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IRONY IN FLAUBERT'S EDUCATION SENTIMENTALE

by

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INTRODUCTION

Style is a novelist's medium--he has no other. When we read and re-read a great novel, it involves us in analyses (or appreciations) that are textural, and textual. We get a general feel for the prose, its rhythms and tones, its "grain." We also study sentence structures, paragraph sutures, beginnings and endings.

But when we read a Flaubertian novel, we become aware of Irony, a realm in which all the textural and textual elements are operating. The orchestration of the "Comices" scene in Madame Bovary, the "grain" of political dialogues in the Education, the deformation of syntax in sentence after sentence--all are stylistic elements of the ironic realm.

When we read a novel by Flaubert, these aspects of style pass through an additional ironic perspective. Here we consider irony not only as a rhetorical or narrative device, but also as an authorial ego-structure, since a man's living sense of irony acts as a teleological force throughout his work. We must consider the author's life as one category, the act of writing as a second: the point at which they converge is his particular aesthetic universe. (Here, in this tentative, convergent, reverberant phase, he is inspired by his psychology, his literary heritage and

his language.) The finished work is a third category in itself, no longer tentative.

Irony in Flaubert is common to all phases and all aspects of the aesthetic universe.

Given the work's multiple existence, there are many different approaches to it. But in criticism, neither the psycho-sociological, nor the stylistic, nor the cultural-linguistic (structuralist) approaches to Flaubert have taken into adequate account the ironic element necessary to all. Flaubertian irony has not even become the subject of a stylistic study, although students of style could not possibly be immune to its all-pervasive presence.

Gustave Flaubert once wrote quite concisely in a letter to Louise Colet (and he wrote about this subject a considerable number of times) of the importance of irony in his project for the novel: "Ecrire un grand roman tout simple mêlé de sentiment et d'ironie--c'est-à-dire vrai."[1] The purpose of our study is quite clear, therefore, and needs no further introduction than to document the gaps in criticism which necessitate its present existence.

In the 1950's and '60's, the poetic metaphor and psychology (through phenomenological criticism, and profound psycho-sexual analysis) dominated Flaubertian studies. It can be said that Georges Poulet, Jean-Pierre Richard, and Jean-Paul Sartre truly brought Flaubert's work into the spotlight of modern criticism. Richard's work on Flaubert

is rich with poetic images of oceans of matter: the prose of Flaubert is presented as a "surface lisse" under which constantly swells "la présence sous-jacente de la pâte savoureuse."[2] The material of the prose is therefore described as "gras et rapide," the former suggesting both Flaubert's "lourdeurs vaincues" and "l'éclat qui demeure aux creux des sillons mal séchés."[3] Richard's entire extended metaphor appears to have been happily inspired by Proust, who said of Flaubertian sentences: "Mais nous les aimons, ces lourds matériaux que la phrase de Flaubert soulève et laisse retomber avec le bruit intermittent d'un excavateur."[4]

The movement of Flaubert's narrative structures was a subject of particular interest to Jean Rousset, whose article, "Madame Bovary ou le livre sur rien" (1960), revealed new fields for critical controversy. Rousset's structures for a reading of Madame Bovary were largely drawn from psychological criticism in the tradition of Leo Spitzer (as were Poulet's). According to Rousset, Flaubert placed "at the gates of [Madame Bovary], where he makes contact and takes leave, the maximum of irony and sad sarcasm, because it is there that he observes with the most estranged view. The novel is thus ordered in a movement which goes from the exterior to the interior, from the surface to the heart, from indifference to complicity, and

then returns from the interior to the periphery."[5]

This sweeping optical system, however, refers to nothing more than the zooming-and-panning novelistic techniques that any author in general might use. The system of "irony and sad sarcasm . . . estranged views . . . [and] indifference," as opposed to "interior . . . heart . . . [and] complicity" represents but a general psychological accounting for mental features, an accounting that does no justice to Flaubert's specific scenes. It pays no attention, for example, to style, to the very structure of prose fiction.[6] But then, inner-outer dichotomies like Rousset's and Poulet's are too static to encompass the delicacies of nuance and emphasis in Flaubert. The very fusion of exterior and interior which occurs in his intimate structures of style, is logically beyond the bounds of such studies, where only the most simple superstructures are considered. What of the fusion of irony and sentiment in the chapter on Emma's convent education (cf. my pp. 206-208), what of Flaubert's heartfelt passion for "the crust, the mechanical" (Rousset's terms of exteriority), and what of the multitudinous variations of syntactic irony which are not polarized by the inner and the outer (cf. my Chapter Three)?

Rousset at least does pursue the text with a camera-man's eye, pointing out the modulations and shifts of viewpoints as Flaubert directed them--the changes worked upon

the prose according to the gaze of the characters and their thoughts.

The text itself then became the focus of study, for such critics as Gérard Genette (of the Tel Quel group), who pushed Rousset's theory of the "livre sur rien" to its logical conclusions. Whereas Rousset follows Flaubertian directions through the fragmentation of vision, Genette follows the fragmentation (which he considers anarchistic) through the sentence-structure of the text itself, in devices like the "discours indirecte," etc.[7] For Genette, Flaubert's stylistic processes symptomizes the anarchistic disruption of meaning, the fragmentation of language itself.[8] In Genette's "Le Travail de Flaubert" (1963), we find the theory of Flaubert's revolutionary "refus de l'expression." This refusal in its semantic aspect is the process of "désamorçage de l'expression, transformation du discours signifiant en objet silencieux."[9] But Genette's theory, at its extreme objectivist limits, leaves the real Flaubert far behind.

Nathalie Sarraute's criticism of interpretations of Flaubert by Tel-Quelistes and "new novelists," stemmed from the fact that their methods overlooked Flaubert's innovations in what she considers the novel of the psychological character, par excellence. Her reading of Flaubert is therefore psycho-stylistic in nature (as a

novelist herself she is an excellent critic of style), and also adds a new dimension to Flaubertian criticism--the role of the reader: "[Disons] ce que font surgir en nous ces belles descriptions ciselées et cadencées," she wrote in 1965. "Mais c'est à une fabrication d'images que nous occupent Flaubert et les Parnassiens."[10] However, in Sarraute's view those images are not signifiers of Flaubert's inner state (as they were for the Geneva School), but rather they belong to the reader. The reader empathizes with, and participates in, the language of Flaubert's finished, written work.

J.-P. Sartre's L'Idiot de la famille, when it appeared in the early 1970's, easily became the most exhaustive work of Flaubertian criticism of our period, and continues to exert a great influence upon some critics (cf. Pierre Danger's 1974 study, Sensations et objets dans le roman de Flaubert). L'Idiot de la famille remains ultimately unconvincing to many, however, because in its function as a psychoanalytic study of Flaubert himself, it relies heavily upon evidence that is largely circumstantial (if not, as in some cases, entirely imaginary). Yet the fascinating theory upon which Sartre bases his specific progressive-regressive method resides in the claim that Flaubert "incarne, par ses seules relations ambivalentes avec un père trop aimé, mal aimant, le

drame de la société française."[11] To anyone familiar with Sartre's material, despite the flaws in the psychoanalysis of Flaubert, the evidence in favor of such a theory is overwhelming. Historically and philosophically, L'Idiot de la famille is an awesome work, but as for Sartre's literary criticism it is marred, once again, by the radicalism of his psychological position, by the extreme psychological bias of that criticism. (It does provide some revelatory insights, however, into the short stories Flaubert wrote as an adolescent.)

The structuralist approach to Flaubert has been rather oblique, as no major structuralist work on him has yet appeared. One "edge" of the language of Flaubert is considered by Roland Barthes to be "mobile, vide . . . là où s'entrevoit la mort du language" (cf. "Bords" in Barthes' 1973 work, Le Plaisir du texte), while the other cutting edge of his language affirms literature and culture, and the compromise of the two brings about the wickedly delightful, almost impossible "instant . . . romanesque," according to Barthes.[12] "Flaubert: une manière de couper, de trouer le discours sans le rendre insensé"--Barthes examines the deforming and reforming process in Flaubert's narrative.[13] But he makes some general statements that contradict the evidence of actual Flaubertian texts (which the reader must keep before him). Further, Barthes

makes other statements that refer to privileged, ideal text-excerpts rather than to whole novels. It is true that often in Flaubert's works, "le langage [s'imite] lui-même . . . d'une façon . . . radicalement ambiguë," but to say that the text "ne tombe jamais sous la bonne conscience (et la mauvaise foi) de la parodie (du rire castrateur, du 'comique qui fait rire')," is to overlook so many passages--for example, those on Alfred de Cisy in the definitive Education.[14]

No clue is given by the critics discussed above as to the exceptional innovations wrought by Flaubert, by means of irony and ironic style, upon the novelistic genre. Nonetheless, in England, France, and the U.S. in the past quarter-century, major works on the nature of irony (by Muecke, Yankélévitch, and Booth) have established the foundation for a proliferation of critical works by ironists of all persuasions--from literary metaphysicians to proponents of communications theory.

One unfortunate aspect of the interest in theories of irony is that such interest has added to the increasingly numerous and confusing definitions of irony--lists of definitions begun in antiquity and reaching incredible proportions today:

1. L'ironie joue le rôle d'une affiche et par là détruit la multivalence."[15] (Roland Barthes, objecting to

the limits of irony's divisive and oppositional, as opposed to multivalent, character.)

2. "L'ironie est une bonne conscience ludique."[16] (Vladimir Yankélévitch whose game-playing emphasizes the detachment of irony from "useful" interests, and who involves us in a hermeneutics of appearance.)

3. "L'ironie en littérature doit être une structure verbale."[17] (Michael Riffaterre, as part of the reply to Jakobsen's and Lévi-Strauss' study of Baudelaire's "Les Chats.")

4. "Objectivity is irony."[18] (Thomas Mann, who considered irony as the clear glance of art itself, untroubled by any moralism.)

5. "Cervantesque irony [is] the irony of double vision."[19] (Morton Gurewitch.)

6. ". . . the strabismic gaze of irony."[20] (Wayne Booth, struggling with the critic's ironic interpretations, added to those already in the text--the disorienting effects of scattered focal points.)

7. "It contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative."[21] (Friedrich Schlegel, for whom the spirit of irony in Romantic poetry and philosophy included the aspiration to a universality which was <u>not</u> attainable.)

8. ". . . tragic irony." (G.W.F. Hegel's view

of irony as a force that reduces human striving to nothingness. "At night, says Hegel, "all cats are grey.")[22]

Compounding the problem of multiple definitions is the tendency, on the part of students of irony, to classify. Muecke's classifications of irony fall into the categories of grades and modes--grades of concealment (overt, covert and private irony), and modes indicating the relationship between the author and his irony (impersonal irony, self-disparaging irony, etc.). Yankélévitch classifies according to rather vague thematic patterns based on psychological premises. Wayne Booth's classification of irony into "stable" and "unstable" is the most stylistically (rhetorically) oriented, in terms of what types of reconstructions of ironic texts (including ironic sentences within the text) are valid. Attempting critical precision, Booth studies the possibilities and limits of interpretation. He relies largely upon a genre theory (developed from specific works), in deciding by which values we judiciously approach an ironic work of art (and determine its success). The types of works "are classified . . . to hint at effects, at overall form and at the structure of what is ironized and what is left firm."[23]

In order to approach stylistic irony in Flaubert (specifically, in the Education sentimentale), avoiding a

compendium of definitions and classifications, we must proceed more specifically, examining Flaubert's living sense of irony, his attitude towards the act of writing, and the completed work itself. Apprehending Flaubert's literary ancestry through the ambiance of the early 19th century, the ironic atmosphere of his period can be sensed and analyzed. This places in perspective the stance of Flaubert as a young man--his predilection for sarcasm at that time, the ironic styles of early Flaubertian texts.

The innovations of narrative style in Flaubert's mature works participate in the ironic realm to such a degree, that precise analyses of style are in fact equivalent to ironic study. Dissection of Flaubertian syntax, reconstitution of blueprints for the architecture of his scenes, graphing of his plot-lines--these activities will reveal overwhelming evidence of Flaubert's ironic innovations.

This analytic activity, however, cannot encompass all ironic reverberations in the Education (or Madame Bovary for that matter). The texts as Flaubert wrote them point out beyond themselves, and necessitate our comprehension of the author's attitudes and opinions. A reader who is deaf to their supra-textual echoes remains insensitive to important ironic aspects of the text, to wit: social satire, ironic treatment of historical events, or Flaubert's portrayal of Art in the Industrial Age.

Regrettably little reference has been made in this study to the irony of Bouvard et Pécuchet (except for the "Dictionnaire"), which in itself would demand a profound and exhaustive analysis. The definitive Education sentimentale has been taken as the major ironic novel to be considered, and only those texts in which ironic methodologies of the Education are pre-figured (the early short stories, "Mémoires d'un fou," Novembre, the 1845 Education, Madame Bovary, and, for further elucidation, the Correspondance) have been included. Other works antedate the definitive Education but, like Salammbô, are poorer texts for students of irony. For purposes of clarity and brevity, the entire romantic and philosophical St. Anthony project has been left aside.

The broad compass of the definitive Education sentimentale is such that it remains the primary Flaubertian text for the student of irony--it provides a theater of vast proportions for the staging of ironic scenes. It represents the artistic culmination of thirty-five years of irony in Flaubert's style, and therefore it is necessary that we trace the development of that ironic style, from the first adolescent manifestations (in the letters of a thirteen-year-old), to the text of the definitive Education sentimentale itself.

NOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

[1]Gustave Flaubert, Correspondance (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), I, 385. Only the first volume of this three-volume edition for the "Bibliothèque de la Pléïade" series established by Jean Bruneau, has appeared to date. This is indeed our misfortune, as a comparison between this and other existing editions reveals it to be far more complete, and faithful to Flaubert's original letters. We therefore shall refer to it (as Correspondance, 1973) for the period from January, 1830, to April, 1851, which constitutes the first volume. The Conard edition in nine volumes (1926-1933) and its Supplement in four volumes (1954), are rather poor by comparison (entire portions of letters have been omitted, and corrections have even been made upon Flaubert's style!). The Edition du Centenaire for the Librairie de France, in three volumes, proved to be far more satisfactory, as it was carefully prepared by the great Flaubertian, René Descharmes, who consulted many original letters (although many remained impossible to consult), and corrected the Conard texts whenever possible. We have therefore employed Descharmes' edition (referred to henceforth as Correspondance, 1928) for the years 1851 to 1880, pending the publication of the second and third volumes for Gallimard, by Jean Bruneau.

[2]Jean-Pierre Richard, Littérature et sensation (Paris: Seuil, 1954), p. 212.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Marcel Proust, "A propos du style de Flaubert," Nouvelle revue française, XIV, 1 (1920), p. 83.

[5]Jean Rousset, "Madame Bovary ou le 'livre sur rien'; un aspect de l'art du roman chez Flaubert: le point de vue," in Flaubert: A Collection of Critical Essays trans. and ed. Raymond Giraud (N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 115.

[6]The main thrust of this psychological approach involves the discovery by the critic of some psychological feature in the artist, that would account for some persistently recurring peculiarity of style. Stylistic devices are therefore not analyzed in terms of language, but merely tabulated as manifestations of some mental feature in the artist.

[7]Cf. Stephen Ullman, Language and Style (N.Y.: Barnes and Noble, 1966), pp. 134-5, for a more traditional view of free indirect style in Flaubert: it provided "variety, flexibility, a certain surprise effect, an undercurrent of irony . . . it [allowed for] avoidance of explicit subordination . . . [and it] transposed the present tense of direct speech into the Imperfect, a form of which Flaubert was particularly fond."

[8]Marxist literary critics outside the Tel Quel group saw in Flaubert the genius of an idealist who had failed. Cf. Jacques Douchin's praise of Flaubert's 1845 Education in Le Sentiment de l'absurde chez Gustave Flaubert (Paris: Lettres modernes, 1970), pp. 32-39. Leaning heavily on Lukàcs, Douchin sees the Flaubert of Salammbô as a bourgeois escapist (p 73).

[9]Gérard Genette, "Le travail de Flaubert," Tel Quel, été 1963 (14), pp. 56-67.

[10]Nathalie Sarraute, "Flaubert le précurseur," Preuves, fév. 1965, p. 6.

[11]Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Idiot de la famille: Gustave Flaubert de 1821 à 1857 (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), I, 504.

[12]Roland Barthes, Le Plaisir du texte (Paris: Seuil, 1973), pp. 14-15.

[13]Ibid., p. 18.

[14]Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[15]Roland Barthes, S/Z, Essai (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p. 51.

[16]Vladimir Yankélévitch, L'ironie ou la bonne conscience, 2nd ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), p. 44.

[17]Michael Riffaterre, Essais de stylistique structurale (Paris: Flammarion, 1971), p. 338.

[18]Thomas Mann, as cited by D.C. Muecke in The Compass of Irony (London: Methuen & Co., 1969), p. 217.

[19]Morton Gurewitch, "European Romantic Irony," Diss. Columbia U., 1957, p. 20.

[20]Wayne C. Booth, A Rhetoric of Irony (U. of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 196.

[21]Friedrich Schlegel,"Lucinde" and the Fragments, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1971), pp. 155-156.

[22]G.W.F. Hegel, as cited by C.I. Glicksberg in The Ironic Vision in Modern Literature (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), p. 7.

[23]Op.cit., p. 207.

1. FLAUBERT'S EARLY ROMANTICISM, AND THE CLASSICAL REACTION

For three decades before Gustave Flaubert's birth, great upheavals had been fracturing the social structure of France, splintering and separating her established extended families. "Environ cent soixante-quinze mille personnes, appartenant surtout aux classes cultivées de la nation, avaient quitté plus ou moins volontairement la France après 1789," according to the critic and literary historian, Henri Peyre.[1] It is true that many returned after the Terror was over, but by then the families had been fragmented into smaller units, and had lost their political potency. Heads of households, and first sons of the upper class, were further eliminated during the Napoleonic Wars.

In the absence of upper-class leadership, and with the shifting of land ownership into new hands, France embarked upon what Albert Thibaudet calls the "temps héroïques" of the bourgeoisie. In Normandy by 1819, the structure of society had been so transformed, and class mobility had become so common, that even a peasant's grandson (Gustave Flaubert's father) could now become the Head of the Rouen Hospital.

Gustave Flaubert's grandfather on his father's side, a country veterinarian, had been condemned to deportation in

1794 for "incivisme," but was fortunately spared the punishment by amnesty, granted after the Convention had voted to arrest Robespierre and his followers. Later Gustave's father, a brilliant student, became a renowned empirical doctor (whose favorite author was Voltaire), and pioneered research in surgical methods, with the aid of precise anatomical charts and hygienic precautions. Surgery before their time seemed to such men to have been barbarous, witchcraft. However, it was not Achille-Cléophas Flaubert's insurgence against the old methods, but rather it was his moderation, his dedicated respect for Science, that earned him his success as "Directeur-en-chef de l'Hôpital de Rouen." This extreme moderation was, in part, a reaction against further social insecurity, common to Dr. Flaubert's generation. It was against his father's strict social codes that Gustave Flaubert then rebelled.

Gustave had read some of the books in his father's library, in particular Homer and Voltaire. But his neighbor, old Mignot, is now famous for also having read to him books like Don Quixote, while he was a child. And unlike his older brother Achille, Gustave was never inspired to become a doctor. "Me voilà devenu bien anti-prose, anti-raison, anti-vérité," he wrote as a teen-ager, "car qu'est-ce que le beau sinon l'impossible, la poésie si ce n'est la barbarie . . ."[2]

Gustave Flaubert's mother was the daughter of a doctor of Pont-l'Evêque. Of her family little is known,

except that the doctor's wife (Flaubert's maternal grandmother) was of noble birth though impoverished, and had married into this bourgeois family. The type of Catholicism practiced by such families was not adopted by an adolescent Flaubert who preferred Victor Hugo's version of Cain and Abel, by far, to the version presented in his maternal family's local parish. The romantic revolt for Flaubert was therefore, quite conceivably, a revolt against both his parents (and his older brother), which little Gustave conducted at the head of his band (faithful friends, and his younger sister): "O que j'aime bien mieux la poésie pure, les cris de l'âme, les élans soudains et puis les profonds soupirs, les voix de l'âme, les pensées du coeur," Flaubert wrote in 1837 when such concepts were hardly new. And the sixteen-year-old continued: "Il y a des jours où je donnerais . . . toute la sotte érudition des . . . philosophes, . . . pour deux vers de Lamartine ou de Victor Hugo."[3]

The young romantic Flaubert, much influenced by Hugo and the "Cénacle," considered himself a revolutionary, in the sense that he would not study law or medicine as the bourgeois code of behavior demanded. He addressed his friend Ernest Chevalier as "Cher enfant de la littérature" at the age of thirteen, and quoted from Marion Delorme, by "notre ami Victor Hugo," in the same letter. His group at school was so inspired by the Romantic rebellion that some carried daggers beneath their winter coats (Flaubert

included); some, like Flaubert, considered themselves as members of a disruptive literary fraternity, as radicals in Hugo's camp; and some were so seriously affected by familial and social estrangement (as occurred to some extent between Gustave and his father) that suicide seemed to be their only choice.[4] The "mal du siècle" was suffered acutely by these very young martyrs. Indeed, George Sand in 1866 was to feel compelled to defend the "mal du siècle," claiming that "peut-être notre maladie valait-elle mieux que la réaction qui l'a suivie, que cette soif d'argent, de plaisirs sans idéal et d'ambitions sans frein qui ne me paraît pas caractériser bien noblement la 'santé du siècle.'"[5]

A steady diet of George Sand had been part of Flaubert's literary nourishment as an adolescent. His own earliest stories can be seen to reflect his reading of novels like Uscoque. He wrote to Ernest in 1838: "Tâche de te procurer ce roman et tu verras que cet Uscoque est un homme qui mérite ton estime"--the character kills his wife and his wife's lover in Sand's tale of murder, treason, and debauchery, set in seventeenth-century Italy.[6] Flaubert's libidinal liberation through literature further exercised itself in readings of that "vieux Shakespeare," especially Othello. Finally, Walter Scott and the Dumas plays are the other major readings of Flaubert's early adolescence (ages thirteen to sixteen).

From ages thirteen to fifteen Flaubert wrote many short stories, and in them one discovers his image of Romantic writing. There are historical intrigues involving murderous families, there are Christian allegories (e.g., the battle between Satan and the ideal hero, d'Almaroës, in "Rêve d'enfer"), and there are dark tales of doomed lovers. In the latter stories, dramatically meridional heroines act out passionate crimes of hatred and horror. Mazza, the adulteress in "Passion et vertu," is one such character, whose lover abandons her. Her hair turns completely white, overnight. At the end of the tale, she murders her husband and children.

Two fascinating stories by Flaubert-the-Romantic were written when he was sixteen and seventeen years of age. "Agonies" is a funereal mélange of themes from Shakespeare and George Sand, in which a corpse on its way to burial <u>feels</u> the cold examination and laughter of passers-by. The macabre tone of the story, however, can perhaps be more directly linked to Petrus Borel. Borel's works were a subversion, by irony, of the forms of literature considered "respectable" by the bourgeoisie (i.e., classical works taught at school). His novels contain inversions of the approved "classic" tone, and their main theme is almost always that of death. The critic René Bourgeois cites a passage from <u>Monsieur de l'Argentière, l'accusateur</u> (a little known work by this minor author), in which the two protagonists are seen

leaning over a table: "L'un était moins qu'un loup, c'était un accusateur public; l'autre plus qu'un porc, c'était un préfet."[7] The remark of the "procureur," who watches a multiple execution from a friend's dining-room window, is typical of Borel's macabre sarcasm: "Quel délicieux repas! à chaque bouchée j'allais voir tomber une tête."[8]

At age seventeen Flaubert added another Romantic to his reading list--Rousseau. "Quel homme!" he wrote to Ernest. "Je te recommande spécialement ses Confessions. C'est là-dedans que son âme s'est montrée à nu. Pauvre Rousseau qu'on a tant calomnié parce que ton coeur était plus élevé que celui des autres . . ."[9] Flaubert seems to have drawn a parallel between himself and the "misunderstood" narrator of the Confessions.

At the same time, Flaubert also wrote the short story entitled "Les funérailles du dr. Mathurin." Sartre has interpreted this second cadaver-story as a symbolic turning-point in Flaubert's adolescent writing career, an attack, at last, against his father. "Rêvant sur son propre suicide," Sartre surmises in a circumstantial though somehow convincing presentation, "Flaubert se met, sans y prendre garde, à raconter les derniers instants futurs du docteur Flaubert."[10]

Only when Flaubert began to realize that his own writing was immature and imitative, did he leave aside the writing of short stories, and begin more extensive studies of literature. To readings of Shakespeare and Cervantes he added Rabelais, Montaigne, the satires of Horace. After travels in the Pyrenees and in Corsica, he began to edit his travel-notes, probably studying descriptive style in Chateaubriand and in Théophile Gautier's landscape poetry (in the Correspondance, Flaubert cites the passage in Gautier's Comédie de la mort where Napoleon nostalgically describes his native Corsica).[11] By the end of 1842, Flaubert had written the "Mémoires d'un fou" and had also completed the existing text of Novembre (his first novella), both in the confessional mode.

While studying law in Paris, Flaubert maintained an interest in the latest romantic works, and even met Gautier and Hugo. Caroline (his younger sister) and her friends were always clamoring for more romantic readings: "Les Burgraves ne sont point encore parus," Flaubert wrote to his sister in 1843, "je vous les apporterai avec moi."[12] Predictably, his radical disillusionment with the bourgeois government was further aggravated by his Paris sojourn (this pre-1848 period was to emerge as the political center of the definitive Education sentimentale). But Flaubert appears to have been more outspoken as an older brother, than as a dutiful son (and member of society), as can be

seen in this letter to Caroline:

> J'ai été hier dîner chez le père Tardif [a banker, like Dambreuse] qui m'a remis 150 francs. Le sieur Daupias y était. Tu peux rassurer maman, je me suis bien conduit, je n'ai presque rien dit ou du moins je n'ai pas déblatéré contre cet infâme Louis-Philippe. Quel ridicule imbécile que ce baron d'Alcochete, quel porc, quelle plate canaille, quel crétin, quel misérable! Il était autrefois marchand de perles, il a fait faillite, il est maintenant diplomate et baron avec beaucoup de rubans sur son revers d'habit.[13]

But although Flaubert kept Caroline informed of Hugo's theater and Tardif's dinners, he did not inform her of a marked change he experienced in his own reading habits. It appears that it was in Paris, with entire libraries of classical literature available to him, that Flaubert first became a classicist. Having decided to leave behind him an adolescent romanticism, he told neither Caroline nor Ernest, but told Du Camp's best friend Louis de Cormenin, of the superior "phrases mâles" of Suetonius, Plutarch, Tacitus, La Bruyère, even of Voltaire (whose prose he now "adored").[14] Meanwhile, Flaubert kept abreast of current romantic writing as well, and referred to such works as Mérimée's Notes d'un voyage dans le midi de la France for his sister's sake, while helping her plan her honeymoon.[15]

However, the literary and psychological turning-point Flaubert had reached in the early forties, appears to have been consonant with a turning-point in literary history. By the time Flaubert wrote to Le Poittevin that "Aux deux bouts du lac de Genève il y a deux génies qui

projettent leur ombre plus haute que celle des montagnes: Byron et Rousseau" (May, 1845), the entire Romantic period was being evoked with a certain nostalgia.

It was as a political and poetic action that Byron had etched his name into a prison-cell's pillar of stone at the Château de Chillon, an act that had provoked wild enthusiasm all over Europe. One of the many who later came to that glorious shrine was Victor Hugo, who wrote that "ce nom de Byron . . . jette un rayonnement étrange dans le cachot."[16] Hugo then added his own signature to the stone column, an action of which twenty-four-year-old Flaubert despaired, on visiting the spot in 1845: "Il faut être bien hardi ou bien stupide pour aller . . . écrire son nom dans un séjour pareil. Le roc en est bariolé et égratiné en cent endroits. Parmi tous les noms obscurs qu'on y voit, j'y ai lu ceux de Victor Hugo et de George Sand. Cela m'a fait de la peine pour eux. Je leur croyais plus de goût."[17]--The expression "de goût" is hardly applicable to Hugo and Sand, as they surely would have refused to describe themselves in such a manner! Flaubert, it can be seen, was already completely detached from the effervescent politics of preceding generations--but not from the desperate irony of impossible goals, as he was moved by the thought of "un homme pâle qui un jour est venu là," and shared with his childhood heroes a great admiration for the mythic figure of Byron.

However, in Flaubert's first actual novel, the Education sentimentale of 1845, a reaction against Romanticism is markedly present. Flaubert looked back with bitter irony at his own romantic youth, and at the dismal failures in writing for which the Romantic "disease," as he would later call it, was partially responsible. Flaubert's former errors of style required that he formulate a new style to oppose them, a style too lucid to succumb to the excesses (syntactic and thematic) of the embarrassing short stories and unsatisfying confessionals. Working on the notes for his half of Par les champs et par les grèves, Flaubert must have realized the advantages stylistically inherent (for him) in objective landscape studies which did not belong to his own adolescent topos.

Flaubert and his exact contemporary, Charles Baudelaire, both seem to have retained the energy of romantic excesses, while each learned to maintain great control over stylistic excesses. Flaubert's period of stylistic self-control (including epistolary style) had gained complete ascendancy by 1846. At age twenty-five, after he had written the Education (and also, soberingly, after Caroline's untimely death), Flaubert's letters exhibit a radical improvement in style: "As-tu réfléchi combien nous sommes organisés pour le malheur?" he wrote to Du Camp. "On s'évanouit dans la volupté, jamais dans la peine. Les larmes sont pour le coeur ce que l'eau est pour les poissons."[18]

Critics like René Descharmes and A. Coleman have rightly discerned the precise difference between Romantic works and those of Flaubert's generation--a partial return to the methods of classicism. In the quotation above, the first person plural, the impersonal "on," and the classical trope are indeed symptomatic of a reaction against Romanticism. While suffering was a personal sentiment for the romantic poets, in this letter of Flaubert's we can see how his pessimism (to cite Descharmes), "se généralisa."[19]

In fact Flaubert was elated at the effects of classical restraint upon the romantic disarray of his work, as his satisfaction with Par les champs . . . attests. And Albert Thibaudet relates Flaubert's enthusiasm, at this time, for the autobiography of Carême, because in it the great chef admitted that he was "naturellement gourmand, mais . . . la vocation de la cuisine était si forte en lui qu'elle étouffa la gourmandise."[20]

With the lucidity of irony, Flaubert was able to look back at his Romantic childhood and at that of the genre he was to explore--the modern French novel--to initiate new styles for the form. Indeed, Flaubert's formal ironies furnish a key to his exploitation of the novel's stylistic possibilities: he was to make great use of the tensions between the reader's expectations (reactions conditioned by Sand, Balzac, etc.), and structural twists which he would initiate over and against those very expectations.

Charles Baudelaire was to undertake a quite similar project in poetry. His most grotesque images would peer out through the polished mask of the sonnet--a classically beautiful countenance. Further, the lyrical language of Romanticism was ironically exploited by Baudelaire. There was indeed something diabolical about his deformation of poetry--the use of a genteel form like the ballad, in describing a rotting corpse, was a radical shock:

> Les mouches bourdonnaient sur ce ventre putride,
> D'où sortaient de noirs bataillons
> De larves, qui coulaient comme un épais liquide
> Le long de ces vivants haillons.[21]

Baudelaire's enjambement is particularly striking, as the noble and bellicose language of one line is brought to a halt on the next, by two simple words before the comma, "De larves." The image itself is unquestionably horrifying. Yet the first two lines of the poem are faithful to the traditional construction of the ballad: "Rappelez-vous l'objet que nous vîmes, mon âme,/Ce beau matin d'été si doux."[22]

Baudelaire's description of the corpse is juxtaposed with quatrains of a most Romantic allure, and of course adheres strictly to the ballad form. The poem is complete with a "renvoi": "--Et pourtant vous serez semblable à cette ordure," etc. Baudelaire then adds to his poem yet another, more modern, ending, an "encore" of his own "ironie vorace":

Alors, ô ma beauté! dites à la vermine
Qui vous mangera de baisers,
Que j'ai gardé la forme et l'essence divine
De mes amours décomposés![23]

The shifting realities in the last quatrain of "Une Charogne" are indeed a "grotesque" creation, as the poet defined the word in "De l'essence du rire."[24] The ambiguities of the word "forme," the forms of decomposed beauty, the literally voracious irony in this application of the expression "vous mangera de baisers"--all are melted into one ironic stanza.

In but two paragraphs of Madame Bovary, Flaubert was also to accomplish a shocking innovation in both content and style. Readers of George Sand or Balzac would have certain expectations of a scene in which a country doctor arrived at a farm, to find the farmer's daughter alone in the kitchen. Behind polite dialogue, passions would surge, as explained by the author in omniscient narration. But in Flaubert, the dialogue is sparse and indirect. Characters and objects symbolically interact. Passions are objectified, and need no further authorial explanation than the grotesque coupling of death-images with sensuality:

> Il arriva un jour vers trois heurs; tout le monde était aux champs; il entra dans la cuisine, mais n'aperçut point d'abord Emma; les auvents étaient fermés. . . . Des mouches, sur la table, montaient le long des verres qui avaient servi, et bourdonnaient en se noyant au fond, dans le cidre resté . . . Entre la fenêtre et le foyer, Emma cousait; elle n'avait point de fichu, on voyait sur ses épaules nues de petites gouttes de sueur . . .

> Selon la mode de la campagne, elle lui proposa de boire quelque chose . . . elle se renversait pour boire: et, la tête en arrière, les lèvres avancées, le cou tendu, elle riait de ne rien sentir [dans son verre à peine rempli], tandis que le bout de sa langue, passant entre ses dents fines, léchait à petits coups le fond du verre."[25]

The juxtaposition of dead flies and Emma's tongue is, of course, highly ironic. This grotesque and explicitly detailed erotic scene was indeed so radical that Flaubert (like Baudelaire after him) would be brought to trial on charges of immorality (although this was not one of the "tableaux lascifs" singled out by M. Pinard).

The lyrical language of Romanticism was also as ironically exploited by Flaubert in Madame Bovary, as it was by Baudelaire in "Une Charogne"--especially in Flaubert's dialogues between Léon and Emma:

> --Avez-vous du moins quelques promenades dans les environs? continuait madame Bovary parlant au jeune homme.
>
> --Oh! fort peu, répondit-il. Il y a un endroit que l'on nomme la Pâture, sur le haut de la côte, à la lisière de la forêt. Quelquefois, le dimanche, je vais là, et j'y reste avec un livre, à regarder le soleil couchant.
>
> --Je ne trouve rien d'admirable comme les soleils couchants, reprit-elle, mais au bord de la mer, surtout.
>
> --Oh! j'adore la mer, dit monsieur Léon.
>
> --Et puis, ne vous semble-t-il pas, répliqua madame Bovary, que l'esprit vogue plus librement sur cette étendue sans limites, dont la contemplation vous élève l'âme et donne des idées d'infini, d'idéal!
>
> --Il en est de même des paysages de montagnes, reprit Léon. J'ai un cousin qui a voyagé en Suisse l'année dernière, et qui me disait qu'on ne peut se figurer la poésie des lacs, le charme des cascades, l'effet gigantesque des glaciers. On voit des pins d'une grandeur incroyable, en travers des torrents, des cabanes suspendues sur des précipices, et, à

> mille pieds sous vous, des vallées entières, quand les nuages s'entr'ouvrent. Ces spectacles doivent enthousiasmer, disposer à la prière, à l'extase! Aussi je ne m'étonne plus de ce musicien célèbre qui, pour exciter mieux son imagination, avait coutume d'aller jouer du piano devant quelque site imposant.[26]

Flaubert's own comment on this passage, in a letter of 1853 to Louise Colet, provides a further gloss on the extent of his ironic reaction against the degraded Romanticism of his day. He mentions having uncovered in an article (in Pays, a journal of the period) by a popular chronicler, "en parlant de la Suisse, des phrases textuelles à peu de chose près de mon monsieur et de ma dame parlant de la Suisse (dans Bovary). O bêtise humaine, te connais-je donc? il y a en effet si longtemps que je te contemple! et note que ces mêmes gens qui disent 'poésie des lacs,' etc., détestent fort toute cette poésie, toute espèce de nature, toute espèce de lac, si ce n'est leur pot de chambre qu'ils prennent pour un océan."[27]

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

[1]H. Peyre, Qu'est-ce que le romantisme? (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), p. 62.

[2]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 25.

[3]Ibid., pp. 24-25.

[4]Cf. Peyre (Romantisme, pp. 120-122) for a list of romantics who died young, went mad, feared becoming insane, or committed suicide. Flaubert himself described the spleen of his school-mates (several of whom committed suicide) in his preface to Bouilhet's Dernières Chansons.

[5]Quoted by H. Peyre, Romantisme, p. 129.

[6]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 29.

[7]R. Bourgeois, L'ironie romantique (Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1974), p. 69.

[8]Ibid.

[9]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I. 33.

[10]J.-P. Sartre, L'Idiot de la famille, I, 461.

[11]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 99. Also cf. A. Naaman, Les débuts de Flaubert et sa technique de la description (Paris: Nizet, 1962).

[12]Ibid., I, 150.

[13]Ibid. I, 201.

[14]Ibid., I, 209-210.

[15]Ibid., I, 218.

[16]Le Rhin, Lettres à un ami . . . (Paris: Charpentier, 1845), III, 131. Quoted by J. Bruneau in footnote #1, in G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 961.

[17]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 233.

[18]Ibid., I, 262.

[19]Descharmes is cited by A. Coleman, Flaubert's literary development in the light of his "Mémoires d'un fou," "Novembre," and "Education sentimentale" (1845) (1915; Rpt. New York: Krauss, 1965), p. 53.

[20]A. Thibaudet, Gustave Flaubert, 1821-1880 (1922; 4th ed., Paris: Gallimard, 1935), p. 71.

[21]C. Baudelaire, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 30.

[22]Ibid., p. 29. Strangely, a similar theme appears in a letter Flaubert wrote from Egypt in 1850, after visiting an underground cemetery: "Tout suinte le bitume des embaumements, la poussière des momies vous prend à la gorge et vous fait tousser, les chauves-souris voltigent autour de votre lanterne, c'est une jolie promenade à faire avec une dame [my emphases]."--Correspondance (1973), I, 642.

[24]C. Baudelaire, Oeuvres complètes, p. 31.

[25]G. Flaubert, Oeuvres (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), I, 310-311.

[26]Ibid., I, 365.

[27]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928), I, 404.

2. PRE-FIGURATIONS OF FLAUBERTIAN IRONY

The evidence of Flaubert's first written work obviates the fact that his sense of irony developed concomitantly with his sense of the comic. As a young man, Flaubert's particular social forte was his sense of humor. Specifically, he was appreciated by his sister and his friends for his descriptions of the follies of society. One of his most successful tools was that of sarcasm. He wrote in 1837 to his friend Ernest Chevalier thathe could not find the heart of man, because it was hidden between "deux vastes pensées qui remplissent souvent la vie d'un homme: faire sa fortune et vivre pour soi, c'est-à-dire rétrécir son coeur entre sa boutique et sa digestion. [my emphasis]"[1]

And in a post-script to the same friend in 1841, at age twenty, Gustave wrote:

> Un grand malheur public: Le sieur Braquehais s'est tué; canaillerie insigne envers le public qui comptait le voir, envers les gens vertueux indignés qui se promettaient de l'insulter, envers Me Mesnard qui préparait un beau discours, envers trois journaux, quantité de dames de bonne société, et Duboc, louageur, qui l'aurait voituré de Rouen à Yvetot!!!!!
> Le Procureur se reposera, et deux rosses resteront à l'écurie.[2]

Such striking nonchalance in describing the circumstances involving a suicide was a special talent of Flaubert's, as whenever death was involved. Indeed, he was always

known for his great repertoire of macabre sarcasms. His familiarity with death, arising from his upbringing in a hospital environment, strengthened this natural advantage. Flaubert was known throughout his life for his scatological humor: the critic Albert Thibaudet describes its origins as the humor of the medical student, "un humour professionnel, tout comme celui du soldat . . . Mais il prend naturellement pour le dehors une ligne macabre, cynique et qui fait froid dans les os de la 'clientèle.'"[3]

What would normally be considered tragic--an event like suicidal death, for example--is transformed, given this medical scatology and Flaubert's taste for the macabre, into the realm of comedy. Flaubert was already aware of the tragic and comic dimensions of life, and of their interconnections. However, what had become important to him, in relating various events (be they comic, tragic, or anything in between), was a vision of life as seen through the equalizing lens of the "grotesque."

Thus the "grotesque" was, to Flaubert, not precisely a genre (as it had been for those Romantics who wrote monster-stories--the first "tales of the grotesque"). It was not even the "grotesque" in the Hugolian sense, which, uniting with the "sublime," created "le génie moderne."[4] Rather the Flaubertian grotesque was a world-view in the Baudelairian sense (discussed in the previous chapter).

In the domain of literature, Flaubert had experimented with various gruesome post-Romantic tales like "Quidquid volueris" (1837), about a creature half-man, half-ape, or "Passion et vertu" (1838), about the frenzied Mazza who so resembles the future Emma Bovary. But Flaubert discovered rather early in his writing career that the most successful means of disseminating the "grotesque" world-view was through portraits of society. He did not have to create monsters. He would simply illustrate the monstrosities of the French bourgeoisie. As he wrote of the character Jules, in the 1845 Education sentimentale:

> . . . à ne faire attention qu'à l'élément grotesque d'une société et qu'aux ridicules dont elle est spécialement douée, il en découvrit tellement dans la nôtre qu'il en arriva, par rapport au genre comique, aux mêmes conclusions qu'il avait trouvées quant au tragique. Ainsi il avait eu d'abord envie de s'amuser avec les Saint-Simoniens, mais les Fouriéristes l'emportèrent [shades of Stendhal], de même que M. Cousin lui semblait très drôle avant qu'il n'ait lu Pierre Leroux. Qu'est-ce qui fera rire, en effet, quand tout est risible? il est vraiment pénible pour un auteur de penser que, quelque bêtise qu'il fasse débiter à ses bouffons, les gens graves en diront toujours de plus fortes.[5]

Although in this passage there are strong echoes of Montaigne and La Bruyère, Flaubert in a letter of the same year to Louise Colet, describes the "grotesque triste" in a more Baudelairian manner, with evocations of the all-encompassing Absurd:

> Ce qui m'empêche de me prendre au sérieux . . . c'est que je me trouve très ridicule, non pas de ce ridicule relatif qui est le comique théâtral, mais de ce ridicule intrinsèque à la vie humaine elle-même,

> et qui ressort de l'action la plus simple ou le geste le plus ordinaire.--Jamais par exemple je ne me fais la barbe sans rire, tant ça me paraît bête.[6]

The descriptions of peoples' ordinary actions and gestures (pre-figuring the Theater of the Absurd) are indeed rendered by Flaubert as grotesqueries, witness the letter, "Un grand malheur public," cited above. And by far the most typical literary device employed by Flaubert to illustrate this in his early writings, is that of sarcasm. As one might well surmise, Flaubert is being extremely sarcastic when he calls Braquehais' death a "great misfortune," given the evidence in the rest of the letter, and the obvious disdain with which he calls disappointed gawkers "virtuous," Mesnard's speech "beautiful," etc.

Flaubert's predilection for sarcasm dates back to early adolescence. He and friends like Ernest Chevalier, along with his own sister Caroline, used to take turns playing the role of a character they invented named "Le Garçon," who appears to the modern reader as a halfway-character between Gargantua and Ubu (later Flaubertian incarnations include "The Sheik" and "St. Polycarpe"). Albert Thibaudet describes Le Garçon as "hilare et hurleur, projection d'une vie sarcastique et joyeuse."[7] He goes on to describe a typical game the young friends would play:

> . . . chaque fois qu'on passait devant la Cathédrale de Rouen, l'un disait: c'est beau, cette architecture gothique, ça élève l'âme! Et aussitôt celui qui faisait le Garçon s'écriait tout haut au milieu des passants: "Oui, c'est beau, et la St.

> Barthélemy aussi, et les Dragonnades, et l'Edit de Nantes, c'est beau aussi!"[8]

The character of the Garçon stayed with Flaubert for many years. Even at age thirty he would write to Maxime Du Camp that "Le Garçon croit que le fromage de Parmesan est l'auteur de tous les tableaux désignés sous le nom du Parmesan [Flaubert was writing from Venice, as he was accompanying his sister and brother-in-law on their Italian honeymoon].--Et toutes les fois qu'il voit du Parmesan il lui fait des compliments, et cause peinture avec lui."[9]

The sarcastic laughter that began in public school eventually became a mania for Flaubert. The character Yuk in his early story, "Smarh" (1839), reacts to all human events with bitter, sardonic laughter. In the semi-autobiographic "Mémoires d'un fou" (1838), this reaction had been the province of the narrator, who admitted of the work that "j'ai tellement pris l'habitude du rire et du scepticisme, qu'on y trouvera, depuis le commencement jusqu'à la fin, une plaisanterie perpétuelle, et les gens qui aiment à rire pourront à la fin rire de l'auteur et d'eux-mêmes."[10] And Flaubert ended "Mémoires d'un fou" with a fictional "note" from a supposedly unbiased friend who, on the basis of one reading of the work, advised the author to give up writing entirely.

Indeed, sardonic laughter does dominate even the very act of creation in Flaubert's early works. Novembre (1842), his first actual novella, and a work in which his consummate attention was devoted to the progression of narrative styles,

has as its subtitle, Fragments de style quelconque. That last word, the word "haphazard," reveals Flaubert's sarcastic snubbing of his own effort. As Bernard Masson, editor of the Seuil edition, remarked: "Ce qui est sûr, c'est que l'oeuvre est construite avec le plus grand soin, en dépit d'un sous-titre, qui n'est peut-être qu'une provocation ironique ou une manière de s'exprimer par antiphrase."[11]

If Flaubert's abundant use of the word irony in these early works is any indication, he knew himself from the start to be no stranger to the ironic realm. It will be necessary for us to establish his own definitions of the word, in order to later demonstrate the many ways in which his applications of ironic techniques themselves transcended the idea he had of the concept of irony.

One can only approximate Flaubert's definitions of the word irony through inference, in Novembre and in the 1845 Education, which are not lexica, of course, but creative works. Our first exercise in the stylistics of irony is to determine the lexical field of the word "irony" itself, to draw it from the contexts, from the various guises through which Flaubert presents it.

The first appearance of the word irony, in Novembre, is in a metaphorical context, rendering its definition by inference even more necessary:

> . . . mes pauvres années ont repassé devant moi, comme emportées par l'hiver dans une tourmente lamentable; quelque chose de terrible les roulait dans mon souvenir, avec plus de furie que la brise ne faisait courir les feuilles dans les sentiers paisibles; une ironie étrange les frôlait et les retournait pour mon spectacle, et puis toutes s'envolaient ensemble et se perdaient dans un ciel morne. [My emphases][12]

In an extended metaphor, the young Flaubert represents his concept of irony by animating it, by giving it the quality of a strange, terrible wind overturning the narrator's memories, which are as leaves. Therefore, the key word to the definition of irony in this context is "retournait"--and from this action attributed to irony, one may conclude that it represents here "that which upsets or overturns," an impersonal force, yet somehow lodged in the mind.

The next time we come across the word irony is in a description of an entire romantic world of the narrator's imagination. The conclusion of this description reads: "Mais par-dessus cette vie si mouvante à la surface, si résonnante de tant de cris différents, surgissait une immense amertume qui en était la synthèse et l'ironie."[13] Here the context yields irony defined, classically, as negation, and indeed Flaubert does not in this early work see past the impassive concept of irony as a "spirit of opposition." Even later, in the first Education sentimentale, we find a passage which evokes the same image of the word: "La nature extérieure a une ironie sans pareille; les cieux ne se couvrent pas de nuages, quand notre coeur est gros . . ."[14] In a direct reaction against the Romantic pathetic fallacy, whereby

Nature faithfully reflects the poet's emotions (in Musset, Lamartine), Flaubert's nature is cruelly unaware of Jules' despair--and this exemplifies Flaubert's idea of a supreme, impassive irony.

The sarcasm of Flaubert in his adolescence has prepared us for a definition of irony as "negation." Yet another example of the word in Novembre harkens back to the author's adolescent temperament, although the narrator denies any such resemblance to the author: "Elevé sans religion, comme les hommes de mon âge, je n'avais pas le bonheur sec des athées ni l'insouciance ironique des sceptiques."[15] Here "ironique" is synonymous with "moqueur," and the mocking insouciance of one who stands apart, who is not involved, was indeed characteristic of the sarcasm of Flaubert in his youth (for example, in the game of Le Garçon).

Flaubert's conscious vision of irony remains a reaction to romantic conceptions, as his next work, the 1845 Education, proves, although the form of the novel occasions a greater variety of applications, such as that of character analysis. Thus Flaubert's description of M. Renaud is precisely that of a rather ridiculous ironist, who "souriait souvent d'une manière ironique aux choses les plus insignifiantes." (1845 ES, 281) An ironic manner is a scoffing manner, in the Roman rhetorical sense, and here Renaud is said to pose as a superior thinker to hide his own ignorance.

The character Lucinde (the actress adored by a still-romantic Jules, and therefore endowed with the name of

Schlegel's heroine) is described as affecting a more cruel version of the ironic pose, to more sinister purposes of dissimulation: "Une ironie peut-être cruelle palpitait sur sa lèvre mince, aux contours de sa bouche discrète." (1845 ES 307) Lucinde's scoffing can be cruelly critical, and Flaubert further develops his concept of irony-as-cruelty (heartless negation or opposition) in this novel. Jules writes to Henry, thanking him for sending a purse which was to be Jules' gift to the runaway Lucinde--a purse which will now be "la seule ruine de cette espérance abattue . . . à moins que les choses inanimées n'aient aussi leur ironie." (1854 ES 314) Indeed, in later works Flaubert's objects (like the "coffret" belonging to Mme. Arnoux in the definitive Education sentimentale) do exhibit their own irony.

Later in the 1845 Education, Flaubert returns to a consideration of irony as a concept, rather than as an affective attribute of characters, and here previous definitions appear to mellow and mature. Irony is now seen as a psychological space which Jules is to inhabit, rather than as a mere aspect among many of his personality. The critical, analytical outlook on life is perceived by Flaubert to be the ironic outlook (knowledgably detached, aware of painful truth), and somehow this outlook is deemed superior to any other. Describing Jules, the narrator states that "tout fuyait sous la flagellation de son ironie, ironie terrible qui commençait par lui-même." (1845 ES 350) And again:

"Par moments encore, il avait des tentations de vivre et d'agir, mais l'ironie accourait si vite se placer sous l'action qu'il ne pouvait l'achever, l'analyse suivait de si près le sentiment qu'elle le détruisait aussitôt." (1845 ES 362) This is indeed, in a primitive form, the idea of "ironie vorace" as expressed by a poet who was Flaubert's contemporary:

> Je suis comme le roi d'un pays pluvieux,
> Riche, mais impuissant, jeune et pourtant très-vieux,
> Qui, de ses précepteurs méprisant les courbettes,
> S'ennuie avec ses chiens comme avec d'autres bêtes.[16]

This "ennui" is the extreme position of the ironist first seen in Novembre, although the optimism with which Flaubert claimed the ironic view to be superior to any other caused him some embarrassment later. A critical analysis for Jules, and by extension we shall say for the young Flaubert (a justifiable extension in the case of this rather adolescent novel that Flaubert refused to publish)--a critical analysis leads to knowledge as a disclosure, a dis-covery of reality. This discovered reality represents the last stronghold along the frontier of merciless ironic reversals, for it is only this true reality which is somehow sheltered from further processes of ironic analysis. The passage on Jules as the King of Art (1845 ES 370-371) represents the apotheosis of this fanatical faith. But Jules' ideal reign is soon to expire, systematically eliminated by an older Flaubert.

As a matter of fact, Flaubert never does, throughout the rest of his works, come to any further conclusions about

irony, and the word itself appears only rarely in his later works. He effectively stopped labelling actions or gestures as ironic, as this only served to cut short the flow of actions and observations, defining them as "ironic" rather than presenting them in their fullness without comment. When the word irony does appear in later works, it is given the same classical definitions:

Flaubert wrote to Louise Colet in 1847 that "La contemplation d'une existence rendue misérable par une passion violente . . . rabaisse avec une ironie hurlante tant de passions banales . . . que l'on est satisfait en songeant que l'instrument humain peut vibrer jusque-là et monter à des tons si aigus."[17]

The inhabitants of Carthage in Salammbô mock Mathô as he meets his atrocious final punishment: "C'étaient des injures atroces, immondes, avec des encouragements ironiques et des imprécations . . ."[18]

And Emma Bovary "se délectait dans toutes les ironies mauvaises de l'adultère triomphant."[19]

Flaubert's definitions of the word irony remain static, even as his applications of the concept, stylistically polished and mature, renew and enrich the ironic realm, through innovations in the art of novel-writing.

After the debacle of the Tentation de St. Antoine and the long trips, first to Brittany and then to the Middle

East, with Maxime Du Camp, Flaubert returned to his work much-changed. He no longer insisted in his writings that analysis would disclose any "deeper" reality or any "true" universe, although he delighted in employing the tools of analysis for perfecting character-types, and for digging up and fashioning the gems of his experience. Flaubert did not entirely abandon the world of ideas, but he did expand his ideas about the world. He became more certain of his vocation as an artist, and was more concerned with attaining some competence as a stylist than as a philosopher.

Let us then, for the purposes of this chapter, interpret irony further, not only in the classic sense as "dissemblance" (the obfuscation of a "deeper" level of reality followed by a sudden disclosure), but also as a game of disguises. In this sense, Flaubert's theatricality and sensuality as a writer are not omitted from our interpretation of his texts. It will be simpler (and more appreciative) to play into this sensuality, than it would be to search for meanings beyond stylistic analysis at this point.

Critics of style, if they mention Flaubert's irony at all, do so without ever taking into account the shifting masks of his amoral (artistic) sensibility. For instance, R. J. Sherrington in his discussion of the multiple interrelationships amongst characters in the 1869 Education, demonstrates that these ironic interrelationships are aspects of a protective shield, "a seemingly infinite variety of ironic

contrasts behind which Flaubert can hide his personal attitudes."[20] Victor Brombert, in dealing with the structure of the same novel, states that the many ironic "arranged situations" are aspects of psychological impotence and masochistic self-chastisement for Flaubert (presenting Frédéric as his alter-ego).[21] Brombert here attempts an infusion of the psychological into the structural, which dilutes our understanding of both. And a reading of Benedetto Croce's theory, of the romantic concept of what he calls "art-irony" in Flaubert, is equally limiting, as Croce takes Flaubert "à la lettre" (from the Correspondance), claiming that irony for Flaubert is simply a means of playing God, impersonally and potently.[22] In each interpretation, the critic seeks a single moral justification for Flaubert's participation in the ironic realm. Each finds some evidence to support his claim.

But Flaubert was always a manipulator of evidence, for stylistic purposes, psychological ones, or simply for dramatic effect. Surely in Madame Bovary and in the Education the games of irony cannot be simply labelled as sado-masochistic. Certainly the reader is not a "victim" of manipulation--rather, he is invited to "play along" with the author. For it was often the case that Flaubert, with his great respect for "les maîtres," for Cervantes, Rabelais, even for classic masters of irony (for Homer, or Horace)--it was the case that Flaubert meant his readers to be edified and amused. His contribution in employing rich, complex techniques of irony,

was that of equaling the masters' accomplishments in a new aesthetic form. The modern novel would appropriate the intelligence of Voltaire, the prosodic clarity of La Bruyère, the wisdom of Montaigne--and it was to be a new art form for a new age of readers. Unfortunately, the "Bovary" trial, and the reception that greeted the Education, were to demonstrate that Flaubert's readership was largely as yet incapable of separating these goals from current moral and political concerns. At least a portion of his posthumous readership will prove itself capable, I hope, of just that separation.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2

[1]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 25.

[2]Ibid., I, 81.

[3]A. Thibaudet, Gustave Flaubert, 1821-1880 (Paris: Gallimard, 1935), p. 12.

[4]Hugo had defined the grotesque as "ce germe de la comédie," in his "Préface à Cromwell."

[5]G. Flaubert, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Seuil, 1964), I, 359. Henceforth quotations from this novel will be listed simply as "1845 ES."

[6]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 307-8. Compare this with Baudelaire's 1852 article, "De L'essence du rire," in Oeuvres complètes (1961), p. 985.

[7]Op. cit., Thibaudet, p. 19.

[8]Ibid., p. 20.

[9]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 784.

[10]G. Flaubert, Oeuvres de jeunesse inédites (Paris: Conard, 1910), I, 484.

[11]G. Flaubert, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Seuil, 1964), 248.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., I, 251.

[14]Ibid., I, 320.

[15]Ibid., I, 254.

[16]Op. cit., Baudelaire, p. 70.

[17]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 462.

[18]G. Flaubert, Oeuvres (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), I, 991.

[19]Ibid., I, 461. Henceforth quotations from this novel will be listed simply as "MB."

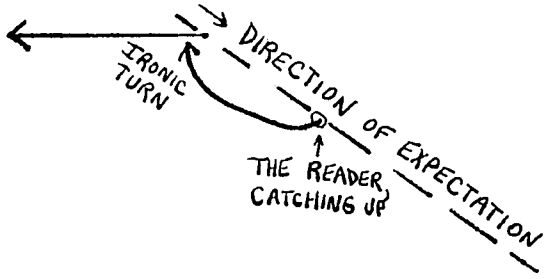
[20]R. J. Sherrington, Three Novels by Flaubert (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 331.

[21]V. Brombert, The Novels of Flaubert (Princeton U. Press, 1966), p. 164. Brombert also states here that "Flaubert's presence is felt as a permanent form of intervention, often ironic, at times deliberately cruel."

[22]B. Croce, "Flaubert," London Mercury (1922), p. 486.

3. THE STYLE OF FLAUBERT: SYNTACTIC IRONY

Perhaps the best way to begin to understand the inner workings of Flaubert's mechanisms of irony, is by examining the circuitry along the many syntactical interstices of his novels. The way in which Flaubert creates an ironic tension, in these cases, is by controlling a switch in perspective. Whereas a reader is generally led mechanically through an accustomed syntax, from the beginning of a sentence to its logical conclusion, Flaubert in these cases manages to jolt the reader off the path of expectation. The reader subsequently must recognize (meaning re-cognize, re-evaluate) his original direction, thus:



The reader has thereby been invited to enter into a structural adventure with Flaubert.

A typical Flaubertian text in which this movement takes place is in L'Education, where Sénécal comes to Frédéric for help in securing employment, hinting also at

some dangerous mission in the near future. He then takes leave of Frédéric:

"Cet adieu, répété deux fois, son froncement de sourcils en contemplant le poignard, sa résignation et son air solennel, surtout, fîrent rêver Frédéric, qui bientôt n'y pensa plus."[1]

In this sentence Flaubert carefully recapitulates the solemn poses of Sénécal throughout the scene as perceived by the reader and, as far as the reader can tell, by Frédéric. Each phrase represents a pose. But we are amused to discover that the sentence, instead of terminating with the joint "point of view" (to use the critic E. Auerbach's phrase) of Frédéric and ourselves, that is to say the phrase "fîrent rêver Frédéric," sports a tacked-on relative clause in the final position which deliberately trips up our expectations. The speed at which this loss of attention on Frédéric's part takes place is what makes this instance of irony comical, theatrical. And yet Flaubert has been shifting the ground of "reality" throughout the entire passage--from Frédéric's growing antipathy toward Sénécal, to a portrait of the latter's stoicism, then Sénécal's rude allusion to Madame Arnoux, then the hesitations involving Frédéric's gift to the "démocrate." Although the tone of the passage is serious, there are glimmerings of irony that ought to have prepared us for the final sentence of the scene, and which actually do so when we reread the passage.

Flaubert had already employed the same technique, that of a "surprise" relative clause in the final position, in Madame Bovary, where Emma and Charles arrive in Rouen to see the famed Lagardy:

"Madame s'acheta un chapeau, des gants, un bouquet. Monsieur craignait beaucoup de manquer le commencement; et, sans avoir eu le temps d'avaler le bouillon, ils se présentèrent devant les portes du théâtre, qui étaient encore fermées." (MB 493)

Aided by the inflated verb "se présentèrent," the last clause effectively labels the pair, especially the overanxious Charles, as country bumpkins. The sarcastic description of them as "Madame" and "Monsieur" is an echo of another description of the marital bliss of yet another perfect bourgeois couple, M. and Mme. Renaud of the first Education sentimentale.[2]

In the preceding cases the ironic turn comes at the end of the sentence. However, there are other instances of what we may now call the technique of syntactic irony, where its position varies. It is often through the use of some kind of subordinate clause that this type of irony, involving directional shifts, is accomplished. One or two further examples will suffice to show that a build-up (and turn at the end) is not always necessary in order for the sentence to exchange one mask for another. This one is bound to be a favorite of Flaubertian ironists: "Sénécal--qui avait un

crâne en pointe--ne considérait que les systèmes." (ES 90)

Or let us glance at this trip-up over a direct object pronoun, where Frédéric is still dreaming of seducing Marie Arnoux, when he is interrupted:

"--Venez-vous la prendre? dit Regimbart.

--Prendre qui?

--L'absinthe!" (ES 72)

The techniques involved in syntactic irony encompass stylistic twists including something as simple as a punctuation mark, or as sophisticated as the syllepsis. A sentence drawn from Flaubert's three-page description of Yonville may serve to illustrate how even punctuation can be ironic in Flaubert: "Mais ce qui attire le plus les yeux, c'est, en face de l'auberge du Lion d'or, la pharmacie de M. Homais!" (MB 356)

The appearance of the exclamation point in the text of the narrative itself, not the dialogue, is unusual enough in this novel (and is generally meant ironically), especially in the context of what appears to be quite a pedestrian descriptive passage, much of it sounding rather like a travelogue for some imaginary tourist to Yonville. From a supra-Flaubertian point-of-view, this is an ironic parody in itself, since no tourist would ever go to Yonville for sight-seeing. But aside from that, the exclamation point appears as a kind of clue to the ironic undercurrent of the passage, a point of tension. The seemingly impassive voice

that describes the place as a "paysage sans caractère" where the worst cheeses of the region are made, where the most interesting place in town is the pharmacy--that voice will soon be replaced by a narrative describing exactly how torturous the whole environment becomes for Emma.

One punctuation mark, one word may suffice to give an ironic turn to a Flaubertian sentence. When a cliché is twisted, the word that is out of place protrudes from the expected sentence, as when Rosanette, jealous of Madame Arnoux, shouts at Frédéric: "Pourquoi vas-tu te divertir chez les femmes honnêtes?" (ES 390) Or, to cite yet another example, the painter Pellerin, so caught up in theories of art that at age fifty he has yet produced nothing but sketches, is described in the following ironic manner by Flaubert: "Sa haine contre le commun et le bourgeois débordait en sarcasmes d'un lyrisme superbe, et il avait pour les maîtres une telle religion, qu'elle le montait presque [my emphasis] jusqu'à eux." (ES 69)

The word "presque" is obviously sarcastically intended, as are the words "c'est-à-dire" in this next quotation, words evidently followed by embroiled language:

"Tandis qu'il [Charles] étudiait les équins, les varus et les valgus, c'est-à-dire la strephocatopodie, la stréphendopodie et la stréphexopodie (ou, pour parler mieux, les différentes déviations du pied, soit en bas, en dedans ou en dehors), avec la stréphypopodie et la stréphanopodie

(autrement dit: torsion en dessous et redressement en haut), M. Homais, par toute sorte de raisonnements exhortait le garçon d'auberge à se faire opérer [my emphases]." (MB 451)

Here the syntax mimics Charles' own confused state of mind, but the Molièresque profusion of cacophonic medical terms (cf. Le Malade imaginaire) is rendered even more comic by the ironic implications of the passage. Why are there pseudo-attempts on Flaubert's part to "clarify," and why does he include the technical language? Which would the narrator, describing the different stages of Charles' studies, consider "parler mieux": the Latin term, or its French equivalent? For poor Charles, the translations themselves are difficult enough to comprehend. For a character like Dr. Larivière, the Greek or Latin term would be preferable by far. For Flaubert, the juxtaposition of the two simply creates successful stylistic irony.

Flaubert's sarcasm at his characters' expense (though considered cruel by some) serves to lighten the tone of various passages, occasionally providing necessary comic relief. One example of such sarcasm is the burlesque sequence comparing Charles Bovary, before Hippolyte's operation, with the great innovators of the medical community: "Ni Ambroise Paré . . . ni Dupuytren . . . ni Gensoul . . . n'avaient certes le coeur si palpitant, la main si frémissante, l'intellect aussi tendu que M. Bovary quand il s'approcha d'Hippolyte, son ténotome entre les doigts." (MB 452) That

correlative conjunction, combined with the word "certes" and the layman's title, "Monsieur," renders the entire sentence sarcastic.

Another method Flaubert often employs is that of concessive clauses, which give an ironic turn to a sentence. One such sentence describes Charles' first wife: "Quoiqu'elle fût laide, sèche comme un cotret et bourgeonnée comme un printemps, certes Madame Dubuc ne manquait pas de partis à choisir." (MB 301)

Indeed, the amusement afforded by Flaubert's syntactic irony can often equal that of slapstick comedy, as his sense of timing in these instances is acute. As G. B. Fitch remarks in his article, "The Comic Sense of Flaubert in the Light of Bergson's Le Rire," Flaubert makes excellent use of comic repetition in his works. Here repetitions occur after a concessive clause: "Quoique n'ayant besoin de rien prendre, Frédéric avala un verre de rhum, puis un verre de kirsch, puis un verre de curaçao, puis différents grogs, tant froids que chauds." (ES 136) The economy of this sentence turns it into comedy. It also highlights the surrounding scene in a rather gruesome way, since we are witnessing the duping of a distraught and distracted Frédéric. He consumes so much liquor in this one sentence that the rapidity of consumption contrasts sharply with the way time is supposed to have dragged on, that afternoon. The sentence is intended for the reader's amusement--it is a speeded-up slapstick film clip,

delivering in hammer blows a sequence which will then be replayed at a "normal" pace for plot and psychology.

Yet another device which condenses time and sentence-structure, providing Flaubert with an excellent stylistic vehicle for irony, is the syllepsis. Flaubert had already experimented with the device in the 1845 Education. In the following three examples, he ironically brings disparate elements together by placing them on equal grammatical footing within a sentence, employing the ironic syllepsis:

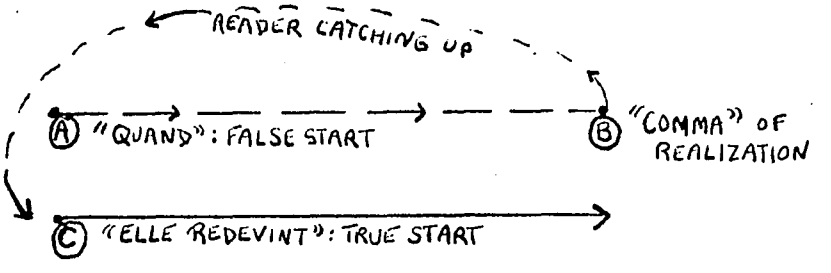
> Le soir, quand Charles rentrait, elle sortait de dessous ses draps ses longs bras maigres, les lui passait autour du cou, et, l'ayant fait asseoir au bord du lit, se mettait à lui parler de ses chagrins: il l'oubliait, il en aimait une autre! On lui avait bien dit qu'elle serait malheureuse; et elle finissait en lui demandant quelque sirop pour sa santé et un peu plus d'amour. (MB 301)
>
> . . . Il admirait l'exaltation de son âme et les dentelles de sa jupe. (MB 533)
>
> . . . l'illustre Pierre-Paul Meinsius, le dernier représentant de la grande peinture, qui portait gaillardement, avec sa gloire, ses quatre-vingts années et son gros ventre. (ES 77-8)

The ironic syllepsis affords the reader a direct and immediate apprehension of the narrator's ironic intent. But other, equally subtle forms of syntactic irony evoke entire scenes in the space of a single sentence. The marvelous burlesque unification of Rosanette and the Archbishop does precisely that, in the following sentence where Frédéric consoles her:

> Tout était tranquille, maintenant, aucune raison d'avoir peur; il l'embrassait; et elle [Rosanette] se déclara pour la République,--comme avait déjà fait Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Paris, et comme

> devaient faire avec une prestesse de zèle merveilleuse: la Magistrature, le Conseil d'Etat, l'Institut, les Maréchaux de France, Changarnier, M. de Falloux, tous les bonapartistes, tous les légitimistes, et un nombre considérable d'Orléanistes. (ES 324)

Other forms of syntactic irony require us to reconstruct sentences and paragraphs for their true ironic impact. One example introduces Part Three, Chapter Three of the Education: "Quand l'enthousiasme de Rosanette pour les gardes mobiles se fut calmé, elle redevint plus charmante que jamais, et Frédéric prit l'habitude insensiblement de vivre chez elle." (ES 384) Let us map out the action of this sentence (which begins a chapter) upon the reader:

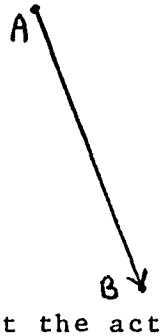


The subordinate clause (the chapter's false start: "Quand l'enthousiasme," etc.) with which the sentence begins refers back to an unwitnessed action before the calm, an action which irritated Frédéric. After the comma the main clause begins (the true beginning of the chapter: "elle redevint plus charmante," etc.), and the reader realizes what the sentence has been hinting at. He experiences a literary double-take, and starts again, imagining scenes, restructuring the sentence.

The more complex examples of syntactic irony are nearly always important functions of the surrounding scene, especially when that scene is one of a certain emotional intensity. The ironic sentence may play a pivotal role in the impact of such scenes upon the reader. This marks the ironic sentence as an important literary structure in Flaubert, not as a mere sarcastic commentary. One feels an inspired excitement on the part of the author throughout the entire scene in which this last example of syntactic irony is located--the scene from the Education where Frédéric explodes before Cisy and his guests:

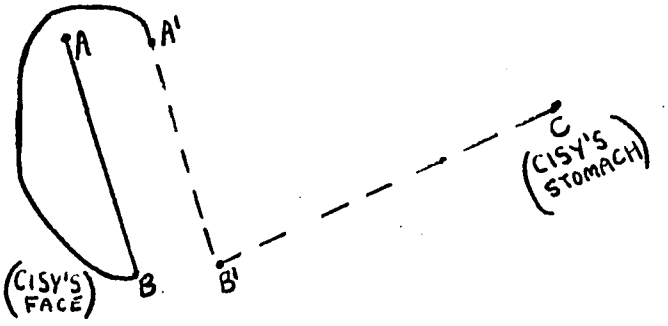
> Frédéric lui lança son assiette au visage.
> Elle passa comme un éclair par-dessus la table, renversa deux bouteilles, démolit un compotier, et, se brisant contre le surtout en trois morceaux, frappa le ventre du vicomte. (ES 253)

Flaubert's irony here is eminently theatrical. He has now decided to present a completed action for us in the first sentence:



Then he returns to repeat the action for us, to slow it down, to allow us to perceive the slow-motion ghost of the action, as it were. Yes, the plate travels like a lightning bolt, but we have the time to follow it as it knocks two bottles down, demolishes a "compotier," and

breaks into three distinct pieces which hit the vicomte . . . in the stomach! Which is the "real" version? Not the first, in which the reader is presented with a straightforward and simple syntax, and where he assumes that since Frédéric has thrown the plate <u>at</u> the vicomte's face, then it must have logically hit him there. But the second, ghostly version:



in which we perceive the entire process, and the final thwarting of Frédéric's project by life's contingencies. This is, in a broad sense, the major theme of <u>L'Education</u> (cf. my Chapter Five).

As we can see from these examples of syntactic irony alone, Flaubert certainly envisions irony as something more than mere negation, sarcasm or spirit of opposition. As a stylistic mode, and as a way of describing the world, the ironic for Flaubert is a means of setting into prose the very differences between the "average" man's perceptions and expectations, and Flaubert's own (that is to say, the exacting perceptions of the Artist). The average reader expects the plate to hit Cisy in the face, and in a less ironic novel it would do just that. Flaubert opens

other possibilities, besides the mundane events of realism.

The sentence demonstrating syntactic irony is a microcosm of Flaubert's style, since the ironic turn detaches the reader from the accustomed path and leads him into restless situations, shifting ground each time the hint of a cliché or a complacent conclusion is reached. And the creation of a sentence like "Il admirait l'exaltation de son âme et les dentelles de sa jupe" shatters the romantic posturing of Léon and Emma, which the reader, after seeing "Il admirait l'exaltation de son âme," expects to continue. Like Baudelaire, Flaubert uses innovative language to undermine the pat stylistic traditions of an already hackneyed romanticism.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

[1]G. Flaubert, Oeuvres (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), II, 248. Henceforth quotations from this novel will be listed simply as "ES."

[2]"Madame avait sa bourse particulière et son tiroir secret; Monsieur grondait rarement et depuis bien longtemps déjà ne faisait plus couche commune avec Madame. Madame lisait très tard le soir dans son lit; Monsieur s'endormait de suite et ne rêvait presque jamais, si ce n'est quand il s'était un peu grisé, ce qui lui arrivait quelquefois." (1845 ES, 282)

4. THE STYLE OF FLAUBERT: INTER-STRUCTURAL IRONY

Having considered syntactic irony (the irony that arises within the confines of a single sentence), we now expand our outlook to include broader narrative divisions within the novel: dialogues, paragraphs, passages. Inter-structural ironies arise from the connections between paragraphs, the construction of certain passages for ironic effect, and the orchestration of dialogue. Flaubert himself attributed capital technical importance to these aspects of narrative style, proceeding slowly and painfully by "sections" or "scenes" when writing, and occasionally finding himself in difficulty when such scenes had to be sewn together into the larger fabric of a chapter.[1]

Thus the narrative category called the chapter, will not be included in the delineation of inter-structural irony. Rather, this much larger unit, along with the complexities of irony arising from Flaubert's plot-lines, will be examined in my Chapter Five. It is interesting to note that the smaller, more compact units actually represented the primary points of departure for Flaubert's literary endeavors. If we examine the evidence on the Flaubertian creative process (available in his Correspondance, in the "brouillons" for Madame Bovary, and in the notebooks

analyzed by Marie-Jeanne Durry), we find that in general the plot of a novel has little aesthetic value for Flaubert, at the moment of actual creation. Indeed, his now-famous, frustrated statement, that he desired nothing so much as to create a novel without any subject at all, has made him a favorite of such modern critics as Rousset and Genette.

Insofar as the act of writing was concerned, Flaubert's own emphasis on the single sentence or the passage brings into particularly fine focus those examples of syntactic and inter-structural irony studied here. It was only later in the creative process that Flaubert would re-work his passages in such a way as to fit into the exigent, preconceived outlines (called "scenarios" by Claudine Gothot-Mersch). Those outlines of chapters were then ordered into sensible and sequential plot-lines, into such aspects of the finished novel as we shall call, "super-structural."

Although M.-J. Durry's study of Flaubert's notebooks includes numerous plot-sketches for the Education that do antedate the actual creation of his polished sentences and scenes, she effectively proves that these sketches were just possibilities (to be considered more or less seriously for inclusion in the work), and not, in Flaubert's mind, parts of the aesthetic whole. Plot-sketches were the necessary and often tiresome grids upon which Flaubert would build his creations. Those "creations" of which he was especially proud were the finished,

polished Forms--be they sentences, or passages, or dramatic scenes. According to Durry, Flaubert's obsession with what we call syntactic and inter-structural devices actually weakened his visions of chapters and plots. She cites the colloquial language of the sketches (e.g., "Le mari . . . tourne à la bedolle, s'attendrit," to describe the aging Arnoux) as proof of Flaubert's careless attitude toward his plots.[2] It remains for super-structural ironies in the Education to be studied, before we can determine whether Durry's judgment (derived from the notebooks) actually holds true for Flaubert's finished novel.

Before analyzing the stylistic construction of inter-structural passages in Flaubert, there is one other consideration which should be mentioned. The ironies of style which we have gathered under the headings of syntactic, inter-structural, and super-structural by no means exhaust Flaubert's extensive use of irony. The French bourgeoisie as an object of his gaze, his very bitter fictional reconstructions of the historical events of his time, and his attitudes toward Romanticism, are all of prime importance to students of Flaubertian irony. No sentence or passage in Flaubert's work is entirely "stylistically" self-sustaining, but some passages do depend mostly upon grammatical and stylistic methods for their irony, while others refer beyond themselves to other realms--such as social critique and implied judgments--for their basic ironic

meaning. There are borderline cases, but these distinctions represent the divisions of the present study. A paragraph, passage or scene labelled "inter-structural," is one in which the ironic stress emerges from the formalized movement and tensions within that particular unit. In this sense it is an expansion upon syntactic irony, which depends on certain formal tensions within a sentence, for its success.

A sentence is easily recognizable as a self-contained unit, and a paragraph is just as easily delineated. But in Flaubert's work, larger units of thought and style are often contained within formal structures lacking such clear limitations. One such structure might be roughly called, the Flaubertian passage--whose rather consistent length and complexion are fashioned by Flaubert's individual aesthetic choices.[3] In his works the presentation of a passage is always so unmistakeably Flaubertian, that when Proust created his "Affaire Lemoine" pastiche à la Flaubert, it became typical of any number of Flaubertian passages in any number of his novels. The first reason for this was its length: a pastiche must always be brief, but Proust's pastiche of Flaubert was exactly as brief as Flaubert's typical passage (several pages long). The Proustian pastiche was also entirely precise in terms of aesthetic choice of detail. Factual details in the manner of Balzac were

omitted, in favor of highly ironic portraits and descriptions. These took such precedence (in the pastiche as in Flaubert) over detailed realism (in descriptions and in the action), that in the pastiche, the "Affaire Lemoine" itself is never even discussed! Thirdly, in setting off a passage, the creation of a "mood" in such a unit is essential. A certain emotional and physical coloration marks each individual passage of Flaubert's for the reader (as he himself often pointed out), and this "mood" varies from one passage to another.

What might be called a "narrative scene" is a specific form of the Flaubertian passage, which one could describe as a narrative adaptation (often with dialogue) of typically theatrical components, whereby Flaubert attempts to highlight the more dramatic elements in his narrative. He accomplishes this by means of formal juxtapositions. In the following section of our study, we shall examine ironies in Flaubert's passages (including narrative scenes), and then turn to his organization of dialogue for ironic effect.

Our first example begins with the blank at the head of a chapter (Chapter Three of Part One of Madame Bovary), and ends with Emma Bovary's entrance. The passage in question centers around Charles' "recovery" from the "grief" of his first wife's death, and is therefore quite ironic in tone (as my quotation marks indicate). Flaubert in this passage employs a variety of diverse techniques to achieve

irony, all of which he combines in order to arrive at a total effect. Only some of them are strictly stylistic in emphasis. Since those ironic techniques that are not, support those that are, it is necessary for the reader to be cognizant of both. For example, one effect that does not derive its ironic hue from the manipulation of style, is the comic commiseration of Emma's father with Charles Bovary. It is an irony of complicity Flaubert creates with the reader when Rouault exclaims, "Je sais ce que c'est! . . . j'ai été comme vous, moi aussi! Quand j'ai eu perdu ma pauvre défunte, j'allais dans les champs pour être tout seul; je tombais au pied d'un arbre, je pleurais . . ." (MB 309).

Here Flaubert's ironic tensions are perceived through the farcical tone of the peasant's plaints. The reader understands the distance between Rouault's erroneous conclusions ("J'ai été comme vous"), and Charles'actual indifference toward his old and ugly wife's death. This irony of complicity is apart from Flaubert's efforts in style, and depends heavily upon psychological and social information for its success.

Later in the same passage, however, we come upon a case of inter-structural irony, typically deriving its impact from Flaubert's considerations of style. Here Flaubert's ironic grasp tightens the passage considerably and permits him to say a great deal (in terms of plot and

characterization) in a few compact sentences, preparing the reader for the equally economical closing of the passage. Rouault is entertaining Charles after the latter's wife's death:

". . . Il conta des histoires. Charles se surprit à rire; mais le souvenir de sa femme, lui revenant tout à coup, l'assombrit. On apporta le café; il n'y pensa plus.

"Il y pensa encore moins, à mesure qu'il s'habituait à vivre seul. L'agrément nouveau de l'indépendance lui rendit bientôt la solitude plus supportable." (MB 310)

A mere semi-colon connects the bringing of coffee with Charles' instant forgetfulness, a case where an asyndeton opens a harshly sudden ironic vista, complete with the hypocrisy of enforced grief and Charles' fear of being caught laughing. The phrase, "il n'y pensa plus" was to be employed again as a shocking device by Flaubert, in L'Education sentimentale (as we have noted in the section on syntactic irony, when Sénécal visits Frédéric--cf. supra, p. 50).

In this example from Madame Bovary, the parallel placement of the two phrases, "il n'y pensa plus," and "il y pensa encore moins" on either side of the paragraph division, forms an excellent ironic suture between the paragraphs. Their juxtaposition impresses itself upon the reader, even more so because of the logical paradox the two phrases present: if Charles doesn't think of his wife at all, how can he then think of her even less than that? This question,

brought to mind by means of inter-structural irony, points the reader's way to the last paragraph of the passage, where its answer can be found. As Proust said in "A propos du style de Flaubert": "Il y a une beauté grammaticale [qui consiste à] faire jaillir du coeur d'une proposition l'arceau qui ne retombe qu'en plein milieu de la proposition suivante . . . [Les phrases] assuraient l'étroite, l'hermétique continuité du style . . . il s'agit de relier deux paragraphes pour qu'une vision ne soit pas interrompue . . ."[4]

The formal irony described above prepares the way for the last paragraph of the passage, which explains how it is possible for Charles to think even less often about his ex-wife. In that paragraph, Flaubert begins by suggesting all the little bachelor comforts Charles discovers. He then implies that the widower's increase in business is due to the notoriety of his bereavement. Flaubert ominously closes his passage by revealing the vague feelings of hope and happiness (always given ironic dimensions in Flaubert, as we shall see) which fill Charles' hours before his fateful visit with Emma.

The ironic tension of the two phrases cited above is thus elaborated throughout the passage. With the complete control afforded by this formal irony, Flaubert's economical suggestions (coffee, forgetfulness, oblivion, bachelorhood) guide the reader towards imagining the situation

himself. The choice of but a few telling social and psychological details enables Flaubert to avoid the tediousness of a "thorough" description.

The economy of such guideposts is at the heart of Flaubert's narrative style. Ironic techniques and Flaubert's stylistic goals therefore have this in common--succinct, implicative design. And some of the most salient evidence supporting this view of Flaubert can be found in his dialogues.

The dialogues of Flaubert's great novels are frozen from the insufferable flow of common conversations, and are then intensified and polished by the novelist. Many readers have applauded them; many critics have studied them. Eric Auerbach's simple statement about their effect upon readers is complete and concise: in Flaubertian dialogue, "language unmasks stupidity by pure statement."[5]

Flaubert's dialogues are a means of allowing asinine characters to condemn themselves merely by speaking. There is perhaps little kindness in this. However, there are psychological and historical (not to mention stylistic) lessons to be learned from Flaubert's amazed and attentive study of stupidity. The fact is that we recognize some of Flaubert's characters as true archetypes; every person who regards himself as "intelligent" must struggle with those whom he finds "stupid," and Flaubert especially saw himself as a Hamlet surrounded by Poloniuses. As he said in his famous

letter of 1845 to his friend Le Poittevin:

> Fais comme moi . . . --envoie faire foutre tout, tout et toi-même avec, si ce n'est ton intelligence. Il y a maintenant un si grand intervalle entre moi et le reste du monde, que je m'étonne parfois d'entendre dire les choses les plus naturelles et les [plus] simples. Le mot banal me tient parfois en une singulière admiration. Il y a des gestes, des sons de voix dont je ne reviens pas, et des niaiseries qui me donnent presque le vertige. As-tu quelquefois écouté attentivement des gens qui parlaient une langue étrangère que tu n'entendais pas? J'en suis là.[6]

Re-creating conversations as accurately as possible in the novel, allowing characters to describe themselves merely by speaking--these processes for a writer like Flaubert combined personal satisfaction with literary precedent. Victor Hugo had written in 1822, on the subject of Han d'Islande, that ". . . tous les personnages se peignaient par eux-mêmes. C'était une idée que les compositions de Walter Scott m'avaient inspirée et que je voulais tenter, dans l'intérêt de notre littérature."[7] Perhaps Choderlos de Laclos' (condemning) letters by Cécile, were created with less lofty interests in mind. In any case, playwrights and novelists had already undertaken in various ways what Flaubert was to attempt.

He was to discover that dialogue could affect prose by allowing for less and less narrative intervention. The

author could make his point without needing to comment openly. Of course, dialogue could also, with some difficulty, be most successfully interwoven with the threads of an ironic narration, which might refer us to the super-structure of the novel as a whole. Therefore the structure of the particular novel will be seen to guide the mechanics of style, in these cases of inter-structural irony.

A major article by Gothot-Mersch, "Le Dialogue dans l'oeuvre de Flaubert," examines his contributions to dialogue as an aspect of novelistic style, without specifically confronting the importance of irony. The author draws evidence from the Correspondance and from the texts themselves. She notes that "Flaubert estime qu'il est 'canaille' de remplacer par des tirets les 'il dit,' 'il répondit' et d'autres formules d'introduction, qu'il va s'épuiser à varier pour mieux intégrer les conversations dans le tissu du style."[8] But what of irony in dialogue?

Flaubert's first dialogues, of course, were composed for the "Garçon" scenarios and for the little theater that he, his sister and others played at as children. Flaubert's passion for recording dialogue continued throughout his youth, as did Caroline Flaubert's amusement at reading her brother's epistolary renditions of them. For example, while studying law in Paris in 1842, he wrote her a dialogue "à la Henri Monnier" he had had with his "portière":

DIALOGUE
(passé il y a une heure):
MOI, MA PORTIÈRE. (J'entends du bruit.)

LA PORTIÈRE (de dedans l'antichambre): C'est moi, Monsieur, ne vous dérangez pas. (La portière ouvre la porte, ordinairement ce sont les portières qui s'ouvrent.) Je vous apporte des allumettes, Monsieur, car vous en avez besoin.

MOI: Oui.

LA PORTIÈRE: Monsieur en brûle beaucoup. Monsieur travaille tant! Ah! comme Monsieur travaille! Je ne pourrais pas en faire autant, moi qui vous parle.

MOI: Oui.

LA P[ORTIÈRE]: M[onsieur]r va bientôt s'en aller cheux lui. Vous avez raison.

MOI: Oui. . . .

LA PORTIÈRE, élevant la voix. . . : Comme vos parents doivent être contents d'avoir un fils comme vous (c'est son idée fixe, car elle l'a déjà dit à Hamard).

MOI: Oui.

LA PORTIÈRE: C'est que, voyez-vous, rien ne contente plus les parents comme de voir leurs enfants bien travailler. Moi, eh bien, quand je vois Alphonsine à l'ouvrage, y a rien qui me fasse plaisir comme ça: veux-tu bien travailler, veux-tu bien travailler, que je lui dis comme ça tous les jours, vilaine paresseuse! Veux-tu pas rester comme ça à ne rien faire! Mais je vais vous dire, elle est un peu molle, cette pauvre Alphonsine. Oui, elle a maintenant un petit bobo, ça l'empêche de coudre . . .

Je ne l'écoutais plus qu'elle parlait encore. . . [9]

This type of dialogue was of course an exercise for Flaubert's theater, and was perhaps influenced, according to Jean Bruneau, by Monnier's Scènes populaires which had been published (after having been performed) from 1835 to 1839. Although Flaubert's theater is not the subject under discussion here, there can be no doubt that his ambitions as a dramatist influenced his attentiveness to dialogue, and

vice-versa. Even after Flaubert limited himself to the novelistic genre, he remained involved with theatrical dialogue. While writing the 1869 Education, he aided his friend and dramatist, Bouilhet, in writing dialogues:

"Les deux dialogues entre la duchesse et le comte . . . me semblent pleins de talent scénique. A la bonne heure! rien, ici, ne pourrait remplacer le dialogue. . . . Page 161. Le langage des deux personnages en scène est-il bien vrai? 'Heureux l'homme qui a su faire vibrer les nobles instincts de votre âme, Madame.'"[10]

However, our task here is to trace Flaubert's own development as a writer of ironic dialogue from the "portière" scene to the 1869 Education.

A comparison between the 1845 Education sentimentale and 1869 novel yields evidence of Flaubert's successful development of the techniques of dialogue (especially that of non-intervention). In the following example from the earlier novel, M. Renaud (the Husband in the Flaubertian love triangle) approaches Ternande (the Pellerin-type artist) in the drawing room:

> -- . . . Comment vont les arts?
>
> -- Mais pas mal, mon cher maître, pas mal.
>
> -- Notre coloris se chauffe-t-il?
>
> -- A mort! répondit l'artiste.
>
> -- Et le torse? continua M. Renaud en ricanant d'une manière fine, le torse comme vous le dites, l'étudions-nous toujours? J'aime beaucoup le torse, moi . . . Toujours ferme, l'antique, j'espère? il ne faut pas sortir de là, voyez-vous. L'antique, l'antique!

> -- Vous y voilà encore! répondit Ternande impatienté; mais, mon cher monsieur, comprenez donc . . .
>
> Il l'entraîna dans l'embrasure d'une fenêtre et lui exposa pour la centième fois ses idées sur l'art, qui ne furent pas plus comprises que la première, malgré ses rapprochements ingénieux, ses décisions tranchées et sa gesticulation expressive. (1845 ES, 286)

In a manner typical of Flaubert, half the dialogue at least occurs out of earshot. What the reader misses is filled in by narration. What he "hears," though, is identified as spoken by one speaker or another in the traditional manner (the "tirets"). But Flaubert's technique is developing. Renaud's patronizing first-person plural ("notre coloris"), and his lecherous interest in torsos are self-exposing. Flaubert's sarcasm at Ternande's expense appears in the narration, where the artist's arguments, though labelled "ingenious," are deemed to be of so little interest that they are omitted from the text. What is included is a view of someone gesticulating by a window, not a painter's ideas about art, not to mention his "décisions tranchées."

The dialogue cited above is surely not up to the level of Flaubert's later accomplishments, as we shall see. Here perhaps Gothot-Mersch's judgment about Flaubert's portraiture-through-dialogue is correct: the dialogue remains "en surface," and Flaubert is painting types, creating caricatures. However, judging from the later texts and the Correspondance, we shall see that Marie-Jeanne Durry's

estimation of the interaction of caricature and caricaturist appears to be more accurate: "Il partait d'individus," she theorizes, "et souvent les haussait au type. Il pensait un type et le vérifiait et le vivifiait par les individus . . . [Un être] se classait inconsciemment chez lui dans une catégorie d'individus, devenait type."[11]

Pierre Guiraud, in his book Essais de stylistique, notes exactly how Flaubert employs reported speech for greater ironic impact in his dialogues. Citing the scene where Frédéric first meets Arnoux on the boat at the beginning of L'Education, Guiraud remarks how

> Flaubert parle et tient Arnoux sous son regard et l'enveloppe des inflexions de sa propre voix: il exposait des théories, narrait des anecdotes.
>
> Puis il lui cède la parole ou plus exactement rapporte ses paroles: il était républicain, il avait voyagé. Mais il les rapporte en les interprétant car Arnoux n'a pas dit: "je suis républicain, j'ai voyagé, je connais l'intérieur des théâtres, etc." Ce n'est pas ainsi qu'on parle. Le il était républicain avec son intonation est une sorte d'imitation caricatural et ironique dans la bouche de Flaubert de quelque: "Vous savez, moi, je suis républicain" dans la bouche d'Arnoux. Les paroles expriment (affectivement) à la fois la fatuité du personnage et l'ironie du narrateur.[12]

Flaubert has come a long way, in terms of narrative technique, from the dialogue with the "portière" cited earlier. Flaubert must be accurate in reporting dialogue as he "hears" it and as we think we recognize it, while maintaining a rigorous narrative pattern which is consonant with the design of the whole novel.[13]

The Dambreuse party (Part II, Chapter 2 of L'Education) is rendered largely by means of such methods as have been discussed here. The pattern of the dialogue we shall quote is expertly executed, but the passage itself, in terms of historical accuracy, has given rise to some controversy among the critics. Albert Thibaudet calls the Dambreuse passage a "'Comices' manqué," finding Flaubert's reportage inaccurate.[14] He attributes this to the author's provincialism when in Paris. Of course it could be argued that the dialogue as heard by Frédéric succeeds in creating that very impression, and that it is the outsider's view-point which allows for such nonsensical conversation as we find in the passage. Whether these conversations could or would actually occur given the time and place, is for historians to decide. But in fact it is my contention that Flaubert's aim is not, by nature, to record, historically, the society in its every factual detail. The buffoonery of the serious man is the larger theme, and this is successfully rendered. It is one of Flaubert's earliest credos: "Il n'y a pas pour moi de prêtre à l'autel," he wrote to Ernest Chevalier in 1843, "d'âne chargé de fumier, de poète hérissé de métaphores ni de femme honnête qui me semble aussi comique qu'un homme sérieux."[15] Also, we might remember the aphorism from Flaubert's first Education: "Il est vraiment pénible pour un auteur de penser que, quelque bêtise qu'il fasse débiter

à ses bouffons, les gens graves en diront toujours de plus fortes." (1845 ES, 359)

Is it true then that Flaubert's picture of the Dambreuse party, which shall be partially quoted, is inaccurate--that Flaubert knew nothing of the society of that period, because he became famous and entered society, much later? Is it true that, as Enid Starkie claims, "the rich social life of the upper classes [in the novel] . . . [is] in the mood of the Second Empire rather than that of the July Monarchy?"[16] Regardless, it must be emphasized that passages like the ones cited below, with their absurdly correct (if not factual) details, are set in a style streamlined for irony. Let us examine the execution of one such passage (Frédéric is at the Dambreuse gathering):

> En errant de groupe en groupe, il arriva dans le salon des joueurs, où, dans un cercle de gens graves, il reconnut Martinon, "attaché maintenant au Parquet de la Capitale".
>
> Sa grosse face couleur de cire emplissait convenablement son collier, lequel était une merveille, tant les poils noirs se trouvaient bien égalisés; et, gardant un juste milieu entre l'élégance voulue par son âge et la dignité que réclamait sa profession, il accrochait son pouce dans son aisselle suivant l'usage des beaux, puis mettait son bras dans son gilet à la façon des doctrinaires. Bien qu'il eût des bottes extra-vernies, il portait les tempes rasées, pour se faire un front de penseur.
>
> Après quelques mots débités froidement, il se retourna vers son conciliabule. Un propriétaire disait:
>
> -- C'est une classe d'hommes qui rêvent le bouleversement de la société!
>
> -- Ils demandent l'organisation du travail! reprit un autre. Conçoit-on cela?
>
> -- Que voulez-vous! fit un troisième, quand on voit M. de Genoude donner la main au Siècle!
>
> -- Et des conservateurs, eux-mêmes, s'intituler progressifs! Pour nous amener, quoi? la République! comme si elle était possible en France!

Tous déclarèrent que la République était impossible en France.

-- N'importe, remarqua tout haut un monsieur. On s'occupe trop de la Révolution; on publie là-dessus un tas d'histoires, de livres! . . .

--Sans compter, dit Martinon, qu'il y a, peut-être, des sujets d'étude plus sérieux!

Un ministériel s'en prit aux scandales du théâtre:

-- Ainsi, par exemple, ce nouveau drame la Reine Margot dépasse véritablement les bornes! Où était le besoin qu'on nous parlât des Valois? Tout cela montre la royauté sous un jour défavorable! C'est comme votre Presse! Les lois de septembre, on a beau dire, sont infiniment trop douces! Moi, je voudrais des cours martiales pour bâilloner les journalistes! A la moindre insolence, traînés devant un conseil de guerre! et allez donc!

-- Oh! prenez garde, Monsieur, prenez garde! dit un professeur, n'attaquez pas nos précieuses conquêtes de 1830! respectons nos libertés. Il fallait décentraliser plutôt, répartir l'excédent des villes dans les campagnes.

-- Mais elles sont gangrenées! s'écria un catholique. Faites qu'on raffermisse la Religion!

Martinon s'empressa de dire :

-- Effectivement, c'est un frein!

Tout le mal gisait dans cette envie moderne de s'élever au-dessus de sa classe, d'avoir du luxe.

--Cependant, objecta un industriel, le luxe favorise le commerce. Aussi j'approuve le duc de Nemours d'exiger la culotte courte à ses soirées.

-- M. Thiers y est venu en pantalon. Vous connaissez son mot?

-- Oui, charmant! Mais il tourne au démagogue, et son discours dans la question des incompatibilités n'a pas été sans influence sur l'attentat du 12 mai .

-- Ah bah!

-- Eh! eh!

Le cercle fut contraint de s'entr'ouvrir pour livrer passage à un domestique portant un plateau, et qui tâchait d'entrer dans le salon des joueurs.

(ES 189-90)

This passage is set off from the rest of the party scene simply by the fact that the passage takes place in a different room, the "salon de joueurs." The character around which Flaubert groups his arrangement is Martinon,

usually a minor figure tucked into a corner of the Flaubertian canvas, now placed at the center of this portrait of "un cercle de gens graves," the group blocking the entrance to the room.

Perhaps a musical metaphor would better suit what amounts to an orchestration of dialogue in this passage. The prologue presents Baptiste Martinon, who as a student, "voulant déjà paraître sérieux, . . . portait sa barbe taillée en collier." (ES 53) Here his complexion is waxen, and his beard "en collier" is a sarcastic "merveille," for that beard was representative of, and worn by, the solid bourgeois citizens Flaubert despised.[17] Martinon's entire manner and dress is that of a "juste milieu" which Flaubert illustrates by trumpeting in counterpoint each element. Martinon has imitated some outer trapping from every segment of society, assuming them all to himself, so as not to alienate anyone at all. He shaves his temples so as to appear a thinker (as though a broad forehead were any indication of intelligence), but sports that beard, so as not to appear too intellectual. The final result, a farcical cacophony.

The first movement of Flaubert's piece then takes us around the circle. "Un propriétaire" speaks, then "un autre," then "un troisième." For variation, a fourth speaks without narrative introduction. This movement ends with a choral rendition of "Tous déclarèrent que la République

était impossible en France." (The word "tous" in such a setting will be examined as a significantly ironic indicator in my Chapter Six. At any rate it here serves to amplify the sound of the chorus.)

The second movement embellishes upon the first. Each character is endowed with some sort of "conversational" device which allows him to take the floor, and the variations in these devices reveal Flaubert's special attention to the effective rendition of dialogue in the novel. We have "un monsieur" whose "N'importe" allows the discussion to pick up in the wake of that grave statement about the Republic. Martinon's "Sans compter" maintains the rapid pace Flaubert has established, while the "ministériel" who speaks next is given a narrative propulsion into the discussion by means of Flaubert's strong choice of verbs ("s'en prit aux . . ."). The professor's nervous "Oh! prenez garde, Monsieur, prenez garde" and the catholic's abundant exclamation points contribute to the rhythm and movement of the discussion. Flaubert brings us back to Martinon again, with the conversational device "s'empressa de dire," and the conclusion of this second movement is that "Tout le mal gisait dans cette envie moderne de s'élever au-dessus de sa classe, d'avoir du luxe [my emphasis]." Now this is a vice which all present at the luxurious Dambreuse affair exhibit. Martinon's father is a farmer. Flaubert reports what the "ministériel" is saying, not the "ministre." For these reasons all exhibiting the

vice loudly criticize it in chorus, and Flaubert's irony is amplified by their unanimity.

The political arguments offered in the course of this scene will be dealt with in the chapter on irony and historical events. Stylistically, the conclusion of the passage is absolutely magistral. Sensing now that the chorus had reached the apex of its glory, Flaubert turned our attention to two minor, but "typical" voices--an "industriel," and an unidentified other. These two bald sopranos both terminate their exchange at a sub-verbal level, which is Flaubert's way of fading out what has become an idle and meaningless exchange, easily interrupted by the servant with the tray.

Flaubert began by bringing Frédéric into the circle, and in the coda to the piece he must take him out. Frédéric, our alter-eavesdropper, follows the servant through the circle into the room. This servant is a fine device for leading Frédéric out of one ironic passage into another one. The food on the tray, perhaps a political symbol, might very well be the ironic reason for the break-up of this circle of materialists. Indeed, earlier in the scene, Flaubert does describe the ceremonial center of the party: "Le buffet ressemblait à un maître-autel de cathédrale . . ." (ES 188)

A parallel passage occurs later, at a Dambreuse "soirée." At first glance, it appears to be very similar in structure to the first (though it is far more caustic in

content). Yet a closer examination reveals a shift in presentation:

> Une ironie silencieuse l'enveloppait. Il se sentait comme perdu dans un désert. Mais la voix de Martinon s'éleva :
>
> -- A propos d'Arnoux, j'ai lu parmi les prévenus des bombes incendiaires le nom d'un de ses employés, Sénécal. Est-ce le nôtre?
>
> -- Lui-même, dit Frédéric.
>
> Martinon répéta, en criant très haut :
>
> -- Comment, notre Sénécal! notre Sénécal!
>
> Alors, on le questionna sur le complot; sa place d'attaché au Parquet devait lui fournir des renseignements.
>
> Il confessa n'en pas avoir. Du reste, il connaissait fort peu le personnage, l'ayant vu deux ou trois fois seulement; il le tenait en définitive pour un assez mauvais drôle. Frédéric, indigné, s'écria :
>
> -- Pas du tout! c'est un très honnête garçon!
>
> -- Cependant, Monsieur, dit un propriétaire, on n'est pas honnête quand on conspire!
>
> La plupart des hommes qui étaient là avaient servi, au moins, quatre gouvernements; et ils auraient vendu la France ou le genre humain pour garantir leur fortune, s'épargner un malaise, un embarras, ou même par simple bassesse, adoration instinctive de la force. Tous déclarèrent les crimes politiques inexcusables. Il fallait plutôt pardonner à ceux qui provenaient du besoin! Et on ne manqua pas de mettre en avant l'éternel exemple du père de famille, volant l'éternel morceau de pain chez l'éternel boulanger.
>
> Un adminstrateur s'écria même:
>
> -- Moi, Monsieur, si j'apprenais que mon frère conspire, je le dénoncerais!
>
> (ES 270-71)

This passage is an intensified mimesis of the other. Furthermore, Flaubert has combined several modes of presentation to the best possible ironic advantage. The opening exchanges are offered as direct dialogue, intruding upon Frédéric's reverie. The paragraphs beginning with "Alors" and "Il confessa" are in the "free indirect style"--the

rendering of direct dialogue without any direct quotation, an intermediary technique between dialogue and narration, perfected by Flaubert. It appeared in our first selection from the Dambreuse party ("Il fallait décentraliser plutôt) . . ."") for variation, in an incidental manner. Here, it is a way of easing our attention away from the exact form of expression the particular character banally employs. Flaubert thus proceeds to shrink the dialogue down to a few essentials, preparing for the narrative interruption that follows.

Frédéric's brief outcry and the retort by "un propriétaire" are intense and powerful enough in their brevity to announce Flaubert's intrusion.

The one sentence beginning with "La plupart des hommes" is Flaubert's harsh judgment of the reactionary circle, and needs no further explanation here. A sudden though familiar word marks the choral dialogue that follows it: "Tous déclarèrent les crimes politiques inexcusables." This juxtaposition of two sentences renders Flaubert's irony with great impact. The description of criminals who would have sold the human race, and then their own statement "against political crimes," creates a sharper, more bitter, more highly ironic version of the condemnation of luxury in the first passage.

However, Flaubert's paragraph continues. Our example of inter-structural irony is quickly followed by a

hypocritically concerned comment on the part of an unknown guest, rendered in free indirect style (with no explanatory interruption) so as to sustain the momentum of the paragraph. Flaubert's exasperation with the entire world represented by the Dambreuse group culminates in his next narrative intervention, which begins with a sardonic "Et," includes the wearied tone of "on ne manqua pas," and pulses with the equally wearied adjective, "éternel."[18]

The theatrical grotesqueness of this right-wing party is then quite a bit more exaggerated, is epitomized in the very person of the administrator who cries out, "Moi, Monsieur, si j'apprenais que mon frère conspire, je le dénoncerais!" The "simple bassesse" of the frightened, confused coalition of the wealthy bourgeois and aristocrats rings true as a portrait of the period of the July Monarchy in its last years. Flaubert allows this excitable administrator to flare up, and, as many of the "villains" of the novel do, to condemn himself merely by speaking. Instead of denouncing his brother, he denounces himself.

Having dealt summarily with some orchestrated dialogue centering around the conservative elements of Flaubert's French bourgeois society, we shall turn our attention towards the radicals of the period. Supposedly, they are the group which includes Frédéric's "friends," but they too have their share of idiots and villains. They

receive parallel treatment by Flaubert. However, the difference between portraying the cocktail party and depicting the meeting-house is made evident, by some adjustments in technique.

The latter dialogues are characterized firstly by a certain tone of hilarity, the result of Flaubert's excellent depictions of controlled chaos. The leftist groups are naturally a bit less homogeneous than those at the Dambreuse gatherings. They are less adept at hiding the diversity of their origins, and indeed the sole link among these constituents is dissatisfaction with the existing order. Flaubert is therefore able to bring together into the same scenes many incongruous characters.

The student protest scene, an early crowd scene where three such disparate personalities as Frédéric, Hussonnet and Dussardier meet, is a case in point. Here Flaubert directs the crowd, and propels the action, by means of reported speech and "dialogue" consisting of shouts. He intersperses the outburts of single speakers (especially his ironic persona in the scene, Hussonnet) with ironic narration where necessary:

> Bientôt la multitude se fendit d'elle-même; plusieurs têtes se découvrirent; on saluait l'illustre professeur Samuel Rondelot, qui, enveloppé de sa grosse redingote, levant en l'air ses lunettes d'argent, et soufflant de son asthme, s'avançait à pas tranquilles, pour faire son cours. Cet homme était une des gloires judiciaires du XIX^{e} siècle, le rival des Zachariæ, des Ruhdorff. Sa dignité nouvelle de pair de France n'avait modifié en rien

ses allures. On le savait pauvre, et un grand respect l'entourait.

Cependant, du fond de la place, quelques-uns crièrent :

-- A bas Guizot!

-- A bas Pritchard!

-- A bas les vendus!

-- A bas Louis-Philippe!

La foule oscilla, et, se pressant contre la porte de la cour qui était fermée, elle empêchait le professeur d'aller plus loin. Il s'arrêta devant l'escalier. On l'aperçut bientôt sur la dernière des trois marches. Il parla; un bourdonnement couvrit sa voix. Bien qu'on l'aimât tout à l'heure, on le haïssait maintenant, car il représentait l'Autorité. Chaque fois qui'il essayait de se faire entendre, les cris recommençaient. Il fit un grand geste pour engager les étudiants à le suivre. Une vocifération universelle lui répondit. Il haussa les épaules dédaigneusement et s'enfonça dans le couloir. Martinon avait profité de sa place pour disparaître en même temps.

-- Quel lâche! dit Frédéric.

-- Il est prudent! reprit l'autre.

La foule éclata en applaudissements. Cette retraite du professeur devenait une victoire pour elle. A toutes les fenêtres, des curieux regardaient. Quelques-uns entonnaient la Marseillaise; d'autres proposaient d'aller chez Béranger.

-- Chez Laffitte!

-- Chez Chateaubriand!

-- Chez Voltaire! hurla le jeune homme à moustaches blondes.

(ES 60)

What makes this passage particularly interesting for us is the fact that Flaubert again places the reader out of earshot of the dialogue around the professor. Yet here, he manages to arrange the entire scene, the gestures of professor and crowd, in such a way that whatever is not heard as dialogue is still "heard." This particular technique has fascinated modern critics, who see in Flaubert a precursor of the nouveau roman. Such passages as the one cited above would prove, according to Genette, that Flaubert's goal was

really to attempt the transformation of meaningful discourse into "objet silencieux."[19]

Whatever one's interpretation of the technique, the fact that the conversations not heard in the scene are still heard, is truly amazing. Somehow, the reader is able to fill in the scene. Subaudible narration, too, and Flaubert's play upon it, substitute for dialogue (as in the "Comices" scene), while preserving the immediacy and authenticity of the street-scene. There is neither pure narration nor pure dialogue here, but rather a workable hybrid of the two, a new style, to suit the exigencies of irony. (Note the syntactic irony of the concessive "Bien qu'on l'aimât" sentence, and Hussonnet's ridiculously funny "Chez Voltaire!")

Indeed, the character Hussonnet embodies the spirit of the scene. He can always be counted on for the "bouffonerie" of the Garçon, for that nonsensical element which ironically undermines grave events and serious conversations. And so at the meeting at Dussardier's, for example (presided over by Sénécal), the members' angry and intolerant protests seem to disintegrate in the wake of Hussonnet's deliberately subversive puns--"Rouget est frit," etc. (ES 294-296)

The meeting of the "Club de l'Intelligence" (could there be a more sarcastic nomenclature?) exhibits yet further great refinements in Flaubert's techniques of irony. The dialogue itself tends to degenerate in this long scene, putting extra weight, again, upon narration. What we

actually observe here is a series of minor scuffles, riots, interruptions and idiotic speeches, constructed into fragments of dialogue interspersed with narration. For example, here is an incomplete metaphor interrupted by a stupid simile, further interrupted by an absurd commotion:

> Quelqu'un lui objecta qu'il allait loin.
> -- Oui! je vais loin! Mais, quand un vaisseau est surpris par la tempête...
> Sans attendre la fin de la comparaison, un autre lui répondit :
> -- D'accord! mais c'est démolir d'un seul coup, comme un maçon sans discernement...
> -- Vous insultez les maçons! hurla un citoyen couvert de plâtre.
>
> (ES 336)

The chaos crescendoes when Regimbart's friend Compain rises to defend an obscure terrorist organization called "tête de veau"--a translation of the English Calves' Head Club into something the auditors understand as "mutton-head." This organization itself was researched by Flaubert and actually existed in England. But the Calves' Head Club is not explained in the text by Compain, nor is it taken seriously by the "Intelligence Club"--in fact they laugh at what in England was a deadly serious anarchist group:

> -- Je crois qu'il faudrait donner une plus large extension à la tête de veau.
> Tous se taisaient, croyant avoir mal entendu.
> -- Oui! la tête de veau!
> Trois cents rires éclatèrent d'un seul coup. Le plafond trembla. Devant toutes ces faces bouleversées par la joie, Compain se reculait. Il reprit d'un ton furieux :
> -- Comment! vous ne connaissez pas la tête de veau?
> Ce fut un paroxysme, un délire. On se pressait les côtes. Quelques-uns même tombaient par terre,

> sous les bancs. Compain, n'y tenant plus, se réfugia près de Regimbart et il voulait l'entraîner.
> -- Non! je reste jusqu'au bout! dit le Citoyen.
> Cette réponse détermina Frédéric . . . (ES 336-7)[20]

Regimbart's decision to stay is what Frédéric interprets as a sign of his firm intention to back him (Frédéric), and this sets the stage for what is just one of a seemingly endless series of peripeties suffered by Frédéric in the course of the novel. When Sénécal as president of the Club challenges Frédéric to find a "patriote" to back him (besides Dussardier), a classic set-back occurs, touching off the scene's finale. Frédéric elbows his supposed supporter Regimbart, who awakens from a quick nap and jumps up to introduce a Spanish "patriote" instead of seconding Frédéric. Sénécal in his malice allows Frédéric's candidacy to be shelved in the confusion.

Overwhelmed by long-winded declamations in Spanish, Frédéric's protests remain unnoticed by the assembly. Finally he exclaims with exasperation that no-one even understands, meaning "understands Spanish," of course. But his elegant demeanor and intelligent face bring across a different message--an insult to "the people" of the Intelligence Club, the claim that they are too stupid to "understand." This "qui pro quo" is the last straw, and our hero is tossed out. His failure is crystallized in the cry of the street-urchin, "Aristo!"

After such an ironic portrayal of what is presented as a typical club-meeting, Flaubert evokes in the reader, at this moment of pathos, a post-climactic depression. It matters little whether Frédéric is or isn't an aristocrat--obviously he "fits in" nowhere. But here the end result, as one critic puts it, is "not laughter, but reverie."[21] This occurs often in Flaubert, in the wake of what the novelist called "le grotesque triste."[22] By means of objective descriptions and dialogue, ironically juxtaposed, Flaubert implants his bitterness into the text.

In fact, as we have seen in our review of Flaubert's childhood and early works, it is a trademark of the Flaubertian world-view, that the impossible and hopeless circumstances of life must be placed (in art as in life) in the most grotesque and ironic contexts. The relationship between Frédéric and Rosanette, for example, is doomed to failure. Therefore, even at its most poignant moments, the grotesque foreshadowing of its end is present. She gives birth at a "maison d'accouchement" (itself depicted with ironic accuracy) to a sickly child of Frédéric's, which is to die soon afterwards. The presentation, in the dialogue below, of her tenderness and blindness, alternates with a comically ironic rendition of Frédéric's repugnance:

> Rosanette se mit à sourire ineffablement; et, comme submergée sous les flots d'amour qui l'étouffaient, elle dit d'une voix basse:
> -- Un garçon, là, là! en désignant près de son lit une barcelonnette.

Il écarta les rideaux, et aperçut, au milieu des linges, quelque chose d'un rouge jaunâtre, extrêmement ridé, qui sentait mauvais et vagissait.

-- Embrasse-le!

Il répondit, pour cacher sa répugnance:

-- Mais j'ai peur de lui faire mal!

-- Non! non!

Alors il baisa, du bout des lèvres, son enfant.

-- Comme il te ressemble!

Et, de ses deux bras faibles, elle se suspendit à son cou, avec une effusion de sentiment qu'il n'avait jamais vue.

(ES 416)

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 4

[1]Thibaudet's final judgment of the Education was that it was not very harmonious, on the whole. "La phrase est plus composée que le tableau," he opined, "le tableau plus composé que le livre." (Op. cit., Thibaudet, p. 213.)

[2]M.-J. Durry, Flaubert et ses projets inédits (Paris: Nizet, 1950), p. 173.

[3]Claudine Gothot-Mersch claims still further bases as determinants of Flaubert's passages: "Dans ce travail de forçat qui consistait à recommencer inlassablement le même passage Flaubert semble s'être laissé guidé par une donnée matérielle toute fortuite: les dimensions de son papier. Après avoir couvert une page, il la recommence, repartant exactement du même point, fût-ce le milieu d'une phrase; il n'est pas rare de trouver quatre ou cinq brouillons qui débutent au même mot."--La Genèse de Madame Bovary (Paris: Corti, 1966), p. 173.

[4]M. Proust, "A propos du style de Flaubert," NRF, XIV, 1 (1920), p. 74.

[5]E. Auerbach, "Madame Bovary," in Flaubert--A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. R. Giraud (N.Y.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 138.

[6]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 252.

[7]V. Hugo, "Lettre du 16 février, 1822" (to his fiancée), cited by J. Bruneau, Les débuts littéraires de Gustave Flaubert (Paris: A. Colin, 1962), p. 565.

[8]C. Gothot-Mersch, "Le Dialogue dans l'oeuvre de Flaubert," Europe, no's. 485-487 (1969), p. 114.

[9]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 139-40.

[10]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928), II, 357.

[11]Op. cit., Durry, p. 30.

[12]P. Guiraud, Essais de stylistique (Paris: Klincksieck, 1969), p. 76.

[13]Laclos is Flaubert's main precursor insofar as this technique is concerned. Organizing intertwining letters in les Liaisons dangereuses (paralleling the orchestration of dialogue in Flaubert), Laclos alternated perfidious admissions of intent by Valmont and Merteuil, with the naïve letters of their victims. Directed by Laclos' irony of complicity, the reader joins the villains in laughter when, for example, after Valmont has seduced Cécile, the latter in turn confides to Merteuil that she was unable to defend herself. "Et puis aussi, j'étais bien troublée!" Cécile complains, unwittingly admitting the extent to which Valmont had already succeeded before she even began the said defense.

[14]Op. cit., Thibaudet, p. 153. Elswhere the critic admits that Flaubert's great merit is "d'avoir épousé et assimilé une tradition de langue parlée, d'avoir donné à son expression cette solidité vivante et tissu organique de la parole." (p. 258)

[15]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 188.

[16]E. Starkie, Flaubert the Master (N.Y.: Atheneum, 1971), p. 150.

[17]Martinon's father, a successful farmer, wished his son to become a judge. Flaubert's infinite variations on the bourgeois theme ("Le bourgeois . . . est pour moi quelque chose d'infini," he once wrote to Le Poittevin), will be briefly examined in my Chapter Six.

[18]Note Flaubert's sarcastic use of that adjective in a notebook entry on Parisian society, for the Education: "Une des belles choses de Paris [c'était] les soirées intimes. L'éternel thé . . . [les] petits gâteaux secs. La bonne en tablier blanc, les fiacres qu'on envoie chercher, le désir d'avoir un jour." (Cited by Durry, Flaubert et ses projets, p. 84.)

[19]G. Genette, "Le travail de Flaubert," Tel Quel (été 1963, no. 14), p. 55.

[20]The Calves' Head Club is explained on ES p. 455. Flaubert obtained his information from the British magazine Notes and Queries. The page he consulted is reproduced in R. Dumesnil's Flaubert et l'Education sentimentale--documents iconographiques.

[21]G. B. Fitch, "The Comic Sense of Flaubert in the Light of Bergson's Le Rire," PMLA, vol. 55 (1940), p. 521.

[22]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 307.

5. THE STYLE OF FLAUBERT: SUPER-STRUCTURAL IRONY

Under the aegis of the term, "super-structural irony," we shall be referring (with respect, particularly, to the second Education sentimentale) to those narrative techniques that unify diverse actions and characterizations across broad expanses of the novel. These were techniques Flaubert developed with a great deal of difficulty, as evidenced in his admission to Louise Colet that "ce qui m'embête, ce sont les malices du plan, les combinaisons d'effet, tous les calculs du dessous. . . ."[1]

Despite the problems involved, however, Flaubert seems to have taken great pleasure in inventing complex combinations of situations with resulting ironic dimensions. In a sense, the broader narrative devices allowed him to coordinate his total theatrical performance. Much as a playwright would, he arranged situations to synchronize in the purposeful workings of the plot--its coincidences, its dissonances, the progression and the immediacy of its timing. Not only is Flaubert ironic in the effects of his broad strokes of plot (the bare outlines of action), but the organization of details and their manner of presentation enhance the dramatically ironic effects of the novel, much as such details might be emphasized by the director of a play. One might even

envision Flaubert as his own stage-manager as well, providing inventive props (objects used for ironic purposes) with which the characters interact, revealing themselves in the process.

"The exploitation of details for ironic contrasts seems almost a perverse pleasure with Flaubert," writes the critic Victor Brombert. "[He] sometimes carries it to cruel extremes . . . At times, the symbolic detail serves as an ironic punctuation, as it almost graphically plots the stages of a moral evolution."[2]

Very early in L'Education, Flaubert strings together the following thoughts and incidents in one passage which deals with a Frédéric who seems to have forgotten the boat ride with Marie Arnoux, after he has enjoyed a mysterious glimpse of Mme. Dambreuse:

1) Frédéric regrets not having actually seen Mme. Dambreuse.

2) A commotion caused by a traffic jam of coaches makes him turn his head.

3) (What a coincidence!) He notices a marble nameplate on the building facing him and reads Jacques Arnoux's name upon it.

4) In free indirect style: "Comment n'avait-il pas songé à elle, plus tôt?" Frédéric asks himself this innocently ignorant question, while the knowing reader laughs. Flaubert has worked a traditional piece of dramatic irony

(the character does not know what the spectator knows) into the text of the narrated plot.

5) Frédéric moves toward the building, but does not enter the shop; Mme. Dambreuse now forgotten, he waits for Mme. Arnoux ("Elle" with a capital "E") to appear. (ES 52)

In L'Education, Flaubert has attempted to re-create with some verisimilitude the life of a man beset by a thousand trivial annoyances, even at the most eventful moments. Frédéric succumbs to the contingencies of his existence because he has no goals or ambitions by means of which he might transcend them. These contingencies emerge, in the text of the narrative, as arranged situations. The narrator and the reader, detached from the action, can appreciate the ironic results. For example, Frédéric's endless setbacks in matters of love and friendship are often presented as ironic peripeties:

Frédéric gives himself until rue de Richelieu to declare his love to Marie Arnoux. "Mais, presque aussitôt," she stops short, says good-bye, and enters a store. (ES 99)

Frédéric wishes to take a ball of clay with Marie's handprint on it from the factory at Creil. She scolds him, but as he is about to make an impassioned reply, Sénécal enters and interrupts him. (ES 228)

Frédéric's carriage splashes mud on a man. The man turns around; we are told that Frédéric's face turns pale. He has recognized none other than Deslauriers. (ES 240)

At the Café Anglais, Rosanette is about to let Frédéric have his way with her, in the privacy of a booth. She has even ordered oysters, which are alleged to be aphrodisiacs. All is ready for Frédéric, when the voice of Hussonnet, followed by the man himself, breaks up the action. (ES 241)

Frédéric is finally kissing Marie Arnoux, when the famous "craquement" of the wooden floor announces Rosanette's appearance. (ES 389)

Passing an abandoned shed with Marie Arnoux (which she declares now out of use), Frédéric tells her, "d'une voix tremblante," that "le bonheur peut y tenir." The blaring horns of a passing fire engine cover his words, and Mme. Arnoux has already left the site. (ES 227)

The immediacy of Flaubert's timing creates dramatically nuanced ironies, while detailed auditory contingencies like the voice of Hussonnet, the "crack" of the floorboard, and the blare of horns, render these scenes more graphic. As for this technique of pummeling Frédéric, it represents perhaps an aesthetic misjudgment on Flaubert's part, because through repetition, we tire of the device. It becomes too transparent, visible as mere artifice. To call Flaubert sadistic or cruel at Frédéric's expense, however, or to consider Frédéric as his alter-ego and interpret the technique as a form of masochism, is to impose an unnecessary moral bias upon an already complex work.

The temptation to impose this kind of bias has not been successfully resisted by such excellent scholars as Brombert (calling Flaubertian irony a "perverse" pleasure) or Mario Praz, whose quotations in The Romantic Agony "proving" Flaubert to be a sadist, are entirely inconclusive.[3]

Narrator and reader do conspire in literary irony at a character's expense when old Roque comes home after massacring a helpless prisoner and, feeling a bit tired and ill, agrees with his daughter Louise (ignorant of the event) that he is "trop sensible." (ES 370) The ironic tension is made possible by our knowledge of the preceding actions. Our knowledge of Roque's terrible culpability greatly contrasts with the innocent complaint of an old father to his daughter, "Je suis trop sensible."

In L'Education, the succession of ironic events in the plot often serves as a stylistic arrangement, by means of which the dynamic interactions of a group of people can be rendered into prose. The events of Marie Arnoux's name-day represent a case in point. We are informed of Arnoux's thoughts through Frédéric's presence, since the latter hears the former speak them aloud, after Arnoux receives a letter from La Vatnaz calling him back to Paris. We know the letter must have something to do with Rosanette. By indirect dialogue, we learn how Arnoux lies to his wife and guests about the cause of his departure ("Une lettre de son

caissier le rappelait."--ES 113). The narration reveals Frédéric's vague apprehension of what is occurring, and his naïve admiration for Arnoux ("Frédéric, soupçonnant dans la lettre de Mlle. Vatnaz quelque histoire de femme, avait admiré l'aisance du sieur Arnoux à trouver un moyen honnête de déguerpir."--ES 114). Flaubert's use of the words "honnête," "sieur" and "déguerpir" are indicative of the tongue-in-cheek amusement afforded by the noble ruses and conquests of love. Not without added piquancy is the irony of the approbation the Arnoux couple receives from the guests. She asks if she will be returning with him. He gallantly answers: "Vous savez bien, Madame, qu'on ne peut vivre sans vous!" We know his reasons, which is why the ironic peak of the passage is set apart from the rest of the text: "Tous la complimentèrent d'avoir un si bon mari." (ES 114)

However, Arnoux had forgotten to buy his wife a present, and Flaubert capitalizes on this fact to arrange a super-structurally ironic piece. Arnoux goes to the garden to pick his wife some roses, ties them with string, and digs into his paper-filled pocket, grabbing a piece of paper "au hasard," to wrap around the bouquet. The attentive student of irony will immediately guess which paper Arnoux has selected. This guess will be confirmed when Marie Arnoux, perhaps actually pricked by the pin her husband has fastened into the bouquet, goes up to her room and disappears for a quarter-hour, returning without the flowers. Frédéric

despite her protests runs back to get them, and finds them on the floor, but returns with them. As the carriage starts up, Marie throws the bouquet out the window, and her motion for Frédéric to be silent is a signal of her decision to engage also in an adulterous conspiracy, coming as it does after Frédéric has just declared his love for her.

The bouquet as a symbolic object is, of course, a device formerly employed by Flaubert, in Madame Bovary. The burning of the wedding bouquet in that novel has both a symbolic and an ironic dimension, as do many such objects in Flaubert's works.[4] Not all symbols, however, are ironic: the humidity which falls on Emma's shoulders as she enters the new home in Yonville, for example, is not, although its later treatment by Flaubert (in Homais' descriptions) has ironic overtones. So also the objects described with irony by Flaubert are not always continuing, super-structural devices. The description of the grotesque wedding-cake in Madame Bovary is an ironic vignette which might have been as successful outside the novel, for example, let us say, in an imaginary Flaubertian essay, "Coutumes Normandes."

But those objects which have influence upon characters throughout the course of a novel, by means of which some aspect of characterization is accomplished, are of interest to us here, provided they are part of the ironic realm. An early indication that Flaubert perceived the use of objects as such devices appears in the first Education,

where Jules receives, too late, the purse from Henry which was to be Jules' gift to the now-departed Lucinde. Jules writes: ". . . ce sera mon souvenir à moi, la relique de mon amour trompé, la seule ruine de cette espérance abattue . . . à moins que les choses inanimées n'aient aussi leur ironie." (1845 ES, 314) We shall discover, from objects in the later Education, that this was to become precisely the case.

As we have seen, tangled coaches and mud-splashing coaches have played their part in ironic situations in the Education. The coaches are also primary in revealing certain aspects of Frédéric's character. At the beginning of the novel, we see him watching women in their carriages rounding the Rond-Point:

"Il se sentait comme perdu dans un monde lointain. Ses yeux erraient sur les têtes féminines; et de vagues ressemblances amenaient à sa mémoire Mme. Arnoux. Il se la figurait, au milieu des autres, dans un de ces petits coupés, pareils au coupé de Mme. Dambreuse." (ES 55)[5]

The erotic evocations of those objects and their precious cargo are particularly characteristic of the Education. Their appearance in fiction as indicators of status goes back further than Flaubert, but their ironic dimension is emphatically present here. Outside the Théâtre de la Porte St-Martin, Frédéric admires "un grand landau vert, attelé de deux chevaux blancs, tenus par un

cocher en culotte courte." (ES 120) Flaubert follows Frédéric inside, where the latter observes a woman whose face he cannot place. Well ought he to have remembered, for she is Mme. Dambreuse, and the coach (symbol of the wealth he later believes he will acquire by marrying her) is hers.

These remarks prepare us for the Hippodrome scene. Frédéric and Rosanette attend in "une berline de louage [naturally] avec deux chevaux de poste et un postillon; il avait mis sur le siège de derrière son domestique. La Maréchale parut satisfaite de ses prévenances . . ." (ES 233). Flaubert indulges in a bit of vehicular hide-and-seek at the race-track, as Frédéric perceives that "à cent pas de lui, dans un cabriolet milord, une dame parut." (ES 235) He thinks it might be Mme. Arnoux. Then by one of the coincidences far too frequent in this scene, Cisy appears, followed by Hussonnet. The milord re-appears with Mme. Arnoux actually in it--it is ironic that this devastates Frédéric, as we know he is with Rosanette out of rebelliousness against Marie's rejection. His vengeance is more complete than Frédéric might have desired. Rosanette spots Mme. Arnoux,

"Et levant le plus haut possible son verre rempli [de champagne], elle s'écria:

-- Ohé là-bas! les femmes honnêtes, l'épouse de mon protecteur, ohé!

Des rires éclatèrent autour d'elle, le milord disparut." (ES 238)

As though this coincidence were not forced enough, yet another occurs immediately after:

"Alors passa devant eux, avec des miroitements de cuivre et d'acier, un splendide landau [note the anastrophe for emphasis and assonance] attelé de quatre chevaux, conduits à la Daumont par deux jockeys en veste de velours, à crépines d'or." (ES 238) This coach belongs to the Dambreuses, who happen to be attending the races with none other than Martinon, and who are naturally astonished to see a good boy like Frédéric with the likes of Rosanette.

Following a long sociological description of people and carriages, Flaubert closes the scene by specifically educating the reader in the matter of mingling carriages with desires. It is a reminder of Frédéric's earlier hopes and desires (ES 54) quoted above. Then the irony of Frédéric's present situation is made explicit: "Alors, Frédéric se rappela les jours déjà loin [sic] où il enviait l'inexprimable bonheur de se trouver dans une de ces voitures, à côté d'une de ces femmes. Il le possédait, ce bonheur-là, et n'en était pas plus joyeux." (ES 240) Frédéric's education in irony is as essential as, and is inseparable from, his education in love.

Thus, objects in the novel are intimately connected with Flaubert's techniques of characterization, as Frédéric himself illustrates while waiting for Mme. Arnoux, who never arrives at the all important rendez-vous:

"Il considérait les fentes des pavés, la gueule des gouttières, les candélabres, les numéros au-dessus des portes. Les objets les plus minimes devenaient pour lui des compagnons, ou plutôt des spectateurs ironiques . . ." (ES 309)

The identification of persons with objects is quite complete in Frédéric's bestowal of all that is Marie upon a little silver Renaissance coffer, a symbolic object much commented by Flaubertians. When first perceived by Frédéric, its location is "un endroit paisible, honnête et familier tout ensemble" (ES 77), the Arnoux home. It was a gift, we learn, from husband to wife, and Arnoux kisses Marie in front of their friends when complimented on the coffer. As is to be expected of the fickle Arnoux, it appears again later in his mistress' boudoir. The irony is in the way Frédéric is described as treating it as though it were Marie herself, as though it might react to his touch: ". . . il éprouva un attendrissement, et en même temps comme le scandale d'une profanation. Il avait envie d'y porter les mains, de l'ouvrir. Il eut peur d'être aperçu, et s'en alla." (ES 290-91)

Any other man, if perceived, would be quick to explain that far from desiring to pry, he was admiring the object as a work of art. Not only is Frédéric shocked by the presence of the sacred object in a profane setting, however, but he seems as fearful of being caught touching it

as he would be were he caught handling Mme. Arnoux herself.

Much later, à propos of the gentleman's photo found amongst Rosanette's belongings, Frédéric reflects that "les coeurs des femmes sont comme ces petits meubles à secret, pleins de tiroirs emboîtés les uns dans les autres; on se donne du mal, on se casse les ongles, et on trouve au fond quelque fleur desséchée, des brins de poussière--ou le vide!" (ES 420)[6] This sounds much more like Flaubert, veteran of the Louise Colet Wars, than like the coffer-fetichist, Frédéric.

When Mme. Dambreuse reveals her vengeful intentions to Frédéric by purchasing the coffer at the auction of the Arnoux estate (replying, to his too-casual protest, his asking her what she could possibly use such a trinket for: ". . . y mettre des lettres d'amour, peut-être!"--ES 445), Frédéric decides to break with her. Flaubert succinctly plots the stages of his reaction after doing so, in one ironic period:

"Il était fier d'avoir vengé Mme Arnoux en lui sacrifiant une fortune, puis il fut étonné de son action, et une courbature infinie l'accabla." (ES 446) The irony of the situation is again made explicit by Flaubert, in this case with considerable success.

There are two aspects of Flaubert's style that are of great importance in rendering ironic effects in the superstructural sense. One, which we have just examined, is a

sustained wealth of objective detail. The other is Flaubert's succinctness for ironic effect. Many critics, including Marcel Proust, have admired Flaubert's relentless condensation of time, and it is our purpose to demonstrate the effective achievement of irony in that process.

Among the early sketchings of the technique is a passage from the first Education which constitutes an amusingly-written example of the condensation of time Flaubert was later to realize in his prose:

"Il [Jules] se résigna donc et vécut plus clame, dans l'espoir d'une mort prochaine; décidé à mourir, la vie lui parut plus belle, il lui souriait tristement, comme à la suite des longues maladies. Il médita son suicide, ce qui l'occupa pendant six mois, puis il le voulut d'une autre façon, ce qui acheva l'année; au bout de ce temps, il avait pris l'habitude de l'ennui et ne songea plus à s'en aller." (1845 ES, 321)

This passage should be compared with the beginning of I,vi of the second Education, where Flaubert's condensation of time in prose is much more powerful. Here we are presented with Frédéric's lassitude, with his despair. We expect that the lamentations we are witnessing over the course of a few paragraphs represent in fact a matter of days, perhaps a week, in his life. We are brutally informed that they have lasted three months (ES 124, top). The reader's expectations are pre-determined by Flaubert.

"Ruiné, dépouillé, perdu!" The three words that sound the death-knell of Frédéric's Parisian adventures are followed by the sketching of a specific subject: "Il était resté sur le banc, comme étourdi par une commotion." No other temporal indications are given for two paragraphs, until the narrator relates that Frédéric "déclara le soir, à sa mère, qu'il y retournerait." The conversation that follows still satisfies our assumption that all has taken place within the space of a day, so that when the narrator relates how Mme. Moreau's lamentations "se répétèrent vingt fois par jour" we are still completely unprepared for the number of days indicated brusquely by the next phrase, "durant trois mois." However, by the end of the paragraph Flaubert has set us upon the path of disintegration of will that Frédéric follows from semi-colon to semi-colon--the halting, stumbling passage to the end-phrase: "si bien que, lassé, énervé, vaincu enfin par la terrible force de la douceur, Frédéric se laissa conduire chez maître Prouharam."

The next few paragraphs present Frédéric mumbling to himself, dreaming. Again, we assume that perhaps a few weeks have passed. The first temporal indication is indeed quite vague, consisting of a narrative "passé simple," unfettered by specific, lived time, "Il n'y montra ni science ni aptitude." Then we are told he meditates upon letters to the Arnoux ménage "pendant une semaine." We are still contemplating that week, when a brief paragraph corrects

our vision with a shock:

"Il se levait très tard, et regardait par sa fénêtre les attelages de rouliers qui passaient. Les six premiers mois, surtout, furent abominables."

Flaubert has deliberately chosen to disfigure a naturalistic plot. He has placed here an imperfect tense that could easily describe a week's worth of mornings, and he has then understated the climax of the passage by according it one very ironically short sentence, containing one amazingly long temporal indication. He has not, as in the first Education (cf. supra, p.107), bent lived time to suit the demands of a classic form for meiosis (parallel subordinate clauses). Rather the form has been bent to render superstructural irony. Flaubert has demonstrated the nothingness of Frédéric's life by telling us almost nothing, and then informing us that there is a great deal more time filled with this nothingness than we would have imagined possible. The ironic tension is achieved in the contrast between Flaubert's opening collocation of temporal events, and the (planned) discovery by the reader that he has been misled.

Thus the exact date of Frédéric's inheritance, proferred a few pages later ("le 12 décembre 1845, vers neuf heures du matin"--ES 129), strikes us as bizarre. It is a strange dissonance in the plot that exact notations of time should occur in the context of plot-timings which are disfigurations of "natural" time, as we have illustrated above.

These exact notations are what Butor calls "le spectre des dates harmoniques" in Flaubert, but their study reveals more than a ghost of the author's intentions and difficulties. Many critics have studied the chronology of the novel, which begins on September 15, 1840 and ends around December, 1867. The missing years especially are evidence of the condensation of time on a large scale in the novel, as noted by Proust. But Proust's admiration might have been somewhat qualified had he reconstructed the time of the novel, as the critic J. Pinatel has done (by means of historic clues like that of the "proposition Rateau"--ES 386) to discover that Rosanette announced her pregancy in January of 1849, only to give birth, according to Flaubert, in February of 1851!

Flaubert's difficulties in plotting L'Education are thus revealed by this critic, who concludes that "Non seulement le lecteur--l'accueil réservé au roman l'a montré--mais l'auteur lui-même s'y trouvent mal à l'aise."[7] Pinatel goes on to cite a late letter of Flaubert's where he writes to George Sand of L'Education: "Esthétiquement parlant, il y manque la fausseté de perspective. A force d'avoir bien combiné le plan, le plan disparaît. Toute oeuvre d'art doit avoir un point, un sommet, faire la pyramide, ou bien la lumière doit frapper sur un point de la boule. Or, rien de tout cela dans la vie."[8] And Pinatel justly remarks, in terms of the plot of the novel and the imprecision of several of the dates given, that Flaubert's "désir de rendre

la complexité de la vie le mettait en conflit avec ses préoccupations artistiques."[9]

Although admitting the obvious errors committed by Flaubert in the course of this lengthy "historical" novel, one must agree with Victor Brombert that there is an explanation which takes into account the temporal successes planned, not stumbled upon, by Flaubert. Frédéric as a character would take greater stock in the date of his own inheritance than, perhaps, in the dates of the most important historic events of his time (witness his timely escape to Fontainebleau). It is therefore not surprising that Flaubert would choose to pay greater attention to pivotal events in terms of the psychology of his main character, in order later to underline the ultimate banality of even the most important quotidian events. With the precision of an exact date, Frédéric received the legacy; and with the vague goal of a happiness vainly wished-for, he squandered it.

The over-all plan, as seen by Brombert, would then be a question of what, in a brilliant lecture entitled "Roman et histoire: l'Education sentimentale de Flaubert," he called Flaubert's "parti-pris." "Le parti-pris de Flaubert: montrer l'incompatibilité du temps Historique et du temps banal quotidien . . . [avec le but d'] ironiser là-dessus."[10]

Thus far, we have been discussing irony in L'Education as an essential dynamic of the plot. As we have seen, there are certain incidents in the novel which are active pivotal directives of plot and characterization. The entire circuitry of the novel may therefore be re-directed by a change of current in just one of its circuits. We shall turn our attention to such minor points of energy as are justified by the dependence of the plot upon them, although they may be very small signals indeed.

The fact that these signals are often induced by clear misunderstandings on the part of some of the characters, throws the reader into an ironic counter-rhythm which pulsates throughout the whole novel. One reason, for example, why Marie Arnoux is pre-disposed towards a relationship with Frédéric, is because she knows him to be a "good" person--he loves children, therefore he must be good, with the result that an unspoken adulterous relationship develops between them:

> La voiture roulait, et les chèvrefeuilles et les seringas débordaient les clôtures des jardins, envoyaient dans la nuit des bouffées d'odeurs amollissantes. Les plis nombreux de sa robe couvraient ses pieds. Il lui semblait communiquer avec toute sa personne par ce corps d'enfant étendu entre eux. Il se pencha vers la petite fille, et, écartant ses jolis cheveux bruns, la baisa au front, doucement.
> -- Vous êtes bon! dit Mme Arnoux.
> -- Pourquoi?
> -- Parce que vous aimez les enfants.
> (ES 117)

We might define this particular ironic counter-rhythm to the plot as the irony of "projective fallacy." In terms of characterization, this irony arises from the presence of a kind of wish-fulfillment on the part of a character, presented simultaneously with evidence of that character's misunderstanding of the situation.

Referring back to the quotation above, we might keep it in mind as Flaubert heightens the irony of projective fallacy in a later passage. The same phrase will be seen to be used by husband and wife. When Jacques Arnoux trusts Frédéric to go and defend him during a marital battle with Marie, he sends his untrustworthy confidant off to her with the words, "Vous êtes bon, vous!" (ES 200) Arnoux makes the same kind of mistake after Frédéric's duel, telling him that "Je sais le motif; vous avez voulu défendre votre vieil ami." (ES 261)

As a matter of fact, the old love triangle provides a constant ironic motif for Flaubert in both the first and second versions of L'Education. Note for example the following passage, where the irony is even more apparent upon re-reading the text of the novel, given the reader's limited knowledge upon first reading: "Il [Arnoux] lui montra [à Frédéric] l'art de reconnaître les vins, à bruler le punch, à faire des salmis de bécasses; Frédéric suivait docilement ses conseils,--aimant tout ce qui dépendait de Mme. Arnoux, ses meubles, ses domestiques, sa maison, sa rue [son mari]."

The bitter tone of the narrative, at the last meeting of Frédéric and Marie, underscores the (hopeless) continuity of the ironic ignorance in which people remain of their loved ones' thoughts:

> Frédéric soupçonna Mme Arnoux d'être venue pour s'offrir; et il était repris par une convoitise plus forte que jamais, furieuse, enragée. Cependant, il sentait quelque chose d'inexprimable, une répulsion, et comme l'effroi d'un inceste. Une autre crainte l'arrêta, celle d'en avoir dégoût plus tard. D'ailleurs, quel embarras ce serait! -- et tout à la fois par prudence et pour ne pas dégrader son idéal, il tourna sur ses talons et se mit à faire une cigarette.
>
> Elle le contemplait, tout émerveillée.
>
> -- Comme vous êtes délicat! il n'y a que vous! Il n'y a que vous!
>
> (ES 452)

This understanding of the coexistence of what would seem to be mutually exclusive emotions, is the summit of the ironic projective fallacy.

One last and clear example of the irony of projective fallacy illustrates how Frédéric arrives at a perception of the Dambreuse fortune which is to color and influence all his dealings with them: "Frédéric observa surtout deux coffres monstrueux, dressés dans les encoignures. Il se demandait combien de millions y pouvaient tenir. Le banquier en ouvrit un, et la planche de fer tourna, ne laissant voir à l'intérieur que des cahiers de papier bleu." (ES 187)

This presents itself as a typical example of irony --as the tension between mere appearances (the coffers look as if they contained millions) and reality (they contain only

paper). But, as might be expected from Flaubert, the situation is actually quite ambiguous. Those blue papers probably do in effect represent millions. Here, appearances do not disguise a reality, but rather mask another appearance. The Flaubertian irony of projective fallacy indicates to the reader how unmoved Frédéric's "romanesque" imagination remains, at the sight of the blue paper mask over the Dambreuse wealth.

Our final stylistic discussion will deal with a type of irony we shall call "re-reader's irony." The term "retrospective" has been used (by Prof. R. W. Hartle) to imply that scenes deliberately planted refer back to past occurrences and act upon them to make them ironic.[11] Our term requires of the reader that he re-read the passage in question in the light of later events of which he is at first ignorant. The result is the same, but re-reader's irony differs from previous techniques discussed here in that rather than juxtaposing events or phrases with preceding events or phrases in the text, the ironic tension is achieved by juxtaposing a text with something yet to come (of which, as re-readers, we become cognizant).

The perception of this irony requires an attentive second reading, almost as attentive as Flaubert's own writing process. Writing a long and complex novel, often following the characters wherever they might lead him, often removing

or radically altering entire passages of his work, Flaubert himself may have sometimes been unaware of the new ironic cast a former passage might be taking as a result of his current workings, only to discover it, later, as a reader of his own work.[12] This angle also renders necessary, then, the all-inclusive term, "re-reader's irony."

Let us take as an example the word "irrévocablement," which takes on an ironic dimension only upon re-reading the following passage (in which Frédéric must disembark from the Ville-de-Montereau and leave Marie Arnoux), certainly not upon the first reading: "Plus il la contemplait [Mme. Arnoux], plus il sentait entre elle et lui se creuser des abîmes. Il songeait qu'il faudrait la quitter tout à l'heure, irrévocablement, sans en avoir arraché une parole, sans lui laisser même un souvenir!" (ES 39)

In Part Two, Chapter Four of the novel, Dussardier arrives, extremely upset, at Frédéric's, to inform him of Sénécal's arrest for conspiracy, and to solicit help in freeing him. The irony in this scene does not become apparent until one becomes aware of the later one (III,v) in which Sénécal murders Dussardier.[13]

There is nothing inherently amusing about Hussonnet's great secret, either. Frédéric takes him aside (in I,v) and is informed of the day M. Arnoux is departing for Germany, leaving Mme. Arnoux alone at home. The reader is as gullible as Frédéric, until the latter actually arrives

at the Arnoux's to find the wife gone and the husband puzzled as to the reason for this unexpected visit.

Again, after the first Dambreuse party, there is nothing ironic in Frédéric's deprecating view of Martinon as compared with his own possibilities of conquering a fortune by seduction ("et, en s'endormant il [Frédéric] souriait de pitié sur ce brave garçon"--ES 194), unless we know of the outcome of Martinon's bid for success. (Cf. ES 371, et passim.)

As part of the characterization of Pellerin, the text reveals yet another case of re-reader's irony. At first reading, no irony is present in Pellerin's anger upon discovering that Arnoux has sold for 2,000 F. two of the artist's paintings obtained cheaply at a pawnbroker's (after refusing to buy them directly from Pellerin). "Quelle gredinerie!" Pellerin complains to Frédéric, "et il en fait bien d'autres, parbleu! Nous le verrons, un de ces matins, en cour d'assises." (ES 73) However, upon attentive re-reading, the passage emerges as ironic, since shortly afterwards, "Le peintre prit la défense du marchand, car les opinions de Sénécal l'exaspéraient. Il osa même soutenir que Jacques Arnoux était un véritable coeur d'or, dévoué à ses amis, chérissant sa femme." (ES 84) The latter passage works in both ironic capacities, as a case of super-structural irony referring back to the earlier one, then as the re-reader's "point de repaire" for irony in the first passage.

Re-reader's irony can even take us outside the text of this novel itself, to other works by Flaubert. It is therefore an ironic introduction to L'Education that one of the first incidents of the novel refers to the trial of Mme. Lafarge, a discussion indignantly cut short by the protectively watchful Mme. Moreau, Frédéric's mother. This very trial of a woman isolated in the provinces, who allegedly poisoned a husband she despised, is obviously a wink at the reader by the famous author of Madame Bovary.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 5

[1]G. Flaubert, Correspondance, to Louise Colet, June 19, 1852.

[2]V. Brombert, The Novels of Flaubert, p. 48.

[3]The bloody battles of Salammbô are not sound evidence of Flaubert's supposed sadism. Given his love for the epic, his life-long adoration of Homer (and of Shakespeare), there is a thoroughly literary precedent for the conception of Salammbô. Neither is the fact that Flaubert wrote bloody tales in his adolescence (under the literary influence of the Romantic movement) proof of an inner bent towards sadism. The possibility exists, but there is not enough conclusive evidence from Flaubert's life (from his known relationships with others) to prove his sadism or his masochism one way or the other. The waves of speculation initiated by Du Camp and the Goncourts have yet, however, to subside.

[4]Cf. P. Danger, Sensations et objets dans le roman de Flaubert (Paris: A. Colin, 1974).

[5]Cf. 1845 ES, p. 279, where Henry also looks longingly at coaches in the Bois de Boulogne and dreams of "quelque existence grasse, pleine de loisirs heureux."

[6]Cf. G. Bachelard, La poétique de l'espace (Paris: Presses U. de France, 1958). His chapter on drawers, chests and wardrobes includes quotations from Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé and Breton.

[7]J. Pinatel, "Notes vétilleuses sur la chronologie de l'Education sentimentale," Revue d'histoire littéraire, janv.-mars 1953, p. 59.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 63.

[10]V. Brombert, "Roman et histoire: l'Education sentimentale de Flaubert," lecture presented at the Alliance Française de New York, February 23, 1976.

[11]The term was used by Prof. Hartle in his Fall, 1972 class, "Problems in the theory of literature," at the Graduate Center of C.U.N.Y.

[12]A hint of this appears in a letter of 1861 from Flaubert to Feydeau: "A mesure que j'avance, je m'aperçois des répétitions, ce qui fait que je récris à neuf des passages situés cent ou deux cents pages plus haut, besogne très amusante."--Correspondance (1928), II, 203.

[13]This technique is ingeniously utilized by Marcel Proust, where the act of re-reading is essential to the basic structure of A la recherche. For example, relating little Marcel's first glimpses of the "angelic" lady in pink, the narrator refrains from informing us of what we shall later ironically discover--that is, the true identity of this Odette, Swann's deceitful lover and faithless wife.

6. FLAUBERT'S SOCIAL SATIRE

The study of stylistic techniques of irony in L'Education has revealed that single words in themselves often serve as pivotal ironic structures. Any deconstruction of the text of this novel will yield evidence of certain words used again and again by its author. As Stephen Ullman has stated, "If one succeeds in discovering in a given writer, persistent preferences or aversions for a particular word or word-group, rhythmic pattern, morphological category, part of speech or syntactical construction, one will have identified an idiosyncrasy just as significant as the tendencies which govern the dynamics of his imagery."[1]

Following certain key words through their contextual occurrences, one discovers those words which participate in Flaubert's ironic realm. These words, which I shall call ironic indicators, are neither restricted in their ironic extensions merely to the sentences in which they are embedded, nor to the paragraphs in which they reside. Some specific words, such as "tous" or "bonheur," attest to a lexical field, to an entire Flaubertian symbolic system. This symbolic system cannot be derived by analyzing one work alone, but rather by exploring outside the specific text, consulting

the collected works of the author. In this case, the words "bonheur" and "tous" are ironic indicators with satiric intent on Flaubert's part.

Satire is a sub-category of irony where, in the over-all conception of the author, ethical (and perhaps political) dimensions reign. As we shall see, Flaubert intended his illustrations of "bonheur" and "tous" to have a corrective effect upon the reader. But satire is not an element of style (this must be emphasized)--rather it acts as a point of view upon the work. Therefore we shall be using the expression "ironic satire," when referring to satire which employs ironic devices of style.

The study of ironic satire necessitates at this point that we take leave of our strictly stylistic analysis. An interpretation of L'Education that includes the author's intentions, opinions and Weltanschauung is required by the very fact that he worked such considerations into the integral text. Flaubert's supra-stylistic convictions are therefore inseparable from his ironic stance at certain moments in the text. The critic would only impoverish his complete study of Flaubertian irony, were he to impose an anti-Flaubertian methodology (i.e., devoid of psycho-sociological ramifications) upon L'Education.

As Wayne Booth indicates, ". . . the 'external' reference [pointing outside the text] in ironic satire is not simply to the objects of the satire, but to the picture

we build of the satirist as ironic man, and that will be derived largely from 'internal' clues!"[2] The "internal clues" by means of which we arrive at the evidence necessary for putting the words "bonheur" and "tous" into ironic relief can be found outside L'Education proper, but within Flaubert's opus as a whole--that is, inside the written texts of the Correspondance, in the Dictionnaire des idées reçues, in Madame Bovary, etc.

I have said that some specific words, such as "tous" and "bonheur," attest to the existence of an entire symbolic system in Flaubert, a system which exercised its control over Flaubert's Education. It will be seen that this particular system evokes not a world of imagery (as in Baudelaire), but an ideational realm based on Flaubert's fundamental skepticism as seen in his numerous disapprobations of societies, concepts, and characters in the novel. Thus the word "tous" calls into play Flaubert's pessimistic opinion of "democratic" society, where the idiocy of the majority is accorded total ascendancy over the deepest wisdom of an individual. The word "bonheur" will be represented as one of the false goals proferred by bourgeois society, always employed as though it had a given meaning, when in fact it has so many mutable meanings as to be meaningless.

These words, as well as other devices, are utilized by Flaubert to create satiric portraits--exposing human vice and folly. The fact that ironic devices as we have

enumerated them are employed in the creation of many satiric portraits, is the raison d'être for our discussion of (ironic) social satire in this study.

The 1845 Education offers an early formulation of Flaubert's idea of "bonheur." It is rendered in a skeptical first person narration occasioned by the characters' optimism as the adulterous Henry and Emilie embark upon a new life:

> Puisqu'ils se croyaient heureux, ils l'étaient en effet, le bonheur ne dépendant que de l'idée qu'on s'en forme . . . J'ai connu un pauvre diable qui . . . couchait dans une hutte en terre qu'il s'était faite avec ses mains, en ramassant de la boue quand il avait plu; un bonnetier retiré, qui avait acheté un château dans les environs, lui donna cinquante francs par an, pour garder ses cochons et vider leur étable où il couchait avec eux, pour les soigner quand ils étaient malades. J'entrai un jour là dedans; à peine si l'on y pouvait respirer: "Eh bien, Monsieur, me dit-il en montrant la botte de paille qui composait son lit, je suis heureux maintenant, j'ai un bel appartement . . ."
>
> Le bonheur est de même, cage plus ou moins large, pour des bêtes petites ou grandes . . . mais que les barreaux soient resserrés ou élargis, il arrive un jour où l'on se trouve tout haletant sur le bord, regardant le ciel et rêvant l'espace sans limites.
>
> (1845 ES 314)

The years 1845-6 as perceived in Flaubert's correspondance reveal his continuing interest in the concept of "bonheur," which he calls a "dangereuse manie," "un usurier qui vous rend dix pour cent," etc. But as early as 1842 Gustave Flaubert was counseling Ernest Chevalier: "Lisez Rabelais, Montaigne, Horace ou quelque autre gaillard qui ait vu la vie sous un jour plus tranquille et apprenez une bonne fois pour toutes qu'il ne faut pas demander des oranges aux pommiers, du soleil à la France, de l'amour

à la femme, du bonheur à la vie."[3]

In Madame Bovary Flaubert's critique of "le bonheur" is directed mainly at the notions which spread from the Romantics to the reading public (especially women). We shall come back to this critique, but suffice it to say that the word "bonheur" in the 1869 Education is colored by this previous use of it in Madame Bovary, a usage evident in the narrator's explanation that "Il lui semblait [à Emma] que certains lieux sur la terre devaient produire du bonheur, comme une plante particulière au sol et qui pousse mal tout autre part." (MB 328) As is well known, Emma's attitude owes something to her innocent readings of romantically exotic writers. Flaubert's ironic quotation in the "Sottisier," of Bernardin de St.-Pierre's Etudes de la Nature, proves that if "le bonheur" is like a plant, then plants may in some ways resemble "le bonheur." The well-known excerpt from Bernardin reads: "Le melon a été divisé en tranches par la nature afin d'être mangé en famille; la citrouille, étant plus grosse, peut être mangée par les voisins."[4]

But the family of words "bonheur," "heureux," and "félicité" partakes of yet a third context, besides the skeptical overview and the romantic connotation. The emphasis placed by bourgeois society on the concept of "le bonheur," and specifically the activities undertaken in order to obtain it, are targets of Flaubert's ironic

satire as early as the first Education:

> [Jules] savait bien cependant que, pour être heureux, il faut se mêler à la danse, prendre un métier, un état, une manie, une marotte quelconque et en faire secouer les grelots, s'adonner à la politique ou à la culture des melons, peindre des aquarelles, réformer les moeurs ou jouer aux quilles; mais il n'avait pas le coeur à tout cela, et la moindre tentative pour entrer dans la vie positive lui donnait des nausées, en même temps que la vie spéculative le fatiguait et lui semblait creuse.
> (1845 ES 321)

The ironic syllepsis "s'adonner à la politique ou à la culture des melons," giving the two equal status, suffices to illustrate Flaubert's opinion that the search for happiness is a search for Fool's gold.[5] The specific customs and practices ordinarily employed in this search vary from high to low society, from one period to another; but those witnessed by Flaubert in his lifetime bestow upon some aspects of the very word "bonheur," the status of a cliché. Clear evidence of this fact appears in the first Education, where in indirect dialogue part of the phrase uttered by Emilie--"Elle n'avait pas le bonheur d'être mère"--is rendered in italics. (1845 ES 282) This was a practice often employed by Flaubert (as in the short story "Un parfum à sentir," or in Madame Bovary) to indicate that a common locution, a cliché from the spoken language, was being used. "Bonheur" is thus a word that partakes of this usage, as well as of certain very automatic actions publicly known to result in instant happiness, such as the opening of a bottle of champagne:

> Le vulgaire Champagne arriva, ce vin essentiellement français, qui a eu le malheur de faire naître tant de couplets, français comme lui et ennuyeux comme lui. Le maître de la maison, avec le pouce, ébranla le bouchon gonflé dans le goulot de la bouteille. Il partit--toutes les dames crièrent de surprise--s'élança au plafond, et retomba sur une cloche à fromage, qui se mit à vibrer du coup. On se passa les verres de main en main, vivement, pêle-mêle, la mousse tombait sur la nappe et sur les doigts, les dames riaient; il y a ainsi des bonheurs infaillibles.
>
> (1845 ES 282)

This rather lengthy quotation is replete with ironies like the ladies' "surprise" at the obviously expected event (note the word "toutes"). The champagne that produces instant happiness of course re-appears in Madame Bovary (spilling over Emma's ringed fingers) and in the 1869 Education (at the Hippodrome, etc.) Indeed, the cliché of "bonheur" occasioned by the wine appears in the Dictionnaire under the "Champagne" entry as "enthousiasme," where we read among other listings for champagne, "provoque l'enthousiasme chez les petites gens" and "c'est par lui que les idées françaises se sont répandues en Europe."

Taking all this evidence into account, we return to the text of L'Education with a more complete idea of what Flaubert intended when he used the "bonheur" family of ironic indicators with all their resonances.

Flaubert's skeptical overview of the impossibly relativistic exigencies inherent in the concept of "bonheur" appears in the juxtaposing of various types of happiness as perceived by various characters. Frédéric is

skeptical about Martinon's version:

> Lui [Martinon, "speaking" through indirect dialogue], il allait tous les matins à l'Ecole, se promenait ensuite dans le Luxembourg, prenait le soir sa demi-tasse de café, et, avec quinze cents francs par an et l'amour de cette ouvrière, il se trouvait parfaitement heureux.
> "Quel bonheur!" exclama intérieurement Frédéric. (ES 53)

Frédéric's own hesitations are ample illustration of Flaubert's ironic skepticism. When the former loses his fortune and returns to Nogent, he considers that Marie Arnoux "devait s'émouvoir à ce spectacle, et elle s'attendrirait. Ainsi, cette catastrophe était un bonheur, après tout; comme ces tremblements de terre qui découvrent des trésors, elle lui avait révélé les secrètes opulences de sa nature." (ES 123)

The reversal of catastrophe into "bonheur" evokes here the etymology of the word, its root "heur" (Latin "augurium"), the good luck in the image of treasure uncovered in an earthquake. But Frédéric's good luck is to lack fortune, without which he cannot return to Paris to take advantage of Mme. Arnoux's pity, and so his "bonheur" rapidly reveals itself as Fool's gold once again.[6]

Further analyzing Frédéric's "bonheur," we find another example of it in a sentence visibly ironic to the re-reader, as well as to the Flaubertian familiar with the author's pre-conceptions: Frédéric is with Rosanette at Fontainebleau, and the narrator declares of him that

"Il ne doutait pas qu'il ne fût heureux pour jusqu'à la fin de ses jours, tant son bonheur lui paraissait naturel, inhérent à sa vie et à la personne de cette femme." (ES 358)

Flaubert's usage of phrases like "jusqu'à la fin de ses jours," and of words like "irrévocablement" analyzed earlier (cf. supra, p. 116), are inconceivable as anything but ironic, given Flaubert's opinions as we know them.[7]

Looking beyond skepticism to the romantic extensions of the word "bonheur," we may also be sure that those reverberations that appeared to readers of French novels were not unknown to Flaubert. There was also a long tradition of ironic play on "bonheur" in Romance literature, as a euphemism for sexual relations. What else could the Vicomte de Valmont have been referring to in Les Liaisons dangereuses, when he wrote to the Marquise de Merteuil, "Soyons de bonne foi; dans nos arrangements, aussi froids que faciles, ce que nous appelons bonheur est à peine un plaisir"?[8] This same extension of the "bonheur" family of ironic indicators is hardly absent from L'Education, for example when Frédéric, spying the tool shed at Creil, says to Marie that "Le bonheur peut y tenir." (ES 227) Further examples abound:

> Il [Frédéric] dit en soupirant:
> --Donc, vous n'admettez pas qu'on puisse aimer . . . une femme?
> Mme. Arnoux répliqua:
> --Quant elle est à marier, on l'épouse; lorsqu'elle appartient à un autre, on s'éloigne.
> --Ainsi le bonheur est impossible?
> --Non! Mais on ne le trouve jamais dans le mensonge, les inquiétudes et le remords.
> (ES 231)

What Frédéric obviously has in mind, throughout the entire scene from which the above exchange is taken, is adulterous sexual relations. Marie understands what he means by "bonheur," and her answer responds not only to the fulfillment of desire intended in the word, but also to a twisting of the term back to her own conception--"bonheur" as a life-style to be shared by a man and a woman bound in matrimony.

But a few pages later, Frédéric gives the word the same sexual meaning again, this time with Rosanette at the Hippodrome:

> --Nous nous amusons! dit la Maréchale. Je t'aime, mon chéri!
> Frédéric ne douta plus de son bonheur; ce dernier mot de Rosanette le confirmait. (ES 235)

One last example in L'Education is particularly interesting. Louise Roque and Frédéric are walking in her father's island garden in the Seine after Frédéric's return to Nogent. She complains of her empty existence, without pleasures of any kind:

> . . . Elle désirait monter à cheval.
> --Le vicaire prétend que c'est inconvenant pour une jeune fille; est-ce bête, les convenances! Autrefois, on me laissait faire tout ce que je voulais, à présent, rien!
> --Votre père vous aime, pourtant!
> --Oui, mais . . .
> Elle poussa un soupir, qui signifiait: "Cela ne suffit pas à mon bonheur."
> Puis, il y eut un silence . . .
> (ES 280)

The activities undertaken in society in the name of "bonheur" constitute the last examples of ironic satire to be analyzed from the standpoint of this particular indicator. The range of these activities is wide in L'Education, and as we have seen the indicator often draws upon resources found in other Flaubertian works, for its full ironic effect. Thus Mme. Renaud's adoption of the "idée reçue" involving "le bonheur d'être mère," in the 1845 Education, acts as a gloss upon Mme. Dambreuse's conduct in the 1869 version. Mme. Dambreuse declares at one of her receptions that she will have to give up balls and soirées (not a likely thing for her to do), "car elle allait faire sortir de pension une nièce de son mari, une orpheline--On exalta son dévouement; c'était se conduire en véritable mère de famille." (ES 161) This is not merely ironic because we are never assured that the girl is not M. Dambreuse's illegitimate daughter. Nor is it merely ironic because Mme. Dambreuse will surely treat the girl with as little "dévouement" as if she were. But Mme. Dambreuse's idea of "bonheur," far from "d'être mère," can better be appreciated in the phrase she proffers later, "Duchesse, ah! quel bonheur!" (ES 268) upon seeing the very influential old widow of a marshal of the Empire, the widow appearing at her very own soirée.

Indeed, for Flaubert, what non-ironic value could so equivocal a term as "bonheur" possibly have? Its uses

in L'Education can only be ironic, if it comprises all the preceding variations and the following one, where Hussonnet and Frédéric see Dussardier at the Tuileries:

> C'était Dussardier; et, se jetant dans leurs bras:
>
> --Ah! quel bonheur, mes pauvres vieux! sans pouvoir dire autre chose, tant il haletait de joie et de fatigue.
>
> Depuis quarante-huit heures, il était debout. Il avait travaillé aux barricades du Quartier Latin, s'était battu rue Rambuteau, avait sauvé trois dragons, était entré aux Tuileries avec la colonne Dunoyer, s'était porté ensuite à la Chambre, puis à l'Hôtel de Ville.
>
> --J'en arrive! tout va bien! le peuple triomphe! les ouvriers et les bourgeois s'embrassent! ah! si vous saviez ce que j'ai vu! quels braves gens! comme c'est beau!
>
> Et, sans s'apercevoir qu'ils n'avaient pas d'armes:
>
> --J'étais bien sûr de vous trouver là! Ç'a été rude un moment, n'importe!
>
> Une goutte de sang lui coulait sur la joue, et, aux questions des deux autres:
>
> --Oh! rien! l'éraflure d'une baïonnette!
>
> --Il faudrait vous soigner, pourtant.
>
> --Bah! je suis solide! qu'est-ce que ça fait? La République est proclamée! on sera heureux maintenant! Des journalistes, qui causaient tout à l'heure devant moi, disaient qu'on va affranchir la Pologne et l'Italie! Plus de rois, comprenez-vous! Toute la terre libre! toute la terre libre!
>
> (ES 323)

Flaubert's opinion is simply that "le bonheur" is a bogus principle whose chief use is that of making false goals available to those who believe in it. False hopes for those who believe the Republic will bring it, false joys for those who believe Motherhood will bestow it upon them, vain aspirations for those who seek it repeatedly in the pleasure principle. Flaubertian irony compounds upon

irony, when Frédéric, having brought Rosanette to the room vainly prepared for Marie, and after having made love there, cries bitterly, his head buried deep in the pillow so as not to wake Rosanette. But she does awaken:

"--Qu'as-tu donc, cher amour?

--C'est excès de bonheur, dit Frédéric. Il y avait longtemps que je te désirais." (ÈS 315)[9]

The words "tout," "tous" and "tout le monde" comprise another family of ironic indicators found in L'Education, many examples of which I have already mentioned in the course of my analyses of stylistic irony. In such passages as the dialogues of the Dambreuse soirées, we have seen the word "tous" as an ironic inter-structural device, summing up the cowardly "bêtise" of those present, an ironic finale in the orchestration of dialogue. But unlike the "bonheur" group, this family of indicators includes some very neutral members, adjectival or pronominal, whose function is not ironic at all (e.g., in the purposefully flat, depressing sentence that terminates the chapter of Marie Arnoux's last visit: "Et ce fut tout."). The frequency with which these words in their common usage appear in L'Education ought not detract us, however, from their occasional function as ironic indicators. Flaubert's disdain for the stupidity of unanimity is so familiar that few background examples of the "tous" indicators should

suffice.

In a letter from Constantinople to his mother at the end of 1850, Flaubert bemoans the fate of his childhood friend-become-magistrate:

"Ce brave Ernest [Chevalier]! . . . Comme il va bien plus que jamais défendre l'ordre, la famille et la propriété! Il a du reste suivi la marche normale . . . Magistrat, il est réactionnaire; marié, il sera cocu; et passant ainsi sa vie entre sa femelle, ses enfants et les turpitudes de son métier, voilà un gaillard qui aura accompli en lui toutes les conditions de l'humanité."[10]

This sarcastic image of "toutes" is repeated in L'Education at M. Dambreuse's funeral: "Et tous profitèrent de l'occasion . . . On exalta ses lumières, sa probité, sa générosité, et même son mutisme comme représentant du peuple [!], car s'il n'était pas orateur, il possédait en revanche ces qualités solides, mille fois préférables, etc., avec tous les mots qu'il faut dire: 'Fin prématurée,--regrets éternels,--l'autre patrie,--adieu, ou plutôt non, au revoir!'" (ES 413)

"All" the words that ought to have been said have been omitted in favor of clichés, which Flaubert further studies as a sociology of funerals in that scene. Indeed, the concept that platitudes suffice (and must be used) to describe not only some, but all the attributes of a given object, is one that Flaubert finds all around him, and

which he can hardly refrain from rendering ironically in his works. It is especially abhorrent to him as a limitation upon knowledge, as the self-satisfied expression of those who have come to conclusions, have stopped learning (and so stopped living) in a world so rich that one lifetime is hardly enough to begin the most vital inquiries. Fumichon, one of Dambreuse's industrialist friends, is typical of such persons. The socialist attacks on property infuriate him: "C'est un droit écrit dans la nature!" he exclaims. "Les enfants tiennent à leurs joujoux; tous les peuples sont de mon avis, tous les animaux . . . Laissez-moi tranquille, avec votre Proudhon! S'il était là je crois que je l'étranglerais!" (ES 376-7) And Flaubert's narrator continues, "Il l'aurait étranglé. Après les liqueurs surtout, Fumichon ne se connaissait plus; et son visage apoplectique était près d'éclater comme un obus." (Ibid.) Flaubert is pitiless toward Fumichon, with his name that is a cross between an industrial smokestack and a pickle, and the face ready to explode like the bombs he no doubt manufactures.

In the 1845 Education, Henry's father is another character representative of those who are sure "all" agree with them, because they think only the thoughts of "tout le monde." He is described in a manner less vitriolic, but no less ironic:

"Il avait ses idées faites sur tous les sujets possibles; pour lui toute jeune fille était pure, tout jeune homme était un farceur, tout mari cocu, tout pauvre un voleur, tout gendarme un brutal, et toute campagne délicieuse." (1845 ES 335)

Notice of course that Flaubert himself had been unable to avoid the pitfall of one of these platitudes, namely, "tout mari un cocu," in the letter to his mother cited above. (This tendency of the Correspondance, especially when Flaubert wrote to his sister, his mother or bourgeois friends of the family, has often been mentioned by critics analyzing his "idées reçues.") Flaubert further contributed, or added to Henry's father's list, by enumerating the qualities of "tout bourgeois" in Madame Bovary, à propos of Léon:

> D'ailleurs, il allait devenir premier clerc: c'était le moment d'être sérieux. Aussi renonçait-il à la flûte, aux sentiments exaltés, à l'imagination: --car tout bourgeois, dans l'echauffement de sa jeunesse, ne fût-ce qu'un jour, une minute, s'est cru capable d'immenses passions, de hautes entreprises. Le plus médiocre libertin a rêvé des sultanes; chaque notaire porte en soi les débris d'un poète.
>
> (MB 555)

The relationship between Léon and the slender, blond Ernest Chevalier is further clarified in another section of Flaubert's letter from Constantinople cited above:

> Lui aussi [Ernest], il a été artiste, il portait un couteau-poignard et rêvait des plans de drames . . . Puis ç'a été un étudiant folâtre du quartier latin . . . Puis il a été reçu docteur. Là, le comique du sérieux a commencé . . . Il est devenu grave, s'est caché pour faire de minces fredaines, s'est acheté définitivement [note the ironic adverb] une montre et a renoncé à l'imagination (textuel); comme la séparation a dû être pénible![11]

The shattering force of that final sarcasm can only serve to emphasize the emotional intensity behind the "tous" family of ironic indicators, when Flaubert employs it in fiction to illustrate some aspect of the development of a young bourgeois, along the narrow road society has set before him.

However, we have already suggested another major effect of this indicator, one which is perhaps even more essential to the study of ironic satire in L'Education. As we have said, the words "tout," "tous" and "tout le monde" in Flaubert are indicative of a view of the democratic ideals of the French Revolution as seen by a member of an intellectual elite--ideals which were put forward by the most refined thinkers of the Enlightenment, only to be infinitely debased (in Flaubert's opinion) in their application by the most inane and corrupt majority France had ever known.[12] This is the concept behind the ironic dialogues previously analyzed, whether those of the reactionaries who retained the slogans of democracy in order to further the most selfish goals of industrial capitalism, or

those of the fanatic levelers of human excellence represented by the "democrat," Sénécal.

Although Flaubert's political views will be examinied in the next chapter, I should like to place the foregoing remarks in a larger context, by selecting three excerpts from L'Education where the ironic indicator "tous" is applied equally to three groups: the nominally democratic artists, the basically republican "garde nationale," and the reactionary industrialists. As Flaubert wrote to Feydeau while still working on Salammbô, declaring his satiric intentions: "À mesure que je me plonge plus avant dans l'antique, le besoin de faire du moderne me reprend, et je cuis à part moi un tas de bons-hommes."[13]

The artists meet at the offices of L'Art industriel, described by Flaubert as politically neutral territory in 1840-41, a place for outspoken gentlemen of loose morals as well as for radical artists. The painter Pellerin "déblatérait contre l'Institut," but Arnoux's habitués turn out to be no more radically individualist, and no less bourgeois, than Flaubert's reactionaries. A discussion at L'Art industriel (the name itself a contradiction in Flaubertian terms), is among the earliest episodes of the novel:

> Les confrères absents furent critiqués. On s'étonnait du prix de leurs oeuvres; et tous se plaignaient de ne point gagner suffisamment.

> lorsque entra un homme [Pellerin] de taille moyenne, l'habit fermé par un seul bouton, les yeux vifs, l'air un peu fou.
>
> --Quel tas de bourgeois que vous êtes! dit-il. Qu'est-ce que cela fait, miséricorde! Les vieux confectionnaient des chefs-d'oeuvre, ne s'inquiétaient pas du million. Corrège, Murillo . . .
>
> --Ajoutez Pellerin, dit Sombaz.
>
> (ES 66)

The National Guard are accorded the distinction of introducing Frédéric's bad dreams, their "discussion" resembling some long, aimless nightmare--theirs is unanimous stupidity, not unanimous cupidity. Frédéric spends a night with them before imagining Arnoux's "accidental" murder and then having to listen to Arnoux's plans for interminable hours:

> Il eut à subir la société des gardes nationaux! et, sauf un épurateur, homme facétieux qui buvait d'une manière exorbitante, tous lui parurent plus bêtes que leur giberne. L'entretien capital fut sur le remplacement des buffleteries par le ceinturon. D'autres s'emportaient contre les ateliers nationaux. On disait: "Où allons-nous?" Celui qui avait reçu l'apostrophe répondait en ouvrant les yeux, comme au bord d'un abîme: "Où allons-nous?" Alors un plus hardi s'écriait: "Ça ne peut pas durer! il faut en finir!" Et, les mêmes discours se répétant jusqu'au soir, Frédéric s'ennuya mortellement.
>
> (ES 345)

Although in the above quotation, the ironic indicator does not appear in the final position, its status as the summation of the paragraph's intended point is indisputable.[14] A last example from reactionary circles in the summer of '48 returns the indicator to its usual location at the end of a narrative movement, as the Dambreuse group discusses the June uprisings. Two significant rightist

martyrs of the civil war are lamented, but:

> au lieu de déplorer simplement ces deux meurtres, on discuta pour savoir lequel devait exciter la plus forte indignation. Un second parallèle vint après, celui de Lamoricière et de Cavaignac [two of the most important generals to defend "Paris" against "the insurgents"], M. Dambreuse exaltant Cavaignac et Nonancourt Lamoricière. Personne de la compagnie, sauf Arnoux [who was in the National Guard], n'avait pu les voir à l'oeuvre. Tous n'en formulèrent pas moins sur leurs opérations un jugement irrévocable. (ES 377)

Although the juxtaposition of "personne" and "tous" itself suffices for ironic hyperbole in this case, the fact that leading members of one of France's major political factions act in such a way in Flaubert's novel, is typical of his social commentary. The momentum of the satire achieved throughout the passage is such that it reaches a climax at the moment of hyperbole--Flaubert therefore makes frequent and powerful use of the "tous" family of indicators.

Of course we can only eliminate the possibility of a literal application of "tous" in favor of an ironically hyperbolic one, if we know from the passage itself (for example, the one just cited), or from other sources, the author's intentions in the matter. Other sources are sometimes necessary because in all the instances in which "tous" appears, it can only be considered syntactically hyperbolic some of the time. And always the full impact of the hyperbole cannot be felt without knowledge of its preconditions. The elimination of the possibility of

literal application is accomplished textually in the case of the "personne-tous" juxtaposition, but supra-textually in the case of Henry's father (cf. supra, p. 136) or in the case of the Dictionnaire. The textual ambiguity of the Dictionnaire was in fact a primary goal of Flaubert's and he employed the same technique in the "Sottisier" at the end of Bouvard et Pécuchet. Bernardin de St.-Pierre was not being ironic in Etudes de la nature, but Flaubert was so when he placed Bernardin's quotation in the "Sottisier." The placement of ironic indicators into an over-all Flaubertian context therefore becomes essential. Unless we follow their development throughout Flaubert's works, we will have missed important thematic structures of L'Education itself--structures as revealing as the themes of the betrayal of ideals, the failure of a generation, the aimlessness of individuals, the liquidation of a life.[15]

Let us return to "le bonheur," not as an ironic indicator, but as a social concept under scrutiny. The results of sexual "bonheur" bear some study, as examples of the ironic satire directed by Flaubert at men of Frédéric's social class. The demi-mondaine served as an extra-marital "fille de joie" for that class. Occasionally the problem of unwanted progeny did arise, and Flaubert's "maison de santé et d'accouchement" in L'Education (ES 415-416) is an ironic parody of its legitimate counterpart, since the

inner trappings of this clinic resemble those of a house of prostitution. The madam, whose only fault (according to the narrator) is to aspire to the legitimacy of knowing famous doctors, otherwise performs her duties well. Her receiving-room is done in bordello-red, the maid she hires looks more like a soubrette, and her "house" is so discreet that gentlemen may visit without embarrassment. Like an actual madam, she manipulates their delusions to her own financial advantage. Hypocrisy--the cushion between illegitimacy and comfortable propriety--is the target of Flaubert's ironic satire. Here this is evidenced by the exaggeratedly proper street-placards and by the very atmosphere of the place, where when gentlemen came to visit, "tout le monde se tenait aux écoutes, malgré le bruit continuel des pianos." (ES 417)[16]

In yet another of many instances of social satire in L'Education, only a few of which need be mentioned here, the nobility and the bourgeoisie are juxtaposed by Flaubert. This is accomplished in terms of the heraldic shield of M. Dambreuse, first described at his funeral:

"L'écusson de M. Dambreuse . . . était de sable au senestrochère d'or, à poing fermé, ganté d'argent, avec la couronne de comte, et cette devise: "Par toutes voies." (ES 411)

The militaristic aggressiveness of the symbols of a French count are undermined by the motto, "par toutes voies," as applied particularly to the deceased. Not only had he melted down the noble particule of his name to form a more bourgeois-sounding one (for economic gain--ES 50), but he had ironically exemplified the motto with all his shady dealings, betraying his own class by every means available to him.

The persona of M. Dambreuse could be characterized in a more specific way, a less symbolic one, by means of Hussonnet's suggestion--compiling a list of all the people Dambreuse had bribed during his lifetime, simply by noting the names of the various orators at his funeral, "car enfin le bonhomme Dambreuse avait été un des pot-devinistes les plus distingués [note the sarcasm] du dernier règne." (ES 413) And the list of speeches includes those made on behalf of "La Chambre des députés . . . [le] Conseil Général de l'Aube, . . . la Société d'agriculture de l'Yonne; . . . une Société philanthropique . . . [et] on s'en allait, lorsqu'un inconnu se mit à lire un sixième discours, au nom de la Société des antiquaires d'Amiens." (ES 413) That last speech probably was made on behalf of those who found profit in Dambreuse's illegal seizures of property.

Satire of the bourgeoisie is too well-known an aspect of Flaubert to be analyzed here, but it is less apparent to many readers that Flaubert considered one of the pivotal establishments of the bourgeoisie to be, precisely, the house of prostitution. It was indeed the place that revealed the most about a town and its people to Flaubert. It was a barometer of morality.[17] Witness the description in the epilogue that shocked contemporary readers of L'Education by its cynicism as an ending:

> Ce lieu de perdition projetait dans tout l'arrondissement un éclat fantastique. On le désignait par des périphrases: "L'endroit que vous savez,--une certaine rue,--au bas des Ponts." Les fermières des alentours en tremblaient pour leurs maris, les bourgeoises le redoutaient pour leurs bonnes, parce que la cuisinière de M. le sous-préfet y avait été surprise; et c'était, bien entendu, l'obsession secrète de tous les adolescents.
>
> (ES 456)

Flaubert here plays on his preferences for the comic energy of lower classes, for the naiveté of adolescents, for the "grotesque" logic of the middle class. But in L'Education, the more vicious ironic portrayals are especially directed at those members of the bourgeoisie who aspire to "improvement" in the form of imitation of the upper class. Dr. Des Rogis is described by Pellerin as being so hungry for fame that he "shines the boots" (figuratively) of the "grand monde," and even writes pornographic medical books. But his imitation of snobbery is particularly anathemized: "Lui et son épouse . . . se trimbalent ensemble dans tous les

endroits publics, et autres. Malgré la gêne du ménage, on a un jour, thés artistiques où on se dit des vers." (ES 150)

Parallel to this is the lower-class aspiration toward "l'embourgeoisement":

"Bourgeoise déclassée, [Rosanette] adorait la vie de ménage, un petit intérieur paisible. Cependant, elle était contente d'avoir 'un jour'; disait: 'Ces femmes-là!' en parlant de ses pareilles; voulait être 'une dame du monde', s'en croyait une. Elle . . . pria [Frédéric] de ne plus fumer dans le salon, essaya de lui faire faire maigre, par bon genre." (ES 421)

This parody of Marie Arnoux's way of life does little to please Frédéric, and it is more ironic if one pauses to consider the supposedly dutiful husbands of the domestic scene--Jacques Arnoux doing the can-can at the Alhambra, etc. Imitation of what is thought to be "Society" often undergoes strange burlesque transformations abroad, as evidenced in a letter from Constantinople, where Flaubert relates:

"J'ai cuydé crever de rire hier au théâtre, à la représentation d'un ballet: Le triomphe de l'Amour. Les danseuses pinçaient aux yeux du public un cancan effréné. La haute société d'ici, croyant que c'est le suprême bon ton, applaudissait à outrance. Les bons pachas étaient transportés. Il y avait des petites filles déguisées en

amours qui lançaient des flèches, et un dieu Pan avec un pantalon de velours noir à bretelles. C'était bon."[18]

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 6

[1]S. Ullman, Language and Style (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), p. 149.

[2]Op. cit., Booth, p. 123.

[3]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 314.

[4]G. Flaubert, "Le 'Sottisier' de Bouvard et Pécuchet (copie d'Edmond Laporte)," cited by G. de Maupassant in "Etude sur Gustave Flaubert," Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Conard, 1902), vol. 19, p. 106.

[5]The ironic syllepsis is a common device in the 1845 Education, as for example in the description of Henry's father as "enthousiaste de la culture de la pomme de terre et de l'émancipation des nègres." (1845 ES 335)

[6]The paragraph cited continues with an amusing play on the word "capitale": "Mais il n'existait au monde qu'un seul endroit pour les [les opulences de sa nature] faire valoir: Paris! car, dans ses idées, l'art, la science et l'amour (ces trois faces de Dieu, comme eût dit Pellerin) dépendaient exclusivement de la capitale." (ES 123)

[7]Wayne Booth analyzes the stages of this recognition of the ironic man behind the work as follows: 1) rejection of the literal meaning of the phrase ("the route to a new meaning passes through an unspoken conviction that cannot be reconciled with the literal meaning"); 2) a brief attempt (optional) to try out alternate explanations, such as author's error; 3) a decision the reader makes about the author's beliefs, not the work's intents; and 4) the choice of a new meaning--all this with great "speed and economy." (Booth, pp. 10-13.)

[8]P. Choderlos de Laclos, les Liaisons dangereuses (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1964), p. 29.

[9]The irony of "bonheur" in this passage has been noted by Durry, Flaubert et ses projets, p. 170.

[10]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 721.

[11]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 721.

[12]Flaubert's disdain for the majority is common knowledge. Durry quotes from his Notebook 19 (F°15): "Quel est l'imbécile qui a dit ceci: 'il y a quelqu'un qui a plus d'esprit que Voltaire, c'est tout le monde.'--Pas du tout! --il y a quelqu'un de plus bête qu'un idiot, c'est tout le monde--" (Durry, p. 94).

[13]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928), II, 130.

[14]Proust recognized the value of the device now under discussion, as is evidenced by his pastiche, in Les Pastiches de Proust, ed. J. Milly (Paris: A. Colin, 1970), p. 103: "mais tous [my emphasis] le détestaient, jugeant qu'il les avait frustrés de la débauche, des honneurs, de la célébrité, du génie . . ."

[15]To these themes, often referred to by critics, one might add the decomposition of a world (Jean Bruneau's view), or the Romantic theme of failure (mentioned by Pierre Castex), etc.

[16]According to Victor Brombert, Flaubert "had even planned to have the 'Madame' explain to Frédéric how to dispose of the newborn baby!"--V. Brombert "L'Education sentimentale--Profanation and the Permanence of Dreams," in Giraud's Flaubert: A Collection of Essays, p. 164.

[17]There is an irresistible sentence in a letter from Flaubert to Mme. des Genettes, where his criticism of prostitutes who want to go straight, or at least to have their daughters do so, is merciless. One such lady voiced her objections to Madame Bovary in the same terms as the State Prosecutor: "Une dame fort légère m'a déjà déclaré qu'elle ne laisserait pas sa fille lire mon livre, d'où j'ai conclu que j'étais extrêmement moral."--Correspondance (1928), II, 34. For the house of prostitution as a barometer of morality, cf. also Maupassant's La Maison Tellier.

[18]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 718.

7. IRONY AND HISTORY

Do historical events provide the background for the intrigues of the characters in this novel, as well as for the sentimental education of its protagonist? "Bien que mon sujet soit purement d'analyse," Flaubert wrote to Armand Barbès in 1867, "je touche quelquefois aux évènements de l'époque.--Mes premiers plans sont inventés et mes fonds réels."[1] Careful study of these "fonds réels" reveals the technique of their rendition in fiction. Indeed almost without exception, they are consistently rendered as ironic satire. Most Flaubertians concur with the historical critic, A. François, when he writes that "L'histoire . . . de l'Education est satirique . . . commandée en grande partie par les faits dont l'auteur a été témoin."[2] Alexis François compares the capture of the Tuileries as Du Camp reported it (a risky substitution for the "fonds réels"--but François decides to respect Du Camp's talent as a chronicler in this case) with the version of the Tuileries capture ascribed to Frédéric in Flaubert's novel. Although Flaubert speaks of historical events to Barbès, François is able to prove that Flaubert is influenced by his personal experience of the "journées de février." The "historical" event is distorted, thwarted by the contingencies of Flaubert's situation.

It is probably true that although Frédéric is shown in Rosanette's arms during the Boulevard des Capucines massacre, Flaubert himself ended up in Bouilhet's apartment with his friends, listening to Bouilhet recite his Melaenis.[3] It is typical for Flaubert to end up in that situation, and it is his pleasure as a novelist to grant his protagonist a more active, romantic life. But this presents ambiguities for literary critics, as it becomes evident that it is the novelist's habit to place masks over appearances, not reality. In l'Education, Flaubert has written an artistic version, not of historical events themselves, but of his descriptions and transformations of events.

In addition, the characters in the novel are to some degree representative--and are intended to be such by the author--not of actual historical figures, but of Flaubert's conception of historical types. This cannot be said to be true of the Frédéric-Marie theme in the novel, where characters are too complex and nuanced to be "representative of types" in any way. But apart from that level, the events and persons involved in the fabric of l'Education are seen to be twice removed from actuality--though providing the critic with "real" underpinnings, however distant and unsteady. "Je cuis à part moi un tas de bonshommes," wrote Flaubert while meditating a project for the novel, and it is the critic's pleasure to taste the final dishes and decide whether the raw materials have met with a harmonious end.

First, however, the pinpointing of Flaubert's technique necessitates that we follow each of the characters in the "historical" sections of the novel. Although we follow the implied history of the period 1840 to 1852, the a-political opening of the novel and many subsequent "sentimental" chapters, force us to skip about. Nevertheless, the political attitudes of each of the characters do finally emerge into historic events. In fact, they appear to be even more important than the great historical events (involving Guizot, Louis-Philippe, etc.) in Flaubert's conception.[4]

Dec., 1840

The politics of M. Dambreuse, whose origins we discussed earlier, are first described as subordinated to personal gain. He in this way "represents" many centrists of the July Monarchy. "Il fatiguait le ministre par ses demandes continuelles de secours, de croix, de bureaux de tabac; et dans ses bouderies contre le pouvoir, inclinait au centre gauche." (ES 50) Flaubert's irony presides over that list of requests, and over the motive ("bouderies") for Dambreuse's leftward sway. That sway is largely compensated for, by his wife's rightward swing in the description directly following, where she "cajolait les duchesses . . . et laissait croire que M. Dambreuse pouvait encore se repentir . . ." (Ibid.) The reader is informed much

later (ES 274) of something neither the minister nor the duchesses were informed of--that M. Dambreuse had been using M. Roque to seize mortgaged property illegally.

Dec., 1841

The student demonstration at rue Saint-Jacques (cf. supra, pp. 86-87) introduces politics farther left, including an account of the arrest of naïve bystander Dussardier, an event which propels the young clerk into a political life and death. Both Frédéric and Hussonnet are seen to be cynically amused by the protests against Foreign Minister Guizot, such amusement rather resembling Flaubert's at the time. Gustave wrote to Ernest on Nov. 30, 1841 that "pour fêter la nouvelle année et la session qui s'ouvrira et qui doit renverser le ministère de l'étranger, on y votera la réforme électorale et un boeuf truffé au beurre d'anchois pour chaque citoyen."[5]

Dec., 1845

Descriptions of Sénécal's life and interests are rendered, as far as Flaubert is concerned, in the very ironic narrations befitting any extremist. Flaubert himself would be pleased to call these "voltairian" narrations. Starting with the premise that Sénécal "cherchait dans les livres de quoi justifier ses rêves" (ES 167), the narrator then rails against Sénécal's choice of readings: "Il connaissait Mably, Morelly, Fourier, Saint-Simon, Comte, Cabet, Louis

Blanc, la lourde charretée des écrivains socialistes, ceux qui réclament pour l'humanité le niveau des casernes, ceux qui voudraient la divertir dans un lupanar ou la plier sur un comptoir . . . et tout ce qu'il jugeait lui être hostile, Sénécal s'acharnait dessus, avec des raisonnements de géomètre et une bonne foi d'inquisiteur." (ES 167)[6] Frédéric is surprised to discover that Sénécal is also a papist, thinking the two beliefs incompatible, but it is explained that Sénécal opposes the "individualisme" of the protestants.

In contrast, "individualisme" is perhaps the best word to describe Hussonnet's politics, for politics enable Hussonnet to strike poses which are quite odd, though familiar to most Flaubertians. Throughout much of the novel, in his extravagant carryings-on, Hussonnet is of course the incarnation of none other than Le Garçon. We have seen him cry out "Chez Voltaire!" at the 1841 student protest. Now, in December 1845, he gives the Garçon's version of the Polish question: "D'abord, la Pologne n'existe pas; c'est une invention de Lafayette! Les Polonais, règle générale, sont tous du faubourg Saint-Marceau, les véritables s'étant noyés avec Poniatowski. Bref, 'il ne donnait plus là-dedans,' il était 'revenu de tout ça!' C'était comme le serpent de mer, la révocation de l'édit de Nantes et 'cette vieille blague de la Saint-Barthélemy!'" (ES 171; cf. supra, pp. 36-37: Le Garçon.)

Aug., 1847

Years later, when Frédéric discusses the prosecution of the review La Démocratie pacifique by the government, due to its publication of a novel entitled La Part des femmes, Hussonnet's answer is the farcical "Allons! bon! . . . Si on nous défend notre part des femmes!" (ES 295) Hussonnet goes on to perform an excellent imitation, in the style of Le Garçon, of Louis-Philippe. (ES 296) These talents and others allow Hussonnet easy participation in the events of the day, via the small presses.

Aug., 1847

Deslauriers' politics are strained, variable and quite complex. The narration dealing with him is sometimes contradictory. For example, although Deslauriers represents one aspect of the author's political opinions, expressing the same irritation as the Flaubertian narrator toward the reactionary Catholicism of supposed liberals like Saint-Simon and Fourier, Deslauriers is also described ironically by the narrator, as "le futur Mirabeau." (ES 170) Deslauriers had presented his (Flaubertian) political position, an extremely cynical one, at great length to Frédéric in 1846 (ES 208-9). But resemblance to Flaubert ends when Deslauriers expresses his very non-cynical desire to become a rédacteur-en-chef, "c'est-à-dire [d'avoir le] bonheur inexprimable [my emphasis] de diriger les autres, de tailler en plein dans leurs articles, d'en commander, d'en refuser."

(ES 209) Here Deslauriers is surely narrated as a caricature of Du Camp.

Once again, this does not erase those passages where Deslauriers (speaking of the socialists, for example) sounds not only like the narrator of L'Education, but also exactly like Flaubert himself, writing to Mme. Roger des Genettes in 1864:

> Il y a une chose qui les lie tous [les socialistes]: c'est la haine de la liberté, la haine de la Révolution française et de la philosophie. Ce sont tous des bonshommes du moyen âge, esprits enfoncés dans le passé. Et quels cuistres! quels pions! Des séminaristes en goguette ou des caissiers en délire . . . On a senti [en 1848] instinctivement ce qui fait le fond de toutes les utopies sociales: la tyrannie, l'antinature, la mort de l'âme . . .[7]

This letter of Flaubert's closely resembles Deslauriers' tirades. Deslauriers' political position of 1846 (ES 208-9) is that of a sounding-board and also that of a spokesman for Flaubert's own research. The novelist had studied the works of Socialists and liberal Catholics, had read the newspapers of 1846-8, and had requested information on the neo-Catholics of the 1840's from Sainte-Beuve. Then he had transformed this information into the political "persona" of Deslauriers.

By August, 1847, the character Deslauriers has become even more sombre, tired of his difficulties and failures, threatening to leave for America or commit suicide (Romantic clichés) if things do not improve within a year (ES 292). Sénécal had been arrested in May for carrying gunpowder in

another plot against the government, and now that he has been released for lack of evidence, his extremist influence on Deslauriers is becoming more pronounced.

Frédéric, in turn, has been somewhat influenced by Deslauriers, although the combination of Frédéric's temperament and the class division between them softens this influence considerably. Frédéric had shocked the Dambreuse gathering in June by defending the right to resistance in general (and, irritated by Martinon, by defending Sénécal in particular). But the narrator ironically remarks that Frédéric's arguments depended on the fact that, "se rappelant quelques phrases que lui avait dites Deslauriers," (ES 271) he was simply parroting his friend. Furthermore and very importantly, just as personal gain motivates Dambreuse's politics, so psychological motivation is at the base of any political stand of Frédéric's. The reader will recall that at the Dambreuse party mentioned above, it was the sight of Le Flambard, containing a denigrating account of his duel, which motivated his arguments against those present. Martinon, with his embarrassing "notre Sénécal?", particularly irritated Frédéric in his desire to shock the company.

In August, further angered against Martinon and his ilk, Frédéric declares that "L'aristocratie nouvelle, la bourgeoisie, ne valait pas l'ancienne, la noblesse. Il soutenait cela; et les démocrates l'approuvaient--comme s'il avait fait partie de l'une et qu'ils eussent

fréquenté l'autre. On fut enchanté de lui. Le pharmacien le compara même à M. d'Alton-Shée, qui, bien que pair de France, défendait la cause du Peuple." (ES 297) The irony of the narrator is double--not only is Frédéric not a member of the nobility, but his admirers are shown to be foolish enough to believe they will actually profit from the nobility's play for power, from their using of the lower classes against the bourgeoisie.

Frédéric's personally motivated scorn for the bourgeoisie merely echoes Flaubert's own preference as a man of taste for the old nobility, a preference to be found time and again in the Correspondance. Of course Frédéric lacks Flaubert's scorn for the democrats at this point, and Flaubert's "preference" for the old nobility must be rounded out with such portraits as that of Rodolphe and Alfred de Cisy. But as for the "new aristocracy" here criticized by Frédéric--in December of 1847 Flaubert actually attended a banquet given in Rouen by the bourgeois reformers, contenders for the power held by their counterparts of the July Monarchy. Flaubert wrote about the banquet in a now famous letter to Louise Colet:

> J'ai pourtant vu dernièrement quelque chose de beau et je suis encore dominé par l'impression grotesque et lamentable à la fois que ce spectacle m'a laissée.--J'ai assisté à un banquet réformiste! Quel goût! quelle cuisine! quels vins! et quels discours! . . . Je restais froid, et avec des nausées de dégoût au milieu de l'enthousiasme patriotique qu'excitait le timon de l'état, l'abîme

> où nous courons, l'honneur de notre pavillon, l'ombre de nos étandards, la fraternité des peuples et autres galettes de cette farine . . . Et après cette séance de 9 heures passées devant du dindon froid et du cochon de lait et dans la compagnie de mon serrurier qui me tapait sur l'épaule aux beaux endroits, je m'en suis revenu gelé jusque dans les entrailles . . .[8]

Feb., 1848

Returning to Frédéric--who almost always manages to interrupt those repeating the "beaux endroits" of Lamartine's speeches with an impatient "Oui, je sais . . ." --Frédéric's main political trait is actually that of evasion, preferably in order to run after women. He sacrifices the Panthéon meeting of Feb. 22, 1848 to a more important rendez-vous (the one with Marie Arnoux), and even ducks the protesters coming from the Madeleine (by hiding in the rue de l'Arcade) in the fear that his friends might be among them. Later, his idea of "reforming" is to finally make love with la Maréchale. Hearing the sound of the massacre at the Boulevard des Capucines he says "Ah! on casse quelques bourgeois" (ES 315), and this leads Victor Brombert to the conclusion that in l'Education, the Revolution of 1848 is accomplished "sous le signe de l'indifférence et de la profanation."[9]

The next day Frédéric goes out alone to watch the revolution, much as Flaubert and Du Camp did together. After the Château-d'Eau episode Frédéric meets Hussonnet, but the pairing off is misleading. Flaubert doesn't so

much recount his actual experiences with Du Camp (cf. Alexis François' explication of Du Camp's "Souvenirs de 1848"), as he does split his own political self into two characters, the mild enthusiast and the complete cynic, neither of which accurately describes either the whole Flaubert or Du Camp. Rather, these characters are incarnations of what Brombert called the "sign of indifference" and the "sign of profanation."[10]

Hussonnet is in the act of signing the guest registry downstairs in the Tuileries Palace when Frédéric meets him; in other words, he is enjoying "une bonne farce." (ES 319) Frédéric is worried about the paintings housed in the palace, hoping no damage will be done to them by the tumultuous mob. He is annoyed when all Hussonnet seems to care about is that "Les héros ne sentent pas bon." (ES 320) But the self-satisfied journalist certainly observes the situation brilliantly when he sees a bearded proletarian perched upon the throne, hilarious and stupid, and says "Quel mythe! . . . Voilà le peuple souverain!" (Ibid.)

Though he is not always given to such fine observation, Hussonnet's task is greatly facilitated by Flaubert's use, twenty-one years after the event, of the famous caricature done by Daumier at the time. At any rate, Frédéric will be inspired ("moi, je trouve le peuple sublime"--ES 322) to write an article and sign it; Hussonnet is simply disgusted ("Sortons de là, dit Hussonnet, ce peuple me

dégoûte."--ES 322), then depressed ("les excentricités de la Révolution dépassaient les siennes"--ES 324). While Frédéric "feels his gallic blood surge with patriotism" [my paraphrase], the truly cynical Hussonnet yawns and decides to go "instruct the populations," as though the people, fighting, needed him to relate the day's events. Hussonnet is writing for the bourgeois who stayed home, and it is no surprise that in a few months' time we find him editing "une brochure intitulée l'Hydre" for Dambreuse and his reactionary circle. (Remember also Hussonnet's nostalgia for Louis XIII.)

Feb., 1848

Not all of Flaubert's characters are so close to the main historical events of the period, however. It is typical of the novelist to pay particular attention to the fringe elements of society, and by this we are referring not only to successful ladies like Rosanette who end up with salons, but to characters like Regimbart and La Vatnaz. Regimbart is the perfect character to come upon in the anti-climactic days following the revolution. He is part of what Thibaudet calls "la Révolution des cafés"--in this case undistinguished veterans of the Napoleonic hey-day, absinthe drinkers, malcontents living away from the mainstream. The people's causes are of little concern to Regimbart, who sadly berates everyone for being too stupid to do the one

thing that would place him back in the glorious France he knew: "Prendre le Rhin, je vous dis, prendre le Rhin! fichtre!" (ES 326)

La Vatnaz is another such character, outside the mainstream of events, yet Flaubert is less sympathetic toward the type she represents, or toward her bohemian circle, than toward the absinthe-drinkers.[11] In a very misogynistic narration devoid of any irony, at times vitriolic, la Vatnaz, filthy and solitary, is described as being a violent socialist out of vengeance against the family, the "foyer," the things all women want (according to the narrator) and which la Vatnaz--"une de ces célibataires parisiennes" (ES 329)--could never have.[12]

March, 1848

M. Dambreuse is in the political mainstream. His history is that of a rich man made richer, in the provinces and in Paris, by the July Monarchy (aided by provincials like Martinon, already described in previous chapters, and Roque). Now that his government has fallen, Dambreuse is as bitter as his sycophant, Martinon. (Poor Martinon has lost the government post of which he was so proud.) Dambreuse is sombre but will not be defeated; momentarily, as quietly as possible, he crosses over to the revolutionary ranks, wearing an anonymous felt hat in the street, reading the newspapers most hostile to his former beliefs.

Dambreuse therefore comes upon Frédéric's dated revolutionary article and because he is worried about the safety of his Champagne properties, decides that a visit to the young man might be useful. This is the first political mistake we have witnessed in Dambreuse, but his belief that Frédéric is influential is also based on his recollection of Frédéric's defense of the right to resistance (at Dambreuse's home a year earlier).

The narration of Dambreuse's visit is intensely ironic. Dambreuse is particularly hypocritical with Frédéric ("Nous sommes tous ouvriers!"--ES 328), even going so far as to recognize the superior intelligence of the despised Proudhon. Frédéric is particularly gullible. And when he ends the speech he has written and is declaiming (before Dambreuse and Martinon): "N'épargnez rien, ô riches! donnez! donnez!" Dambreuse sourly says, "C'est parfait, votre discours!" (ES 331)

May, 1848

By the end of May, M. Dambreuse's attitude has changed once again. We are told that by now he hates Lamartine; after three months of shouting "Vive la République," Dambreuse is too tired, disgusted and actually too fearful to continue. The position of the reactionaries has begun to solidify, and it is becoming known that Dambreuse is banking on their success. He has lived with the fear

that his turncoat policies would not prevent reprisals from the left. (He was known all along to have belonged to the deposed regime, despite his "revolutionary fervor.") Dambreuse has been carrying a bludgeon in his pocket for three months. He now has a chance to be rid of his enemies, and he supports the plan of the Minister of Public Works, M. de Falloux, to send 18-to-20-year-olds out of Paris as soldiers or laborers.

June, 1848

As the reaction takes hold, it begins to affect the other characters of the novel. Sénécal, who in March as President of the Club de l'Intelligence was seen exhorting its members to abolish inheritances and to form a National Workers' Bank, Sénécal has been imprisoned at the Tuileries and then deported to the prison-galley at Belle-Isle. M. Roque has been living in Paris, and he has served the bourgeoisie as a prison-guard at the Tuileries. Furious at the damage done in the fighting to the front of his Paris town-house, he has killed a prisoner in cold blood to vent his anger (ES 369). Flaubert's narration of this event, of the taking of a life as payment for property-damage, follows the ironic description of public and guards and prisoners alike: "Des gens d'esprit [after the uprisings] en restèrent idiots pour toute leur vie." (ES 368)

Jan., 1849

Of course, M. Dambreuse is truly the one character in the book most sensitive to changes in the political climate. Flaubert calls him his "baromètre." (ES 394) And as the reaction gains power, we witness M. Dambreuse's support for Thiers' book against socialism, his laughter at Leroux, his faith in General Changarnier (the forceful defender of Dambreuse's right to laughter).

Jan., 1850

By January 1850, even Frédéric has become a conservative like Dambreuse, a supporter of the "strong man" theory of government for France (ES 400). And Flaubert's ironic description of the pendulum-swing to the right is further strengthened when in June of that year Deslauriers returns from the provinces completely disillusioned with the Republic.

June, 1850

Immediately after the revolution, Deslauriers had obtained a post as Ledru-Rollin's commissioner, a post he had truly struggled to secure, by virtue of his meritorious record at Law School. "L'obsédant au nom des Ecoles, il en avait arraché une place, une mission." (ES 324) Deslaurier's mission was to represent the government in an oil-producing province, and Flaubert amusingly recounts how he tried to preach fraternity to the owners, and respect

for the law to the workers (ES 398). He had failed, of course. The workers had been especially narrow-minded and brutal, says Deslauriers, asking for representatives of their own who would speak only for them, "Tout comme les députés de la betterave ne s'inquiètent que de la betterave!" (ES 399). Although he has returned without his crown of laurels, Deslauriers is bitter enough to obtain work with M. Dambreuse, and Sénécal will later return to Paris to become his secretary.

Feb., 1851

M. Dambreuse, however, does not survive the successive upheavals that have put such a strain upon France and himself. After the revocation of his protector, General Changarnier, he falls ill and dies. Flaubert, after careful study of the Père-Lachaise Cemetery, decided to place this symbol of the July Monarchy between Benjamin Constant and a certain Manuel, Louis XVI's Procureur Général who had been guillotined.

Jan., 1851

The post-script in this strictly historical account of the characters in L'Education belongs to Sénécal. Released from the prison-galley and even more hardened, he has now predictably become a strong supporter of Authority and Dictatorship. Sénécal reverses his former position vis-à-vis the masses who have failed. He complains so

forcibly of "l'insuffisance des masses," (ES 404) that he displeases the now-conservative Frédéric with an unpleasant exaggeration of his own position.

Dec., 1851

During the preparations for the Coup d'Etat, Sénécal, one of the Emperor's first volunteer Dragoons, kills Dussardier, one of the last revolutionaries.

So the political arena proves to be the playground of supreme irony for Flaubert. In France or outside, it provides him with the satirist's ceaselessly bitter satisfaction. In a gleeful letter from Beirut (1850) to friend Baudry in Paris, after inquiring how are "l'horizon, le timon, l'hydre, le volcan et les bases?", Flaubert delivers his even more cynical "Etat politique" for the Orient: "Quant à la politique," he assures Baudry, "elle consiste à se tenir bien avec le sultan auquel on vient de faire cadeau d'une frégate en oubliant dedans cent mille talaris."[13]

And French politics, where everyone changes sides several times each decade, where finally M. Thiers reigns supreme in Flaubert's imagination, French politics are equally devastating. In this Flaubert as an anguished observer uncannily mirrors the comments of another fascinated spectator of the events of the period, Karl Marx. Marx wrote of the Second Republic:

"Passions sans vérité, vérités sans passions; héros sans héroïsme, histoire sans événements; développement dont la seule force motrice semble être le calendrier, fatiguant par la répétition constante des mêmes tensions et des mêmes détentes."[14]

In the novel, the future of France has been predetermined by an author writing with hindsight. The last chapter includes a summary of what has happened to Frédéric's "lost generation," as it has been called by critics, up until 1867. Frédéric and Deslauriers remember the trip to la Turque's as the best thing that ever happened to them, Martinon has become a senator, Péllerin a photographer (the "dernier cri" in the arts, of course). Rosanette is Oudry's widow and has gone to fat and riches. Mme. Dambreuse has married an Englishman more civilized, no doubt, than the vacillating Frédéric. Father Roque's dreams have been shattered--not only has his daughter married Deslauriers instead of Frédéric, but the marriage is broken and she has run off with a singer. Cisy like all good Catholics has had eight children and has raised them at the ancestral château (Flaubert is aware that some things never change). Frédéric, we are told, having squandered his fortune, now lives after all as a quiet "petit-bourgeois."

A few passages involving historical events in L'Education require further scrutiny. The events of February, 1848 in particular, were integrally woven into Flaubert's "premiers plans . . . inventés." The novelist turned those few days into a complex rite of passage--for the novel (from Part Two to Part Three), for its protagonist (from Marie Arnoux to Rosanette), for the nation (from monarchy to republic). We have already seen how events of the first day of the 1848 Revolution are described in terms of Frédéric's traumatic rendez-vous with Marie. Communications in Paris had broken down--the proclamations forbidding the demonstrations have been revoked, Flaubert tells us, without anyone knowing it. This confusion also has an ominous influence on Marie in her search for a doctor in the scene of little Eugène's illness. When Frédéric, after a long and torturous day, suddenly discovers he is no longer in love with her, the bellicose atmosphere of the city contributes to his sense of freedom. He finds himself able at last to take possession of Rosanette, and then to bring her to the Trois-Frères-Provençaux in a more satisfactory re-enactment of the Café Anglais incident.

Flaubert, in writing these scenes, supplemented his own and Du Camp's recollections with various readings, so as to document the social movements of history as precisely as the psychological movements of the characters. He read Daniel Stern's (Mme. d'Agoult's) Histoire de la

Revolution de 1848, and newspapers of the period (Le National, La Presse, La Patrie, Le Constitutionnel).[15] He questioned friends who were in the capital at the time. But Flaubert deformed or omitted certain events in order to improve upon the texture of his ironic satire, as we shall see with the help of Alexis François' valuable comparison between Du Camp's recollections and the scenes in the novel.

The narration describing the actions of the revolutionaries is at first sober and concise, while that describing the movements of the government mimics its indecision:

". . . et, pendant qu'aux Tuileries les aides de camp se succédaient, et que M. Molé en train de faire un cabinet nouveau, ne revenait pas, et que M. Thiers tâchait d'en composer un autre, et que le Roi chicanait, hésitait, puis donnait à Bugeaud le commandement général pour l'empêcher de s'en servir, l'insurrection, comme dirigée par un seul bras, s'organisait formidablement." (ES 316)

But for precise reasons, other historical details are made to fade into Frédéric's dream-state: there is for example "un vieillard en habit noir" riding around the Château-d'Eau amidst the fighting, absurdly waving a paper and a green branch. (ES 318) According to Du Camp this old man was none other than le maréchal Gérard who, along with General Lamoricière, had been selected to parley with the insurgents.[16]

Historical and lived incidents are distorted by Flaubert in order to infuse the desired atmosphere into the novel. Although a wounded man did fall on Flaubert (as one fell on Frédéric in the novel), in actuality he and Du Camp helped the man to a nearby apothecary's for first aid. The incident in the novel renders Frédéric furiously eager to fight, only to be interrupted by a guard's "inutile" (ES 318). Alexis François comments that "chez [l'auteur de l'Education], la pitié la plus élémentaire se change en sarcasme," and cites several such changes.[17]

The coach-driver who at the Tuileries plunges his face into the sugar-bowl is absent from Du Camp's account, where only the calmly joking diners (ES 319) are present. But whether the coachman was unnoticed by Du Camp or invented by Flaubert, he is essential to the mood Flaubert builds up in an ironic scene where "la canaille" parade in lace and cashmere, where prostitutes sport ribbons of the Legion of Honor as belts, where ex-convicts roll on the beds of princesses, frustrated at having missed raping them, and where sinister thieves glide by while "debout sur un tas de vêtements, se tenait une fille publique en statue de la Liberté,--immobile, les yeux grands ouverts, effrayante." (ES 321)

Flaubert's willful distortion of events, therefore, is so purposeful as to occasion the replacement of the "king" on the throne he and Du Camp witnessed, with Daumier's

version. It is obvious that the witness's chronicle would have made a less dramatic passage in a less coherent whole. Here is Du Camp's rather civilized, journalistic account:

> Dans la salle du Trône, un homme assez bien vêtu s'était assis sur le grand fauteil doré recouvert de velours rouge; on faisait toutes sortes de mômeries autour de lui, on le saluait jusqu'à terre; il dit: "Messieurs, c'est toujours avec un nouveau plaisir que je me retrouve assis au milieu de vous!" On éclata de rire, car cette phrase, qui avait souvent servi au "discours du trône," était depuis longtemps l'objet de la railerie des petits journaux.[18]

Alexis François in an article imbued with social conscience regrets what he sees as distortions, misanthropic distortions that Flaubert wrought upon crucial contemporary events. "On dirait que Flaubert prenne [sic] plaisir à avilir l'humanité," he laments. "Quel avertissement dans l'histoire littéraire pour la génération qui va suivre! C'est un véritable poison que lui administre le maître."[19]

But there are other interpretations than that of misanthropy, as Flaubert in his defense of accuracy broodingly maintained. His argument was simply that he had no choice in the matter: "Par le temps qui court, tout portrait devient une satire et l'histoire est une accusation," he wrote to Mme Pradier.[20] Notice that a portrait must <u>become</u> satire by the novelist's art; history and accusation are simply equated.

To return to Alexis François, it would seem that the novelist's evocation of a mood is no more distortive of the

historically accurate picture of a deeply troubled nation, than is Du Camp's journalistic notation of detailed facts. The difference between the distortions is that one of them also raises the reader's level of excitement, which is what Nathalie Sarraute loved in the Flaubertian novel.[21] In the Flaubertian atmosphere as Sarraute sees it, we are given descriptions that are precise--but only in terms of some foundation details upon which we, starting from their implications, are free to imagine our own worlds. The distortive value of Flaubert is therefore not entirely negative, nor is it the sole value of such disturbing scenes as that of the taking of the Tuileries.

The satiric narration of the events immediately following the establishment of the republic is undertaken in a somehow lighter tone. Flaubert's detached amusement is tremendously caustic, however. Firstly, the monarchy is "destroyed"--by the naming of the Duchess of Orléans as regent. This allows even Rosanette to be consoled, by Frédéric as we have seen, but with the Flaubertian narrator hot on his heels:

"Tout était tranquille, maintenant, aucune raison d'avoir peur; il l'embrassait; et elle se déclara pour la République--comme avait déjà fait Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Paris, et comme devaient faire avec une prestesse de zèle merveilleuse: la Magistrature, le Conseil d'Etat, l'Institut, les Maréchaux de France, Changarnier, M. de

Falloux, tous les bonapartistes, tous les légitimistes, et un nombre considérable d'Orléanistes." (ES 324)

Flaubert called various styles into play in these pages which surely amused him greatly. Above, the burlesque of Rosanette-and-the-Archbishop yields to a truly Pascalian sarcasm (the "prestesse de zèle merveilleuse"). The narration, continuously detached and ironic, then proceeds with an enumeration of the first actions of what is to be a just Republic: the execution by firing squad of a few thieves and looters without trial (this item particularly pleases the property-conscious bourgeoisie); the adoption of the tricolor flag ("chaque parti ne voyant des trois couleurs que la sienne--et se promettant bien, dès qu'il serait le plus fort, d'arracher les deux autres"--ES 325); the pompous planting of a tree of Liberty by "MM. les ecclésiastiques," partially narrated, not surprisingly, in a parody of biblical style ("et la multitude trouvait cela très bien"--Ibid.), the People acting as God.

Who, then, are the People? The "députations de n'importe quoi," as they are called by the narrator, begin their daily parade outside the Hôtel de Ville. The painters' delegation is there, its members sporting bizarre hats and long beards. But it is preceded by the stone-masons. Pellerin intends to follow the demands of the stone-masons with the painters' for an Art Forum--a plea which the Government will hear, before going on to receive the

chicken-merchants.

It is no wonder the bourgeoisie is already dissatisfied and impatient with the government. Flaubert deliberately mocks their reactions: the 45¢ tax excites their exaggerated "surcroît d'horreur"; and socialist theories pronounced at this planning stage, although "aussi neuves que le jeu d'oie [et] . . . depuis quarante ans suffisamment débattues pour emplir des bibliothèques, . . . épouvantèrent les bourgeois, comme une grêle d'aérolithes . . ." (ES 327).

The narrator dwells a bit on that apocalyptic phenomenon before returning to the effect it has upon the ferver of the bourgeoisie: "Alors, la Propriété monta dans les respects au niveau de la Religion, et se confondit avec Dieu." (Ibid.) Fallen to such depths, France without a master is therefore completely weakened, insists Flaubert in an oft-quoted anthropomorphic description of the nation as a blind man without a stick, an infant without its nurse.

These pages are of course a direct transposition into the novel of the author's own political opinions, an unexpected contribution from such a strong advocate of "impersonality" in fiction. They closely resemble Flaubert's political discussions as seen in his Correspondance. When he wrote to George Sand in 1867 about M. Thiers, for example, calling him "Ce vieux melon diplomatique, arrondissant sa bêtise sur le fumier de la bourgeoisie," Flaubert crushingly compared his country to foolish

prostitutes:

"Mais le beau," he wrote, "ce sont les braves gardes nationaux qu'il [Thiers] a fourrés dedans en 1848, et qui recommencent à l'applaudir! Quelle infinie démence! Ce qui prouve que tout consiste dans le tempérament. Les prostituées--comme la France--ont toujours un faible pour les vieux farceurs."[22]

Historical satire does not stop with the 1848 revolution and its aftermath in L'Education, but continues in later passages. Flaubert's wry appraisal of political clubs has been examined in these passages through the Club de L'Intelligence, so named by its constituents who are, Flaubert scoffs, failing students, unemployed school teachers, unpublished men of letters. As in other clubs, the candidates of the Republic copy in dress and appearance the figure of a selected hero of the French Revolution (Robespierre, Danton, etc.).

Several paragraphs are devoted to a description of the rise of Rosanette's conservative salon (ES 421), before the Coup d'Etat. Ironically, her methods are typical of her origins--the great lady draws feu M. Dambreuse's friends by depending on Arnoux's ex-dependent, Hussonnet, to bring them. These guests she supplements with her ex-lovers from the aristocracy, and a salon is born.[23] The Coup d'Etat is itself very briefly and indirectly dealt with (Flaubert was contemplating a different novel to be called

Sous Napoléon III), in a dialogue witnessed by Frédéric (ES 446-47). Its representative bitterness encourages Frédéric's departure from Paris.

The conclusion one must draw from historical events in l'Education is that the ironic author, for all his talk of impersonality in Art, is very much present, closely adhering to the narrator of satiric texts if not actually narrating himself. It does not suffice to ascribe Flaubert's historical preoccupations to his desire for vengeance against society. It is not enough to say his was simply a cynically pessimistic reaction to the events of his time. These conclusions, often drawn by Flaubertian critics, are plainly unsatisfactory.

The development of a philosophy of history on the author's part was an extension of the spirit of analysis he brought to his aesthetic endeavors. That common ground largely motivated the weaving of historical threads into the narrative fabric of l'Education, in which Flaubert drew equally upon socio-historic resources and upon affective (psychological, "sentimental") analyses. The former are often overlooked, and yet Flaubert wrote in no uncertain terms in 1863: "L'histoire, l'histoire et l'histoire naturelle! Voilà les deux muses [my emphasis] de l'âge moderne . . . Observons, tout est là. Et après des siècles d'études il sera peut-être donné à quelqu'un de faire la synthèse . . ."[24]

Victor Brombert is one of the few critics who concerned themselves with Flaubert's own philosophy of history (Lukâcs did, in order to criticize it from a marxist point of view, choosing Salammbô, Flaubert's self-recognized weak spot, to work upon). Brombert's study wisely includes the Fontainebleau episode of l'Education, recalling a geological pre-history of the earth as part of Flaubert's monumental overview of history and natural history.[25]

In addition, Brombert is the only critic to attempt a serious analysis of Flaubert's historical intentions in l'Education. It is his thesis that Flaubert's "parti-pris" was the ironic juxtaposition of Historical Time and banal, quotidian time (as represented in the events of the characters' personal histories). But Brombert's interpretation of Flaubert's project as given in "Roman et histoire: L'Education sentimentale de Flaubert," presents as conclusive evidence a tenuous theory of the author's intentions when writing the two "epilogues" to the novel.

Brombert sees those epilogues as putting the novel in parentheses, as it were--the last epilogue, in which the characters Frédéric and Deslauriers are narrators of their own history, sends us back before the beginning of the actual novel. The other epilogue involves what Brombert calls a "privileged vision"--the "nous nous serons bien aimés" of Marie. This statement in the futur antérieur provides, according to Brombert, a view of lived history from both

within and without, as both lived time and fictional time. Marie makes it evident, when she says "we will have loved each other," that their love affair is to be regarded as a completed history. But a future orientation is also placed on the statement of the past, opening what would otherwise be its closed doors, making a fiction of it, to be re-read, re-experienced.[26]

The very last sentence of the novel ("C'est là ce que nous avons eu [my emphasis] de meilleur") Brombert perceives as an essential last word on Flaubert's part, indicating by its location that one must go through lived history (episodes like the escapades at La Turque's) before arriving at the "privileged vision" afforded by the futur antérieur. The escapade sends us back before the beginning of the novel, which we must re-read in order to appreciate the impact of the privileged vision. This posthumous order, as it might be called in view of the resurrection of the novel at its last sentence's breath, is the aesthetic order which, Brombert maintains, directed the novel in its conception.

Brombert's conclusions are of course subject to question upon further scrutiny. The two epilogues may be viewed quite differently--as two alternative endings for this divided, problematical novel; the order in which they appear does not necessarily indicate the experience of lived time before fictional time in Flaubertian aesthetics.

Marie Arnoux's view of the love affair as a completed story is such that it allows her to re-live the finished past again and again, into the future. The sufferings of this woman and of Flaubert seem to merge here--always psychologically necessary, the re-reading of the book one has written, of the past one has lived, will always be affective in terms of personal history. This "feminization" of experience, as Sartre called Flaubert's exquisite sufferings of Madame Bovary, contrasts sharply with the second ending of the novel. Two men are in the process of creating a mythology of anecdotes. The choice of the episode at La Turque's as their finest hour is indeed satiric. The cynical whoring episode was a failure but is now mythologized, to be sure--and the painful immediacy of the event as it was lived is somehow obliterated in the joy of re-telling it. This epilogue à la Bouvard et Pécuchet is antagonistic to the preceding (perhaps too painfully authentic) one, and in the two endings, the two novels that have been fused into l'Education are extremely apparent.

Both versions of personal history, then (the psychological and the satiric) must be taken into account and must be placed against Historical Time as Flaubert perceived it. Evidently, Brombert's theory is quite stimulating. The theories of L'Education as "pure perte," of the "gaspillage de forces" held by Jean Rousset and A. Thibaudet in dealing with historical satire, or the pantheistic

view of life-as-diffusion maintained by Georges Poulet to be Flaubert's, are insufficient evidence for critics familiar with the correspondance from Egypt and with Flaubert's fascination with, and enthusiasm for, the grandeur of "l'histoire et l'histoire naturelle." Flaubert's intellectual curiosity occasioned the detached observations for which he became famous. Thibaudet actually recognizes this in Flaubert's recollection of the baptism of his niece--a ritual whose history no-one present understood. "Je me faisais l'effet d'assister à quelque cérémonie d'une religion lointaine exhumée de la "poussière" Flaubert wrote.[27] No-one present understood--except for the stones of the church, "auxquelles," said Thibaudet, "devient consubstantiel l'esprit descriptif, évocatoire, ironique et froid du romancier."[28]

The combination of personal history (affective and satiric) and intellectual detachment placed Flaubert in a rather delicate position vis-à-vis the events of his lifetime, as evidenced in the complex political jugglings of l'Education. Particularly, intellectual detachment and the commitment to "L'Art pour l'Art" were not easy for a Frenchman to maintain in a period whose major political events were the July Monarchy, the 1848 Revolution, Napoléon III's coup d'état and the War of 1870.[29]

Flaubert's opinions and his family position made of him an immoral and reactionary bourgeois, in the eyes

of many friends and contemporaries; yet his creative immortalization of "le bourgeois des temps héroïques. . . devenu cliché dans la suite," was itself possible only through detachment from (at times hatred for) that very class.[30] Flaubert nonetheless independently maintained his reactionary defense of "le goût," especially in the arts, where his energetic opposition to the "mission sociale" of the artist was to exasperatingly identify him with those defenders of property whom he so despised.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 7

[1]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928), II, 369. Cf. also the footnote on Barbès, ES 1037.

[2]A. François, "Gustave Flaubert, Maxime Du Camp et la Révolution de 1848," Revue d'histoire littéraire (janv.-mars, 1953), p. 44.

[3]Ibid., p. 46.

[4]Lukàcs objected to Flaubert's avoidance of Walter Scott's method (that of following ordinary people and events for the express purpose of deepening historical awareness) in his novels. Cf. The Historical Novel (London, 1962), pp. 183-194, for Lukàcs' critique of Flaubert.

[5]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 87.

[6]For structural and linguistic proof of Flaubert's clichéd bourgeois attitude toward Socialists in this passage, see H. Mitterand's excellent study, "Discours de la politique et politique du discours dans un fragment de l'Education sentimentale," in La Production du sens chez Flaubert: Colloque de Cerisy, 21-28 juin, 1974 (Paris, 1975), pp. 125-141.

[7]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928), II, 287.

[8]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 491-2.

[9]Op. cit., "Roman et histoire."

[10] Brombert intended the "sign of profanation" to imply mainly Marie's replacement by Rosanette at the rue Tronchet apartment.

[11]La Vatnaz, it will be remembered, would have been caught falsifying payroll books and stealing the difference, had it not been for Dussardier who felt sorry for her and saved her. In fact, Flaubert's intolerably bourgeois evaluation of bohemians would be summarized in the following way, were I to compile a Dictionnaire: "Bohèmes: tous voleurs."

[12]La Vatnaz is evidently based on a type of active, single, lower-class woman Flaubert despised. It is interesting to note that a man of such opinions was actually a friend of George Sand's, though her views differed so strongly from his.

[13]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 653.

[14]K. Marx, "Le 18 Brumaire de Louis Bonaparte," cited by J.-P. Duquette in Flaubert ou l'architecture du vide: une lecture de "l'Education sentimentale" (Montréal: Presses de l'U. de Montréal, 1972), p.11.

[15]For a complete list of Flaubert's readings in preparation for this section of the novel, see G. Guisan, "Flaubert et la Révolution de 1848," Revue d'histoire littéraire (avril-juin, 1958).

[16]A. François, p. 49.

[17]Ibid., pp. 48 and 52.

[18]Ibid., p. 51.

[19]Ibid., p. 52.

[20]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928), II, 51.

[21]Sarraute, "Flaubert le Précurseur," p. 6.

[22]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928), II, 376.

[23]Flaubert actually compared the Rosanettes of the post-revolutionary period to Alfred de Musset, to the latter's great disadvantage! Writing to Louise Colet on May 30, 1852, about Musset's speech at the Académie Française, Flaubert criticizes his "jérémiade anodine sur les révolutions, lesquelles interrompent pour un moment les relations de societé. Quel malheur! Cela me rappelle un peu les filles entretenues, après 1848, qui étaient désolées: les gens comme il faut s'en allaient de Paris; tout était perdu!"--Correspondance (1928), I, 322.

[24]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928), II, 265.

[25]Op. cit. Brombert, "Roman et histoire." This argument also appeared in Brombert's "L'Education sentimentale: Articulations et polyvalence," in La Production du sens chez Flaubert: Colloque de Cerisy, p. 61.

[26]Ibid., p. 67.

[27]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 262.

[28]Op. cit. Gustave Flaubert, p. 78.

[29]Baudelaire's vacillations are a case in point. Whereas in the Salon de 1846, in "Des écoles et des ouvriers," he encourages the beating of what he calls "philistine" republicans, in 1848 Baudelaire joined Champfleury briefly, in editing a revolutionary journal.

[30]Op. cit. Thibaudet, p. 19.

8. IRONIC PORTRAYAL OF ART IN THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

AUX BOURGEOIS: . . . Vous êtes les amis naturels des arts, parce que vous êtes, les uns riches, les autres savants.
--Baudelaire[1]

During the decade in which most of L'Education takes place, no writer could avoid the issue of the "mission sociale du poète." For one thing, industrial transformation of French society was immediately felt in all the traditional media of writers, affecting them whether or not they were politically inclined. Very early in the co-option by industry of the publishing domain, in 1839, Sainte-Beuve lamented the loss of the civilized methods of the ancien monde. For the first time, expanded newspapers and journals depended on commercial advertising for their revenue. This was making the readership unsure of the validity of the opinions expressed by the journals' critics. Sainte-Beuve as a critic was therefore appalled at the introduction of the profit-motive into his own medium, as were many other men of letters in theirs.[2]

Flaubert himself of course expressed no great trust in the marriage of Industry and the Arts.[3] The very idea elicited howls from the hermit of Croisset, who in the Education thus took the opportunity to lampoon social

commitment: ". . . le tableau de Pellerin . . . Cela représentait la République, ou le Progrès, ou la Civilisation, sous la figure de Jésus Christ conduisant une locomotive, laquelle traversait une forêt vierge." (ES 330)

Flaubert and the Goncourts, in their intimate knowledge of the industrial propagandists, permitted themselves in private to laugh more specifically at the actual proponents of the art-industry "marriage," and at their ludicrous efforts to defend the idea. Art as, officially speaking, "literary property," with all the attendant profit, was an idea under serious consideration under Napoleon III. Flaubert in one of his Carnets, while writing the Education, cryptically jots down a plan to include (and I cite it as it was written): "--ironies de toutes les lois sur la propriété [officiell] littéraire--'SA[M] le Prince président demande la différence qu'il y a entre les Beaux Arts & les Arts industriels' à une députation [d'ornementistes] conduite par Sechan vers 1852 ou 1853 (voy [sic] les journaux de l'époque)."[4]

Politically, Flaubert was ostensibly a supporter of the Empire, but had he opined too loudly on the planned "wedding," his irony would surely have excluded him from the élite Magny dinners, where the industrialist as father was sounding out the Artist politically, before

agreeing to sacrifice his daughter, Money, for an investment. This situation no doubt led Flaubert to include the notebook entry above in his Dictionnaire, under "Art."

However, aside from such minor squabbling as the cooling of the Empress Eugénie's relations with Sainte-Beuve, the bourgeois artists suffered few serious losses under Napoleon III. The Goncourts might well have been considered dangerous under a different Emperor, had that ruler discovered such things as the mockery they indulged in with Flaubert, at the expense of France's most zealous subjects.

"Flaubert nous cite cette critique sublime de Limayrac sur Madame Bovary," the Goncourts sarcastically wrote in their Journal, "dont le dernier mot [est] 'Comment se permettre un style aussi ignoble, quand il y a sur le trône le premier écrivain de la langue française, L'Empereur?'"[5]

Flaubert eventually became bitter at his acquiescing rôle at so many Magny dinners, but essentially he had never changed his position--his rebellion against political or economic tampering with the arts was based on the conviction that such "unions" inevitably resulted in bad art. The "mission sociale de l'artiste" comes under a forcefully ironic attack, therefore, in L'Education:

"Un drame, où [Delmar] avait représenté un manant qui fait la leçon à Louis XIV et prophétise 89, l'avait mis en telle évidence, qu'on lui fabriquait sans cesse le même rôle; et sa fonction, maintenant, consistait à bafouer les monarques de tous les pays. . . . [Sa] biographie, vendue dans les entr'actes, le dépeignait . . . sous les couleurs d'un Saint Vincent de Paul mélangé de Brutus et de Mirabeau. On disait: 'Notre Delmar.' Il avait une mission, il devenait Christ." (ES 205)

The enforced repetitiveness of the artist engaged in a "mission sociale," the limitations imposed by such a role, remained unnoticed, however, by those who favored resistance against the government. This Flaubert and Louis Bouilhet were to discover when, as proponents of "L'Art pour l'Art," they found themselves pitted against Du Camp. These issues created a veritable civil war amongst mid-century artists and critics. A letter of 1855 from Flaubert to Bouilhet consoles him over the loss of one skirmish in that war.

"On t'a refusé Le Coeur à droite à la Revue . . . [parce qu'] ils naviguent vers le vieux socialisme de 1833, national pur. Haine de l'Art pour l'Art, déclamation contre la Forme. Du Camp tonnait l'autre jour contre H. Heine et surtout les Schlegel . . . nous n'avons plus besoin de fantaisies. A bas les rêveurs! A l'oeuvre! Fabriquons la régénération sociale! l'écrivain a charge d'âmes, etc. . . .

Notre ami Maxime, lui, profite des chemins de fer, de la rage industrielle, etc."[6]

Flaubert's rendition of the reformer, mockingly sarcastic, beginning with "nous n'avons plus besoin de fantaisies," clearly outlines his position, the writer's position. If fantasy is obliterated in the process of churning out a product, the product is no longer worth anything.

Frankly, then, passages in the Education like the Club scene which includes a song by Béranger (ES 334), a poor poet in the opinion of many, "le bouilli de la poésie moderne," as Flaubert called him[7]--such passages have even greater ironic extensions than they appear to exhibit at first glance. The fact that the novel takes place during a period of such unrest in the arts alerts the reader to an important ironic undercurrent, which erupts into plain view in the author's Correspondance. In 1846, Flaubert wrote a vehement letter to Louise Colet, a now-famous manifesto of "l'Art pour l'Art" which must be cited at some length here:

> Poète de la forme! [as opposed to "poet of content"] c'est là le grand mot à outrages que les utilitaires jettent aux vrais artistes . . . On va, accusant de sensualisme les statuaires qui font des femmes véritables avec des seins qui peuvent porter du lait et des hanches qui peuvent concevoir. Mais s'ils faisaient au contraire des draperies bourrées de coton et des figures plates comme des enseignes, on les appellerait idéalistes, spiritualistes. Ah oui! c'est vrai: il néglige la forme, dirait-on;

> mais c'est un penseur! Et les bourgeois, là-dessus, de se récrier . . . Faire tout bonnement des vers, écrire un roman, creuser du marbre, ah! fi donc! C'était bon autrefois, quand on n'avait pas la mission sociale du poète. . . . L'avocasserie se glisse partout, la rage de discourir, de pérorer, de plaider; la muse devient le piédestal de mille convoitises. O pauvre Olympe! ils seraient capables de faire sur ton sommet un plant de pommes de terre! Et s'il n'y avait que les médiocres qui s'en mêlassent, on les laisserait faire. Mais . . . les forts aussi . . . sont montés à la tribune; ils sont entrés dans un journal, et les voilà appuyant de leur nom immortel des théories éphémères.
>
> Ils travaillent à renverser quelque ministre qui tombera sans eux, quand ils pourraient, par un seul vers de satire, attacher à son nom une illustration d'opprobre.[8]

Flaubert's description of Thiers as a "vieux melon diplomatique, arrondissant sa bêtise sur le fumier de la bourgeoisie," for example, did accomplish that goal, and in such an effortless "aside" as to leave Flaubert the energy and time he needed for writing novels--novels where the distinction between true poets and bogus poets is made with ironic vengeance. A sharp attack against dilettantism in the arts appears in the Education, when Frédéric, exalted after his first dinner at Marie Arnoux's,

> fut saisi par un de ces frissons de l'âme où il vous semble qu'on est transporté dans un monde supérieur . . . Il se demanda, sérieusement, s'il serait un grand peintre ou un grand poète;--et il se décida pour la peinture, car les exigences de ce métier le rapprocherait de Mme Arnoux. Il avait donc une vocation! Le but de son existence était clair maintenant, et l'avenir infaillible. (ES 82)

The presence of the ironic indicator "infallible" serves but to accentuate the delusion, brought on by romantic excitement, that no painstaking apprenticeship is

necessary before a vocation in the arts can be found. Flaubertian irony in this regard dates back to Novembre, where the critical narrator of the third part ironically refers to the romantic first-person narrator of Part One, in the following manner: "Son grand regret était de ne pas être peintre, il disait avoir de très beaux tableaux dans l'imagination. Il se désolait également de n'être pas musicien . . ."[9] Flaubert's ironic litotes is of course revealed in the juxtaposition of the words "great regret" in the singular, and "également."

Indeed, dilettantism in the arts seems to have been so widespread as to cause great irritation to proponents of "l'Art pour l'Art"--witness Baudelaire's invective in the Salon de 1846 against a painter whose specialty is "poetry put to painting": "Après avoir imité Delacroix, après avoir singé les coloristes, les dessinateurs français et l'école néo-chrétienne d'Overbeck, M. Ary Scheffer s'est aperçu,--un peu tard sans doute,--qu'il n'était pas né peintre. Dès lors il fallut recourir à d'autres moyens; et il demanda aide et protection à la poésie."[10]

Flaubert, having satirized Fréderic's vocation as a painter, then continued his attack on the presumptions of the bourgeoisie in the arts. A particularly long-standing irritation was that caused by the impingement of lovers on the domain of poetry, and the favorable

comparisons often made between amateurs and great lyric poets. A long, sarcastic tirade on this subject appears in the 1845 Education, from which a few lines may be drawn here:

"Les amants ont la rage d'écrire; pour peu qu'ils soient gens de lettres, c'est un déluge de style . . . Je [m'adresse ici] . . . aux gens d'esprit qui en ont écrit eux-mêmes. . . : la passion ne se peint pas plus elle-même qu'un visage ne fait son portrait ni qu'un cheval n'apprend l'équitation." (1845 ES 296)

Of course, lovers actually use literature to further their own ends--not only Frédéric who fingers a volume of Musset before using it as an excuse to launch into an amorous discussion with Marie, but also Emma and Léon who use it as a means of escaping from Homais and Charles ("Ainsi s'établit entre eux une sorte d'association, un commerce continuel de livres et de romances; M. Bovary peu jaloux, ne s'en étonnait pas."--MB 381). But from there to writing is a long jump as far as Flaubert is concerned. His irony at Frédéric's expense is evident in the use of critical, technical terms in the following phrase: "Alors, il composa une lettre de douze pages, pleine de mouvements lyriques et d'apostrophes; mais il la déchira . . . [my emphases]" (ES 54).

Even as readers, the bourgeois anger Flaubert, who is a great deal more sensitive to their presumptions in

mis-reading than is Baudelaire. Flaubert is particularly ironic at the expense of the female reading public: Emma studies descriptions of furniture in Eugène Sue (MB 344)--her goals and purposes when reading Balzac and Sand are far from literary. As a writer, Flaubert is offended by the opinion of "serious" men (of science, for example, like his own father): that literature is merely a diversion for their wives. There is a sarcastic passage on this in the first Education, at Mme. Renaud's party, where "Les dames ne disaient rien, ou causaient littérature, ce qui est la même chose." (1845 ES 286) The days of Homer, nay, even of Du Bellay, are violently regretted by Flaubert. And his anger at writers who cater to such wide publics as nineteenth century France provided, became legendary. In a letter to Louise Colet he harshly criticized Lamartine's Graziella, where a man lives with a woman he loves and never desires sexual union, where emotion is subordinated to the "idée reçue," and all this because "il faut que les dames vous lisent."[11]

Therefore when Frédéric, in Paris for the first time, sits down to write a novel, the reader must expect the worst. And indeed, it is entitled

". . . Sylvio, le fils du pêcheur. Le héros, c'était lui-même; l'héroïne, Mme. Arnoux. Elle s'appelait Antonia;--et, pour l'avoir, il assassinait plusieurs gentilshommes, brûlait une partie de la ville et chantait

sous son balcon, où palpitaient à la brise les rideaux en damas rouge du boulevard Montmartre." (ES 56)

Of course, many critics have remarked upon Flaubert's irony at the expense of the romantic literature of his youth. Marie-Jeanne Durry has drawn a comparison between the "embryons d'idées" buried even in his later notebooks (the unused projects), and Flaubertian irony insofar as certain literatures in general are concerned. The conclusion of her Flaubert et ses projets inédits is of particular interest to the student of irony:

"Plus d'une fois, dans ses ironies sur ses héros, Flaubert les a montrés en mal d'oeuvres [giving birth to aborted works] . . . raillant les projets tumultueux de sa propre adolescence . . . [Nous assistons donc à] l'autocritique par Flaubert de ses projets avortés, le grossissement caricatural, la dérision dont il enveloppe ses personnages, la satire qu'il dirige contre les écrivains qui s'obligent à trouver des sujets par force et par artifice . . ."[12]

Flaubertian irony with regard to Romanticism in literature is present to a much lesser degree in L'Education than it is in Madame Bovary, where an entire chapter is devoted to the subject. But one must pay careful attention to its presence in the later novel. A sketch for Frédéric is also to be found in the 1845 Education in the person of Jules, whose relationship with Henry cools because the

latter, says the ironic narrator, "ne montrait pas . . . cette préoccupation exclusive du beau, qui ne voit dans le monde que des sujets de drame, des antithèses fécondes et des couchers de soleil." (1845 ES 310)

Although Frédéric's education does not include the "langueur mystique" of a convent, accentuated by Paul et Virginie and inflamed by erotic engravings in satin-bound keepsakes kept under dormitory pillows, one might surmise (given the sketch of Jules) that in Flaubert's imagination Frédéric, too, "se laissa donc glisser dans les méandres lamartiniens, écouta les harpes sur les lacs, tous les chants de cygnes mourants, toutes les chutes de feuilles, les vierges pures qui montent au ciel, et la voix de l'Eternel discourant dans les vallons." (MB 326)

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 8

[1]C. Baudelaire, Salon de 1846, in Oeuvres complètes, p. 876.

[2]Cf. Sainte-Beuve, "De la littérature industrielle," Revue des deux mondes (1839): "L'annonce règne dans la presse, et maintenant tous les éloges sont suspects; le lecteur n'est pas sûr qu'ils n'ont pas été payés." Quoted by A. Cassagne, La Théorie de L'Art pour l'Art en France (Paris: Dorbon, 1959), p. 21.

[3]Jacques Arnoux's publication, L'Art industriel, is a contradiction in Flaubertian terms. Not surprisingly, it turns out to be largely a dishonest concern, which favors Arnoux's profits over any work of art, no matter how great its merit.

[4]M. J. Durry, Flaubert et ses projets, p. 92. The brackets indicate material crossed out by Flaubert, but still legible and included in Durry's quotations from the notebooks.

[5]Jan. 12, 1860 entry, quoted by A. Billy, "Flaubert et les Goncourt," Bulletin des Amis de Flaubert (Année 1958, no. 13), p. 19.

[6]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928), II, 14.

[7]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973), I, 492.

[8]Ibid., I, 350-351. Flaubert reiterates the classical view of satire here, thatof Horace and of Boileau, who wrote in his Ninth Satire: "La Satire en leçons, en nouveautez fertile,/Sçait seule assaisonner le plaisant et l'utile,/Et d'un vers qu'elle épure aux rayons du bon sens,/ Détrompe les Esprits des erreurs de leur temps."

[9]Op. cit., Novembre, I, 273.

[10]Op. cit., Baudelaire, "De M. Ary Scheffer et des singes du sentiment," p. 931.

[11]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928), I, 314.

[12]Op. cit., Durry, p. 391.

9. THE ROLE OF IRONY IN FLAUBERTIAN AESTHETICS

Flaubert was very clear, and indeed was quite outspoken, about what he considered the necessary standards of excellence to be met by a good novelist. Critics who study his statements on these standards can easily discern a binary aesthetic structure in Flaubert--what must be included in a good novel is no more important than what must be omitted. Regarding the latter, Flaubert's judicious editing of his own works represents a methodological model. The act of editing was for Flaubert a painstakingly devised method for sifting through the raw material of inspiration, disposing of all but the finest words and phrases, then placing them, like rare jewels, in the best settings. The rough copies are described by René Dumesnil, in the following manner:

> Les brouillons de Madame Bovary remplissent 1, 788 feuillets . . . Les pages d'ébauche sont couvertes, recto et verso, d'une fine écriture: au verso d'une feuille, le premier jet, tel qu'il est venu, sans souci de la forme. Et puis, au recto de l'autre feuille, la reprise méticuleuse, phrase par phrase, une sorte de trituration de la matière, une mosaïque patiente, où les mots essentiels changent de place, à chaque rédaction nouvelle. . . . Et puis surtout, de correction en correction, des allégements, des suppressions, et cela jusqu'aux dernières épreuves, --plus même: de réimpression en réimpression.[1]

What was eliminated from the rough copy depended on the exigencies of the novel's subject and on each individual text, so that eliminations from the rough copy of Madame Bovary differed from passage to passage in method. What Flaubert considered to be "le mot juste" was too variable to be arrived at by any one formula (for example, no one method of editing could suit both Madame Bovary and Salammbô). For Flaubert, form and content were of course, inseparable: "On reproche aux gens qui écrivent en bon style de négliger l'Idée, le but moral; comme si le but du médecin n'était pas de guérir, le but du peintre de peindre, le but du rossignol de chanter, comme si le but de l'Art n'était pas le Beau avant tout!"[2]

From such statements, it is impossible to derive any just or exact idea of Flaubertian aesthetics. Actually, it is a common pitfall of criticism to draw excerpts like the one above from Flaubert's Correspondance, as proof of what each critic wishes to designate as Flaubert's own aesthetics. And in addition to critical bias, one must also distinguish, as Paul de Man is so fond of pointing out, between what an author states as his artistic philosophy, and what can be discerned as such in the work of fiction. Flaubert's Correspondance is a particularly difficult text to work with in this regard.

It includes passages dashed off at four in the morning after a full day and night's work by the author. Often, Flaubert's epistolary sermons are distressingly glib and facile--inferior, at times even opposed, to what he actually accomplished in his written works.

Our concern here is with Flaubert's aesthetics as a writer--disregarding his pompous opinions delivered to such persons as Mlle. Leroyer de Chantepie, we must consult those letters where Flaubert himself acted as a writer's critic: letters to Louise Colet, to Bouilhet, to Feydeau, to George Sand. The Correspondance, despite its pitfalls, must be employed in the analysis of binary structures in Flaubertian aesthetics. What could be included, and what was of necessity to be omitted, in the writing of fiction, according to Flaubert?

"Un romancier, selon moi, n'a pas le droit de dire son avis sur les choses de ce monde. Il doit, dans sa création, imiter Dieu dans la sienne, c'est-à-dire faire et se taire."[3] This quotation from Flaubert's Correspondance is usually cited by critics expounding upon his philosophy of aesthetics. It is taken as proof of Flaubert's own god-playing in his fiction. Let us instead bring into focus the lines preceding these oft-quoted ones, understanding that they were written for an intellectual friend of Flaubert's, who had requested his critique of a specific

work:

> Je ne partage pas tout à fait votre enthousiasme pour l'Affaire Clemenceau, bien que ce soit de beaucoup l'oeuvre la plus forte de Dumas. Mais il l'a gâtée à plaisir par des tirades et des lieux communs. Un romancier, selon moi, n'a pas le droit de dire son avis sur les choses de ce monde. Il doit, dans sa création, imiter Dieu dans la sienne, c'est-à-dire faire et se taire.[4]

We can now see that Flaubert's major objection is to the speeches, the soap-box tirades so prevalent in the narration in Dumas' work. The main verb of the oft-quoted section is "dire"--a verb more descriptive of conversations than of the art of fiction, for Flaubert. But the verb "dire" is hidden--on the one side by the underlined "n'a pas le droit," and on the other, by the glib metaphor of "divine" creation. What can or cannot be written, the problem we discussed previously in the light of the many eliminations made in the rough copies, emerges as a central aesthetic problem for Flaubert.[5]

Flaubert's own history as a writer is that of increasing elimination of "interventionist" narrators who "tell" too much, such as those prevalent in the "Mémoires d'un fou", and those (becoming rarer) in Novembre and the 1845 Education.[6] Madame Bovary marks a point where new novelistic techniques had to be invented by Flaubert, in the absence of such explanatory or declamatory narration as had been eliminated. Thus the characters in that novel

condemn themselves merely by speaking--one example of an original ironic device in the novel, arrived at by Flaubert in order to compensate for lack of direct narrative commentary.

Once again, critics have extricated certain lines from Flaubert's Correspondance in order to prove that he was a proponent of a scientific method--whether the critics emphasized objective realism or the a-psychological objectivism of the "nouveau-romanciers." But the reality of the Correspondance reveals a richer text than their conclusions might show, as in this passage addressed to George Sand: "Je crois que le grand Art est scientifique et impersonnel. Il faut, par un effort d'esprit, se transporter dans les personnages et non les attirer à soi."[7]

Upon reading the entire passage, one realizes that Flaubert was not founding a new school, but was in fact advising George Sand of a beneficial methodology she might employ to improve her novels:

> Je me suis mal exprimé en vous disant "qu'il ne fallait pas écrire avec son coeur;" j'ai voulu dire: ne pas mettre sa personnalité en scène. Je crois que le grand Art est scientifique et impersonnel. Il faut, par un effort d'esprit, se transporter dans les personnages et non les attirer à soi. Voilà du moins la méthode . . . [my emphases].[8]

Flaubert knew that George Sand considered as final copy what he believed should be only rough draft. He therefore

recommended to her a method of sifting, whereby she might particularly edit out those phrases by means of which she "drew her characters to herself," or made them too much like her. Flaubert's main point was not only that all authors should be scientific, but that George Sand should be less solipsistic.

In his diligent process of editing, Flaubert did finally arrive at what could be considered (more or less) a final copy. René Dumesnil discovers that:

> Tels passages comme le discours des "Comices" ont été entièrement refaits jusqu'à sept fois. Les scénarios, très développés, ne laissent à peu près rien au hasard. Les premiers sont même indéchiffrables, tant ils sont surchargés de développements et de béquets. Dans son livre sur le Travail du style enseigné par les manuscrits des grands écrivains, Antoine Albalat a dit très justement: "Aucun auteur n'a été plus longuement supplicié par les délices du style."[9]

The point at which Flaubert considered a passage complete was the point where the passage became a palatable whole--the point at which it finally seemed "true," scientifically, sociologically, psychologically and of course stylistically. Typically, though, the "truth" of the "Comices" scene is one where all the conflicting truths converge, and ironically where layers of deception become most visible. As we have said before, truth for Flaubert, was as much a mask as an unmasking. Realities

emerge from the text merely as variable and juxtaposable appearances. Too skeptical to be dogmatic, Flaubert shifted realities, and those shifting realities revolutionized the ironic realm in literature. So that after much editing, having arrived at the point that was "correct," Flaubert must have realized that this truth was but one "truth" among many possible ones (note in the Correspondance his frequent discouragements and disappointments with the limits of his current subject). Yet Flaubert's idealism about literature brought a halt to a skepticism that might have crippled him as a writer.

The great literary models were before him. As he saw it, "les deux éléments humains," sentiment and irony, were the two necessary elements common to all great literature.[10] Therefore, this goal was to guide Flaubert's aesthetic philosophy, in terms of what should be included in the writing of a novel: "Ecrire un grand roman tout simple mêlé d'ironie et de sentiment, c'est-à-dire vrai," as he advised Louise Colet to do, instead of wallowing in her troubles.[11]

"Sentiment" must be understood as a term of multi-dimensional extension, a fact which of course any good dictionary will confirm. Especially in view of recent interest in Flaubert's novel, L'Education sentimentale,

much critical attention has been directed toward this word.[12] But as only one of the two major elements in Flaubertian aesthetics, it has not been adequately linked to its inseparable complement, irony.

In Madame Bovary, as in l'Education, "sentiment" is a word which is empowered by its momentum along a trajectory from the sexual, across the "romantic" threshold, to the psychological. This trajectory can be seen, as the Flaubertian narrator describes Emma's experience with romances sung in music class at the convent:

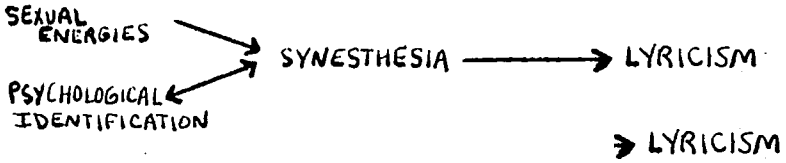
> des romances . . . qui lui laissaient entrevoir, à travers la niaiserie du style et les imprudences de la note, l'attirante fantasmagorie des réalités sentimentales. Quelques-unes de ses camarades apportaient au couvent les keepsakes qu'elles avaient reçus en étrennes. Il les fallait cacher, c'était une affaire; on les lisait au dortoir. Maniant délicatement leurs belles reliures de satin, Emma fixait ses regards éblouis sur le nom des auteurs inconnus qui avaient signé, le plus souvent, comtes ou vicomtes, au bas de leurs pièces. Elle frémissait, en soulevant de son haleine le papier de soie des gravures, qui se levait à demi plié et retombait doucement contre la page. C'était, derrière la balustrade d'un balcon, un jeune homme en court manteau qui serrait dans ses bras une jeune fille en robe blanche, portant une aumônière à sa ceinture. . . . (MB 325)

There is such confusion of sexual, romantic and psychological elements in Emma's education, that her weaknesses are indeed fatally exploited. The same sensual

confusion, however (the confluence of sensations and emotions), is the perfect vehicle, if not a motivating force, for Flaubert's style. The physical world as included in "sentiment" is the starting point for synesthetic experience, in the true Baudelairian manner. All senses are stimulated--tactile, auditory, gustatory, sexual. Words and phrases are energized: "maniant délicatement," "ses regards éblouis," "elle frémissait, en soulevant de son haleine le papier de soie . . . qui se levait . . . et retombait doucement contre la page."

Such synesthetic physical descriptions stimulate the author to stylistic excitement, while giving the character a psychological depth which establishes her human-like characteristics so strongly, as to practically force the reader's identification with her.[13] Nathalie Sarraute's discussion of identification with psychological characters rightly leads to the rejection of Flaubert as a precursor of the "nouveau roman" (so-considered by some on account of his preoccupation with form). Sarraute justly observes that "ces belles descriptions ciselées et cadencées" create in the reader a "surging up" of images, raising our level of excitement "by means of suggestive, sonorous phrases upon which we build our own worlds."[14]

Flaubert's is <u>the</u> novel of the psychological character. Emma expands outside the limits of exact physical description. In Flaubert's description of Emma, the psychological dimension is a necessary step in the progression from specific (sexual) description, to synesthesia, to diffusion of the physical through the associative psychological--retaining the energy of the first, and encouraging multiple depths of identification through the last. It is from this very basis that Flaubert expands, too (in the literary experience), becomes more abstract, and yields to the exaltation of style, to high lyricism:



The characters seem to observe the readers "avec des regards familiers," while in the course of Flaubert's scene "les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent," as in Baudelaire. Flaubert in his idealism about literature must indeed have been satisfied with those paragraphs in their final and "correct" form.

Furthermore, the narrator of the chapter from which the "sentimental" quotation was drawn, is one of the most ironic in all Flaubertian literature, listing (with a vengeance) all the short-comings and clichés of the Romantic imagination: "A la classe de musique, dans les

romances qu'elle chantait, il n'était question que de petits anges aux ailes d'or, de madones, de lagunes, de gondoliers. . . . [22] (MB 325). Flaubert was insistent upon the dual nature--sentimental and ironic--of the novel, upon what Thibaudet called "ce mélange de lyrisme et d'ironie qui donne le ton à son oeuvre."[15]

Flaubert described himself personally as one whose "ironie plane sur tous les ensembles sérieux."[16] But as a novelist he found exclusively ironic writing to be unsatisfactory. His reasons for this are clear in at least two very important respects: as we have seen in our study of "l'Art pour l'Art," Flaubert assiduously avoided standing on any one soapbox for any one cause. (The character, Hussonnet, was the one who stood on a soapbox for the cause of Irony.) Furthermore, Flaubert's idealism in art, his love for his medium, transcended his ironic view, even of life itself. "Art views everything ironically except art itself"--this is the type of irony classified by Wayne Booth under the title of "The Aesthetic Manifesto," and it is indeed the one Boothian category most descriptive of Flaubert.[17]

Therefore, trying to extract irony from a Flaubertian text is like trying to extract the "signature of his style" (to paraphrase S. Sontag), to remove irony from ironic syntax. It is impossible to remove irony

from Flaubertian super-structures either--such super-structures as his plots are all devised with ironic intent. For Flaubert, while editing his work, must have believed that if sentiment was heart (and lyricism), irony was surely intelligence. "Si la Bovary vaut quelque chose, ce livre ne manquera pas de coeur. L'ironie pourtant me semble dominer la vie," he wrote to Louise Colet in a general aesthetic analysis of a double schema he would attempt for his novel.[18]

It would be impossible to extract "sentiment" (that is, the scenes that represent the "réalités sentimentales") from our reading of Madame Bovary. But Flaubert's "réalités sentimentales" are also inseparable from the ironic narrator's introduction to those visions. Syntactically, the "il n'était question que de petits anges aux ailes d'or," and the list that follows, represent as irony the introductory narration. The parallelism of irony and sentiment in this text is beyond question.

Another text, one from the Education sentimentale, is symptomatic of the most serious problems Flaubert was faced with in this novel. It depicts the love affair between Marie and Frédéric at its most explicit point. This text is also introduced ironically, after Frédéric hides his embarrassment with a story about a set of

china, because an inopportune customer has "caught" him caressing Marie: "Elle ne répondit rien. Mais cette complicité silencieuse enflamma son visage de toutes les rougeurs de l'adultère." (ES 300)

Not much more is said about Marie's inner state. Frédéric, in the Auteuil scene, tries to appear more desperate than he is, in order to convince Marie to have an affair with him, while Flaubert divides their dialogue between direct and indirect discourse, an ironic example of the latter being: "Cependant, où serait le mal quand deux pauvres êtres confondraient leur tristesse?" (ES 300). The narrator's irony is evident here, in view of Frédéric's purpose as revealed in the preceding phrase, "afin de poursuivre ses avantages." The dialogue then extends rather lengthily in the absence of action. The narration is caught up in confusing explanations of Frédéric's psychological state, where action and dialogue ought to have sufficed: "il se laissa tomber sur les genoux, malgré lui, s'affaissant sous un poids intérieur trop lourd . . . [my emphases]. Such an explanation is too brief to be believable, as it is not consonant with Frédéric's energetic scheming in the rest of the scene.

Frédéric's visits to Auteuil are described at some length. (Flaubert had no choice but to fill out this scene, once he had decided to keep it.) Its padding

consists of descriptions of dull actions and sites: Frédéric's promise of large tips to coachmen is one such action. One site is Marie's house, which neither illuminates her character nor Flaubert's style (ES 301-302). "Puis c'étaient d'interminables plaintes sur la Providence" (ES 302)--Flaubert himself seems bored with this, whence his ironic interruption, the description of the life the characters might have led (as they imagine it): "excédant toutes joies, défiant toutes les misères." (ES 303)

But Flaubert's passage continues to falter, and though lovely details appear in the next paragraph (Marie breaking the sun's rays with her hand, for instance), it is but a refined version of this clichéd passage from the 1845 Education: "Chaque heure apportait son plaisir différent, ils n'étaient pas heureux le matin comme ils l'étaient le soir, ni la nuit de la même manière que le jour; les choses les plus communes [like Marie's fingers, for Frédéric] ou les plus indifférentes avaient pour eux une signification particulière." (1845 ES 314)

The Auteuil scene is weighted with more under-developed clichés of romantic love (Frédéric's "adoration" of Marie's name) than the greatest love could sustain, and more tedium: "Ils arrivèrent à fixer d'avance le jour de ses visites; et sortant comme par hasard, elle allait au-devant de lui, sur la route." (ES 303)

This ordinary language represents a fall or decline in style, in what has not become, what keeps hesitating to become, a lyric scene. Frédéric's "visits to Auteuil" represent a sentimental passage which is greatly lacking in physical or psychological impetus, though it may be wistfully thought of in terms of "forces perdues." Ordinary language at this point is no longer the "coup de maître" of the ironic dialogues. Because of the fall into ordinary language, stylistic momentum is lost, and Flaubert cannot maintain it in either his ironic, or his sentimental, range. Further, since Marie as a true character had always been sketched in according to Frédéric's view of her, the Auteuil scene, with an objective narration viewing two characters from the same distance, is strangely unsatisfying. If one assumes that, as Sarraute has stated, the reader "fills in" Flaubertian scenes with his own imagined details, the reader's dissatisfaction would stem from the fact that there is not enough information on Marie to "fill in" with, in this scene where she and Frédéric are equidistant from the narrative point of view. Perhaps the scene would have been more successful, had Flaubert continued to view Marie over Frédéric's shoulder, exclusively.

What is the "truth" of this love affair, which allowed Flaubert to retain the Auteuil scene as a palatable whole? Elisa Schlésinger's dramatic story (including

her virtual "sale" by her first husband to Maurice Schlésinger) is implicit in her last scene of the Education. But in terms of the entire novel, she is hardly developed as a character. She is at first sketched out rather beautifully on the boat trip from Paris, in the dreaminess of the river, and in ominous echoes of neglect, while Arnoux is the boisterous center of attention aboard the Ville-de-Montereau. But Marie appears only in scattered scenes of the Education. Many of those that include her (such as the Auteuil scene) are as in a stylistic abyss between two realms, the sentimental and the ironic. This fracturing element gnaws at l'Education sentimentale, as Flaubert himself knew. Somehow in the Education, the two realms occasionally became mutually exclusive. Technically, the device by which Marie Arnoux avoided giving in to Frédéric, after agreeing to a rendez-vous--Flaubert's "coincidence" of her son's illness--works poorly to establish her psychological depths. In fact, that very device, that slim coincidence, was employed to remove her from "another" novel, a novel which was about to begin again. The "Revolution scenes" could only begin when the "love-interest" had been removed: ironically, Marie's supreme sacrifice was also the sign of her exit "de la scène." Nevertheless, Flaubert proceeded, satisfied that he had found a device, if only

a super-structural one, whereby irony and sentiment could at least be linked.

Frédéric seems to participate in "both" novels. One could say that his love-affair with Marie lacks the passion necessary for the intensely lyrical narration of "réalités sentimentales." His sexuality falls within the scope of the ironic realm, however--relations with Rosanette and Mme. Dambreuse involving powerful ironic narration and dialogue. (Here there is little question of psychological, sexual and sociological convergence in key scenes of a main protagonist's youth however, as found in Charles or Emma Bovary's "éducations sentimentales.") But Frédéric's participation in both the sentimental and ironic realms did not cure Flaubert of the apprehensive feeling that lack of focus was working against his interests in the novel. Indeed, the Frédéric character is hardly endowed with the energy to sustain the two "novels" within the Education: the one dealing with Marie Arnoux's life and loves, the other with the history of Frédéric and his generation. And Marie herself is altogether an enigma. Perhaps Flaubert for some reason was unable to use Elisa Schlésinger to chronicle Marie Arnoux's frustrations and her sufferings (as he had used Louise Pradier in the portrait of Emma).[19] But perhaps Flaubert loved her too much to give Frédéric any other love.

By bringing this novel too close to himself, while revealing too little in the main female character, Flaubert failed to convince the reader that a whole revolution was subordinate, or perhaps equal, to such an affair as Frédéric's and Marie's. Flaubert himself seems to have been uneasy about the unresolved conflict between his life and his art, as seen in this novel. As he wrote in 1879: "Esthétiquement parlant [de l'Education], il y manque la fausseté de perspective. A force d'avoir bien combiné le plan, le plan disparaît. Toute oeuvre d'art doit avoir un point, un sommet, faire la pyramide, ou bien la lumière doit frapper sur un point de la boule. Or, rien de tout cela dans la vie."[20]

Marie-Jeanne Durry's reflections on the matter of Elisa Schlésinger are more sober, yet more provocative, than most:

> [Flaubert] . . . avait enfermé [dans la chambre royale] le long souvenir d'une passion d'autant plus intense qu'elle n'avait jamais trouvé, croyait-on, son accomplissement charnel . . . Que l'énigme demeure. Que l'on continue d'ignorer si les premières ébauches [de l'Education définitive] . . . sont plus fidèles [à la réalité], ou si la réalité même a été pareille au songe et si Flaubert l'avait emprisonnée en lui avec un tel serment intérieur de ne jamais la révéler, une telle pudeur du sacré, une si essentielle jalousie, qu'il a fallu l'authenticité même de son oeuvre, plus forte que son désir de séparer son oeuvre de lui, pour le contraindre à laisser apparaître son propre secret de pureté.[21]

NOTES FOR CHAPTER NINE

[1]R. Dumesnil, "Introduction à Madame Bovary," MB 275-276.

[2]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1973),I,350.

[3]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928),II,322.

[4]Ibid.

[5]In fact, an author like Flaubert could never play God with his work, because the work itself demands countless acts of the pen. But that is another question.

[6]Cf. Jean Bruneau, Les débuts littéraires de Gustave Flaubert, 1831-45 (Paris: A. Colin, 1962), pp. 556-557, for an analysis of this stylistic evolution.

[7]G. Flaubert, Correspondance (1928),II,340.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Op.cit. MB 276.

[10]Flaubert wrote to Louise Colet: "Si la Bovary vaut quelque chose, ce livre ne manquera pas de coeur. L'ironie pourtant me semble dominer la vie. . . . Elle vous enlève à la personnalité, loin de vous y retenir. Le comique arrivé à l'extrême, le comique qui ne fait pas rire, le lyrisme dans la blague, est pour moi tout ce qui me fait le plus envie comme écrivain. [This could also describe Baudelaire, of course.] Les deux éléments humains sont là. Le Malade imaginaire descend plus loin dans les mondes intérieurs que tous les Agamemnons. Le 'N'y aurait-il pas du danger à parler de toutes ces maladies?' vaut le 'Qu'il mourût!'"--Correspondance (1928),I,317.

[11]Correspondance (1973),I,385.

[12]Cf. Peter Cortland, The Sentimental Adventure (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1967).

[13]Flaubert as a reader of his own work also identifies himself very strongly with Emma here. In a letter to Louise Colet he describes his early conditioning as a romantic, comparing it to the contraction of a nervous disease (much as it

became for Emma): "J'ai eu aussi, moi, mon époque nerveuse, mon époque sentimentale, et j'en porte encore, comme un galérien, la marque au cou." --Correspondance (1928),II, 463.

[14]Op.cit. "Flaubert le Précurseur," p.6.

[15]Op.cit., p.82.

[16]Correspondance (1973), I,349.

[17]W. Booth, A Rhetoric of Irony, pp. 207-208.

[18]This statement appears in the same letter as passages on "l'art pour l'art" and the "mission sociale de l'artiste," already discussed. Its reliability is supported by further evidence on irony as intelligence which can dominate life: cf. Correspondance (1973),I, 307-308; and 1845 ES 362.

[19]Cf. D. Siler, Flaubert et Louise Pradier: le texte intégral des mémoires de Mme. Ludovica (Paris: Lettres modernes, 1973). Flaubert "used" many models for Emma, of course--including Louise Colet, much to her surprise and anger.

[20]Correspondance (1928), III,417.

[21]M.J. Durry, Flaubert et ses projets, p.200.

CONCLUSION

Despite the difficulties posed by the problem of Marie Arnoux in the novel, there is an undeniable elemental unity in the Education sentimentale as studied from an ironic perspective--a unity which marks the most succinct of Flaubert's sentences, the most sweeping of his historical chapters, the form of his dialogues, the content of his satire. It was a careful analysis of the style of Flaubert that first revealed to me his ironic innovations in the novelistic genre.

Syntactic irony, as I have defined it stylistically, is a procedure by means of which a reader is jolted off the path of his usual expectations of the sentence. The syntactically ironic sentence often demands a careful re-reading, without which the reader may misunderstand its actual intent. By means of a few well-chosen, very succinct, and above all, correct details, and by means of their placement within the sentence, an entire portrait emerges from the master's most delicate brush-strokes. This involves what Flaubert called "l'anatomie du style; savoir comment une phrase se membre, et par où elle s'attache."[1] And Flaubert made extensive use of this anatomical knowledge, syntactically, in the Education, employing concessive clauses, syllepses,

etc., to their full ironic advantages.

The orchestration of dialogues, and Flaubert's use of free indirect style, participate to the same extent in the inspired succinctness of irony. Only certain details could be chosen, as Flaubert freed narrative prose from the task of describing and explaining everything, so as to extract from language "un style qui serait beau . . . et qui serait rhythmé comme le vers, précis comme le langage des sciences, et avec des ondulations, des renflements de violoncelle, des aigrettes de feu. Un style qui vous entrerait dans l'idée comme un coup de stylet . . . "[2] And indeed, only certain details could be chosen for the "recording" of dialogues at the Dambreuse gatherings, at the Club de l'Intelligence, at Dussardier's meetings, at Rosanette's all-night parties, at the Alhambra, etc. As briefly as possible, the essential details necessary for ironic portraits were provided by Flaubert.

The style of the dialogues does remind one of successive "coups de stylet." Each participant's phrase cuts into the texture of the prose, itself so smooth, so essentially uninterrupted (because of Flaubert's timing, indirect dialogue, and other methods of orchestration) that despite these incisions, the rhythmic continuity of dialogued passages is unimpaired, and the portrait (Flaubert's reconstructed reality) is complete.

In the unusual juxtapositions of scenes for ironic effect, the novel is freed from the duty of linear and encyclopedic cataloguing. Though the narrative point of view is constantly shifting in the Flaubertian novel, the over-all effect involves the creation of a momentum "où votre pensée enfin voguerait sur des surfaces lisses, comme lorsqu'on file dans un canot avec bon vent arrière."[3] The author's direction of the movement of ironic scenes, parallels his considerations of dynamics and movement, within dialogued passages. The Flaubertian point of view, like that of a cameraman in a modern film, is eminently flexible; perspectives are switched according to the ironic exigencies of the scene depicted. Over Frédéric's shoulder in the first scene of the Education, Flaubert's "camera" pans across the "paysage," then studies the passengers, then zooms in on Marie Arnoux. The "camera" remains stationary for a while, allowing Frédéric (catching Marie's shawl) to enter onto the set. Suddenly, her husband's voice is heard (as a distracting device, like the "craquement" of floorboards and other such sounds), and the ironic "camera" now shifts to its new visual center of attention, Jacques Arnoux.

The way in which scene-fragments are manipulated by Flaubert, the particular placement of comparative fragments for ironic effect, allows them to enter into new and unusual aesthetic "tableaux."

The impact of Flaubert's ironic outlook is so basic, that it must be perceived at the most elemental level in the Education. The structure of the sentences themselves is such, that at every turn, the reader participates in the game of irony, stopping, and delighting in the unusual workings of a great stylist. As when Frédéric throws the plate at Cisy's face, and the reader discovers it to have landed in Cisy's stomach, Flaubert slows down the action, frame by frame, so that we view this action, and the characters, dissected. The syntactic process teaches us how to perceive each incident ironically. Again and again, we are shown how Frédéric's project is inevitably thwarted by life's contingencies. Flaubertian syntactic irony in fact expresses, in microcosm, this essential theme of the Education.

"L'ironie pourtant me semble dominer la vie," said Flaubert. And irony, as a principle of style and structure, also prevailed, from the elemental sentence to the broadest outlines of plot, over Flaubert's Education sentimentale.

NOTES FOR THE CONCLUSION

[1]Correspondance (1928), I, 442.

[2]Ibid., I, 315-316.

[3]Ibid., I, 316.

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*Only volume 1 has appeared to date.

**I have chosen to refer to this more recent Seuil edition rather than Conard, for several of Flaubert's novels.

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