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A SCYTHIAN AMONG THE FRENCH: THE ROLE OF IVAN TURGENEV IN THE SOCIETE DES CINQ

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A SCYTHIAN AMONG THE FRENCH:

THE ROLE OF IVAN TURGENEV

IN THE

SOCIÉTÉ DES CINQ

by

SUSAN L. ROSENSTREICH

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

1981

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1981

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in French in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

A SCYTHIAN AMONG THE FRENCH: THE ROLE OF IVAN TURGENEV IN THE SOCIÉTÉ DES CINQ

by

Susan L. Rosenstreich

What was the importance of Ivan Turgenev's presence in the Société des Cinq? This study focuses on ideas of social change and social reform, which Edmond de Goncourt, Flaubert, Zola, and Daudet possessed in common with Turgenev, and expressed in their novels. The method of inquiry begins with the creation and development of a Scythian character in Turgenev's later novels of contemporary life, and continues with an examination of novels by French members of the Société des Cinq. A similar character is shown to be present in these novels, and the increased prominence of these characters coincides with the novelists' years of association with Turgenev. The study concludes that Turgenev played a crucial role in the development of ideas concerning social reform among French members of the Société des Cinq.

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Valid statements in the following text were made with the approbation and encouragement of these three mentors. For the erroneous ones, I take sole responsibility.

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Introduction

He was Russian; they were French. He was an international cosmopolite, fluent in several languages and familiar with the customs and ideologies of two distinct cultures. They, on the other hand, remained tourists when they traveled abroad. But Ivan Turgenev, Edmond de Goncourt, Gustave Flaubert, Alphonse Daudet, and Emile Zola were destined for friendship. It all began when Edmond met Turgenev at one of the first Magny dinners on February 23, 1863. On May 8, 1880, when Flaubert died at Croisset, it all ended. During those seventeen years, one of the most intriguing circles of novelists in literary history evolved. Four years after meeting Edmond de Goncourt and Gustave Flaubert at Magny's, Turgenev had formed the close friendship with Flaubert which was to continue until Flaubert's death. Zola and Turgenev met at Flaubert's home on rue Murillo in 1872, and, in 1874, Daudet joined these four novelists, for the first meeting of the Société des Cinq. The five members came together because their differences fascinated them. They stayed together because, beneath the differences, there was a mutual, compelling interest. More than any other motive, the hope that their novels would influence the course of civilization towards some greater good was responsible for bringing together the members of the Société des Cinq.

Their hope for a more civilized world should not be taken to mean that the novelists in the Société des Cinq were optimistic about contemporary society. On the contrary, the trenchant social criticism in the literature of Turgenev, the Goncourts and Flaubert was augmented by political criticism in the novels of Daudet and Zola. Their novels of contemporary life, that is, their novels in which contemporary life is represented in a form which most of their readers would accept as real, are replete with pessimism. For the Société des Cinq, contemporary civilization was truly uncivilized, eroding the intrinsic value of the individual, and the enduring worth of humanity with transitory commercial values. Bourgeois culture, the life of the great urban centers of the period, appeared to these novelists as the advent of an oblivion which would engulf the past and of a present whose only pleasures were those which could be purchased from the shelves of a city shop.

If contemporary life incited the Société des Cinq to pessimism, where is the reader to look for the signs of hope that drew these novelists together? In the act of befriending Ivan Turgenev, the French members of the circle left a major clue as to where we might look for their faith in the progress of a humanist civilization. The pacific charm and reassuring confidence Turgenev displayed in his personal relationships appear also in the most realistic of his novels of contemporary life. When the intelligentsia ceases its officious, vainglorious chatter, there is a

humanist voice in Turgenev's novels, which speaks on, remembering from the past that which is of value to humanity in the future. This voice is the key to Turgenev's humanist thought, and the speaker is Turgenev's Scythian character. The Scythian transcends the constant race of the present toward an uncertain future, analyzes the social consequences of disorder and incoherence, and develops a sense of responsibility for the correction of these inadequacies. Through deep psychological change, the Scythian character leads the way toward constructive social change.

There is a similar key figure who speaks for humanist ideals in the novels of contemporary life by the other members of the Société des Cinq. Unlike Turgenev's Scythian, these key figures manage to be heard only briefly, before being overwhelmed by a society intent upon facile pleasures. But, like Turgenev's Scythian, these figures are keys to each author's humanist thought, to the belief in universal human dignity, which, if nourished from era to era, could produce a humanist society.

The history of the development of the Société des Cinq contributes to an understanding of the humanist thought which consolidated it, and that is precisely where our examination of key figures in novels by members of the group will begin. But it is in the key figures themselves that we fully appreciate the mutual sense of hope among these five novelists. Because the novels they published, or were about to publish, during their association would most likely

contain the ideas they discussed at their gatherings, we use these novels as the sources of evidence for humanism in the discussion of the key figure.

Turgenev's Scythian most clearly represents the concept of the key figure, and the first example of this character appears in On the Eve. The Scythian will mature in Fathers and Sons and Smoke, emerging in Turgenev's "new man," Solomin, in Virgin Soil. Key figures in Renée Mauperin, Germinie Lacerteux, Manette Salomon, Madame Gervaisais, La Fille Elisa, and Les Frères Zemganno will demonstrate the Goncourt brothers' belief that individual lives possess value for all society. Flaubert's two novels of contemporary life written during his association with Turgenev, L'Education sentimentale and Bouvard et Pécuchet, contain key figures who explain his humanist thought. Although Le Petit Chose was published before Daudet met Turgenev, it is an invaluable reference for the understanding of key figures in Fromont jeune et Risler aîne, Jack, Le Nabab, and Les Rois en exil. We will refer to Zola's novels, La Conquête de Plassans, La Faute de l'abbé Mouret, Son Excellence Eugène Rougon, L'Assommoir, Une Page d'amour, and Nana, in our study of his key figures.

If the examination of each author proceeds according to the order in which Turgenev became acquainted with them, we do not imply thereby that the existence of key figures in their novels can be attributed to Turgenev's influence on his French associates. Instead, this procedure illustrates

that the hope for the eventual ascendancy of a peaceful, dignified human family was shared by all members of the Société des Cinq, that this hope was most clearly expressed in Turgenev's Scythian character, and that, as this unusual association of novelists continued, the French members expressed with increasing intensity their hopes for a humanist civilization.

Chapter I

The Société des Cinq

> 23 février, 1863: Dîner de Magny. Charles Edmond nous amène Tourguéneff, cet écrivain d'un talent si délicat, l'auteur des *Mémoires d'un seigneur russe*, l'auteur de *L'Hamlet russe*.[1]

Edmond de Goncourt's journal entry for February 23, 1863, marks the beginning of an association which was to eventually unite Turgenev and the Goncourts with Flaubert, Daudet, and Zola in the Société des Cinq.[2] A spirit of great levity reigned at the regular gatherings of these five novelists, whom it pleased Flaubert to call "les auteurs sifflés,"[3] since each of them had failed at least once to please a theatre audience. Flaubert's *Le Candidat*, the Goncourts' *Henriette Maréchale*, *Le Bouton de Rose* of Zola, Daudet's production of *L'Arlésienne* with Bizet's music, and Turgenev's plays, in general, according to him, had all been unsuccessful, and it undoubtedly gave the writers great pleasure to commiserate with each other.

More than commiseration bound the Société des Cinq together, however. Beneath the spirited tenor of conversation at the dinner table, or during the long Sunday afternoon visits, there dwelt a sympathy for each other's purpose in making a life of literature, and as the years

passed and antagonisms between various members of the group came to the surface, this sympathy was a critical factor in sustaining the Société des Cinq. "Nous avions en ce temps chez Gustave Flaubert," wrote Daudet of those years of association, "des réunions du dimanche qui ont fait peu à peu, d'un petit groupe de'écrivains unis dans le respect et la passion des lettres un groupe de vrais amis."[4] Flaubert, who introduced Turgenev to Daudet and Zola during the course of 1872,[5] can be credited with bringing the group together, providing a meeting-place first in his quarters on rue Murillo, and, later, in the Saint Honoré district. But the formation of the sympathetic ties must be attributed to additional favorable influences, and the most important of these is the presence of Turgenev in the Société des Cinq.

Charles Edmond, whose friendship with the newly expatriated Turgenev dated from several years earlier, chose a propitious moment to introduce the Russian realist to the Magny circle, for dining with the Sainte Beuve's group that evening was Gustave Flaubert. Aside from Prosper Mérimée, Flaubert was the French writer closest to Turgenev during his life, and the friendship between the two novelists was a source of encouragement for both of them during their later years. But the friendship was slow to develop. The circumstances of Turgenev's expatriation in 1862 accorded him considerably less social freedom than he had enjoyed as the obscure young Russian whom Pauline and Louis Viardot introduced to George Sand in 1845 at Cortavenel.

Eighteen years later, Turgenev's reputation as one of Russia's foremost realists had spread to France, where Mérimée's article, "La Littérature et le servage en Russie,"[6] had brought Charrière's translation of Notes of a Hunter to the attention of French readers. The decision to settle in Baden with the Viardots in 1862 removed Turgenev from an unpleasantly polarized political climate in Russia, but, while he could now freely exercise that "impartialité" of which Mérimée wrote in 1854, his residence in Baden prevented him from pursuing a close friendship with Flaubert.

Nonetheless, the "bons auspices"[7] under which the two had met at Turgenev's first Magny dinner were sufficient to establish a correspondence, and in November, 1868, Turgenev stayed with Flaubert at Croisset, where the two "moles,"[8] as Turgenev called them both, discussed in depth ideas upon which they had only been able to touch lightly in their brief encounters and letters. "Il y a peu d'hommes dont la compagnie soit meilleure et l'esprit plus séduisant," remarked Flaubert to Princess Mathilde shortly after Turgenev's visit. "Quel dommage qu'on ne vive jamais avec les gens que l'on aime."[9]

The initial bond between Turgenev and the two realists, Edmond de Goncourt and Flaubert, strengthened over the course of the next few years, to the extent that, when Turgenev settled in Paris in 1872 at the Viardot's home on rue de Douai, the three writers dined together often. Although Flaubert and Turgenev spent a great deal of time

together, Turgenev being especially helpful to Flaubert during the drafting of La Tentation de Saint Antoine, the French realist enjoyed introducing other writers to the friend whose judgment he had come to value. The publication of Zola's La Fortune des Rougon convinced Flaubert that the author of that "atroce et beau livre"[10] possessed real talent, and he invited him to meet Turgenev. At the same time, Daudet was made welcome at Flaubert's Sunday gatherings, and, as he was to do later with Henry James and Guy de Maupassant, Turgenev set about helping the two younger writers to become more widely known. For Zola, there was a contract with Stasjulevič for Vestnik Evropy,[11] a relationship which lasted for five years, and included the first publication of much of Le Roman expérimental, as well as of several of the Rougon-Macquart novels. For Daudet, Turgenev helped secure assignments from Novoe Vremja.

The five novelists met as a group for the first time on April 14, 1874, at Restaurant Riche.[12] If conversation at subsequent meetings centered on literature, it was also likely to cover peripheral issues as well, and, in this respect, Turgenev's broad background served his French associates well. Not only was his literary acumen responsible for widening their horizons, introducing them to aspects of Goethe previously unfamiliar to them with his translations of Prometheus and The Satyr,[13] and explaining his opinions of the Russian peasant.[14] Turgenev also brought to the

group the experiences of a Russian aristocrat, educated at universities in Moscow, Petersburg and Berlin, and welcomed into intellectual circles which included Bakunin, Belinskij, Stankevič, Granovskij, and Herzen among others. Thus, when the Société des Cinq discussed the performance of Augier's Madame Caverlet, Turgenev commented to the French novelists that their reaction was a clear expression of their "religion du droit," while the Russians, not in the least legalist, were, above all, "des hommes."[15] The idea that ultimately human behavior is beyond the dominion of law, and must be understood and modified by some other means proves to be Turgenev's most important contribution to discussions among the members of the group.

Personal relationships between the several members of the Société des Cinq did not progress as smoothly as the development of the association itself. Although Turgenev and Flaubert frequently expressed critical judgments of each other to friends, their friendship was far more stable than their acquaintance with Zola, who irritated both of them,[16] as well as Edmond de Goncourt. Edmond also got along poorly with Daudet towards the end of the association. But the most intriguing antagonism of all was expressed by Turgenev. Turgenev had never made a secret of his impatience with French culture. In 1857, he had written to Lev Tolstoij that "there is only one narrow path along which the French poke their noses into anything designated a received idea."[17] When his association with the Société des Cinq brought him

into extended contact with leading French novelists, Turgenev became more specific in his criticism, yet it remained entirely professional, devoid of personal attack. In 1875, he remarked in a letter to Saltykov:

> . . . reading your letter of November 30, I'd gladly kiss you, dear Mixail Evgrafovič, for what you say about the novels of Goncourt and Zola is apt and true . . . Yet it is not that they lack talent, especially Zola. They are just not on the track of what is real. Their literature simply stinks of literature; there's the evil.[18]

That literature was his first and foremost reason for joining the association could not have been more clearly stated when he wrote to Zola following Flaubert's death: "Ce n'est pas seulement un grant talent qui s'en va, c'est un etre d'élite, et un centre pour nous tous."[19] Loyalty to literature through loyalty to writers had motivated Turgenev to remain as cordial as would be possible under the circumstances with Tolstoij, given that the two very nearly duelled over personal disagreements in 1861. Even Dostojevskij's parody of him in The Devils, coming barely two years after his bitter criticism of Turgenev for Smoke, aroused little more anger in Turgenev than the realization that Dostojevskij still owed him money.

Turgenev's French friends failed to take his principle of unwavering loyalty into account when Isaac Pavlovskij published Souvenirs sur Tourguéneff, in which Turgenev is purported to have made disparaging remarks about the French in general and Daudet in particular.[20] Edmond de Goncourt and Daudet pointedly disengaged themselves of the

obligations of loyalty to the memory of the deceased Russian when the monograph was circulated. Daudet, to whom Turgenev had openly expressed reservations on Le Nabab,[21] now saw the Russian as a hypocrite, disguising disdain with flattery. "Je le vois dans ma maison, à ma table, doux, affectueux, embrassant mes enfants. J'ai de lui des lettres cordiales, exquises. Et voilà ce qu'il y avait sous ce bon sourire."[22] To Goncourt, Turgenev now appeared "petit, manquant de bravoure."[23] As if the judgment of his former friends consigned Turgenev to obscurity, the fact that the Société des Cinq had existed at all seemed unimportant to the author of Mimesis who observed that "Turgenev received more than he gave" to the French.[24]

Without touching upon the writing of Flaubert, the Goncourts, Daudet, and Zola during the period of their association with the Société des Cinq, it is clear that, on the contrary, Turgenev brought a great deal to his French friends. A broad, humanitarian point of view was not the least of his offerings, and, in fact, Turgenev defined himself as a humanist in a letter to a friend in 1875. "I do not believe in absolutes, or systems, and I love freedom above all else . . . Everything human is dear to me."[25]

The humanism which Turgenev claimed as his personal philosophy is as apparent in the novels he published during his years as a member of the Société des Cinq as it was apparent in his conversations and dealings with his associates. At the same time, if the novels of Turgenev's

associates are examined for the same element of humanism, they, too, reveal a fundamental concern for all that is human, and for the welfare of the most ambitious human enterprise, society. Yet, as if Turgenev were indispensable to a study of these humanist ideas in the novels of the Goncourts, Flaubert, Daudet, and Zola, they are in greatest evidence when perceived in the light of the Russian's humanist beliefs as expressed in his novels of contemporary life.

Although Turgenev's humanism is diffused throughout his novels depicting the contemporary intelligentsia, it is most clearly expressed through characters whose relationship with the environment undergoes profound change in the course of the novel. These characters are not conventional main characters who develop a heroic concept of broad and swift social change, as Russian literature was to create following the publication of Fathers and Sons.[26] In fact, Turgenev's changed characters are peripheral to the whirling pace of contemporary life as it appears in his novels. But, in the modification of their relationship with the environment, these characters become the key to Turgenev's concept of progress towards a humanist society.

We discern in the novels of contemporary life by the French members of the Société des Cinq the same concept of a humanist society as professed by Turgenev through his key figures. The struggle of central characters to reverse the trend of society towards disorder and injustice leaves the reader with a far more cautious sense of hope for progress

towards that ideal society than Turgenev's novels convey. But, by directing attention to the social institutions which subjugate and dominate the individual, these characters still function as keys to the novelists' humanism. For, like Turgenev's key figures, the concern of the key figures created by the French members of the Société des Cinq is to effectively resist the power of society to deprive the individual of dignity, and to return humanity and human ties to the center of civilization. The common interest in a humanist society which explains the formation of the Société des Cinq can be demonstrated through a study of key figures in novels of contemporary life published by members of the group during the years of their association with Turgenev. We begin that study with the key figures created by the most outspoken humanist of the society, Ivan Turgenev.

Notes to Chapter I

[1] Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, in Vol. II of Journal, mémoires de vie littéraire, 9 vols., in Oeuvres, 33 vols., Ed. définitive (Paris: Flammarion, 1921-1936), p. 76.

[2] Edmond de Goncourt first used the term "société des cinq," in his journal on May 5, 1876, Journal, V, p.

[3] Alphonse Daudet, Trente Ans de Paris à travers ma vie et mes livres (189-, rpt. Paris: Flammarion, 1925), p. 320. Flaubert established the custom of convoking the group regularly during his stays in Paris, although Turgenev, Edmond de Goncourt, Zola, and Daudet met at times without him. See Gustave Flaubert, Correspondance, 12 vols., in Oeuvres complètes, 23 vols. (Paris: L. Conard, 1923-1954), XXII, p. 161.

[4] Daudet, Trente Ans, p. 320.

[5] Margarita G. Ladaria, I. S. Turgenev i klassiki francyzkoj literatury ("Alašara," 1970), p. 104.

[6] Prosper Mérimée, "La Littérature russe et le servage en Russie," in Vol. II of Études de litterature russe, 2 vols. (Paris: H. Champion, 1927-1933), p. 230.

[7] Ivan Turgenev, in Vol. V of Pis'ma, 13 vols., in Polnoe sobranie sočinenij i pisem v dvacati vos'mi tomax (Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1960-1968), p. 106.

[8] Turgenev, Pis'ma, VII, p. 140.

[9] Flaubert, Correspondance, Vol. XV, p. 422.

[10] Flaubert, Correspondance, XVI, p. 314.

[11] Turgenev, Pis'ma, 2, XI, p. 23.

[12] Goncourt, Journal, V, p. 94.

[13] Turgenev's reading of the translations he had made impressed his friends, for Goncourt mentions it in Journal, V, p. 152, and Daudet mentions it in Trente Ans, p. 333.

[14] Goncourt, Journal, V, p. 233, and VI, p. 75.

[15] Goncourt, Journal, V, p. 201.

[16] Turgenev wrote to Flaubert of L'Assommoir: "Il y a bien du talent --- mais c'est lourd --- et on remue trop le pot de chambre." (Pis'ma , XII, 1, p. 19), and Flaubert expressed impatience with Zola for his ignorance (Correspondance, XXIII, p. 57).

[17] Turgenev, Pis'ma, III, pp. 76-77. All quotations from the Russian are in my translation. Transliteration of Russian names and titles follows System III as given in J. Thomas Shaw, Four Systems of Transliteration and Recommendations for Their Use (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967).

[18] Turgenev, Pis'ma, XI, 2, p. 164.

[19] Turgenev, Pis'ma, XII, 2, p. 251.

[20] Isaak Yakovlevich Pavlovski, Souvenirs sur Tourguéneff (Paris: A. Savine, 1887). An interesting sequel to the publication of this book occurred when Camille Blanc published L'Incident Daudet Tourguéneff: tous documents réunis, ou le juif Pawlowski exploitant un mort (Paris: Grenelle: Imprimerie Westermann, 1888).

[21] Daudet, Trente Ans, p. 338.

[22] Daudet, Trente Ans, p. 344.

[23] Goncourt, Journal, VII, p. 160.

[24] Erich Auerbach, Mimesis, the Representation of Reality in Western Literature, Trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 520.

[25] Turgenev, Pis'ma, XI, 2, pp. 31-32.

[26] Rufus J. Mathewson's discussion of the position of Fathers and Sons in Russian literature in The Positive Hero in Russian Literature (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958) has been augmented by Charles Moser's Anti-Nihilism in Russian Novel of the 1860's (The Hague: Mouton, 1964).

Chapter II

Turgenev's Scythian

> Just look at the river! It seems to beckon to us. The ancient Greeks would have beheld a nymph in it. But we are not Greeks, o nymph! We are thick-skinned Scythians![1]

The time: summer, 1853. The place: a fictional country estate near the Moskva River in Ivan Turgenev's novel, _On the Eve_.[2] Thick-skinned Scythians: Russians, who, confused by the deepening social conflict between Western culture and Russian traditions, seek within themselves and their own past the meaning of their experiences. Šubin the speaker whose quote sets the theme for _On the Eve_, appears as Turgenev's first Scythian in this novel, published in 1860, three years before Turgenev and Edmond de Goncourt became acquainted at Magny's, and formed the nucleus for the Cercle des Cinq. But without a brief discussion of this first Scythian, and the subsequent development of the character in _Fathers and Sons_,[3] published in 1862, the significance of Turgenev's key figure in _Smoke_,[4] and _Virgin Soil_[5] will be lost.

Šubin's attempt to distinguish between his Scythian heritage and the Greek tradition imported from Western Europe typifies the dilemma of the Russian intelligentsia

as Turgenev understood it in 1860. The politically privileged elite to which Šubin belonged was profoundly affected by young aristocrats returning to Russia after years of studies and travels throughout a changing European continent. Moreover, Aleksandr II's Age of Reforms enhanced the impact of new ideas through a surge of technological change. New roads, the opening of schools to nonaristocrats, the increasing number of publishing houses for a growing number of readers were changes which accelerated during the Sixties. Turgenev, already sensitive to them in 1860, incorporated these coming changes into a retrospective study of Russia's upper class, leading Pavel Annenkov to assess his realism as a "long, detailed, and poetically written catalog of ideas that circulated throughout Russia among the various layers of its educated and semi-educated peoples over the course of thirty years, in the midst of everyday life and the harsh conditions in which it revolved."[6]

The dilemma which Turgenev believed the intelligentsia faced was not a simple choice of political reforms. Any direction in which change pointed would shake Russia to its roots. To be dominated by Western rationalism and its polarization of moral issues into right and wrong positions on individual liberties would lead to a revolutionary rejection of Slavic paternalism and populist wisdom. On the other hand, the 'mir,' through which the Slavic agricultural collective operated, established rigid and politically

unjust class lines. Because of the 'mir,' Marc Slonim wrote, "the people entrusted the administration of their worldly affairs to the Czars (sic), and this 'delegation' of temporal power gave its real meaning to the Russian monarchy."[7] Turgenev's relationships with such contemporaries as Mixail Bakunin, Aleksandr Herzen, the Aksakov brothers and, perhaps most important, with the critic, Visarion Belinskij, deepened his appreciation for the complexity of the intelligentsia's position in regard to responsible change.

In On the Eve, Šubin is forced to make a choice when he recognizes the conflict between Western rationalism and Slavic mysticism. Through this choice, Turgenev examines the meaning of the Scythian's refusal of both rational and mythical dogmas. Instead of choosing Westernism or Slavophilism, Šubin is led to a more complicated choice between Elena, the restless aristocrat committed to universal political liberty, and art, the exercise of critical thought and tireless adjustments of imperfections and imbalances. Elena's rejection of Šubin in favor of Insarov, the Bulgarian nationalist, resolves part of the Scythian character's problem. But this same rejection brings about Šubin's prolonged period of self-assessment, during which he realizes that he could, if he wished to reform his entire character, win the love of someone like Elena. Šubin's

period of introspection from his antithetical position of a fringe aristocrat, an observer, makes his situation into much more than the story of a spurned lover.

Šubin's disappointment contributes to an understanding of his complex environment. At the beginning of the novel, Šubin is already verging on independence from models and imitative art, relying on his deep emotions for inspiration. The realization that, to win Elena, he would have to imitate Insarov, and his recognition that such an act would destroy his true self and his art, liberate him from dependence on Elena, reliance on public opinion, and the imitation of artistic models. At the end of the novel, Šubin is "completely devoted to his art and is considered one of the most remarkable and promising of young sculptors."[8]

Through constant, lucid analysis of his experiences, Šubin expands the significance of his comment on thick-skinned Scythians to embrace problems of profound inner change in the individual as well as the problems of a society in the midst of rapid intellectual development.

When Nikolai Dobroljubov reviewed On the Eve in Russkij Vestnik[9] immediately following the novel's publication, he made assumptions about the use of characters in the novel which reveal substantial confusion concerning Turgenev's intentions. Elena, says Dobroljubov, is the central character in the novel and "it is in relation to

her that we must examine the other characters in the story. . . ."[10] He continues: "She expresses that vague longing for a new way of life, for a new type of people which the whole of Russian society, and not only its so-called educated section, now feels."[11]

To the extent that Elena is affected by changes in the intelligentsia, she is one of several central characters in the novel. But she reflects her times. The more she seeks commitment, the more she is taken in by the reassuring language of dogma. The more she deals with Insarov, the more dependent on him she becomes, the more she withdraws from the real world and the problems about her into a combination of fantasy and folklore. By the end of the novel, Elena has dissolved into a mythical character of whose fate no one is ever quite sure. She embodies the inadequacy of a young aristocratic class which fervently wished for a more just society, but which would not discipline its members to the need for specific, sequential objectives to create a new order.

The critical voice of the observer in the novel belongs to Šubin. His voice draws the reader's attention to numerous, equally compelling expressions of longing for a new order: Bersenev, Insarov, Uvar Ivanovič are as important in this respect as Elena. But, through Šubin, the reader comprehends the importance of resisting both revolutionary and conservative dogmas.

Dobroljubov's comments on Elena reveal expectations of

a central character worthy of emulation, and, in these expectations, Dobroljubov is no different from other nineteenth century Russians. According to Rufus W. Mathewson, Jr., Russians yearned to "read their own spiritual history in the lives of their literary heroes."[12] Reformist Russians were sure to identify with Elena and Insarov because their interests lay in the compulsion to reform. By making Elena an émigrée and Insarov a Bulgarian nationalist, Turgenev suggested to his readers that reform by Russians for Russians was not yet possible.

Yet it was not Turgenev's intention to create models who would chastise Russians for their weaknesses, and shame reformists into a radical position. Through Belinskij's powerful influence on him, Turgenev shared Russian naturalism's concern with contemporary social problems and determination to point out critical failures of justice. But Turgenev was guided in his realist esthetic by a "need for fairness,"[13] as Annenkov called his friend's desire to reveal all aspects of Russian society. The novel according to Turgenev, must reproduce "the truth precisely and powerfully . . . even if that truth does not coincide with [the novelist's] own sympathies."[14] Including Insarov, Elena, Bersenev, Uvar Ivanovič, and the Staxovs in the same novel assures a well-distributed array of personalities developed by, and contributing to, contemporary Russian society. But without the voice of the thick-skinned Scythian, searching for the possible meanings of the fragmented emotions in the

people about him, On the Eve is only an array of personalities. Šubin provides the novel with a metaphoric depth, reflecting in his growth and eventual acceptance of incomprehensible vicissitudes, the uncertain direction of the future and the responsibility of the individual to establish his own sense of stability.

As in On the Eve, the Scythian voice in Fathers and Sons[15] provides equilibrium and direction amidst disjointed and impetuous impressions of contemporary Russian life. But, in 1862, when the novel was published, the intelligentsia was approaching the apogee of several convergent conflicts. Marc Slonim characterized this period of strife as a clash along horizontal and vertical rifts within the intelligentsia.[16] The vertical divisions separating Nationalists, Slavophiles and Westernizers were accompanied by a severe conflict between the traditional aristocrats and the so-called 'raznočincy,' "scions of various lower classes"[17] who had begun to enter the intelligentsia under Aleksandr II's liberalized rule. Turgenev's customary sense of fairness in the midst of such tension provoked a bitter confrontation between the novelist and the entire intelligentsia, and convinced Turgenev to abandon Russia and settle abroad.

Superficially, the cause of Turgenev's disputes with both the aristocrats and the raznočincy was his rendition of Bazarov, a member of the raznočincy in Fathers and Sons. Bazarov, a newly graduated doctor, accompanies a university

friend, Arkadij Kirsanov, to his country home for a visit with Arkadij's aristocratic father and uncle. Bazarov's hostility towards Pavel Kirsanov, Arkadij's uncle, and the hostile response of the uncle dramatized for the whole intelligentsia the antagonism between young and old aristocrats, between radical and conservative aristocrats, and between the raznočincy and the aristocrats.

The older aristocrats found Bazarov too repugnant to appear in a novel of contemporary life. When Turgenev, who hesitated to publish the novel in the first place, gave a reading of Fathers and Sons in Paris to Russian émigrés, one member of the audience avowed that the novel was "wonderful," but that Turgenev would surely "suffer because of it."[18] When news of new student riots at Petersburg University reached aristocratic circles, someone was said to have commented to Turgenev: "Look at what your Nihilists are doing now!"[19]

The response of radical youth and of the raznočincy was more virulent. Having broken with the increasingly radical Sovremmenik in 1861, Turgenev published Fathers and Sons in Mixail Katkov's journal, Russkij vestnik, in February, 1862. The following month's issue of Sovremmenik carried a bitter critique of the novel. Nikolai Cernisevskii's condemnation of the novel was just as immediate, although not published until 1906. Radical young Russians, studying in Germany, addressed several complaints about the novel to Turgenev, all of which draw their common

theme from the contrast the radicals saw between apologistic portraits of the aristocrats in the novel and an unfavorable characterization of Bazarov, the raznocinec.

Turgenev attempted to elucidate the character of Bazarov in his letter of April 14, 1862[20] addressed to the radical student, Konstantin Slučevskij: "The traits with which he was endowed are not random. I wanted to make a tragic figure of him--but tenderness was out of place. He is honest, truthful, and a democrat to the core--and you see no good in him?" But the extent of ill feeling towards Turgenev after the publication of Fathers and Sons made it clear that Russian readers were unprepared for his realist esthetic of reflecting a whole picture. The intelligentsia wanted heroes with unequivocal powers to reform society quickly and efficiently. This limitation on Turgenev's artistic license, which he must observe if he was to be read by the intelligentsia with sympathy, was intolerable to him. His retrospective essay on the controversy over Fathers and Sons, conveys his terrible sense of frustration. The task of establishing a relationship of trust between the realist writer and a society, which expected from literature clear, simple programs for reform, was insurmountable. "Without education, without freedom in the obvious sense of the word--freedom in respect to one's self, to one's preconceived ideas and systems, even to one's own people, one's own history--the true artist is not to be thought of,"[21] wrote Turgenev in that essay.

With expectations like those of the intelligentsia, the writer could be little more than a maker of models, showing life as it should be without seeking the causes for its failure to become all that it can.

That the reaction to Bazarov brought into the open profound anxieties aroused by accelerating change in the Russian polity has been an important factor in interpreting Turgenev's novel. Yet, on close reading of Fathers and Sons, though he "dominates"[22] the other characters, Bazarov functions as a catalyst, rather than as a central character. Through the extreme reactions he excites in Pavel Kirsanov, Anna Sergeevna, and even Vasilij Ivanič, his father, Bazarov induces these characters to reveal their unproductive self-involvement, and their inability to comprehend subtleties in large, abstract issues. In her spontaneous trust of Bazarov, whose democratic convictions allow him to treat everyone precisely the same, Fenička betrays her own need to be led and lack of inner strength. His philosophy, Nihilism, which Turgenev defined as revolutionary radicalism,[23] even Bazarov's name, suggest a character who excites and provokes. But his purpose in releasing this sort of energy in others is hardly social. Far from hoping to knit members of society closer together for a common goal, Bazarov places value on breaking the social bond of tolerance, and demeans individual dignity by seeking to manipulate the behavior of others. "A real man," he tells Arkadij, "is someone whom you don't need to think

about, whom you must either obey or hate."[24] The emotionally impoverished model of society on which such a comment is founded is the work of Bazarov's own shallow feelings for others and his refusal to engage in prolonged human contact. Beneath his doctrinaire nihilism is a human being terrified by the power of love.

Bazarov's shallowness is in stark contrast to Arkadij's sensitivity towards others. Shaken from his blind devotion to Bazarov by his friend's crass lack of appreciation for the feelings of others, Arkadij finally emerges as an independent personality, capable of projecting life goals without resorting to the armature of political ideology to compensate for his intellectual inadequacies. His return to agrarian traditions, formerly so repugnant to him, links his life to his father's, and establishes a continuity between generations which does not necessarily rule out deep social change. In fact, the end of the novel shows the reader a harmonious cohabitation on the Kirsanov estate, where serf, master, urbane son and provincial father converge in a family unit. The significance of Bazarov had been to excite these characters to the point of self-doubt, to make them question whether slow change was worth waiting for, and even whether waiting was the proper way to induce change.

Arkadij's development, on the other hand, demonstrated that deliberate choice and modest reform are not futile gestures in a society that badly needs change. Years later,

Turgenev wrote of Bazarov's failure to achieve a nihilist revolution that:

> Society in the times ahead of us will not need any special talents, . . . or anything too strong, outstanding, or too individualistic; it will need industriousness and endurance. People will have to know how to sacrifice themselves without any glitter or fuss; they will have to know how to take on petty, and obscure, and even mean work.[25]

Arkadij's ability to adopt such a modest, selfless posture results from his rejection of Bazarov's revolutionary values which demeaned the individual dignity of others in order to exalt the power of the revolutionary. To remain true to his newly emerged self-confidence, Arkadij chooses to live on a provincial estate, away from the agitated partisanship of Petersburg, yet fully immersed in the problems of effecting real change.

Published in 1867, Smoke was the first novel Turgenev wrote following Fathers and Sons, and reaction to it was as negative as the reaction to Fathers and Sons.[26] This time, however, the criticism was directed toward a Westernist character, Potugin, and a young provincial aristocrat named Litvinov. Richard Freeborn has written that "the weakness of Litvinov's character is the weakness of the novel."[27] But Litvinov's character becomes stronger in the course of the novel, and, in so doing, the apparently fragmented aspects of the narrative come into focus around a single theme: we are blinded to that which has lasting significance by that which is senseless and

ephemeral.

At the novel's beginning, Litvinov appears to be aloof, although not weak. He is neither part of the aristocratic group of Russians, vacationing in Baden, where the story takes place, nor is he a member of the verbose group of radicals, with whom he occasionally spends time. Litvinov's position as an observer of these two groups is reinforced by his first conversation with Potugin, which occurs at the beginning of the novel. Potugin, who is a generation older than Litvinov, and a raznocineč whose presence in Baden is not explained until later in the novel, introduces himself to Litvinov at a coffee house, and initiates a conversation involving radical revolutionary ideology. Reflecting on the radicals with whom the two men have each visited that evening, Potugin comments, "they are all grand people, but the sum total of it all is nothing; the food is grade A, but the dish is unfit for consumption!"[28] His conclusion is that radical leaders are demagogues, and people cling to such leaders because they must " . . . have a master. . . . We prattle about renunciation as our distinguishing characteristic; but we do not exercise renunciation like a free man who strikes with the sword. Rather [we are] like a lackey, who gives a beating with his fists, and does it only at his master's command."[29] The sectarianism which passes for ideology amongst the radicals is a mask which protects the individual from recognizing his own weaknesses.

With Potugin's commentary, occurring in the fifth chapter, the plot of the novel is activated. The fragrance from a bouquet of heliotrope, which the hotel servant explains was delivered by a "lady," awakens in Litvinov "something quite remote," not a rational memory, but a chain of sensations leading to a figurative dream which will suddenly bring to mind his first love, Irina.

Remembering the obsessive anxieties of this first love disturbs the course of action Litvinov had set for himself at the beginning of the novel: marriage to a well-off, distant relative in provincial Russia and a return to his own estates to manage them in accordance with methods carefully absorbed during his travels in Western Europe. The suggestion that this diversion is a sign of weakness requires careful attention, especially because the reawakening of feelings from Litvinov's inexperienced youth and the ensuing period of disequilibrium come immediately after the first conversation with Potugin concerning the human, or Russian, need for a "master."

Litvinov's diversion into a renewal of his old love affair with Irina is disjointedly related along with expositions of the aristocratic circle in which Irina now travels, further episodes involving the radicals, and additional diatribes from Potugin. Richard Freeborn calls these four fragmented trends in the narrative "themes,"[30] but they all illustrate Potugin's original assertion, that our need for "masters," guides or models who will somehow

assume the burden of making decisions and choices which the individual feels too frightened to make, is a self-destructive need.

Litvinov is about to be swept back into Irina's power when she reveals her own spinelessness. Protesting to Litvinov that she wishes only to be friends with him, and needs him to counterbalance the "unbearable, insufferable"[31] aristocracy into which she has married, Irina begs Litvinov to forget the sadness of the past. She then abruptly breaks off the conversation to join a duchess from the aristocracy she has just reviled. Greeting this older woman with an "insinuating voice,"[32] Irina joins her, abruptly deserting her newly found "friend," Litvinov. No sooner does the chapter end than Potugin reappears in the narrative with a monologue to Litvinov on the Russian's dilemma between national pride and imported ideas, ending with a picture of the Russian folk hero as a "fop."[33] Russian society creates its heroes by robbing a character of the ability to perform socially constructive actions, and dresses him in the costume of a "jeune premier." This has been Irina's own fate, as her conversation with Litvinov had shown. Potugin's diatribe warns Litvinov that his silent, but obvious, desire to win Irina's love could lead him into the same fate.

Litvinov, inattentive to these warnings, submits to the long-repressed passion he first experienced with Irina years previously. He yields to the object of his passion

as to a "master," a single figure, into whose power he entrusts the determination of choices, and relinquishes his capacity to think independently. As he prepares to break his engagement to Tatjana, his fiancée, Turgenev describes him on the railway platform in Baden:

> His self-confidence had disappeared, his composure had also disappeared, along with his self-respect; nothing was left of his former state of mind. . . . A certain unprecedented sensation, strong, sweet--and evil, had been aroused; a mysterious guest had invaded his sanctuary, and had taken possession of it . . . as master of the new domicile.[34]

A crucial characteristic distinguishes Litvinov from the other characters who have yielded to some form of domination in the novel. His peripheral relationship to conservative and radical circles, and Potugin's insistent allegories help to bring this difference to the reader's attention. Litvinov finds Irina's aristocratic circle of conservative friends intolerable. "His pride, his honorable pride of a plebeian rose up in him. What did he, the son of a petty official, have in common with them, those military aristocrats from Petersburg?"[35] As for the radicals, his "fellow countrymen,"[36] as Turgenev calls them, are only intrusive visitors in Litvinov's quarters, and Litvinov scolds himself for not turning them away. Litvinov refuses to engage in their political discussions, which, like the discussions of the aristocrats, eschew ideology and concentrate on trivial information concerning personalities. Only Potugin captures his attention, assisting

Litvinov as he searches for more in life than the vain preoccupations of the people in his environment.

Litvinov's aloofness from these people expresses the "pride of the plebeian," which is all the more apparent because Irina is devoid of it. She accuses Litvinov, and his fiancée, Tatjana, of being weak-willed, when she, in fact, is tortured by ambivalence about her planned elopement with Litvinov. The accusation against these two characters, who, amongst all the other characters in the novel, most earnestly seek to discover and express the value of human dignity, cannot but be a projection of Irina's own disgust with her indecisiveness and profound fear of being severed from the social group from which she derives her identity.

Irina's change of heart concerning her elopement with Litvinov destroys his illusions about the possibility of life with her. More than a "betrayal,"[37] her "trivialities," suggesting that Litvinov "follow us to Petersburg," where she would obtain a suitable position for him, insulted Litvinov's pride. The force with which his inner dignity surges up prevents Irina from playing "so pitilessly with [his] life."[38]

Litvinov's brief affair with Irina was enough for him to reject this "master." But to reject the need for a "master" altogether, Litvinov must recognize an alternative relationship between two people which does not distinguish between inferior and superior, or model and imitator, and allows the anxieties of those possessing less experience to

be allayed by those possessing more, without infringing on either individual's sense of personal dignity. This relationship is a teacher-pupil bond, based on respect of each for the other, and the hope for an evolving good through cumulative experience. But the respect is not a simple expression of meliorism, since the pupil takes as much responsibility as the teacher in the exercise of critical thought. " . . . A good pupil," Potugin tells Litvinov, "sees his teacher's errors, but, out of respect, he says nothing, for those same errors serve the student, and set him on the right path."[39] Potugin has attempted to be such a teacher for Litvinov, having already been one of Irina's disappointed admirers, one of the intelligentsia's raznočincy bureaucrats, one of a master's slaves.

In a final, allegorical folk tale, Potugin urges Litvinov to listen to the older man, the "dead, human skull . . . and perhaps, in return for your good deed, you will succeed in leaping across the fatal stone . . . across which all sorts of people have tried to leap, but in vain."[40] Litvinov needs Potugin to speak from the experience of one who has failed to clear that "fatal stone," that need for a "master." Potugin can urge Litvinov to reflect on the moral significance of his passion, to see the connection between it and the urge to serve any cause blindly.

The psychological maturation which Litvinov undergoes allows him to place the values of experience and reflection

above impetuosity and slavishness, and provides a morality on which he can base his life. David Ball has written that Litvinov's experience with Irina shows he was "wrong to think . . . sweet reason would sustain him in his life" because "'right' and 'wrong' themselves are part of a constantly moving dialectic--one which may leave us no firm ground on which to live."[42] We can push the definition of Litvinov's morality even further if we accept his rejection of life with Irina as the triumph of his personal dignity. Firm ground exists only within the individual, and only by reflecting on experience does the individual locate this ground within the self. Any other form of reassurance is deceiving, "smoke" as Litvinov comes to realize during his inner monologue on the train returning to Russia.

> All is vapor and smoke, he thought, . . . all seems to change continually, but underneath, everything is the same; everything rushes, hurries somewhere--and everything disappears without a trace, achieving nothing; the wind changes--and everything rushes in the opposite direction, and there, the same unnecessary, restless, useless game begins again.[43]

Litvinov's meditation finally integrates into a single, moralist structure the metaphoric images and disjointed scenes in the novel. Irina's filmy veils, the blinding glitter of military uniforms, and the mist of Baden gather into one enormous cloud which obscures reality, and through which the aristocrats and the radicals, the Muscovites and the Petersburgers, the princes and the raznočincy anxiously try to discern which of their

particular leader's gestures they should imitate next. But for Litvinov, the way is once again clear, as it had been at the beginning of Smoke. The difference between the early Litvinov and this new Litvinov is that, in his maturation, he has brought his own need for a "master" to the surface. Litvinov can now exorcise that need, truly choose between following and leading.

By returning to provincial Russia and abandoning the chaotic urban convergence of cultural forces, does Litvinov reject civilization in order to maintain his inner dignity? Not if by civilization one refers to Potugin's "sentiment of beauty and poetry."[44] In Smoke, it is the urbane aristocrats and the frenetic radicals who have rejected civilization in real life. They trust political leaders who appear decisive, yet whose conversation reveals, not only indecisiveness, but a childish lack of interest in anything but themselves. Russian culture has encouraged this superficiality and flattered this egocentricity by creating a literary pseudo-culture. A false, but comforting, impression of contemporary life wafts from the Slavophiles' "triple extract of Mužik," that simplified, superficial image of the pastoral Russian. This image is "absolutely necessary [to the Slavophiles] to periodically assure [themselves] that [they] have not become completely Frenchified, and, for [their] special use, that literature en cuir de Russie is composed."[45]

Litvinov's ability to recognize superficiality and

psychological instability behind political enthusiasm is based on his own sense of individual dignity and independence. Such self-reliance would be out of place in Petersburg. The return to an agrarian life signifies his understanding of his past, as well as an understanding of Russia's past. By returning to the provinces, Litvinov expresses his confidence in his ability to control his own future, and to determine the direction of Russia's future. This reliance on one's own critical judgment continues the Scythian tradition established by Šubin in On the Eve.

If we identify Turgenev's key figure by recognizing the character who emerges from self-doubt into self-reliance, then Litvinov is Turgenev's last Scythian character. Virgin Soil, published in 1876, bears an ambiguous epigram: "To cultivate virgin soil, one must use a deep plow, and plow well into the earth, not a surface plow which only glides over the top."[46] Although the times during which Turgenev wrote the novel were increasingly violent and both radicals and conservatives were practically irreconcilable, the epigram may have a more pacific significance than its strong suggestion of inevitably violent revolution. The epigram was taken from a farmer's notebook,[47] and, in his History of Russian Literature of the Nineteenth Century, S. M. Petrov points out that Turgenev used the plow as a symbol of enlightenment, not revolution.[48]

The novel is a study of several members of a radical

reform movement in varying stages of commitment to the revolutionary cause. Solomin, one of several raznočincy in the novel, is the novel's sole individualist. He undergoes nothing of the profound, positive inner change the Scythian character endures in previous novels, however. He is as self-reliant at the beginning of the novel as he is at the end, and the leader to whom members of the revolutionary movement turn for guidance. He has no patience with ideological commentary, although there is not much of that in Virgin Soil. In fact, there is little of the analytical monologue which distinguishes Turgenev's earlier novels.

Instead of inner change, characters reveal more and more of their true selves to the reader, while they disguise that essence with political identities during the course of the novel. Neždanov, the illegitimate son of a high aristocrat, becomes increasingly depressed, and finally commits suicide when he realizes that the cause demands more patience and commitment than he can give to it. Marianna, an orphan living with her uncle and aunt, the Sipjagins, leans increasingly on Solomin, and, after Nezdanov dies, marries him. The Sipjagins permit the reader to appreciate the extent of their irrelevant concerns with social appearances and their incurable egocentricity. Both progressives and conservatives compensate for their profound inner weaknesses by adopting political ideologies.

The second distinct feature of Virgin Soil is the

unprecedented insistence with which objective reality intrudes in the narrative. On his first visit to the cotton factory, where Solomin is manager, Nežhdanov is acutely aware of the physical environment, "the neglect, the filth, the grime,"[49] a broken window, and scattered tools; "a Russian mill, in fact, not a German or a French factory."[50]

Nezdanov is acutely disillusioned by the physical appearance of Solomin, the leader of the "cause." "Nežhdanov was just as disillusioned about him as he had been about the factory. . . . He was dressed like a mechanic or a stoker in an old pea jacket with baggy pockets, an oilskin cap on his head, a wool scarf round his neck, and, on his feet, tarred boots."[51] Though the disillusionment is short-lived, dispelled by Solomin's inherent charm, it is symptomatic of the young radicals' isolation from the quotidian disorder of real life. Their aristocratic origins have surrounded all their experiences with a complex system of protection, restraining, though unsuccessfully, their extraordinary curiosity and energy. Marianna says of her desire to follow her father into exile in Siberia, "I so much wanted to know for myself, to see with my own eyes, how convicts and prisoners live."[52]

The "cause," by which the radicals hope to awaken the peasants to the real power of agricultural laborers, offers an incidental gratification to the young reformists. In order to deal with the peasants, these young people, pushed to the fringe of their own class by the conservative

element in it, "simplify"[53] themselves. Returning to the ways of the people, they combine a way of teaching peasants with the attempt to satisfy their longing for contact with people and real, vital experience.

Yet, while the "cause" provides sheltered radicals, like Neždanov, Markelov and Marianna, the contact with reality lacking in their domestic lives, and, while seasoned raznočincy, such as Mashurina and Ostrodumov, find in it hope for social justice, political commitment aggravates disturbances in the radicals' personalities. Neždanov's deep sense of personal worthlessness is intensified when he is humiliated by the peasants. After Marianna is liberated from all the restraints of the Sipjagin household, she shows herself to be dependent and impetuous. Mashurina's longing for love is so overpowering that she denies her true, lusterless personality and impersonates an Italian countess. Markelov's sullen rages are the symptoms of pressure created by uncompromising expectations for reform.

The radicals' emotional difficulties have a mutual cause in the nostalgia for a mythical, intimate family composed of all humanity. This utopian model of a great human family underscores the radicals' impracticality and ignorance. Without any experience in factories, Markelov nonetheless places great "hopes . . . on the factory workers,"[54] as a group to be counted on for returning society to perfect running order. Marianna suffers "for

the miserable, poor and oppressed in the whole of Russia"[55] because they have been excluded from the comfortable world she has known and wishes to share with them. Mashurina converts her love for Nezdanov into devotion to the "cause," finding gratification there which she was denied in her imperfect personal life.

As imbued with utopian ideals as the radicals are, the conservative aristocrats are equally utopian in their determination to preserve their political powers. Sipjagin's real purpose in offering Solomin a position as factory manager is to subjugate the raznočinec' expertise to his own will, not realizing that Solomin has gained his expertise by refusing to subjugate himself to anyone. Sipjagin has no conception of the relationship between respect for the individual and the instigation of technological innovation in the interest of social change. According to his simple model of society, change properly occurs when the aristocracy, empowered by birthright, chooses to execute reforms on the lower classes through the work of the lower classes. To his mind, the only obstacle to a perfect society is the resistance of these inferior classes to the will of the aristocracy.

The issue of utopian thought is only suggested by the behavior of both radical and conservative aristocrats in Virgin Soil. In the episode at the Subočev's home, and in the pendant scene in Goluškin's quarters, utopian models of society as the goal for reform movements are examined

more carefully.

The Subočevs, husband and wife, "exactly alike, except that one wears a mob-cap, and the other a skull-cap, trimmed with the same lace but lacking ribbons,"[56] have furnished and organized their home in eighteenth century fashion. Childless, there is nothing in their environment to suggest that time is passing, and that the eighteenth century has long ago disappeared. Their possessions have been carefully selected to retain the illusion that time has stopped. A carved snuffbox bears a realistic hunting scene, freezing the movement and disruption of real life, which the owners find intolerable. Equally prized is the oil painting of Madame Subočev rendered in the unlikely pose of a four year old nude huntress. These objects signify the separation of the Subocevs from the changing world about them, and allay their suspicions of mortality. Their consuming regard for the items combines with their anachronistic way of life to freeze time at a moment when aristocrats such as they felt indulgent treatment of inferior classes was a sufficient concession to the concept of human dignity.

While the Subočevs had withdrawn into the eighteenth century, Goluškin anticipates the twentieth century with his enthusiasm for change. But this aristocrat's generosity towards the less privileged classes is a pretense to bind people to him out of obligation, while he remains free of obligations. This permits him to retain the illusion of

power, but furthers no particular social or political cause. "Here is the money, take it!" he yells to Paklin, a radical who visits him with Solomin and Nezdanov. "Remember Kapiton!"[57] he makes them promise, speaking of himself, as he throws the money on the table in front of them. His hopes for a new society, unspecified though they may be, are based on the egocentric misconception that a single gesture on his part will accomplish any goal he sets. "We must do everything with one blow!,"[58] he exclaims to the radicals, with no notion of what "everything" involves. Like the Subočevs, Goluškin has a concept of change in which society's perfection is measured by its conformity to his wishes for control over it.

Solomin, alone in the novel, counters the aristocratic utopianism of the urban radicals, parodied in the two historical renderings of utopian beliefs we have just studied. A raznočinec with no aristocratic family connections, Solomin has no estate or ministerial appointment from which to derive an income. He knows the value of technological expertise in providing a livelihood. His own expertise has made him appreciate the ignorance of the conservative aristocrats concerning the true nature of change. Having toured Sipjagin's factory, he comments to the owner and his companion, Kolomecov, that "the nobility cannot manage things . . . because there is too much of the bureaucrat in them."[59] He recognizes that the bureaucratic method of reform is to impose change upon others, while the

consciousness and behavior of the bureaucrat remains unchallenged. By his behavior towards others, Solomin maintains a standard of appreciation for individual worth, dealing with workers as people rather than as instruments of his personal will.

Solomin also recognizes the helplessness of the radicals in planning for the orderly introduction of economic changes necessary for social reform. Once again, his pragmatic model for reform distinguishes his point of view from the utopian model of his reformist colleagues:

> He was acquainted with the St. Petersburg revolutionists, and agreed with them up to a point. He himself belonged to the people, and fully realized that most of them, without whom 'you go nowhere,' were still very indifferent, that they first had to be prepared by totally different means for entirely different ends than the upper classes. So he held aloof, not from a feeling of superiority, but as an ordinary, thoughtful man, who did not wish to destroy himself or others needlessly.[60]

Solomin emphasizes his independence and individualism by rejecting the support of urban institutions to realize systematic reform. This likens him to his Scythian predecessors, who, in rejecting a conventionally aristocratic way of life affirm the possibility of civilized order without the threat of impersonal physical coercion, implied by the titles and uniforms of the urban ministries and bureaucracies. Unlike his Scythian predecessors, however, Solomin's independence is that of Turgenev's "new man." Born to pragmatism, Solomin sees in small parts and isolated

bits, the value and function of the whole. This pragmatism entails a belief in the worth of each individual, and permits him to accomplish tasks his utopian friends could barely outline:

> Neždanov began to question [Solomin] about his factory, asking if any experiments in cooperative organization had been tried, or if anything had been done to let the workers share in the profits.
>
> 'My dear fellow!' exclaimed Solomin, 'I set up a school and a clinic, and even then the owner fought me tooth and nail.'[61]

The presence of Solomin as the figure who provides the transition between the novel's end and the real world suggests that we need to modify the traditional view of Turgenev's "réalisme poétique."[62] This expression confines Turgenev's realism to a belief in the reform of the appearance of Russian society. Virgin Soil belies this moderation. The turning over of the social strata, signified by the plowing in the epigram to the novel, may not be a cataclysmic reversal of power, but it is a total revolution nonetheless. It establishes the triumph of pragmatism over utopian thought, bringing the working parts of a social machine into control over the idle parts. Virgin Soil is not the "mise au tombeau des dieux morts"[63] it is claimed to be, for Solomin looks neither behind, as the Scythians did, nor too far ahead, as did the utopian aristocrats. Nor does he seek to destroy the present, as the radical reformists hoped to do. From the beginning of the novel,

Turgenev's final key figure is his own master, who has no need for gods.

Notes to Chapter II

[1] Turgenev, On the Eve, in Vol. VIII of Sočineniya, Vols. 1-15 of Polnoe sobranie sočinenij i pisem v dvačati vos'mi tomax, pp. 15-16. Turgenev's Scythians have nothing to do with the Scythian destiny described by Razumnik Vasil'evic Ivanov in "Izpitanie vgroze i bure," nor with the group of Scythians which gained renown in 1917.

[2] Turgenev, "On the Eve," Russkij Vestnik, 1-2 (1860), pp. 69-212.

[3] Turgenev, "Fathers and Sons," Russkij Vestnik, 2 (1862), pp. 473-663.

[4] Turgenev, "Smoke," Russkij Vestnik, 3 (1867), pp. 5-160.

[5] Turgenev, "Virgin Soil," Vestnik Evropy, 1-2 (1877).

[6] Pavel Annenkov, Literaturnye vospominanija (Petersburg: 1892, rpt. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel-stvo xudožestvennoj literatury, 1960), p. 337.

[7] Marc Slonim, The Epic of Russian Literature from its Origins through Tolstoy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 147.

[8] Turgenev, On the Eve, p. 166.

[9] Nikolaij Dobroljubov, "When Will the Real Day Come?" Vol. VI of Polnoe sobranie sočinenij, 9 vols. (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo xudožestvennoij literatury, 1963), pp. 96-140.

[10] Dobroljubov, Polnoe sobranie, VI, 120.

[11] Dobroljubov, Polnoe sobranie, VI, 120.

[12] Mathewson, The Positive Hero in Russian Literature, p. 14.

[13] Annenkov, Vospominanija, p. 336.

[14] Turgenev, "Concerning Fathers and Sons" in Vol. XIV of Sočineniya, p. 100.

[15] Turgenev, _Fathers and Sons_ in Vol. VIII of _Sočineniya_,

[16] Slonim, _The Epic of Russian Literature_, p. 209.

[17] Slonim, _The Epic of Russian Literature_, p. 209.

[18] Cited in Charles Moser, _Anti-Nihilism in the Russian Novel of the 1860's_ (The Hague: Mouton, 1964), p. 108.

[19] Turgenev, in Vol. XIV of _Sočineniya_, p. 98.

[20] Turgenev, "Letter to Slučevskij" in Vol. IV of _Pis'ma_, 13 vols., pp. 379-382.

[21] Turgenev, "Concerning Fathers and Sons," p. 108.

[22] Turgenev, "Letter to Slučevskij," p. 379.

[23] Turgenev, "Letter to Slučevskij," p. 380.

[24] Turgenev, _Fathers and Sons_, p. 324.

[25] Turgenev, in Vol. X of _Pis'ma_, p. 295.

[26] Turgenev, _Smoke_ in Vol. IX of _Sočineniya_. Of this novel, Pisarev wrote to Turgenev, saying: "You look at Russian life with the eyes of Litvinov. What have you done with Bazarov?" in letter reprinted in Vol. IX of _Polnoe sobranie_ by Turgenev, p. 530.

[27] Richard Freeborn, _Turgenev. The Novelist's Novelist: A Study_ (Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 144.

[28] Turgenev, _Smoke_, p. 167.

[29] Turgenev, _Smoke_, pp. 168-169.

[30] Freeborn, _Turgenev_, p. 144.

[31] Turgenev, _Smoke_, p. 226.

[32] Turgenev, _Smoke_, p. 229.

[33] Turgenev, _Smoke_, p. 237.

[34] Turgenev, _Smoke_, pp. 262-3.

[35] Turgenev, _Smoke_, p. 207.

[36] Turgenev, _Smoke_, p. 210.

[37] Turgenev, _Smoke_, p. 307.

[38] Turgenev, _Smoke_, p. 308.

[39] Turgenev, Smoke, p. 175.

[40] Turgenev, Smoke, p. 312.

[41] David Ball, "Turgenev's Dialectic," The Massachusetts Review, Spring, 1979, p. 152.

[42] Ball, "Turgenev's Dialectic," p. 145.

[43] Turgenev, Smoke, p. 315.

[44] Turgenev, Smoke, p. 236.

[45] Turgenev, Smoke, p. 236.

[46] Turgenev, Virgin Soil in Vol. XII of Sočineniya.

[47] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 5.

[48] M. Petrov, Istorija russkoij literatury XIX veka (Moscow: Moskovskij gosudarstvennoe pedagogičeskij institut, 1974), p. 213.

[49] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 109.

[50] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 110.

[51] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 112.

[52] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 96.

[53] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 204.

[54] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 113.

[55] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 96.

[56] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 124.

[57] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 146.

[58] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 145.

[59] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 175.

[60] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, pp. 112-3.

[61] Turgenev, Virgin Soil, p. 114.

[62] Henri Granjard, Ivan Tourguénev et les courants politiques et sociaux de son temps, 2nd edition (Paris: 1954, rpt. Paris: Institut d'Études, Slaves, 1966), p. 465.

[63] Granjard, Turgenev, p. 465.

Chapter III

Barbarians in the Sanctuary: The Novels of Edmond and Jules de Goncourt during the Société des Cinq

When Edmond and Jules de Goncourt named Turgenev "l'aimable barbare,"[1] they revealed more about themselves than about Turgenev. The Scythian characters Turgenev created were eminently rational, fundamentally opposed to barbarism, valuing individual dignity as the criterion for civilization. The possibility for civilized existence in Turgenev's novels lay beyond the reach of the urban center, where society was structured by the fear of power. But a life outside urban civilization frightened the Goncourts. "La nature pour moi est ennemie . . .," we read in the Journal.[2] "Cette terre verte me paraît un grand cimetière qui attend."

Their love for Paris made the notion of episodic barbaric behavior in society a tolerable thought for them. "La sauvagerie est nécessaire tous les quatre ou cinq cent ans, pour revivifier le monde," they wrote in 1855.[3] But, by the early 1860's, the brothers were no longer so flippant about barbaric elements in Paris. The law of selection which operated in the city seemed merciless to them: "La

vie est hostile à tous ceux qui ne suivent pas le grand chemin de la vie. . . . À chaque pas qu'ils font, toutes sortes de . . . choses tombent sur eux, comme les peines afflictives d'une grande loi de conservation de la société."[4] The massive destruction and rebuilding programs of Napoleon III represented an invasion of personal privacy and an effort to expose everyone and everything to public scrutiny. "Mon Paris, le Paris où je suis né," we read in the Journal,[5] "le Paris des moeurs de 1830 à 1848 s'en va . . . L'intérieur va mourir. La vie menace de devenir publique." The loss of privacy and of domesticity, which formed the insulation of the Parisian against constant scrutiny, aroused the Goncourts from their complacent lethargy. A new civilization, a bourgeois civilization, which claimed that happiness could be bought in the new, glittering shops and elaborate homes, threatened to destroy everything the brothers valued in the city to which they were devoted.

The composition of the new bourgeois civilization is carefully noted and placed in polar opposition to the old one in Renée Mauperin, published shortly after the Goncourts and Flaubert had made Turgenev's acquaintance at Magny's.[6] Renée's sentiment for a pastoral utopia results from the integration of nature and domesticity in her mind, apparent as early as the opening scene of the novel. Resting during the course of a swim in the Seine, Renée observes how "la Nature passe ca et là, entre la bâtisse, le travail et l'industrie, comme un brin d'herbe entre les doigts d'un

homme."[7] In this fragile whole, human figures appear as components, in just proportion to the environment. Her conscience of the holistic value in the scene makes Renée the guardian of the pastoral values of honor and trust she has learned from her father.

In contrast to Renée, Madame Mauperin, Henri Mauperin and Madame Davarande systematically demean honor and trust, which cannot be transformed into commodities. For her son's marriage, Madame Mauperin bargains through a priest, seeking the best price to be gotten for him, obsessed with "l'orgueil de l'argent."[8] Henri "professait le culte de l'utile,"[9] and thereby arrived at political economy as a career, reducing everything to potential commodities. Madame Davarande, the Mauperin's older daughter, finds nothing humiliating in the rental of appropriate Parisian citizens to furnish company at foreigners' gala evening parties.[10]

There is a clear implication in the novel that commercialization of a society is achieved by fragmenting the integral personality, normally composed of emotional and rational parts, and discarding whatever cannot be assigned a quantitative value. In describing Henri's affinity for joining clubs, the Goncourts observe that "il s'était attaché du premier coup à ce grand moyen d'arriver des zéros, qui fait que l'homme n'est plus un, mais une unité reliée à un nombre."[11]

The reduction of the personality from a conceptual whole to a functional unit strongly suggests that

fragmentation is experienced by the individual as a process of dismemberment. By discarding undesirable aspects of the personality, the individual becomes suited for a single function. Certainly this is true of the "femme du monde" as the Goncourts depict her. Madame Davarande permits life to invade domestic privacy to the point that she is unable to conceive of reality in any terms other than public ones: "le monde emplissait sa vie et toute sa tête."[12]

Images of dismemberment color the description of the duel between Henri and Villacourt, lending dramatic support to the idea that the new bourgeoisie is inhumane in its use of expediency. Henri's dispassionate comment that "le coeur me bat un peu sous l'aisselle . . ."[13] and the expression, "effacé,"[14] separate his body from his mind so that he appears to be control parts of himself like so many parts of a machine. Even his death seems to occur part by part: ". . . il tomba à plat, le visage contre terre, et ses mains, au bout de ses bras étendus, un moment fouillèrent la neige de leurs doigts crispés."[15] Henri's silence becomes a tacit agreement that complexity and emotion ought to be cast from one's life.

To contrast with commercial values and the fragmentation of the personality, often by violent methods, the Goncourts depict a close association of pastoral values to integrity. This relationship begins in the opening pages, where a pastoral tranquility removes all suggestions of the nearby capital city:

> De petits nuages jouaient et roulaient à l'horizon, violets, gris, argentés, avec des éclairs de blanc à leur cime qui semblaient mettre au bas du ciel l'écume du bord des mers. De là se levait le ciel infini et bleu, profond et clair, splendide et déjà pâlissant, comme à l'heure où les étoiles commencent à s'allumer derrière le jour. Tout en haut, deux ou trois nuages planaient, solides, immobiles, suspendus. Une immense lumière coulait sur l'eau, dormait ici, étincelait là, faisait trembler des moirés d'argent dans l'ombre des bâteaux, touchait un mât, la tête d'un gouvernail, accrochait au passage le madras orange ou la casaque rose d'une laveuse.
>
> La campagne, le faubourg et la banlieue se mêlaient sur les deux rives.[16]

Human figures assume a proportionate significance, neither masterful nor abject, reflecting the pastoral existence they share with greater and lesser degrees of domestication. Cultivation of the land progresses from virgin nature to the outskirts of Paris, where Renée's frame of reference is interrupted by the line of vision. There are no gaps in the orderly progression from nature to the manufacturing houses.

The pastoral quality of this serene description stems the Goncourts' prejudicial distaste for monumental exaggerations. Art which uses detail in conformity with human proportions is their preference, according to Pierre Sabatier. ". . . Ce qui leur plaît, ce n'est pas tant le grand art, celui des artistes de l'antiquité . . . ou de la Renaissance, . . . c'est bien plutôt, cet art joli, un peu maniéré, . . . et de détails plaisants, créant autour de l'homme un décor d'intimité charmante . . ."[17]

The element of pastorality in the early pages of the

novel provides a frame of reference for the description of Monsieur Mauperin in the second chapter. His past is studded with acts of military courage and bravery during the Napoleonic Wars. His sense of honor forbids him to accept favors from the Restoration government, and he refuses to compromise his principles of independence from notions of prestige. But Renée's birth softens his rigidity. In his protective love for his third child, Monsieur Mauperin finds an outlet for long-repressed desires to extend himself towards others. Political and family loyalties assume a logical importance because of this special relationship. The forest and village region near Morimond is no longer "agreste et magnifique"[18] but a network of roads and paths where the father and daughter talk with farmers, sunlight, and birds alike. The father conscientiously urges his daughter to respect the proportions of convention. "Tu te montes"[19] he tells her when she takes an argument too seriously. In his silent rebuke of Henri's substitution of a noble name for the Mauperin family name, Monsieur Mauperin demonstrates how honor and trust create integrity in the pastoral concept of life. Henri's disregard for historical continuity separates the Mauperins from their true lineage. By renaming himself, Henri falsifies his whole person, appropriating a historical tradition to mask his origins. Creating and severing ties in this manner reduces morality to expediency, and violates Monsieur Mauperin's sense of integrity, which emanates from a deep

conviction that honor and trust ensure stability and continuity in society.

The sinister antipathy of commercial interests for integrity reaches a dramatic climax in the second half of the novel. When Henri purchases a new name from the register of nobility, Renée rushes to defend the honor of the Mauperin family name. The deliberate anachronism of her expression of fealty lends credibility to the impetuous and passionate conduct of young de Villacourt, whose vestigial pastoral ties provide a sentimental contrast with Henri's cold expediency.

The problem with the schism between pastoral morality and bourgeois expediency in Renée Mauperin lies in the context of the narrative. Dissociated from the urban center which fosters it, bourgeois morality appears to spring from basic character structures. Germinie Lacerteux[20] represents the Goncourts' attempt to introduce urban pressures in the lives of their characters as a counter-balance to the internal pressures which affect behavior. The distinction between two sources of pressure on the individual permitted the brothers to treat characterization as a dramatic process, an intense exposition of motivation, involving a synthesis of emotions and environment. The dramatic treatment, which has been called "le véritable avènement du naturalisme,"[21] as well as "romantic,"[22] is the Goncourts' version of "tragédie."[23] The brothers first attempted the idea of a tragic novel in Germinie Lacerteux, to determine

"si, dans un pays sans caste et sans aristocratie légale, les misères des petits et des pauvres parleraient à l'intérêt, à l'émotion, à la pitié, aussi haut que les misères des grands et des riches."[24] Far from being an apology for the lower classes, this theory of the novel claims that any individual can form the focal point of a narrative if there is a clash of interior and exterior forces in the individual's life.

That there is a basic character which is independent of class circumstances is made clear at the beginning of Germinie Lacerteux. Madame Varandeuil's pride cannot be said to stem from class circumstances, since the de Goncourts point out the series of humiliations to which she is subjected because of her class during and after the Revolution of 1789. Nor can Germinie's humility be a function of her poverty, since we are told that Mère Jupillon comes from a similar background, yet we note that she is far from humble. Thus while class circumstances affect individuals, the complex inner life which escapes analysis, is fundamental in determining individual behavior.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Germinie is the intensity of her inner life. We see little of it, but we are told a great deal about it. Her need to express love is so compelling that she is made vulnerable and powerless by it. When Jupillon returns to her for money to buy off his military obligation, she complies, knowing she will be betrayed by him again:

> Elle n'avait pas même fait le calcul que ce sacrifice toucherait le jeune homme . . . cette idée du champ de bataille, . . . devant laquelle . . . la femme ferme les yeux l'avait décidée . . . à vendre sa vie pour cet homme . . .[25]

Jupillon's betrayal of Germinie's love is tragic, because she had recovered through him the vitality she had as a child in the country before her mother's death.

Germinie's pattern of depression and recovery is her source of strength. Depressed when she first enters Mademoiselle Varandeuil's service after a period of degrading treatment, she slowly regains interest in life. After the death of her daughter and again after a miscarriage, Germinie's depressions ultimately dissolve as her love for life returns. This pattern bespeaks inner resources of vitality and a healthy desire to survive. Yet, as the environment continues to devalue her love for life, Germinie's vitality becomes a malignant wish for death. Even as she begins to recover her morale, after the death of her daughter, she is faced with Jupillon's additional betrayals. Her alcoholism, her affair with Gautruche, and her final illness are signs that the Jupillons have succeeded in demeaning Germinie to the point of exhausting her.

As generous and uncalculating as Germinie is, the Jupillons are calculating. What are the sources of this calculating mentality? For Mère Jupillon, calculating self-interest seems to have controlled her life. "On disait dans le quartier qu'elle s'était établie avec l'argent d'un vieux monsieur qu'elle avait servi jusqu'à sa mort dans son

pays,"[26] explain the Goncourts, when Mère Jupillon opens her creamery in Paris.

Jupillon's personality is more complicated. A brief scene imparts some positive characteristic to his personality. As Germinie, about to deliver her child, climbs into a taxi, Jupillon asks her for money. As if to compensate for such insensitivity, he asks if he can accompany her. Otherwise, however, we are aware of his sense of powerlessness. Willing to follow the direction in which his mother points him, Jupillon's lack of will expresses his underlying belief that there is no such motivation as autonomous choice. Thus, in his feelings for Germinie, we are shown how his demeaning irony emerges from his self-hatred: "L'amour n'avait été pour le jeune Jupillon que la satisfaction d'une certaine curiosité du mal, cherchant dans la connaissance et la possession d'une femme le droit et le plaisir de la mépriser."[27] This need to despise is as strong in Jupillon as is in Germinie the need to love.

The scenes at the Boule-Noire further our understanding of the conditions under which the calculating mind flourishes. The need to humiliate Germinie is a compensatory need on the part of Jupillon and the young girls with whom he associates to inflate their vapid characters with a sense of power. Inner emptiness, conveyed in the descriptions of Jupillon's appearance as a mere "spectacle,"[28] and of the dance hall girls in their garish outfits, makes an audience necessary for these people, for otherwise, they

can have no sense of their existence. Their irony is a device by which they project their own feelings of emptiness onto the environment, and, having thus assumed the essential senselessness of all objects, they attribute degrees of usefulness to them according to the amount of attention the objects win for them. The urban environment provides an audience, and a plethora of objects to be used in this manner. This acquisition of a sense of power by the demeaning of others, however, undermines the sources of vitality in the urban environment, and makes of those sources the tools of baseness.

In contrast, Germinie's love for life attempts to elevate the simplest gestures above quotidian life. She endows common acts and objects with great significance, making daily life into a ceremony of gratitude. The grass sprouting in a dish on Mademoiselle's kitchen sill, the sense of peace once Germinie and Jupillon have passed through the city gate into the countryside beyond, the birth of her daughter as the beginning of a better life, are expressions of Germinie's conviction that vitality pervades the environment, and, to remain a part of the environemnt, the individual must renew contact with that vitality constantly. The frustration of her efforts by the Jupillons, who recognize as real only that which can be bought and sold, proving to Germinie that her daily acts are meaningless, is the de Goncourts' version of tragedy.

The malignant effect of commercialism in urban life

increases in Manette Salomon. Though the novel illustrates the Goncourts' belief that "dans le ménage, la femme est presque toujours le dissolvant de l'honneur du mari, . . . l'honneur dans son sens le plus élevé, . . . le plus idéalement imbécile,"[29] the publication of the novel in 1865 was not greeted with much attention. The problem of the novel is presented through a study of four artists at the end of the July Monarchy and the beginnings of the Empire, and this protraction of a simple idea produces a certain amount of tedium. The first artist, Garnotelle, "montrait l'exemple de ce que peut, en art, la volonté sans le don, l'effort ingrat, ce courage de la médiocrité."[30] Chassagnol, rejected as an artist by contemporary standards of art, scorns all tradition. Anatole transfers to his art all the childish delight he takes in life. These characters form a small society from which the character of Coriolis emerges, and in whom the Goncourts study the gradual weakening of artistic drive under the influence of bourgeois domestication.

Coriolis' art is impelled by ideas which he subsequently transforms into visual expressions. In one of his early canvases, the Goncourts write: "ce n'était pas le peintre qui avait voulu s'y affirmer, mais l'homme; et le dessin y cédait visiblement le pas à l'utopie."[31] In a like manner, when Coriolis sees Manette for the first time on an omnibus he is blinded by her luminous beauty, mistaking it for superiority. Under the influence of such idealization,

Coriolis is unable to consider the environment as a series of real objects, which have a life of their own, and, because of this blindness, he eventually finds himself overwhelmed by that same environment.

Coriolis' relationship with Manette recreates the tension between the artist who struggles to keep his vision free of constraints, and the bourgeois need for art, which flatters the bourgeois image of itself as a flawless and dominating force in civilization. Manette's lack of fantasy, her narrow, urban frame of reference, and her scorn for that which cannot be measured, confines Coriolis to the function of a servant.

This serving function is fundamental to the urban idea of art, for it reduces the artist to dependency on society to evaluate his product. Manette's "travail incessant,"[32] dismantles the moral support art gave to Coriolis, making her attachment to him "comme une longue dépossession de lui-même."[33] In her mechanical coldness, Manette symbolizes the urban greed for control over society, the urge to reduce humans to mere citizens, serving the cause of the city exclusively.

The resolute withdrawal from the narrow confines of the civic environment is one alternative for the artist who wishes nothing to dominate his vision. The idyll at Barbizon introduces Crescent, painter of the "paysage moderne, . . . le verger mêlé aux champs, les assemblages de toits de chaume dans un boquet de sureaux."[34] The

cushioning of the human between the smaller and the larger aspects of nature neither glorifies nor overwhelms the human. Yet, the equilibrium is not an acquiescence to complacency. Crescent's "remaniement continu"[35] accommodates his ever-expanding awareness of the environment, and exposes greater and greater intricacies in the objective world.

> Aussi, le ciel pour lui n'était-il jamais un fait isolé, le dessus et le plafond d'un tableau; il était l'enveloppement du paysage, donnant à l'ensemble et aux détails tous les rapports de ton, le bain où tout trempait, de la feuille à l'insecte, le milieu ambiant et diffus d'où se levaient tous les mirages de la nature et toutes les transfigurations de la terre.[36]

Incapable of constant adjustments in the proportions of his visions, Coriolis confines his attention to the discrete existence of objects. Preferring "en toutes choses la simplicité, la clarté et la logique," Coriolis experiences "une sorte de malaise à côté de ces idées, de ces paroles . . . Les fièvres d'imagination, . . . les théories qui perdent terre lui avaient toujours inspiré une répulsion native . . ."[37] This restriction binds him to a more mundane level of art, at which the lack of a courageous imagination is not a fault, but a dependency on the environment for inspiration.

When Anatole considers the possibility of remaining in Barbizon for the winter, earning his living from illustrations, Coriolis chides him: "C'est à ce moment-là que tu feras ton grand tableau pour l'exposition, n'est-ce pas?"[38] The comment betrays Coriolis' greatest fear: anonymity.

Crescent's animist vision brings its own reward in the constant expansion of the significance of each brush stroke, but Coriolis finds in renown the greatest reward of art. He needs Paris, the exhibition, the silent crowd of admirers, and critical acclaim.

In Coriolis' ambivalence towards the environment at Barbizon, we are shown the dilemma of the artist during the transition from the Restoration to the Empire. In the Goncourts' scheme, pastoral tranquility encourages Crescent's ordered inquiry into relationships among objects. But his isolation from society decreases the social value of his art. Paris, on the other hand, destroys artists by reducing art to a commodity, and the artist to a servant.

In his abrupt decision to return to Paris, Coriolis expresses the hope of arriving at a compromise between the independent vision of the artist and the restrictions of a commercial culture. But the death of Vermillon, the pet monkey, who symbolized spirited revolt against a society bound down by its conventions, foreshadows Coriolis' failure. Manette gradually dominates Coriolis' activities with her interest in the ephemeral prestige the bourgeoisie awards to art which gratifies it, and her triumph over Coriolis' weak will signifies the demand of bourgeois culture that the artist who seeks its approval must pay undivided allegiance to its values.

The demand for exclusive submission and allegiance forms the dramatic story of Madame Gervaisais, the novel

the brothers completed after publishing Manette Salomon. Ostensibly the tale of a well-to-do French widow visiting Rome with her small son, the novel quickly becomes the study of Madame Gervaisais' obsessive pietism. This pietism is apparent when she withdraws from social activities, and devotes herself to religious activities. The obsessive quality of her religion is apparent when she demands that her son, afflicted with a learning defect, become literate. Meeting this unrealistic demand will prove to Madame Gervaisais that deviations from the Christian model of human perfection can be corrected by human will.

The function of literacy in the context of the novel draws its significance from Madame Gervaisais' faith in the power of ritual. During a visit to Saint Peter's, the widow is entranced by the designations on the confessional archways, indicating the various languages in which priests are prepared to hear confessions, and the gold-lettered inscription, "Petrus et super hanc petram edificabo," signifying the universal embrace of the Church, extending from the cathedral, reveals the access to divine knowledge through a ceremony of reading and speaking. Madame Gervaisais' decision to force Pierre-Charles to read, coming shortly after this visit, makes literacy an aspect of orthodoxy.

Although Madame Gervaisais relents in the stringency of her demand when she realizes the harmful consequences for her child, her intolerance for deviation from absolute fidelity to orthodox reason turns into an instrument of

self-destruction. Isolated from society, resolutely insensitive to human needs, Madame Gervaisais loses contact with her environment. The purpose of her compulsive submission to orthodoxy is to establish the unquestionable power of the mind to bend all to its will, and to dominate everything within its reach, but the effect of this submission is the separation from real life, and the denial of any value in objective reality apart from its value as an instrument of Madame Gervaisais' will. By her death, the Goncourts illustrate the capacity of civilization to spawn excesses, which become imperious forces destroying resources of vitality in the civilization.

The importance of Madame Gervaisais for the total impression of the Goncourt novels published during the period of the Société des Cinq is its characterization of imperiousness and arrogance as the products of excessive civilization. The psychological conditions which produce intolerance are shown to be the same conditions under which the bourgeois morality of expediency and commercialism flouishes in Renée Mauperin, Germinie Lacerteux, and Manette Salomon. The egocentric perception of the environment as an instrument serving individual needs is shared by Madame Gervaisais, Manette Salomon, the Jupillons and the majority of the Mauperin family. In contrast with this drive for control of their surroundings by evaluating it in terms of its immediate usefulness, Renée Mauperin, Monsieur Mauperin, Germinie Lacerteux, and Coriolis look upon themselves as

agents through whom objects expand their significance and by whom life is renewed and extends beyond the immediate. La Fille Elisa, Edmond's first independent effort following Jules' death in 1870, is an aggressive attack against the arrogant superficiality of bourgeois society.

In the introduction to La Fille Elisa, Edmond writes that Elisa's prostitution and crime are incidental to the novel, leading to its real interest: "la prison et la prisonnière."[39] The Auburn System of "silence continu," enforced in Elisa's prison, represents a punishment "allant au delà de la peine édictée par les magistrats et tuant pour toujours la raison de la femme condamnée à un nombre limité d'années de prison."[40] The drama of this excessive punishment was transposed for the theatre by Jean Ajalbert, and enjoyed some success, before censors forced it to be withdrawn.[41] But during its brief stage appearance, La Fille Elisa was a forceful illustration of perpetual silence as excessive punishment. Imprisonment deprives Elisa of civil rights. This is justifiable. But perpetual silence deprives Elisa of human rights, and, in this deprivation, bourgeois soceity has overstepped its bounds. It has no right to pronounce who is human and who is not.

The defense of Elisa's human rights is restricted to this problem of excessive punishment of criminals. Elisa's criminal disposition is examined to arouse the reader's sympathies. Lack of interest in others, and a fear of surrendering to her need for love reduce Elisa's existence to

primitive behavior. A spiritual component in her character eventually emerges when a young soldier, presenting her with a bouquet at each visit, succeeds in inspiring love in her. The association between the bouquet of flowers, and the growth of compassionate love suggests that Elisa is capable of perceiving more in life than working to satisfy basic needs. She is on the verge of recognizing a horizon that extends beyond urbane, commercial exchanges, and begins to sense that, even though she is a prostitute, she is something else, too. This sense of her individuality is so compelling that she abruptly rebels against all the restrictions placed on her by her past, by society, by her mistrust of others, and, when her soldier lover tries to embrace her, she stabs him.

The complexity of Elisa's motive in committing murder is a necessary feature of the novel, for she can express it only through language. Deprived of self-expression during her imprisonment, there is no medium through which Elisa can make herself understood, nor through which she can understand herself. The imposition of perpetual silence can serve no purpose other than to deny the existence of any complexity in the problem of Elisa's criminal behavior. The intolerance of the new bourgeois society for complexity, which escapes simple commercial evaluation, and which relies on subtlety and independent interpretation, is brought out during an interior monologue when Elisa explains to the reader her stubborn silence in the courtroom trial:

> . . . elle! la dernière des dernières, elle! Une inscrite à la police et dans tant de maisons de la province et de Paris, il aurait fallu avouer qu'il lui était, tout à coup, comme ca, poussé l'envie d'aimer comme une jeune fille qui n'aurait pas fauté, comme une toute jeune honnête fille. . . . non, ce n'étaient pas des choses à dire . . . on aurait trop ri d'elle. . . .[42]

The insensitivity of prison authorities in their regulations is only part of a larger bourgeois society in which civic institutions exist to deny complex and intricate human behavior.

Underlying this criticism of contemporary bourgeois civilization is the struggle the Goncourts had depicted in Renée Mauperin, Germinie Lacerteux, and Manette Salomon. In these novels, bourgeois morality, which only recognizes commercial value in objects, ignores those objects which have no such value. Pastoral morality challenged bourgeois commercialism by valuing in objective reality the remnants of the past and the promise of the future. In Les Frères Zemganno, the final novel Edmond de Goncourt wrote during his association with the Cercle des Cinq, this struggle is communicated in the form of an allegory. Edmond stated that he hoped to achieve in this novel "une réalité poétique,"[43] and he draws on techniques developed in previous novels in order to do so.

The distinction between a provincial, or rustic, period and an urban period in the lives of two circus performers recalls antitheses already familiar to us after studying previous novels by the Goncourts. The development of a deep

attachment between two brothers during a rustic period when the circus in which they perform is itinerant, and sets up camp on the outskirts of towns or in deserted regions, precedes the urban period, when the brothers become resident performers. A profound antipathy between Nello, the younger brother, and la Tompkins, a bareback artist, forms the dramatic interest of the novel, pitting the generous nature of the young man against the egocentric female.

Nello's instinctive animosity towards the bareback rider, exciting her vengeance, conveys the incompatibility of the Zemganno brothers' concept of art, which is a celebration of human potential, and la Tompkins' manipulative, exhibitionist expertise. The distinction between the two sorts of performers, the artist and the exhibitionist, leads to further distinctions in motivation for performing. In la Tompkins' spectacular feats of balance and control of the horse, we sense the appetite for domination, and the description of her wealthy consorts, her thoroughbred horses, and her money furthers the suggestion that she seeks self-aggrandizing power in order to become an object of worship to her audience. Her attraction to Nello is, then, the expression of envy. The envy Nello inspires in other female characters in the novel suggests that his spontaneous artistry threatens the calculated drive for power barely disguised in these women:

> Enfin, c'est très délicat à exprimer, et cela paraîtra peu croyable, il y avait chez quelques amies de ses amis, un rien de jalousie pour le

> caractère de sa beauté, pour ce qu'elle empruntait, pour ce qu'elle dérobait à la beauté de la femme.[44]

Like Manette, these women are intolerant of competition for exclusive devotion to them. And this exclusive devotion to the female, in both Manette Salomon and Les Frères Zemganno, is demanded unconditionally.

The brothers' insistence on the inestimable quality of art, based on creating from the imagination, conflicts with la Tompkin's preoccupation with the accumulation of power. The conflict brings to mind the fate of previous key figures in the Goncourt novels who resisted the dehumanizing and calculating personalities in their environment. Mario Prajs remarked of Germinic Lacerteux' dramatic resistance:

> Le processus commence par la poétisation du passé qui surgit subitement cancéreux dans le présent qu'il écrase et l'être étouffe rapidement dans ces spasmes qu'aucune volonté ne peut plus enrayer.[45]

Nello's demise is not psychological, but it resembles the downfalls of Renée, Germinie, Coriolis, Madame Gervaisais, and Elisa. The forces of debasement and dehumanization are determined to destroy the worth of the individual. As with Turgenev's scythian, the Goncourt key figures find in memory of the past and hope for the future the sense of individuality which urges them to resist these destructive forces. If the conflict between the key figure and the commercial bourgeois society accelerates to the point of a clash, the fragile individual will certainly succumb. The Goncourt novels written during the period of the Sociéte

des Cinq successfully demonstrated that, as long as the new bourgeois civilization sought greater public exposure of society, the more the individual's sense of dignity is exposed. In La Fille Élisa and Les Frères Zemganno, Edmond attributed an even greater value to individual lives than is apparent in novels on which the brothers collaborated. His two independent novels, published while the Société des Cinq still met regularly, demonstrate that the more apparent this value is, the more viciously society attacks it, and the more insensitive and barbaric society becomes. These two novels echo the fears of Scythians such as Arkady and Litvinov, and reflect the awareness of the value Solomin places on individual contributions to society. By underscoring the value of individuals as intensely as he does in La Fille Élisa and Les Frères Zemganno, Edmond de Goncourt gives evidence of his increasing sympathy with Turgenev's ideal of a humanist society.

Notes to Chapter III

[1] Goncourt, _Journal_, III, p. 26.

[2] _Journal_, II, p. 29.

[3] _Journal_, I, p. 83.

[4] _Journal_, II, p. 28.

[5] _Journal_, I, p. 269.

[6] Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, _Renée Mauperin_ (Paris: Dentu, 1864).

[7] Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, _Renée Mauperin_ in Vol. XXX of _Oeuvres complètes_, p. 16.

[8] Goncourt, _Renée Mauperin_, p. 24.

[9] _Renée Mauperin_, p. 85.

[10] _Renée Mauperin_, p. 170.

[11] _Renée Mauperin_, p. 88.

[12] _Renée Mauperin_, p. 160.

[13] _Renée Mauperin_, p. 247.

[14] _Renée Mauperin_, p. 248.

[15] _Renée Mauperin_, p. 248.

[16] _Renée Mauperin_, p. 14.

[17] Pierre Sabatier, _L'Esthétique des Goncourt_ (Paris: Hachette, 1920), p. 131.

[18] _Renée Mauperin_, p. 19.

[19] _Renée Mauperin_, p. 186.

[20] Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, _Germinie Lacerteux_ (Paris: Charpentier, 1865).

[21] Pierre Sabatier, *"Germinie Lacerteux" des Goncourt* (Paris: SFELT, 1948), p. 35.

[22] Brunetière, Ferdinand, *Le Roman naturaliste* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1896), p. 259.

[23] Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *Germinie Lacerteux*, ed. Enzo Caramaschi (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1968), p. 2.

[24] *Germinie Lacerteux*, p. 2.

[25] *Germinie Lacerteux*, p. 51.

[26] *Germinie Lacerteux*, p. 38.

[27] *Germinie Lacerteux*, p. 54.

[28] *Germinie Lacerteux*, pp. 54-5.

[29] Goncourt, *Journal*, II, p. 154.

[30] Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *Manette Salomon* (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1867).

[31] Goncourt, *Manette Salomon* in Vol. XV of *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 405.

[32] *Manette Salomon*, p. 434.

[33] *Manette Salomon*, p. 435.

[34] *Manette Salomon*, pp. 287-8.

[35] *Manette Salomon*, p. 289.

[36] *Manette Salomon*, p. 289.

[37] *Manette Salomon*, p. 320.

[38] *Manette Salomon*, p. 322.

[39] Edmond de Goncourt, Preface to *La Fille Elisa* in Vol. IX of *Oeuvres complètes*, p. viii.

[40] *La Fille Elisa*, viii.

[41] Jean Ajalbert, Afterword to *La Fille Elisa*, pp. 277-8.

[42] *La Fille Elisa*, p. 211.

[43] Edmond de Goncourt, Preface to *Les Frères Zemganno* in Vol. X of *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 12.

[44] Goncourt, *Les Frères Zemganno*, p. 182.

[45] Mario Prajs, *La Fallarité dans l'oeuvre des frères Goncourt* (Paris: A. Nizet, 1974).

Chapter IV

The Arena in

l'Education sentimentale and _Bouvard et Pécuchet_

"La réalité ne doit être qu'un tremplin," declared Flaubert to Turgenev, in the midst of a letter to him concerning Zola and Daudet.[1] "Nos amis," he continued, "sont persuadés qu'à elle seule elle constitue tout l'Etat! Ce matérialisme m'indigne, et presque tous les lundis, j'ai un accès d'irritation en lisant les feuilletons de Zola." Yet, even Flaubert succumbed to a certain materialism in his efforts to raise reality above banality through art. He complained to George Sand that he was glued to the earth, sensing himself to be "d'une platitude écoeurante."[2]

Flaubert was not alone in his search for a transcendent reality amidst contemporary civilization. In the two novels of contemporary life he wrote during his association with the Société des Cinq, Flaubert created characters whose lives were spent in pursuit of a level of existence far above that of contemporary society. Frédéric Moreau, Francois Bouvard, and Juste Pécuchet are involved in endless struggles to rise above the mediocre level of conventions, and, although their lives follow a pattern of hope and disillusionment in the realization of their goal, they

undertake the struggle with a courage which distinguishes them from the other characters in l'Education sentimentale and Bouvard et Pécuchet.

One of the interesting hypotheses to emerge from critical commentary surrounding l'Education sentimentale and Bouvard et Pécuchet is that the characters in these novels bring about their own unhappiness because they are out of contact with the world of objective reality, the real world. According to Maurice Nadeau, Flaubert "vise à réintégrer dans un tout les plans de l'imagination du rêve, de la vie courante. . . ."[4] But his characters are said to suffer from their inability to effect such an integration of the real and the imaginative. Thus, Victor Brombert writes of l'Education sentimentale as "a profanation of dreams," and Bouvard et Pécuchet comes to signify "a 'return' following a pointless odyssey."[5] The theme of the aborted leap beyond reality is seized upon as proof that Flaubert's key figures are unhappy because they fail to accomplish an impossible feat. Yet, the two novels we are about to examine do not associate the key figures' unhappiness with their failure to attain a state of transcendence. In fact, the key figures succeed in rising above the mediocre level of civilization in which they live. As Frédéric and Madame Arnoux point out in their final dialogue at the end of l'Education sentimentale, that transcendence is proof of success: ". . . nous nous serons bien aimés," comments Madame Arnoux. "Sans nous appartenir, pourtant," interjects

Frédéric; Madame Arnoux' response, "Cela vaut peut-être mieux,"[6] suffuses the validity of her argument with the tone of disillusionment both she and Frédéric evince. It is precisely in the depiction of their disillusionment that Flaubert directs the reader's attention to the success of his key figures in existing at a higher level than their contemporaries.

Frédéric Moreau represents the success of disillusionment from the beginning of l'Education sentimentale. From the opening paragraphs, Flaubert remains intent upon demonstrating the difference between the mind which is capable of disillusionment, and the mind which is hopelessly weighted down by the objects confronting it. The description of the departure of the steamboat, the Ville-de-Montereau, which is to carry Frédéric home to Nogent-sur-Seine, involves a fluctuation between reality and fantasy. The fluctuation is accomplished by the use of specific references to real life, as the reader knows it. Flaubert thén dissolves the supports which endow those references with their real appearances.

This technique, which fits Victor Brombert's description of Flaubert's "liquefaction,"[7] begins with the time, September 15, 1840, around 6:00 a.m., and a place, Paris, on the Quai St. Bernard. The scene of the bustling crowd is visualized throug the haze of steam, "une nuée blanchâtre."[8] In addition to the confusion of shapes in the crowd, caused by the haze, there is the steady ringing

of the ship's bell: "la cloche, en avant, tintait sans discontinuer."[9] That Frédéric is the observing eye through which the scene is described is made clear by the point of view of the description, "devant le quai. . . ."[10] The juxtaposition of frenetic movement and the evenly-spaced passage of time takes place in Frédéric's mind, an integration of objective "facts," time and place, with subjective observation, "fantasy," forming, not a dream, but a concept. The forms of the verbs "contempler"[11] and "penser"[12] introduce Frédéric's cerebration, which fix the objective environment firmly in the process. Far from excluding or evading reality, Frédéric's conceptualizations include it as an integral part.

On the other hand, Frédéric's capacity for thought depends upon the extenuation of objects in his midst. This reduction of importance follows from depriving an object of its sense, an obfuscation of its function. Thus the figures on the quai are seen to scurry about in a senseless whirl, encumbering each other while in effect everyone has the same purpose in mind of boarding the steamboat in time for the departure. In a similar manner, after his years of study in Paris, Frédéric has mastered the names of only a few monuments in the capital city: "A travers le brouillard, il contemplait des clochers, des édifices dont il ne savait pas les noms; puis il embrassa, dans un dernier coup d'oeil, l'île Saint-Louis, La Cité, Notre-Dame. . . ."[13] One might volunteer in his defense that he is too inexperienced to

keep such objective facts in his head. Flaubert immediately subverts this excuse. The young man is "immobile,"[14] plans to while away his vacation time ("languir").[15] As if to underline this suggestion of Frédéric's slothfulness, Flaubert places the expression, "faire son droit"[16] in italics, mocking the ambition of the young law student, much as Frédéric's mother does later in the novel, after he returns to Paris as heir to his uncle's fortune.[17]

The intimation that Frédéric's mental activity is an effort to avoid action insidiously and irrevocably fixes itself in the text. The flat banks on either side of the Seine are boring because Frédéric sees nothing significant in them. The captain's endless pacing between the two drums on the steamship is senseless because Frédéric's trip is senseless. The nutshells, food wrappings, and cigar butts are said to litter the deck because Frédéric has not joined in the spirit of fun with which his fellow passengers enjoyed their picnic. The more attentive Frédéric is to his environment, the more alienated from it he appears to be. Yet, the more alienated he appears, the more the reader, captivated by the descriptions of scenery, suspects Frédéric of pomposity and laziness. The banks of the Seine, which are monotonous for Frédéric, are soothing after the disconcerting departure from Paris. The captain's constant vigilance is not absurd; it is reassuring. The passengers' mood of celebration is not banal; it is joyful.

When Madame Arnoux is presented, she is "comme une

apparition"[18] not only for Frédéric, but for the reader. She offers all the distinctive qualities Frédéric lacks. Occupied with her embroidery, her workbasket close at hand, Madame Arnoux represents fidelity and loyalty, just as Frédéric represents irresponsibility and egotism.

Yet, who is the dupe and who is duped in this early scene when Frédéric begins to appear pompous and lazy? The bourgeois insistence on clear-cut goals, on conformity with conventions, on the limitation of all meaning to specific time and specific place are not standards Frédéric shares when he stands on deck, observing and contemplating the activities around him. His whole manner of dealing with his environment differs from the point of view which dismisses Frédéric as irresponsible.

The attraction of political ministership as a career contributes a great deal towards explaining how Frédéric thinks about his environment. In his mind, such a career is not a cluster of specific functions. Frédéric is drawn towards it because of his "instincts,"[19] which are to contemplate reality in order to decipher its meaning. But, to his mother, Frédéric's plans to obtain such an elevated position are a surprise. Madame Moreau, the money-minded bourgeois living in the provinces to conserve funds, has always thought of this son of hers as lazy and irresponsible, in constant need of instructions on planning for the future. She even initiates the conversation on Frédéric's plans with a note of derision for her son, asking him what

he wants to become, "devenir,"[20] as if she assumes that, for him, a career is a sudden metamorphosis, when, instead, to her mind, it involves self-interested planning and self-aggrandizing manipulations.

After her momentary surprise at Frédéric's plans to seek a position as a minister, Madame Moreau is comforted, convinced that her son is following the dictates of common sense, at last. Her surprise, in fact, suggests that Frédéric is not the dreamer in the family. Madame Moreau, cognizant of only one motivating force in life, the competition for prestige, imagines the power she might wield, were her son to achieve his ambition. "Il avait réveillé dans son coeur ses vieux rêves d'ambition. Elle s'y abandonna intérieurement."[21] Ironically, it is Madame Moreau, and not Frédéric, who believes in metamorphosis, in becoming that which one is not. Madame Moreau's conniving mentality, in short, contrasts with her son's contemplative perspective. Appearance and illusion accomplish that which she believes the mind cannot accomplish. If Frédéric does not think like a great leader, he can surely look the part of a great leader.

The bourgeois faith in illusion as a substitute for thought is a notion developed throughout the novel, and has to do with the problems of significance and reality in life. Critics of Flaubert's use of contemporary life in l'Éducation sentimentale have concluded that, through it, Flaubert expressed his wish to escape from reality, or his

profound disappointment in its banality. In a study of this novel, Victor Brombert summarized criticism of Flaubert's notions:

> On connaît le grief de Sartre: spectateur puis critique rétrospectif des événements de 1848, plus tard contemporain apeuré de la Commune, Flaubert, installé dans le mythe du posthume, aurait tout râté de sa propre époque.[22]

Brombert objects to this criticism, claiming that Flaubert's use of contemporary life establishes a correlation between "les événements de la rue et les trahisons des rêves du coeur . . ., le principe même de trahison, de débandade, de dégradation."[23]

There is betrayal in l'Éducation sentimentale, as Brombert states, but the problem is to identify that which is betrayed and by whom it is betrayed. Brombert's statement likens betrayal of hope in the Revolution of 1848 to Madame Arnoux' betrayal of Frédéric's hope for unconditional love at the end of Part II. Yet, Frédéric is the first to betray that hope. His desire to possess Madame Arnoux at all, to make her into a symbol of the fidelity and serenity for which he yearned in real life relieved him of the responsibility of demanding fidelity and serenity from himself. Like all the other theatrical props available to Frédéric in Paris, Madame Arnoux is an object, the possession of which replaces the search for meaning in life. Reality, as the circumstances prevailing when the individual confronts the problem of contributing to the care of the species, has been betrayed, overwhelmed by the

disproportions and absurdities of illusion and spectacle.

The use of exaggeration and spectacle in order to avoid real problems is a theme which has been stated and pursued throughout the novel up to the scenes involving the Revolution. In our examination of the opening paragraphs of the novel, we noted that, while he may mock Frédéric, Flaubert exploits his key figure as a point of view from which to consider objectively the environment. The reader's own preoccupation with the drive for prestige and the accoutrements of power ridicules Frédéric's contemplations as laziness. Yet, it becomes clear that Frédéric's perceptions represent reality, bourgeois life considered as an illusion. Parisian society is perceived through Frédéric's eyes as exceedingly ritualistic, preoccupied with maintaining illusions and disguising reality.

This is understood by Frédéric at the turning point in the novel. Picnicking at the horse races on the Champs de Mars with Rosanette, Frédéric suddenly catches sight of Madame Arnoux. The scene is the first textual confrontation between the two women, the self-denying, pious Madame Arnoux, and the self-indulgent, irreverent Maréchale. The comparison of the two women in Frédéric's mind had already produced a vertiginous confusion, heightened by the constant fluctuation between the two lodgings.[24] Now, the setting on the Champs de Mars explains the significance of Frédéric's dream, occurring two chapters earlier, in which he is bridled alongside Monsieur Arnoux, and is being spurred

forward by Rosanette.[25] His reduction to an object of Rosanette's pleasure is made explicit at the Champs de Mars, where the races, providing a spectacular entertainment, designed to divert the crowd from monotony and insignificance, make an undeniable reference to the dream, and the bourgeois reduction of human beings to objects of pleasure.

The description of the fourth race, a competition for the grand prize, accelerates its rhythm to reflect the excitement of the spectators:

> De loin, [la] vitesse [des chevaux] n'avait pas l'air excessive;. . . . Mais, revenant bien vite, ils grandissaient; leur passage coupait le vent, le sol tremblait, les cailloux volaient; l'air, s'engouffrant dans les casaques des jockeys, les faisait palpiter comme des voiles; à grands coups de cravache, ils fouillaient leurs bêtes pour atteindre le poteau, c'était le but.[26]

Yet, for all the tremendous effort on the part of the horses and jockeys, and for all the excitement compelling the crowd during the brief race, the event lapses into insignificance, impressing on the crowd nothing of lasting value. Frédéric and the reader are suddenly forced to consider the true function of spectacle as a self-deceiving illusion to distract one from the search for enduring significance in life.

The use of spectacle to create the illusion of significance in bourgeois society is most apparent in the scenes associated with the Revolution of 1848. Politics and history are reduced to rituals in these scenes, performed in a city where illusions replace reality. Frédéric is denied the nomination of the Club de l'Intelligence because he failed to celebrate the Revolution,[27] and, in fact, the

entire evening meeting builds up to a farcical climax, with a Spaniard announcing "una oracion funebre" as Frédéric leaves.[28] Frédéric notes the histrionic disguises worn by the Dambreuse's guests, behind which true attributes and inadequacies disappear: ". . . le grand M.A., l'illustre B., le profond C., l'éloquent Z., l'immense Y., les vieux ténors du centre gauche, les paladins de la droite, les burgraves du juste milieu, les éternels bonshommes de la comédie."[29]

The Revolutionaries are fully conscious of their complicity in creating and perpetrating an illusion. "Les blessés qui tombaient, les morts étendus n'avaient pas l'air de vrais blessés, de vrais morts."[29] Indeed, the Revolution appears to be a "spectacle"[30] to Frédéric because the Revolutionaries have staged it as such: "Les marchands de vin étaient ouverts; on allait de temps à autre y fumer une pipe, boire une chope, puis on retournait se battre."[31]

Surrounded by illusion, Frédéric loses access to reality, to the search for significant action. As if the Revolution had alienated the spirit of life, the sound of a dog's howl provokes the crowd's laughter.[32] By their inhumane cynicism, the Revolutionaries signal their willingness to discard the real problems of surviving and prevailing against destructive impulses, and to abandon the species to a spectacular demise. Flaubert denies the validity of class arguments in this view of the Revolution,

blaming powerful and powerless alike, who use it as an excuse for self-indulgence and self-destruction. Frédéric's perceptions of the Revolution dissolve the illusion of its significance, and we are confronted with the real condition of humans, who, bereft of the purpose and direction which emerges from contemplation, turn to bestial anarchy.

That mindlessness gives rise to insignificance and absurdity is a consistent position in l'Éducation sentimentale. Alberto Cento's analysis of Flaubert's social criticism in Il realismo documentario nell'"Education sentimentale"[33] contributes to an understanding of how Flaubert arrives at his position. Contemporary life is examined through "external documentation,"[34] apparent in various "cues,"[35] and through "internal documentation,"[35] criticisms of contemporary life which appear in all Flaubert's novels. Documentation provides Flaubert with a technique to express his own ambivalence towards contemporary French society.[37] In l'Éducation sentimentale, reality, becoming clearer and clearer to Frédéric, loses its ambivalence, and subject and object converge in the act of perception. As Frédéric perceives objective reality in relationship to the search for significant action, he becomes increasingly aware of the illusions he mistook for significance.

Early in the novel, Frédéric's observant attitude heightened his sensitivity to the environment, but it imposed on him a sense of isolation which caused him to misunderstand the environment. Through love, Frédéric hoped

to appease his loneliness. But love, or the search for it, ultimately prevents Frédéric from positive action in the real world. From his original position of aloof contemplation, Frédéric comes into closer and closer contact with contemporary life through his relationship with Madame Arnoux, Rosanette and Madame Dambreuse. The more closely he observes, the more aware he is of the illusion of significance and the presence of spectacle in bourgeois society. Yet, only Frédéric is aware of the illusions, and he is again isolated. In contrast to the beginning of the novel where he thought and contemplated in his isolation, however, Frédéric is now said to dream.[38] Having sought to end his isolation through love, and having failed, Frédéric has no one to whom he might communicate his awareness of illusion. Thinking itself loses all value, and Frédéric lapses into dreaming as the form of mental activity which will protect him with his own illusions. In the final dialogue between Frédéric and Madame Arnoux, from which we quoted at the beginning of the discussion of <u>L'Éducation sentimentale</u>, the search for meaning beyond pleasure is distinguished from the reduction of objects to pleasurable possessions. Frédéric has learned to make the distinction, only after confusing the two ways of life. Whether he is aloof from society, seeking the meaning of its behavior, or trapped in the arena of bourgeois illusions, Frédéric sought from the beginning of the novel a dependable criterion for making the distinction, and he

found it in his personal awareness of illusion.

Observing and experiencing the environment resulted from Frederic's desire to love. But in Bouvard et Pécuchet,[40] learning replaces love as the impetus for observing and experiencing the environment. Just as Frederic went from Madame Arnoux to Rosanette to Madame Dambreuse in his search, so the two Parisian bachelors, Bouvard and Pécuchet, structure their lives to accommodate their search for knowledge.

The attention of critics has focused on the epistemological scope of the nine chapters dealing with the life of the two friends in Chavignolles, assuming that this scope satirized the presumptuous desire to know, which is so irrepressible in the two main characters. René Descharmes has written that Bouvard and Pécuchet are twice failures in their desire to know because they begin where they should have ended, "à vouloir approfondir les conclusions sans s'être, au préalable, rompu l'esprit aux prémisses," and because they rush headlong into their project, "sans conviction, sans foi, sans attrait."[41] Hugh Kenner points to the fact that the encyclopedic minds of Bouvard and Pécuchet are incapable of the process of understanding,[42] and Victor Brombert concurs, stating that in Bouvard et Pécuchet, "facts are shown merely to coexist, but are never brought into meaningful or hierarchical relation to each other."[43] Flaubert, who referred to the two characters in the novel as "mes deux idiots,"[44] treated the novel as a comedy,[45]

and Bouvard and Pécuchet are undeniably comic. But their ambition is treated seriously at all times.

What, precisely, is their ambition? The desire for knowledge motivates them, yet knowledge cannot be said to be their goal. If it were, the two men would never have left Paris with its museums and libraries. The first chapter of the novel gives a substantial clue to the purpose that shapes the lives of these two eccentric men. By using adverbial components at the beginning of paragraphs[46] to imply the passage of great lengths of time, and the systematic rejection of conventional or traditional behavior,[47] Bouvard and Pécuchet are enclosed in a world of their own. The visits to the Louvre, the Collège de France and the Académie Francaise appear to be acts of whimsy, but, in fact, they are cogently related to the bachelor's developing sense of purpose. Studies deeply affect their perspective on the environment, leading them to another level of existence: ". . . ayant plus d'idées, ils eurent plus de souffrances."[48] They organize their lives around cerebral adventures, opening their minds to a reality which expands daily. Not only can the society of their peers no longer accommodate them; the centers of learning, with their regulations designed to create a cultural elite,[49] are inhospitable to the two men. Their sense of adventure, in contrast to the complacent conformity of other figures in the early pages of the narrative, makes them eccentric, and determines their break, not only with the society around them, but the

civilization in which they live.

That they intend to invent a civilization based on adventure and discovery is even more apparent when Bouvard and Pécuchet prepare for their eventual move to Chavignolles. The items they purchase, long before they choose Chavignolles as their destination, are not a senseless assemblage of tools. The articles to be carried to the new home are selected for their suitability to an isolated environment, and adaptability to functions for which they were not intended by the inventor. The simple contact with these tools comforts the user with the impression that the intelligence of the inventor is imparted to him, although the user lacks specialized knowledge.

The chapter structure, formed around the various bodies of knowledge which Bouvard and Pécuchet attempt to absorb, bears out the suggestion that the two Parisians set out for the provinces to invent their own civilization. Still in the first pages of the narrative, during their early days at Chavignolles, Bouvard and Pécuchet isolate themselves from their bourgeois and farming neighbors, in order to immerse themselves in successive studies of agriculture, anthropology, chemistry, archeology, history, spirituality, and finally, the education of children as an effort to bring out the charity which the two friends believe inherent in humans. Each study characterizes knowledge as choice and arrangements of facts in an order which supports some underlying prejudicial conviction. Thus, for

Father Jeufroy, the source of light is not the sun, but the borealis, "pour expliquer comment les végétaux fossiles de la baie de Baffin ressemblent aux plantes équatorialies. On suppose, à la place du soleil, un grand foyer lumineux, maintenant disparu, et dont les aurores boréales ne sont peut-être que les vestiges."[50] The confusion over authorities urges the two friends to doubt them, to find knowledge for themselves by observing the environment. The doubting of authoritative theories places in question the tradition of mediated knowledge, on which the civilization of the bourgeoisie is based.

If Flaubert makes "le comique des idées"[51] the subject of his novel, he is careful not to demean his two equatoriales "bonshommes,"[52] who rebound from each disappointment in authority in the search for definitive conclusions regarding phenomena. Their prodigious energy, their total commitment to gathering information, and their inexhaustible desire to distinguish and observe phenomena honor their antibourgeois eccentricity. Victor Brombert points to a combination of pathos and ridicule in the novel, which, he claims, stems from the "chronological incongruity"[53] of two men, already advanced in age, who dare to probe the ineffable. The passing of time certainly emphasizes the pathetic situation of Bouvard and Pecuchet. Yet ridicule is directed, not toward them, but toward the characters in the novel who fail to question the ideas which govern every aspect of their lives.

Ridiculous behavior results, in the novel, from egocentricity, not from curiosity. Monsieur de Fauverges, obsessed with commanding impressive technical innovations, which make no reduction in the hardships imposed on his workers, is the object of much ridicule, and his base intentions contrast with the elevated goals of Bouvard and Pecuchet. His visit to the bachelors' museum, following a humorous description of the ceremonial robe and helmet in which the curators greet visitors, disturbs the count deeply. The efforts of these two commoners to preserve artifacts, "sans amour-propre,"[54] preempts the count's stewardship of a past which, in his opinion, belongs to him. He excuses his neglect of the past on the basis that "il aimait le progrès, et se fût livré, comme eux, à ces études intéressantes; mais la politique, le conseil général, l'agriculture, un véritable tourbillon l'en détournait."[55] The hypocrisy of these excuses lies in the count's attempt to belittle the bachelors, fumbling about in a past which is not their business, and to glorify Monsieur de Fauverges' self-important activities, which, he supposes, shepherds society through its critical crises. This sense of self-importance is contradicted by the absurdity of his agricultural innovations, and exposes his motives to the ridicule of the reader.

The Revolution of 1848, in its broad and cataclysmic effects, is portrayed as the most ridiculous event in the novel. The greed for power among the bourgeois, and the

hunger for a sense of importance among the farmers, reduce universal suffrage to another form of currency, replacing wealth with votes as an instrument for self-glorification. The concept of a struggle among government and governed is reduced to banality. The construction of a sideroad to the count's chateau is authorized as a concession to the workers' demands for meaningful employment.

In the midst of the attempts to surround a shabby political struggle with the illusion of a heroic endeavor, Bouvard and Pécuchet represent the voice of reality. Marescot's criticism of Gorju as a threat to "le salut public"[56] is hypocritical, according to Pécuchet, because it deflects blame for civil disorder from all members of a society to a single rhetorician. Marescot's self-centered righteousness is exposed as a hidden threat of violent repression: ". . . le droit d'un seul est aussi respectable que celui de tous et vous n'avez rien à lui objecter que la force, s'il retourne contre vous l'axiome," Pécuchet claims.[56]

Thus, the substance of the "comique des idées" is not Bouvard and Pécuchet; rather Flaubert is mocking the notions which fill the heads of the bourgeoisie. The cerebral level at which Flaubert constructs his farce is in keeping with the evolution of his novels away from psychology towards epistemology. Flaubert's intense involvement with ideas has formed the subject of much commentary, not the least elucidating of which is Marcel Reboussin's study, Le Drame

spirituel de Flaubert.[57] The great drama of Bouvard et Pécuchet is that, the greater the frame of reference from which phenomena can be seen to emerge, the less certain the understanding of those phenomena is, and the more courage it requires to persist in studying the environment. There is no question that this drama takes place in the minds of the two key figures in the novel, just as Reboussin believes Flaubert's dramatic involvement with reality occurred in his mind. The estrangement of Bouvard and Pécuchet from the surrounding bourgeois society permits them to create a civilization in which reality presents itself as a question rather than a series of answers.

The novel's drama of ideas establishes a moral relationship between the isolated bachelors and knowledge, in which all facts are hypotheses to be tested against reality. The frenetic ratiocinations of Bouvard and Pécuchet, undermining the assumption that a single system can explain all phenomena, is considered a subversive threat by bourgeois society. In the final chapter, left incomplete when Flaubert died, Marescot, the lawyer, Monsieur de Fauverges, the aristocrat, and Vaucorbeil, the doctor, charitably excuse the two men when Foureau suggests they be sent to prison: "C'est plutôt dans une maison de fous qu'il faudrait les mener," claims the doctor, "avec une pitié insultante."[58] Yet, if there is a single inarguable idea which Bouvard and Pécuchet establish, it is that the bourgeoisie is insulated from the truth by its belief that

facts exist outside of the ideas which they defend.

Yet, if Flaubert expresses a basic idealism in the drama of the mind, he also presents an impressive positivist argument for Bouvard's and Pécuchet's civilization of the mind. By refusing to extend knowledge through hypothetical reasoning, the bourgeoisie fosters a civilization based on laziness and mindlessness. When D. A. Williams argues that Flaubert's Emma Bovary is a "victim of 'chance' only when she is passive,"[59] he might as well have said that she was a victim because she was passive. Too lazy to rise against the conventional ideas which constrained her, 'chance,' in Emma's world, is ignorance, that which the mind refuses to question. On the other hand, Bouvard and Pécuchet must be seen as representing the aggressive intellect, persistent and determined to live by cerebration.

Flaubert also uses positivism as an argument against bourgeois civilization. Cerebral laziness permits such characters as the count and Marescot to deceive themselves with the illusion of progress through the intervention of civic institutions. But their real purpose in strengthening civic institutions is to enhance the power of the strong to oppress the weak. When Pécuchet argues against the use of power to oppress the weak, he is not arguing that men such as Gorju be allowed to rule society. He is arguing against the belief that civic institutions can prevent Gorju from rising to power in his turn. Only universal

expansion of the human mind can remove the threat of Gorju, because Gorju himself will have changed with the expansion of his understanding.

Is it because they fail to supplant the bourgeois mentality in Chavignolles that Bouvard and Pécuchet fail in their ambition to establish their own civilization? On the contrary, because they manage to isolate themselves in an enclave under their own control, Bouvard and Pécuchet succeed. Even copying is redefined by the two men. In the notes for the unfinished portion of the novel, Flaubert had indicated that the friends were to have come across the rough draft of a letter from Vaucorbeil to the prefect, stating that the men are "deux imbéciles inoffensifs" and not "des fous dangereux."[60] Despite their surprise at this letter, Bouvard and Pécuchet were to have continued their mission of copying, expressing "égalité de tout, du bien et du mal, du beau et du laid, de l'insignifiant et du caractéristique."[61] Facts, then, have no independent existence at all apart from the mind, no ideas monopolize truth. All that truly exists is phenomena. With no criteria for the meaning of phenomena, the two copyists undertake their task with nothing more than a respect for each other's humility. This is the beginning of everything.

Withdrawal from the greater society around them in order to retain their individual dignity likens Flaubert's key figures, Moreau, Bouvard, and Pécuchet, to Turgenev's Scythians. But unlike the Scythians, and like the

Goncourts' key figures, Flaubert's characters entertain no hopes for the reform of the society around them. They have devised, instead, a way to protect themselves from the cataclysms brought about by bourgeois illusions. Enclosed in their own arenas, Flaubert's key figures continue to search for significance by remembering the past.

Like Turgenev's Scythians, Moreau, Bouvard, and Pécuchet withdraw from the petty bourgeois society around them. But Bouvard and Pécuchet resemble Turgenev's key figures to an even greater degree than does Moreau. The withdrawal of the two friends from society is motivated at first by the desire to improve their own lives. By the end of the novel, they have joined Turgenev's Scythians, building a new society based on the value of all human life.

Notes to Chapter IV

[1] Gustave Flaubert, in Vol. XXIII of Oeuvres complètes in 26 vols. (Paris: Éditions Louis Conard, 1923-1954), p. 52.

[2] Flaubert, Oeuvres complètes, XV, 238.

[3] Gustave Flaubert, L'Éducation sentimentale, Histoire d'un jeune homme (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1870) and Bouvard et Pécuchet (Paris: Lemerre, 1881).

[4] Maurice Nadeau, Gustave Flaubert, écrivain (Paris: Denoel, 1969), p. 158.

[5] Victor Brombert, "L'Éducation sentimentale: Profanation and Permanence of Dreams" in The Novels of Flaubert: A Study of Themes and Techniques (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 125 and p. 263.

[6] Gustave Flaubert, L'Éducation sentimentale (Paris: Flammarion, 1969), p. 439.

[7] Brombert, Novels, p. 147.

[8] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 37.

[9] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 37.

[10] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 37.

[11] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 39.

[12] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 39.

[13] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 37.

[14] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 37.

[15] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 37.

[16] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 37.

[17] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 184.

[18] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 40.

[19] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 130.

[20] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 130.

[21] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 130.

[22] Victor Brombert, "L'Éducation sentimentale: Articulation et polyvalence" in La Production du sens chez Flaubert, Colloque de Cérisy (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1975), p. 58.

[23] Brombert, "L'Éducation," p. 58.

[24] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 174.

[25] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 158.

[26] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 233.

[27] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 331.

[28] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 331.

[29] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 311.

[30] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 311.

[31] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 311.

[32] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 311.

[33] Alberto Cento, Il realismo documentario nell'Education sentimentale (Naples: Liguori, 1967).

[34] Cento, Il realismo, p. 31, "documentazione esterna."

[35] Cento, Il realismo, p. 32, "spunto."

[36] Cento, Il realismo, p. 32, "documento interno," which I render as "internal documentation" for purposes of clarity in the discussion.

[37] Cento, Il realismo, p. 35.

[38] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 158.

[39] Flaubert, L'Éducation, p. 439.

[40] Gustave Flaubert, Bouvard et Pécuchet (Paris: Lemerre, 1881).

[41] René Descharmes, Autour de Bouvard et Pécuchet, Études documentaires et critiques (Paris: F. Sant'Anorea L. Marcerou et Cie., 1921), p. 151.

[42] See Hugh Kenner, "Gustave Flaubert: Comedian of the Enlightenment," in _Flaubert, Joyce and Beckett: The Stoic Comedians_ (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), pp. 1-29.

[43] Brombert, _Novels_, p. 270.

[44] Flaubert, _Oeuvres complètes_, XVIII, p. 89.

[45] Flaubert, _Oeuvres complètes_, XVIII, p. 26.

[46] Gustave Flaubert, _Bouvard et Pécuchet_, Ed. Edouard Maynial (Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères, 1965). Paragraphs begin with "Souvent . . .," p. 10, "Une fois, ils entrèrent . . .," p. 12, and "Autrefois . . .," p. 13.

[47] The two friends emphasize their desire to appear unconventional, or out of place, when they affect foreign accents. As the friendship intensifies, the two care less and less for their work, with its monotonous hours and duties.

[48] Flaubert, _Bouvard et Pécuchet_, p. 12.

[49] The surprise of the lecturer at the College de France, the special arrangements made for the friends to enter the class, and the requirement of exhibiting a passport are examples of this elitist mentality.

[50] Flaubert, _Bouvard et Pécuchet_, p. 115.

[51] Flaubert, _Oeuvres complètes_, XVIII, p. 26.

[52] Flaubert, _Oeuvres complètes_,

[53] Brombert, _Novels_, p. 272.

[54] Flaubert, _Bouvard et Pécuchet_, p. 133.

[55] Flaubert, _Bouvard et Pécuchet_, p. 133.

[56] Flaubert, _Bouvard et Pécuchet_, p. 204.

[57] Marcel Reboussin, _Le Drame spirituel de Flaubert_ (Paris: Nizet, 1973).

[58] Flaubert, _Bouvard et Pécuchet_, p. 390.

[59] David Anthony Williams, _Psychological Determinism in Madame Bovary_ (Hull: English University of Hull, 1973), p.51.

[60] D. L. Demorest, _À travers les plans, manuscrits et dossier de Bouvard et Pécuchet_ (Paris: 1931), p. 91.

[61] Flaubert, _Bouvard et Pécuchet_, p. 406.

Chapter V

Defiance of Nature, Compliance with Nature and the Idea of Change in Zola's Novels Published During His Association with the Société des Cinq

"Je définis la description un état ou milieu qui détermine et complète l'homme . . . Nous estimons que l'homme ne peut être séparé de son milieu."[1] When Emile Zola published this declaration of the theory of the experimental novel, he had already inaugurated *Les Rougon-Macquart: histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire*,[2] in which he was to demonstrate his resolution of "la double question de tempéraments et de milieux."[3] The notion of intricate connections between heredity and environment was part of Zola's legacy from Taine, Comte, and Bernard. But the manner in which the past produces the present and the present influences the future is not truly experimental in the Rougon-Macquart novels. The past is a document, attesting to an original "débordement des appétits"[4] in the roots of the Rougon-Macquart family tree, an excess which is taken for granted in novels written after *La Fortune des Rougon*.

Pierre Martino has suggested that Zola's novels be called "romans documentaires,"[5] and, if the role of nature

is examined in the novels Zola published between 1874, when he became a member of the Société des Cinq, and 1880, when the group disbanded, this expression appears to be the more descriptive. For nature is a complex force, whose presence Zola documents in his study of social change. If change is inevitable, progress is not, and Zola's key figures represent the obstacles to progress. But these figures also possess the energy to overcome those obstacles. When the Rougon-Macquarts tame their passion, they lead the way to a new order. When they fail to do so, they remain tools of nature in its incessant work of destroying and rebuilding.

Nature is present in two forms in Zola's novels of this period. Violent, disruptive nature seeks to deprive individuals of will. This is the savage force of nature which characteristically overwhelms the passionate Rougon-Macquarts, combining excess with excess, blinding them to everything in the environment which does not serve their egocentric needs. But nature is also a domesticating influence, a force which attenuates extremes, defuses violence, and neutralizes disruption on a social, as well as a psychological, level. To exert this moderating force, tremendous energy is required, so that, in terms of intensity, domesticating nature must defy savage nature in order to reverse disruptive effects. The Rougon-Macquarts possess just this abundant energy. As members of a society which is destined to collapse, the Rougon-Macquarts participate, through their excessive passion, in "le large soulèvement de notre âge,

qui se rue aux jouissances."[6] But, as individuals, the Rougon-Macquarts are the vanguard of a moderating force, sweeping away the old order, making way for a new, serene order. If the Rougon-Macquarts can transcend the egocentric compulsions which blind them to the consequences of their acts, they gain control of their passion, and direct it toward constructive, rather than destructive, ends. Otherwise, impersonal and savage forces remain in control of society.

When he published La Fortune des Rougon in 1869, Zola did not yet know that the Empire would fall in 1871. By 1874, when La Conquête de Plassans was published, history had given him good reason to depict the violent fall of a provincial empire of morality. The novel is a "roman individuel,"[7] focusing on psychological changes in characters affected by the conniving Father Faujas. The key figure anticipates constructive social change when he or she divests the self of the drive for personal aggrandizement, but the narrow, selfish focus of Francois Mouret's self-interested pride in this novel obstructs social movement. Even his love for his children fails to redeem his egocentricity, since he uses this sentiment as an excuse for withdrawing from his environment.

As Mouret loses psychological contact with his environment, his physical context becomes more restricted. Lonely for his children when his wife sends them away, puzzled by his wife's episodes of violent self-torture, Mouret

isolates himself from others. Eventually, his withdrawal confirms his neighbors' suspicions that he is abusing his wife, and he is confined to les Tulettes, the asylum where his grandmother, Adelaide Fouque, is interned. Mouret's confinement is an extension of the confinement of Plassans, deliberately alienated from the upheavals of the rest of society, maintaining its ignorance of the underlying causes of events, and therefore of reality itself. The alienation simplifies life in Plassans, permitting the self-centered members of the middle class, to which the Mourets belong, to conserve existing conditions, and to deny the importance of the past and future.

If egocentric needs obsess Zola's key figures to the point that they fail to understand their past and to project the consequences of the present into the future, La Faute de l'abbé Mouret provides material to resolve the problem. Martino suggests that Zola relieved the monotony of the novels documenting family history by interspersing lyrical novels in the publication of the Rougon-Macquart series.[8] La Faute de l'abbé Mouret is the first of these lyrical novels. But, for all its lyricism and mythological symbolism, it does not ignore contemporary life. Its primary association with contemporary life is the anti-clerical subject matter which is the basis for the novel. Yet the struggle between nature and religion is only the "sujet primitif."[9] Underlying the subject is the ambiguity of nature. Nature comes to be identified as the natural environment while its

representation in individuals appears as passion. In the course of this novel, nature and passion are polarized, struggling for control over human behavior. Nature urges the individual towards annihilation, while passion exerts egocentric force, motivating individuals to assert themselves against nature.

Serge, parish priest at Les Artaud, and descendant of the original Rougon-Macquarts, impresses religion on his parishoners as a ritual. Through religion, Serge hopes to suppress the anarchic promiscuity of the villagers. But his irreverent parishoners refuse to change their ways, aware that too great a degree of domestication will destroy the fierce independence and tenacity with which they battle the encroachment of nature.

La Teuse, Serge's frenzied housekeeper, brings attention to the lack of order which persists beneath apparent order throughout the novel. Negligence and mismanagement appear everywhere, and la Teuse is in perpetual motion attempting to bolster forces against chaos. She is concerned for the threadbare chasuble for which there is no replacement, for Désirée, Serge's sister, who feeds birds in the chapel, for the chapel itself, whose steps are half-buried, and whose stone walls are covered with spider webs.

In contrast to la Teuse, Serge is passive. By devoting himself to the Virgin, Serge devises a way of subduing his passion, making it socially acceptable. Mary is Serge's constant companion, "toujours plus âgée d'un ou deux ans,

comme il convient à une amie souveraine."[10] As Serge matures, this trust expands into a sublime devotion, the purpose of which is to disguise irrepressible passion.

> Elle, toujours plus haut, resplendissait. Lui, sur la dernière marche, la marche que les familiers de Marie atteignent seuls, restait là un instant, pâmé au milieu de l'air subtil qui l'étourdissait, encore trop loin pour baiser le bord de la robe bleue, se sentant déjà rouler, avec l'éternel désir de remonter, de tenter cette jouissance surhumaine.[11]

Through ritual and convention, Serge controls the intensity of his passion. But the image of Mary as the fecund mother, and the presence of Désirée and Albine disturb Serge's control. The drive for procreation is associated in Serge's mind with the power of nature to determine human behavior, and the priest fears this force which seeks to annihilate his will to resist. The anti-clerical interpretation of Serge's fear is that it represents his cowardice when confronted with overwhelming power. But if we consider Serge as a key figure, his fear represents an impulse to protect society from disintegration. For in its struggle to prevail against resistant wills, nature estranges individuals from society, and weakens the framework which provides protection from chaos.

Nature's tactic of estrangement is apparent in the idyll at Le Paradou. Allusions to paradise in this episode signify that if Serge resists temptation, Les Artaud is saved. The temptation is not worldly love, for that is Serge's salvation, bringing him out of Le Paradou, a false paradise, back to Les Artaud. The temptation Serge

encounters at Le Paradou is the renunciation of his will to untamed, unknown nature, to forces which alienate him from Les Artaud, with its familiar veneer of domestication. Although the villagers lack a sense of brotherhood and cooperation in their daily lives, they have made a home for themselves in the midst of chaos.

They impress Serge with their persistence and independence, and, as he gazes at the village from Le Paradou's disordered tangle, his chapel appears to extend shelter over all Les Artaud, like a blessing. The old housekeeper, la Teuse, whose blue dress associates her with Serge's icon of the Virgin, incarnates the guiding figure Serge has sought in Mary:

> Au loin, il entendait nettement vivre le village. Ces paysans, ces femmes, ces enfants, c'étaient le maire Bambousse, revenant de son champ des Olivettes, en chiffrant la prochaine vendange; c'étaient les Brichet, l'homme traînant les pieds, la femme geignant de misère; c'était la Rosalie, derrière un mur, se faisant embrasser par le grand Fortuné. Et, au seuil du presbytère, Le Teuse, en robe de cotonnade bleue, semblait avoir encore grossi; elle tournait la tête, souriant à Désirée, qui revenait de la bassecour. . . . accompagnée de tout un troupeau. . . . Et, lentement, dans l'air endormi du soir, les trois coups de l'angélus arrivèrent jusqu'au Paradou. C'étaient des souffles argentins, des appels très doux, réguliers.[12]

Without his experience at Le Paradou, Serge would have failed to exercise any choice at all. As it is, by losing himself in the untamed forest at Le Paradou with Albine, by submitting momentarily to nature, Serge recognizes that his passion has value. Coming out of the forest, onto the plain between Le Paradou and Les Artaud, the priest reenters

the familiar social world. His decision to return to Les Artaud and to order life around rituals and seasons removes him from the reach of a natural power which annihilates humans. Albine's death demonstrates the power of Le Paradou to consume its inhabitants completely. Villagers at Les Artaud, on the other hand, resist the drive of nature to annihilate the species. They do so by asserting the force of their innate passions, fighting nature with nature. But, by turning natural passion to their own advantage, the villagers obey the interest of the species.

According to Martino's distinction, Son Excellence Eugène Rougon is a documentary novel, following the 1875 publication of the lyrical La Faute de l'abbé Mouret by one year. Documentation in this study of Adelaide Fouque's grandson consists largely of character models selected from contemporary political circles in Paris. Pierre-Jules Baroche and Eugène Rouher, who had both served as president of the Council, furnished Zola with models for Eugène Rougon.[13] Virginie de Castiglione, Napoleon III's Italian mistress, resembles Zola's Clorinde Balbi, whose intrigues directed Eugène's political destiny in the novel.[14] This sort of documentation needs to be kept in mind for an examination of this novel, for Zola represents in it behavior patterns which determine the course of social change.

Zola's evaluation of the rise of the lower class, where the Rougon-Macquart family originates, to power through the middle class exposes the manner in which excessive

passion obstructs social change. Deprived of liberty to project consequences, his sphere of consciousness limited by his ambitions to serve the interests of his friends and bind them to him through obligation, Eugène has no concept of social good. His ambition to construct his own empire in Les Landes is so fraught with the drive for territorial power, and so devoid of the intention of serving some ulterior social good, that it is a relief to note that Napoleon III confines Eugène to Paris, preventing him from competing with the Emperor for the loyalty of subjects.

Eugène's ambition, which is his shortcoming, could easily be turned to his advantage, and Zola gives his key figure the opportunity to do so in a brief scene following the Emperor's order of confinement. In the midst of a reverie, Rougon perceives that excessive ambition accounts for success. ". . . [Il] n'avait plus de regrets; son rêve était de devenir très grand, très puissant, afin de satisfaire ceux qui l'entouraient, au delà du naturel et du possible."[15] Yet, in this momentary suspension of his relentless drive, Rougon also admits that his failure is his defiance of nature, his determination to exceed natural limits. His use of power renders him useless to society, and he intuitively recognizes this in the course of the novel. The evidence for Rougon's realization of the consequences of his misguided actions appears in an episode which takes place in the provinces. The devastation of the countryside around Niort to make way for a railroad

connection with Angers is depicted as a selfish enterprise, designed to enhance the importance of the Emperor, the ministers, the departmental bureaucracy, the town administration, and assorted ancillary personnel. The advantages of the railroad connection are reiterated: ". . . les champs seraient fertilisés, les usines doubleraient leur fabrication, la vie commerciale pénétrerait jusque dans les plus humbles villages . . . ."[16] But Rougon senses the irony behind the advantages. "Rougon, la corde allumée à la main, au milieu de tout ce monde, se sentait ridicule. En haut, sur la crête des coteaux, les carcasses des moulins craquaient plus fort."[17] The destruction of the hillsides surrounding the farming region symbolizes the ill-planned, destructive course of political power.

As the celebration of the new line continues, Rougon becomes aware that he is caught in a network of wrongdoing, and that his drive for power is destroying him. "Pour la première fois, il eut conscience d'un trou devant lui, d'un trou plein d'ombre, dans lequel, peu à peu, on le poussait."[18] Fear of his own drive, rather than compassion for others, causes Rougon to convert his tremendous drive into subservience to the Emperor.

Like Serge, who chooses Les Artaud rather than Le Paradou, Eugène defies nature. But Serge, a later generation, succeeds, submitting to the domesticating influence of the church out of choice. Eugène becomes the puppet of an imperial power out of fear, so that he never suspends

his own compelling needs long enough to assess independently the manner in which he could serve constructive social ends.

It is surprising to note that Martino does not class L'Assommoir as one of Zola's lyrical novels. The intricate convergence of forces which contributes to the downfall of Gervaise draws as much on mythological sources as does the experience of Serge. The reference to Vulcan, lame son of Juno and Jupiter and husband to Venus, follows Gervaise throughout the novel, a constant reminder of the fate against which she struggles. In the case of Gervaise, even reasonable ambitions constitute a defiance of nature in her desire to achieve conventional bourgeois status.

From the beginning of the novel, Gervaise struggles against obstacles. Her handicap, the most obvious obstacle, appears to be the least important one. She manages to gain the victory in her wash house battle with Virginia, and she establishes herself comfortably in Paris after Lantier deserts her. She refuses to leave work although she is about to deliver a baby, and when she does go home, she prepares dinner for Coupeau first, then gives birth unassisted.

Despite her courage and energy, Gervaise is haunted by her limp. It is not the handicap itself which condemns her to unhappiness. The handicap is a symbol of her heritage, impressing on Gervaise her inevitable destiny with every irregular clack of her wooden shoes. After Nana's departure, Gervaise reveals in her gait the loss of dignity and pride, once so important to her: "Gervaise, maintenant, traînait

ses savates, en se fichant du monde."[19] The sound of the shoes interjects a note of triumphant irony in Gervaise's efforts to achieve modest ambitions despite her fateful destiny. "Ses savates éculées chachaient comme des pompes, de véritables souliers à musique, qui jouaient un air en laissant sur le trottoir les empreintes mouillées de leurs larges semelles."[20] The clatter and squeak of these peasant shoes keep time with the downfall of Gervaise in Paris.

Her ambitions were not so disproportionate to her capacity. "Mon Dieu!" she tells Coupeau, "je ne suis pas ambitieuse, je ne demande pas grand-chose . . . Mon idéal, ce serait de travailler tranquille, de manger toujours du pain, d'avoir un trou . . . pour dormir . . ."[21] And, as a final item on her list, Gervaise asks also to dies in her own bed. Not one of these ambitions will she realize, yet she has the courage to struggle for each goal.

Gervaise defies her natural destiny with the same energy the other Rougon-Macquarts invest in their acts of defiance. Yet her greatest act of defiance is her marriage to Coupeau. The marriage is her most significant step towards freeing herself of working class ties. Coupeau appears to be the perfect choice: a solid worker, an amiable suitor, a man of common sense. What happens? Without revealing the deep changes, Zola contrives Coupeau's deterioration so that his association with Gervaise appears to have brought it about. His fall from the roof, which cripples him, recalls the myth of Vulcan once again. According to ancient mythology,

Vulcan was thrown from the heavens by one of his parents, and his lameness resulted from the fall. Coupeau is cut short in his striving for dignity when he is afflicted with the same limp which afflicts Gervaise. In her greatest act of defiance of nature, her marriage, Gervaise brings about the degradation of herself and of Coupeau.

The presence of Goujet in the novel demonstrates how the defiance of nature becomes compliance with nature. Goujet's sensitivity and respect for others arouses Gervaise's sympathy for the blacksmith. But her stubborn resistance to Goujet's overtures is part of the drive for middle class respectability, an urge to rise out of the lower class by imitating bourgeois stability. This urge is counterproductive in her relationship with Goujet, for his ability to perceive individual dignity and to express compassion are strong characteristics which would support Gervaise in her struggle against nature.

Hélène's defiance of nature in Une Page d'amour hardly resembles that of Gervaise, although both women belong to the Macquart family line. First, Hélène's stable middle class position relieves her of the need to strive as Gervaise does. Second, onto Hélène's struggle, Zola articulates the condition necessary for the resolution of the conflict with nature. The reform of passion into willpower in Une Page d'amour recalls the conversion from servility of nature to assertion of passionate will in the character of Serge.

Hélène begins and ends the novel as a passive recluse, but, in the intervening time, she undergoes an evolution. Her change is associated with her realization that the double character of Paris in the novel, with its alternate complicity and impassivity is a projection of her own fluctuation between passion and self-control.

The impassive aspect of Paris appears to Hélène, for the first time in the course of the novel, shortly after the recovery of her daughter, Jeanne, from a fever. The city appears to be suffused with the calm Hélène imposes on her own life.

> Elle vivait . . . ses journées, dans une paix très douce . . . Elle aimait cette vaste chambre si calme, avec son luxe bourgeois, son palissandre et son velours bleu . . . Elle finissait par être très heureuse dans ce milieu, en le sentant solide et simple comme son coeur . . . La seule recréation qu'elle prît pendant ses longues heures de travail, était de donner un regard au vaste horizon, au grand Paris qui déroulait devant elle la mer houleuse de ses toitures.[22]

Yet, shortly after this peaceful interlude, Paris begins to reveal subtle signs of a mysterious life of its own. To reach the home of Mother Fétu, an older woman in need of charity, Hélène follows a narrow alley. Here, she is fascinated by "des portes qu'elle n'avait jamais vues ouvertes,"[23] and "cet escalier recueilli et ombragé, pareil à un chemin creux dans les forêts."[24]

Paris seems to drop its impassive mask further as Hélène's relationship with Doctor Deberle grows. Now the city is rocked by emotional extremes:

> Hélène, depuis huit jours, avait cette distraction du grand Paris devant elle . . . Il était insondable et changeant comme un océan, candide le matin et incendié le soir, prenant les joies et les tristesses des cieux qu'il reflétait . . . Hélène goûtait là toutes mélancolies et tous les espoirs du large . . ."[25]

This change in Paris corresponds to changes in Hélène. She begins to confront long-repressed desires, familiarizing herself with natural feelings she has denied. Yet, while it is clear to the reader that all this disruptive activity is taking place within Hélène's mind, Hélène refuses to accept it as part of her nature. Instead, she projects onto the Deberle's garden intricate and subtle changes she feels taking place within her. As Doctor Deberle reveals his passion for her, Hélène responds, not directly, but by changing her image of Paris. The city swoons with passion, consumed by the effort of containing its violence. From Hélène's window, Paris "devenait saignante; . . . elle était comme un de ces nuages de foudre et d'incendie qui couronnent la bouche des volcans."[26]

When Hélène finally submits to passion, she imitates Serge's behavior in the forest at Le Paradou. And the climax of the experience in Paris resembles the resolution of Serge's experience. Just as Serge was drawn back to Les Artaud by recognizing that his submission to nature meant his alienation from the village, Hélène realizes that her indulgence of passion is a form of estrangement. The alienation is not from her background, with its emphasis on propriety, but from the object of her passion: "quand

Hélène revint, les pieds nus, chercher ses souliers devant le feu qui se mourait, elle pensait que jamais ils ne s'étaient moins aimés que ce jour-là."[27]

The death of her daughter, Jeanne, moves Hélène to return to her former, constrained life, and Paris, correspondingly regains its inscrutable mask, as if it had never seemed familiar to her before. ". . . Hélène, une dernière fois, embrassa d'un regard la ville impassible, qui, elle aussi, lui restait inconnue."[28] Her year of exploring the mystery of passion seems to her to have been experienced by another person. But it had indeed been she who had ceded to Henri's advances. Though she had been unable to state the reason for her fear of this submission, Zola had specified it in her stead. During the moments when Hélène senses that Henri's love is overwhelming her, a family friend is in the process of repairing Jeanne's mechanical doll. The successfully operating doll symbolizes the loss of one's will which inevitably follows from submitting to passion.

> M. Rambaud, enchanté de son raccommodage, avancait toujours les mains de peur de quelque accident. Mais la poupée était solide; elle tapait ses petits talons, elle tournait la tête en lâchant à chaque pas les mêmes mots, d'une voix de perruche.[29]

Zola's next novel, <u>Nana</u>, also has Paris as its context, and it is helpful to recall that <u>Son Excellence Eugène Rougon</u> and <u>L'Assommoir</u> are also set in Paris. As the Rougon-Macquart series develops, however, the capital undergoes important changes in the novels. Stefan Max writes that Zola's Paris is like an organism which changes form,

resembling a female more and more closely with each metamorphosis. This evolution of the city as a character is fundamental to Zola's naturalism, according to Max.

> La métamorphose de la Cité en femme [dans l'Oeuvre] suggère que le but de Zola en la décrivant n'est pas de nous montrer ce qu'il voit, mais de peindre un symbole complexe, qui reflète l'optique de l'artiste et élimine toute possibilité d'analyse objective.[30]

The "optique de l'artiste" includes Zola's assessment of the progress towards a humanist society, and his key figure must be that character through whom the city is represented.

Nana, the key figure in the last novel Zola was to publish during his association with the Société des Cinq, does not project onto Paris her inner struggle with nature. Instead, Zola's key figure now reflects directly the triumph of passion in bringing the lower class to bear on conservative forces which sought to suppress it. In Nana's corruption, we perceive more clearly than in the preceding novels of the Rougon-Macquart series the implication of Zola's theory that society bears within its structure the roots of its disorder, for Nana is, according to Roger Ripoll, "inséparable d'une certaine forme de société."[31] The society from which Nana emerges is collapsing.

If Nana is inseparable from the society in which she lives, she is not exclusively the product of that society. She brings to it her heritage of excessive passion, and joins battle, not against society, but with society against itself, against its stability, its conservatism. She defies nature in the same manner as does the rebellious,

self-destructive society of her time, by striving for excessive, utter corruption.

The more corrupt Nana becomes, the higher she rises in society. Barely able to meet daily expenses at the beginning of the novel, she manages to seduce the pious Count Muffat, one of the last high-ranking personnages in a circle of counts, marquis, businessmen, and ministers, who remain to be exploited by an equally wide circle of courtesans. Her climb up the social ladder represents the leveling of all social distinctions prior to the collapse of a disintegrating society. The imminence of collapse is thus constantly apparent in the novel, and those who observe society are aware of the coming cataclysm. Fauchéry, the journalist, notes of the Muffat household that ". . . ces rires, dans la solennité de la vaste pièce, prenaient un son dont . . . [il] . . . resta frappé; ils sonnaient le cristal qui se brise."[32]

Thoughtless, insensitive Nana may be fighting for the lower class, but her aim is prestige, not dignity. In this aim for prestige, we note the characteristic defiance of nature which runs through the Rougon-Macquart family. Nana seeks prestige, but she wants an impossible prestige, prestige which will mark her permanently as a member of the elite class. She approaches her goal most closely during the Grand Prix at the Boulogne racing course. Admitted to the jockeys' circle, Nana finds herself on an equal footing with countesses and marquises of the most exclusive society.

As a symbol of Nana's achievement of a goal beyond natural expectations, the winner of the Grand Prix is a "dark horse" named after Nana. In a single race, the horse rises from obscurity to renown. This spectacular rise is perhaps what moved Flaubert to comment that "Nana tourne au mythe, sans cesser d'être réelle."[33] But in the dramatic scope of the novel, if Zola remains faithful to a representation of contemporary life, he also accepts the destruction of society as the only method of social change.

Nana had indulged in her own excessive passion, yet her excess is turned to the advantage of the lower class, for which Nana wins an incredible victory. By poisoning the society which disenfranchised the poor, Nana has complied with nature's task of destruction, and has made possible once again the promise of a just reconstruction of society.

> C'était bien, c'était juste, elle avait vengé son monde, les gueux et les abandonnés. Et tandis que, dans une gloire, son sexe montait et rayonnait sur ses victimes étendues, pareil à un soleil levant qui éclaire un champ de carnage, elle gardait son inconscience de bête superbe, ignorante de sa besogne, bonne fille toujours.[34]

Nana's eventual death from small pox is an appropriate end to the novel, for the contagious quality of the disease symbolizes the corruption she spread throughout a vulnerable society.

Nana makes the most explicit statement on the relationship of nature and passion to the idea of social change in Zola's novels of contemporary life published during his association with the Société des Cinq. Although he assigned

a more directive role to characters endowed with ample energy, in *Nana* Zola clearly demonstrates that passion and the defiance of nature comply with the natural law of destruction and reconstruction in social renewal. Critics have drawn a parallel between Zola and Turgenev on the basis of the mutual theme of social renewal in *Virgin Soil* and *Germinal*.[35] The Rougon-Macquart novels we have examined in this chapter follow a clear line of development toward that parallel, and *Nana*, the last novel Zola was to publish while he and Turgenev were meeting regularly, most assuredly determined Zola's shift of focus from the theme of social change to the theme of social renewal.

Notes to Chapter V

[1] Émile Zola, Le Roman expérimental (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1887).

[2] La Fortune des Rougon, the first novel of Zola's natural and social history, was published in 1870 in Le Siècle. The installments began on June 28, but were interrupted by the war on August 11, resuming on March 18, 1871.

[3] Émile Zola, Letter to Lacroix, cited in Vol. II of Oeuvres complètes, 15 vols., Ed. Henri Mitterand (Paris: Cercle du livre précieux, Fasquelle, 1966), p. 13.

[4] Pierre Martino, Le Naturalisme francais (1870-1895) (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966), p. 70.

[5] Zola, Preface to La Fortune des Rougon in Vol. II of Oeuvres complètes, p. 19.

[6] Preface to La fortune des Rougon, p. 19.

[7] Zola, La Conquête de Plassans in Vol. II of Oeuvres complètes, p. 825.

[8] Martino, p. 48.

[9] Roger Ripoll, Introduction to La Faute de l'abbé Mouret in Zola, Vol. III of Oeuvres complètes, p. 17.

[10] La Faute de l'abbé Mouret, p. 78.

[11] La Faute de l'abbé Mouret, p. 84.

[12] La Faute de l'abbé Mouret, p. 179.

[13] See notes 2 and 6 in Vol. III of Oeuvres complètes by Zola, p. 581.

[14] See note 5 in Vol. III of Oeuvres complètes by Zola, p. 581.

[15] Zola, Son Excellence Eugène Rougon in Vol. III of Oeuvres complètes, p. 441.

[16] Son Excellence Eugène Rougon, p. 448.

[17] Son Excellence Eugène Rougon, p. 490.

[18] Son Excellence Eugène Rougon, p. 497.

[19] Zola, L'Assommoir in Vol. III of Oeuvres complètes, p. 886.

[20] L'Assommoir, p. 893.

[21] L'Assommoir, p. 630.

[22] Zola, Une Page d'amour in Vol. III of Oeuvres complètes, p. 986.

[23] Une Page d'amour, p. 993.

[24] Une Page d'amour, p. 994.

[25] Une Page d'amour, p. 1007.

[26] Une Page d'amour, p. 1111.

[27] Une Page d'amour, p. 1152.

[28] Une Page d'amour, p. 1208.

[29] Une Page d'amour, p. 1111.

[30] Stefan Max, Métamorphoses de la grande ville dans les Rougon-Macquart (Paris: Librairie A. G. Nizet, 1966), p. 163.

[31] Roger Ripoll, Introd., Nana, by Emile Zola (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1968), p. 13.

[32] Nana, p. 94.

[33] Gustave Flaubert in Nana, by Zola, n. pag.

[34] Nana, p. 422.

[35] Ladaria, I. S. Turgenev, p. 117.

Chapter VI

Machinery and Destiny in the Novels of Alphonse Daudet during the Period of the Société des Cinq

When Alphonse Daudet joined Turgenev, Goncourt, and Flaubert at the Sunday gatherings on rue Murillo, he was hailed as the author of L'Arlésienne. Even so, he had already made his decision to concentrate on the novel, instead of the theatre, a change of direction which was to earn him the name of "le grand Daudet."[1] According to Jacques-Henry Bornecque, 1865 had been the critical year for Daudet, ending his literary apprenticeship, and marking his decision to leave a legacy as a novelist.[2] Although he would continue to create works for the theatre, the publication of Le Petit Chose in Le Moniteur Universel in 1866 assured Daudet of a "reputation as a writer who had to be taken seriously."[3]

Le Petit Chose precedes Daudet's association with the writers who were to form with him the Société des Cinq. But in Daudet's novels, we encounter for the first time in the study of key figures a character whose hope for social progress motivates him to take an active role in contemporary urban society. In order to understand the evolution of this socially responsible role, we will need to examine

the key figure in Le Petit Chose, in whom Daudet first described the awareness of social evil.

Despite its importance to an understanding of Daudet's novels of contemporary life, Le Petit Chose did not find a responsive audience until the end of the Franco-Prussian War, when the author's "don de rires et de larmes"[4] carried great appeal. "Sa lecture est charmante," remarked scholar Yvonne Martinet of Daudet's "première oeuvre de longue haleine."[5] Narrated by Daniel Eyesette, a young man of provincial origin, the text describes the conditions of contemporary life and the attempt to escape from them, or attenuate them, through fantasy. Daniel's experiences in industrialized Lyon and commercialized Paris resemble Daudet's early suffering as a provincial boy, and Fromont jeune et Risler aîné, Jack, Le Nabab, and Les Rois en exil develop this suffering into a theme of tremendous social scope. When viewed as a body of work, Daudet's novels of contemporary life written during the period of the Société des Cinq constitute an analysis of human suffering, and an inquiry into the sources of the social evil which produces suffering.

In his discussion of the theme of human suffering in Daudet's work, Charles Mantoux identifies several categories into which the theme fits.[6] Physical suffering and death represent two categories, while moral suffering includes misfortunes of fate, personal sorrows, and the intervention of history. These categories present suffering as a

condition imposed on individuals, but provide no model by which the origin and experience of suffering in society can be understood. Le Petit Chose, however, begins to design such a model, and Daudet will elaborate it in his subsequent novels of contemporary life written while he was associated with the Société des Cinq. His key figures can be recognized by the extent to which they contribute to an understanding of human suffering as a social problem.

The manner in which Daudet develops Daniel Eyesette's awareness of human suffering is based on the use of two consciences which speak with a single voice throughout Le Petit Chose. The first conscience is exposed to experience, while the second, "un double inerte et froid,"[7] observes and records experience. This memory function is essential to Daniel's ability to learn the truth, for, because of it, past experiences accumulate significance, and enable Daniel to comprehend the present through reexamination of the past.

The role of memory in the discovery of truth becomes essential to the structure of the novel from the beginning. The narrator forewarns the reader that memory is responsible for the creation of the story: "Je suis né le 13 mai 18 . . ., dans une ville du Languedoc. . . ."[8] Because of its central role, memory endows the narrator's early experiences with great significance. The garden in which Daniel acts out his fantasies as a small boy resembles the original garden in man's experience, Eden. In the statement that those childhood years in the garden were "les seules bonnes

années de ma vie,"[9] Daniel anticipates for the reader the deceptions and disillusionments awaiting the young boy in the world beyond the garden. Childhood naiveté becomes a standard by which subsequent experience is interpreted.

The importance of Daniel's childhood Eden is established by the nature of his fantasy life when he is in the garden. With Rouget, the son of the Eyesette family's concierge, Daniel spends his days reenacting scenes from Robinson Crusoe. Rouget plays Friday, the wild, uncivilized savage, while Daniel plays Crusoe, the good, civilized man. When the adults discover Rouget's influence on Daniel's language, the boys end their play. Rouget's superficial coarseness makes him evil, and forces Daniel to ostracize him from the garden. Yet, when Rouget is banished from the garden, Daniel suspects himself of having participated in some grave injustice. He avoids Rouget's gaze so as to deny his own feelings of guilt, tacitly admitting that, because of his lack of compassion and his sense of self-righteousness, he has wrongly identified his companion as evil.

Adults in Daniel's environment encourage Daniel to avoid the evil Rouget:

> . . . je savais maintenant, c'est saint Paul qui l'a dit et le curé Récollets me le répéta, que le démon rôde éternellement autour de nous comme un lion . . . et vous ne m'auriez ôté de l'idée qu'il s'était caché dans la peau de Rouget pour m'apprendre à jurer le nom de Dieu."[10]

But, when Daniel's father is forced to sell the family factory shortly after this episode, Daniel is convinced that

he himself is evil, "la mauvaise étoile de mes parents,"[11] and that, because of his unjust behavior towards Rouget, he also is banished from Eden.

The meaning of Daniel's early experience in and around his garden is enriched by his experience at Sarlande, where he obtains a position as a study master. The story of Bamban demonstrates how profoundly the friendship with Rouget had affected Daniel, causing him to doubt judgments based on appearances. Daniel overcomes his repugnance for the neglected boy, and expresses his compassion for him by offering him special help. Bamban's gratitude spurs him to rapid progress in school. But when Daniel is removed from supervision of the younger boys, Bamban lapses into indifference. This lassitude emphasizes how valuable Daniel's compassion had been in reversing Bamban's inner suffering.

If he has learned that ugliness is not evil, Daniel has yet to learn that beauty and charm are not signs of goodness. The similarity of the Rouget's name to that of Roger, the fencing master at Sarlande, warns the reader of some pending ironic statement. As Rouget was ugly, but innocent, Roger turns out to be evil beneath his charm. Roger's humiliation of Daniel brings Daniel to a second fall from Eden, but, this time, Daniel falls into a state of innocence, in which he becomes determined not to cause the suffering of guiltless victims, and to prevent evil, the infliction of suffering on innocent people.

In the unctious Monsieur Viot, Daniel finds the

representative of social evil at Sarlande. The caretaker's appetite for power is enormous, enabling him to enforce intricate institutional regulations, and to imprison "les yeux noirs," overworked orphans who perform menial tasks at Sarlande. This control over life at the school is destroyed when Daniel throws the caretaker's keys into the courtyard well. As an act of vengeance, the gesture is rather comic. But as an act of compassionate solidarity with "les yeux noirs," who represent social victims, it signifies Daniel's determination to defy social evil. In this, Daniel is different from his father, who submits to events, and from his brother, who understands evil only as a threat to family concerns.

Father Germane's sympathy for Daniel ultimately destroys this determination. Protected by the abbot's prevenance, Daniel avoids challenging hypocrisy in public. Furthermore, Father Germane's withdrawal from life around him suggests to Daniel that it is prudent to suppress anger. Daniel's innocent, observant double becomes aware of hypocrisy, and the degree to which appearances deceive. But Daniel is unable to establish any course of action against social evil because he cannot bear to be the cause of anyone's suffering. In Paris, he acquiesces to Irma Borel's charm, too passive to resist her, though he senses the evil of this dissipation of his ambition. Eventually, Jacques must intervene in order to save Daniel, and, when Jacques dies, the Pierotte family shelters Daniel from evil. Thus, although Daniel's

truth-seeking double teaches him innocence, it inhibits his urge to combat evil.

Afraid to take any aggressive action, the possessor of the observant double conveys truth as if it were a fantasy, not to be taken seriously. Daudet was obviously dissatisfied with this notion of truth as the domain of the inner double, for in Fromont jeune et Risler aîné, the key figure lacks the capacity to learn the truth through observation. "Le brave Risler ne voyait rien,"[12] we learn at the beginning of the novel, when his bride, Sidonie, suggests that she has an intimate relationship with Georges Fromont, Risler's business partner. Risler's blindness is associated with several changes in the portrayal of evil in this second novel of contemporary life.

In Le Petit Chose, evil was symbolized by Monsieur Viot, who sought total power in order to inflict suffering on others. In Fromont jeune et Risler aîné, evil results from selfishness. Facile self-gratification motivates Georges, "une nature molle, sans ressort, assez intelligente pour se connaître, trop faible pour se diriger."[13] Chèbe and Delobelle, Risler's first friends in France, avoid recognizing their weaknesses by claiming superiority over others. When Désirée Delobelle dies, her father uses the occasion to win sympathy and attention. The mother, who knew nothing of Désirée's love for Risler's brother, or of Désirée's longing for worldly pleasures, is overcome with self-pity when her daughter dies. These characters

contribute to the suffering of others because of their selfishness.

But Sidonie, "cette petite âme vénale,"[14] motivates similarly selfish characters in the novel to commit evil acts in order to cause the suffering of others. Her evil character has developed because of material deprivation. Poor, yet proud, Sidonie was humiliated by her childhood friendship with Claire, daughter of a wealthy businessman related to Risler's original employer, Georges Fromont's father. Hoping to better her economic situation, Sidonie connives to win the love of Georges. Instead, Georges marries Claire, augmenting Sidonie's envy of the wealthy girl. Sidonie's marriage to Risler brings her up to Claire's social level, but this social prestige is not sufficient. Her need to cause the suffering of others in order to derive pleasure for herself forces the business into bankruptcy. Furthermore, she compromises her brother-in-law in order to prevent him from telling Risler about her adultery, she is an obstacle to Claire's domestic tranquillity, and she eventually causes Risler's suicide when he discovers his brother's love for Sidonie.

In contrast with the "monde factice"[15] to which Sidonie belongs, there is the artless world to which Risler and Claire belong. He is egocentric in his own way, protecting himself by his blindness, unwilling to see the truth. As Planus, the accountant, says of Risler's trust in untrustworthy people, "il y a des aveugles si aveugles."[16]

Claire's interest in domestic peace silences her resentment towards Georges, suggesting that she has as great an egocentric need for happiness as Risler. But Claire recognizes the falseness of the world about her, and she arms herself to combat that falseness when family integrity is threatened. Risler succumbs, however, an innocent victim.

Risler's blindness and Sidonie's evil occupy the first half of the novel. In the second half, the sociological sources of evil are examined. Sidonie's selfish needs are served by her sentimental, unscrupulous singing teacher, Dobson. This character emerges from the class of social parasites who profit from the bourgeoisie's need for sensational and transitory pleasures. Dobson can only serve bourgeois pretensions to refined pursuits, for anyone serious about music could never tolerate her small talk. The hypocritical nature of Dobson's music combines with Sidonie's venality and Georges' weakness to portray a class of people for whom ultimate happiness is a momentary sensation of pleasure gained at the expense of others.

The relationship between bourgeois pleasure and Risler's blindness is interesting in respect to the "monde factice" to which Sidonie, Dobson, and Georges belong, for it defines a subclass in the bourgeoisie. Risler manufactures items for the "monde factice" because he believes the bourgeoisie values beauty, and seeks ways of incorporating it into daily life. During his wedding banquet, he points out to his bride that she would do well to imitate Claire's

serenity and domestic loyalty, assuming that Sidonie, born into the lower class, hopes to arrive at a refined understanding of life as a member of the bourgeoisie. When Risler becomes aware that the manufacture of items of prestige contributes to facile pleasures, he resigns his position rather than participate in such a way of life.

Risler's denial of the obvious corruption in society requires more of him than the resignation of his title. His return to the position he had held before Fromont's death is an effort to forget all that happened since then. He refuses to see Sidonie again, and he refuses to open the letter he believes Sidonie has written to apologize for her faithlessness. When he finally reads the letter, and discovers his brother's betrayal of him, he obliterates all memory by committing suicide.

Sidonie also seeks oblivion, and fears the power of memory. During the wedding celebration, Sidonie catches sight of her family's window. Recalling the years of poverty and dingy surroundings, she separates herself from the little girl she had been when she played on the apartment house landing beneath that window.

> Ce sourire orgueilleux, où se peignait aussi une pitié profonde et un peu de mépris comme une nouvelle enrichie peut en avoir pour la médiocrité de ses débuts, s'adressait évidemment à l'enfant pauvre et malingre qu'elle croyait voir là-haut, en face d'elle, dans la profondeur du passé et de la nuit, et semblait lui dire en montrant la fabrique: -Qu'est-ce que tu dis de ca, petite Chèbe? . . . Tu vois, j'y suis maintenant.[17]

Her selfishness, her capriciousness, and her superficiality

emerge from this desire to deny the past and any value deriving from it, by attaching herself to the present only.

The lack of memory explains blindness to the truth in Fromont jeune et Risler aîné. Sidonie refuses to take the consequences of the future, Risler refuses to accept the truth about the past. Denial of the truth relieves suffering, and makes life tolerable, but it also perpetuates suffering. Risler's death at the end of the novel changes nothing, for the life of the city is designed to proceed despite tragedy, and to disregard suffering.

The mindless course of events in Risler's life becomes important in Daudet's next novel, Jack. This novel appeared in Le Moniteur Universel in the summer of 1875, and, when it was published in book form by Dentu in 1876, it was praised for its realism. "Vrai comme la vie," wrote Hippolyte-Fournier.[18] "Jack représente . . . quelques aspects caractéristiques des moeurs actuelles," declared Anatole France,[19] and concludes that Daudet "ne veut point ignorer que le mal est nécessaire . . . Il ne veut point ignorer que la nature est impitoyable, que le cri des victimes ne la trouble jamais et qu'elle laisse tranquillement l'empire au plus fort."[20] But, if we examine Jack's experiences closely, Daudet's novel makes a more specific statement concerning suffering and victims. Nature's treatment of humans is not as reprehensible as the manner in which humans treat each other, and suffering can be attenuated if society learns to project the consequences of its acts before it undertakes

to accomplish them.

Jack's unhappy destiny is due to the banality of thought in the adults who have control over his life. When Jack is denied admission to a prestigious school, his mother's vehement anger is dispelled by the taste of a tea room pastry. The sad story of Mâdou, which portends Jack's own fate, reveals the cruelty of the Moronvals and the stupidity of Doctor Hirsch. Jack's compassion for his African-born roommate indicates how deeply he is conscious of cruelty towards socially defenseless individuals. But the major obstacle to Jack's happiness is the raté, d'Argenton. The misfortune he brings to Jack's life is due to more than his insensitivity towards others and his lack of intelligence. He becomes an obstacle to a natural state of society, wherein first priority in ensuring social order is granted to generic relationships. His motivation, envy of Jack, is absurd when compared to the broad extent of suffering he inflicts on individuals around him.

D'Argenton's most potent weapon in competing with Jack for Charlotte's love is hypocrisy. Claiming that his "infaillible méthode d'observation,"[21] composed of listening to the ignorant chatter of other ratés, leads him to his decision, he declares that the twelve-year-old Jack is to leave home and become "le bon ouvrier"[22] at the foundry at Indret. Jack is well aware that d'Argenton secretly hopes to demean the boy. "'Vous voulez le dégrader, le mettre plus bas que vous!' L'enfant avait retenu cette

phrase de Docteur Rivals, et il sentait bien en lui-même que c'était là, en effet, l'intention de son ennemi."[23] The worst part of this hypocrisy is that d'Argenton is himself so devoid of feeling that he cannot imagine how grave a responsibility he takes on himself in thus determining Jack's destiny.

Jack succeeds in developing from an abject boy into an independent young man who enjoys a brief period of hope, despite his hardships. But the development of independence and the sense of hope result from factors in Jack's environment, rather than from deep inner changes. His eventual acquittal of robbery at Indret and his survival of a shipwreck are due to the intervention of luck. His hope derives from compassionate figures in his environment, who, like Jack, recognize that charity is the only weapon they possess against arrogance and insensitivity. The Rivals family, the Bélisaire family, and Roudic express, through their concern for Jack, a generous concern for others. The critical need for the love of others in order to generate a sense of hope is indicated when Jack, bereft of Cécile Rivals' support, deteriorates morally and physically.

The futility of Jack's life appears even greater when Cécile, hoping to protect Jack's feelings, refuses to marry him. This is the cuase of his death. But death is not a melodramatic turn of events, despite Daudet's sentimental rendering of Jack's death agony at Saint Jean. Jack has died over and over again in the novel. Desperate at the

thought of being separated from his mother early in the novel, Jack suffers from a "cruelle impression d'exil et d'abandon."[25] Later, Mâdou's death as a victim of hypocrisy and insensitivity foreshadows Jack's own death as d'Argenton's victim. These episodes are not the only source of momentum leading to Jack's death at Saint Jean. In a more general sense, the world of physical labor in which Jack finds himself at Indret is a form of death. The exploitation of the human body is relentless, and the neglect of the human need for an uplifting purpose in life brings about the death of the spirit, depriving life of meaning.

At the moment of his death, Jack realizes that his life, with all the suffering he has endured, has been futile. But the novel attributes a greater meaning to his life. That meaning is conveyed by the symbolic meaning of an episode occurring halfway through the novel. Soon after Jack's arrival at Indret, a steam engine capable of a thousand horsepower is completed, and a celebration marks the engine's mounting and embarkation for Saint-Nazaire. The pride of the workers in their creation implies their deeper sense of having participated in the formation of some greater good, of which the machine is a tangible expression:

> Dans l'or du soleil où elle plane, elle semble dire adieu à ces halles nombreuses qui lui ont donné la vie, le mouvement, la parole même, et qu'elle ne verra plus. De leur côté, les compagnons éprouvent en la contemplant la satisfaction de l'oeuvre accomplie, cette émotion singulière et divine qui paye en une minute les efforts de toute une année, met au-dessus de la peine éprouvée l'orgueil de la difficulté vaincue.[26]

The importance of the workers in improving the human condition through technology contrasts with the superfluity of d'Argenton and the ratés, who derive their sense of superiority from a patronizing attitude towards "le bon ouvrier." Daudet's characterization of the ratés as unproductive and incompetent is an indication of society's inability to recognize where true value lies. The workers' intimate knowledge of the cost of social progress makes them aware of the potential value of technology, as well as of its potential risks. Pride in their creation turns quickly to horror when a worker, trapped between a chain and the machine's moving parts, is torn in two. "L'oeuvre est devenue redoutable. Elle a recu le baptême de sang et retourné sa force contre ceux qui la lui avaient confiée."[27] The awareness of the machine's power inspires the workers with humility. But in the humility is a sense of responsibility for the consequences of such power.

Daudet's originality in the use of "style indirect libre" has been well-documented,[28] and the use of this technique to insert in the narrative important thematic material emphasizes the urgent social message in the description of the machine's embarkation. As the barge departs, the workers entreat the superhuman strength of their creation to provide for a greater human good, and inspire love instead of fear: "Contiens ce pouvoir terrible que tu viens d'essayer au départ. Dirige le navire sans colère, et surtout respecte la vie humaine si tu veux faire honneur à

l'usine d'Indret."[29]

The workers, aware that respect for human life does not inhere in machines, are speaking here to those who guide machines. If these individuals can be awakened to their responsibility for others, a greater social good may come to pass. Without that sense of responsibility, those who handle power turn it towards the gratification of selfish needs, and deprive society of the means to arrive at better conditions.

The invocation to the machine explains why it was important for Daudet to create a key figure whose destiny excites compassion, and why he called Jack "ce livre de pitié, de colère et d'ironie."[30] The responsible use of power develops only in the presence of compassion for others. In the absence of compassion, power is perverted to serve the selfish aims of those who possess it.

Paul de Géry, the key figure in Le Nabab, learns the truth about power by observing the fate of his employer, Bernard Jansoulet, a wealthy provincial entrepreneur who comes to Paris in search of prestige. Unlike Daudet's preceding novels, Le Nabab separates the character of the victim from the key figure. Through the wealthy Nabab's irresponsibility, Géry arrives at a course of responsible social action, and points the way to Daudet's culminant statement about responsibility for the destiny of society.

Géry's position as Jansoulet's secretary permits him to observe the most powerful sector of French society. Yet,

among all the ministers, lawyers, aristocrats and investors, no one is concerned about the fate of society. The dignitaries who visit Bethléem are so intent upon creating an impression of their social concern that they disregard the criminal behavior implicit in the perversion of natural processes. The infant care clinic interrupts a natural chain of events in order to serve the director's aim of self-aggrandizement. This aim coalesces with the selfish aims of the dignitaries and of Jansoulet, the "nabab" who seeks increased prestige. No one is concerned with the effect of artificial nursing on the infants, expressing an underlying lack of concern on the part of everyone associated with Bethléem for the social consequences of such an institution.

This social irresponsibility can be traced to the need for prestige in the personalities of those who are believed to direct the course of society. These presumed leaders are preoccupied only with projecting an appearance of importance, and are unconcerned with social improvement. Mora's death reveals that he spent his life as a public image, as an "homme du monde,"[31] accumulating power for no other apparent reason than to possess distinction. In Monpavon's suicide, the same vain personality expresses itself. "Egoïste et dur, il a jusqu'à la fin vécu pour la montre, gonflant son plastron tout en surface d'une enflure de vanité."[32] Prestige satisfies a self-centered need for attention in these personalities, and serves no purpose of social value.

In fact, prestige as Daudet interprets it, is a tool deliberately developed to prevent society from recognizing where true power lies. The function of prestige is most clearly outlined in the funeral ceremony in the nineteenth chapter, where elaborate ritual replaces sincere feeling: ". . . les Pompes funèbres fournissent les larmes des grands deuils . . ."[33] There is little expression of sorrow at Mora's death. "L'indifférence! C'était là le caractère très particulier de ces funérailles."[34] With the exception of Félicia Ruys, the Parisians who participate in the funeral and those who observe it consider it "un beau spectacle."[35]

Beneath the pompous appearances of such ceremonies, there is a complex system of power at work, in which prestige and the power to direct the course of events do not necessarily belong to the same people. When Jansoulet needs help to gain the support of the Chamber of Deputies, he goes to Hemerlingue's severe, bureaucratic assistant, Le Merquier, who displays nothing of the pomp of Monpavon and Mora. The elaborate trap in which Jansoulet is caught when he attempts to win Le Merquier's support is set by Hemerlingue's wife, piqued at being a former slave in Tunis, and seeking revenge on Jansoulet's wife.

Both powerful and prestigious characters are clearly unconcerned with the fate of society, and the responsibility for improving social conditions is left unclaimed. The novel indicates, however, that a segment of the population

ought to claim that responsibility. In the scandal surrounding Jansoulet's nomination to the Chamber of Deputies, there is a moment of truth. The involvement of his older brother in a series of questionable activities had marred Jansoulet's reputation, but when he begins to explain his innocence to the deputies, he realizes that in so doing he would betray his mother's love for her older son. Until that moment, he had been about to realize his dream of winning great prestige. The Chamber of Deputies and members of the audience, with the exception of Jansoulet's mother, are aware of the truth about Jansoulet's innocence and his brother's guilt. Yet, when Jansoulet refuses to speak the truth out of respect for his mother's feelings, the deputies annul his election to the Chamber. Moreover, the audience remains impassive in the face of this injustice, confirming the impression that the Chamber of Deputies represents nothing more than a spectacle for Parisians, rather than a place for responsible political action for social welfare.

Prestigious and powerful members of society take no responsibility for public welfare, and those who form the audience for that sector of society are equally irresponsible. Therefore, responsibility for social change devolves upon the modest private citizen. Paul de Géry had hoped to guide Jansoulet through the treacherous social life on which he had staked so much hope. Géry fails, and in blaming himself for Jansoulet's destiny, he outlines the

responsible course of action he should have taken. Jansoulet's death impresses upon Géry that, as secretary to this lonely man, he had disposed of real power to effect sensible change. "Il se reprochait son impuissance à le servir efficacement. Où était ce beau projet de conduire Jansoulet à travers les fondrières, de la garder des embûches?"[36] Thus, hope is not entirely lost, for, although Parisian society pursues its course untouched by Jansoulet's death, Paul de Géry has just recognized the truth about power, and he is very much alive.

Élysée Méraut, the key figure in Les Rois en exil, seizes the opportunity which Paul de Géry failed to grasp. As tutor to Zara, son of the deposed king and queen of Illyria, Elysée instills in the prince the sense of responsibility for others which Jansoulet lacked. Méraut, disinterested in possessing power and prestige for his own benefit, devotes himself to the ideals of monarchy, finding in its principle a force of social stability. When he discovers that the deposed Illyrian ruler, Christian, is too unstable for responsible rule, he devotes himself to Queen Frédérique, who remains loyal to the cause of nobility. Humble provincial origins and a royalist father taught Méraut to respect tradition. Yet, as Daudet handles the delicate theme of a disappearing elite, we discover that Méraut believes in social change.

Social change in contemporary Paris is reflected throughout Les Rois en exil. The study of deposed royalty

is based on the passing away of an elite class, and the establishment of egalitarian privileges. It is important for an understanding of Méraut's interest in social reform to note that egalitarianism in the novel is most evident in the availability of luxury to anyone with money enough to spend for it. J. Tom Lévis, whose Anglican name disguises his French origin, is the product of this pleasure-oriented urban middle class, feeding off wealth by offering access to the facile pleasures of Paris. Frédérique blames social unrest in Paris for Christian's ultimate corruption.

> Ville sans foi, ville railleuse et maudite, pavés sanglants, toujours levés pour la barricade et l'émeute! Et quelle rage avaient-ils donc tous, ces pauvres rois tombés, de se réfugier dans cette Sodome! C'est elle, c'est son air empesté de fusillades et de vices qui achevait les grandes races; elle qui avait fait perdre à Christian ce que les plus fous de ses ancêtres savaient toujours garder chez eux, le respect et la fierté du blason.[37]

In contrast with social change in Paris, Daudet also depicts a powerful conservative element in the city. Herbert Rosen and his father share Méraut's idealistic faith in monarchy, and their declarations of loyalty to the deposed Illyrian couple sustain their hope for the cause of restoration. The convocation of conservatives at the Palais de l'Institut provides Daudet with the opportunity to represent a broad social spectrum unified by a narrow conservative intellect.

> Tout ce qu'il y a dans Paris de chic, de bien né, de bien pensant, s'est donné rendez-vous ici, se sourit, se reconnaît à de petits signes maconniques, la fleur des clubs, la crème du

> Faubourg, une société qui ne se prodigue pas, ne se mêle guère, qu'on ne lorgne jamais aux premières représentations, qu'on ne voit qu'à certains jours d'Opéra ou de Conservatoire, monde ouaté, discret, qui ferme à grand renfort de rideaux tombants ses salons au jour et au bruit de la rue et ne fait parler de lui que de temps à autre, par une mort, un procès en séparation, ou l'excentrique aventure d'un de ses membres, héros du 'Persil' et de la Gomme.[38]

Elysée Méraut's notions on conservatism and change have little to do with Parisian life as Frédérique and Christian experience it, however. Méraut emerges from the class of common people who earn their living by the work of their hands. Son of a provincial weaver, he inherits a monarchic ideal which conflicts with the elitist tradition of Parisian royalists, for whom Méraut is "trop jeune, trop actif."[39] Instead, Méraut becomes an intellectual of the people for the people, frequenting the Latin quarter cafés, where his rousing appeals on behalf of a restoration of the monarchy are welcomed. Méraut's friends rise to positions of prestige and power in the government of the Second Empire, but Elysée remains faithful to an unselfish provincial tradition of monarchy.

The value of Méraut's hope for restoration is made clear halfway through the novel. On a Sunday outing in Saint-Mandé, Méraut, the queen and the crown prince pass from the restrained and proper groups of lesser commercial bourgeoisie at the edge of the park to the "fourmillement de foule libre,"[40] a great mass of common tradespeople attending a carnival. As the queen enters into the holiday spirit of the crowd, the reader is able to appreciate

Meraut's ideal of monarchy as stewardship of the common people.

> Jamais la reine n'a vu le peuple d'aussi près. Frôlée presque par son haleine et le rude contact de ses fortes épaules, elle s'étonne de ne ressentir ni dégoût ni terreur, avance avec les autres . . . La bonne humeur de tous ces gens la rassure, et aussi la gaiété exubérante de son fils, et cette quantité de petites voitures de bébés continuant à circuler au plus épais.[41]

Méraut recognizes that his role in the process of stewardship is essential, for, without his protection, the royal steward is vulnerable, and all society is threatened with chaos.

That Daudet intended Méraut's life to have social significance is confirmed by the manner in which the novel ends. Zara's weak health makes his eventual accession to the throne unthinkable. But Méraut has passed on to him the sense of responsibility for others which would have made the boy into a compassionate political leader. Elysée's monarchism is, like the Tuileries, a vestige, "témoin de moeurs et de peuples disparus,"[42] but his hope that the contentment of that carnival Sunday will pervade all society, and that unnecessary suffering will disappear, need not depend upon a monarch to be realized. By passing on to Zara a sense of hope and a sense of responsibility for others, Méraut has already begun to reform the society in which he lives.

Daudet acknowledged his debt to his realist elders by dedicating Jack to Flaubert, and Les Rois en exil to Edmond de Goncourt. But in the metaphor of society as a machine,

he made a unique contribution to the hope for a civilization in which needless suffering would be abolished, and compassion would determine human behavior. The social machine, in Daudet's analysis, is directed, not by the prestigious members of society, but by discreet figures who serve them. The resemblance to Turgenev's Scythian character is strong, but the resemblance to Solomin, Turgenev's last key figure whose dedication to social progress informs his daily life, is unmistakable. Although Turgenev had located Virgin Soil in provincial Russia, while Les Rois en exil was set in Paris, Solomin and Elysée possessed the same goodness of spirit which Daudet claimed he held in common with Turgenev. "On devient bon à écouter la nature," wrote Daudet in describing his admiration for Turgenev's art, "et ceux qui l'aiment ne se désintéressent pas des hommes."[43] Elysée takes Solomin's reform out of the provinces into the urban context, so that the task of political reform can begin.

Notes to Chapter VI

[1] J. H. Bornecque, Les Années d'apprentissage d'Alphonse Daudet (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1951), p. 85.

[2] Bornecque, p. 137.

[3] Murray Sachs, The Career of Alphonse Daudet, A Critical Study (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 51.

[4] Edmond About, Letter to the Editor of Atheneum, January 9, 1875, in Vol. II of Oeuvres complètes illustrés, by Daudet, Edition Ne Varietur (Paris: Librairie de France, 1930), p. 269.

[5] Yvonne Martinet, Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897), sa vie et son oeuvre, mémoires et recits (Paris: Imprimerie Louis Jean, 1940), p. 334.

[6] Charles Mantoux, Alphonse Daudet et la souffrance humaine (Marseille: Imprimerie Record, 1941), table of contents et passim.

[7] Daudet, Preface to Le Petit Chose, histoire d'un enfant in Vol. II of Oeuvres complètes, p. vii.

[8] Le Petit Chose, p. 3.

[9] Le Petit Chose, p. 3.

[10] Le Petit Chose, p. 4.

[11] Le Petit Chose, p. 7.

[12] Le Petit Chose, p. 4.

[13] Daudet, Fromont jeune et Risler aîné in Vol. IV of Oeuvres complètes, p. 71.

[14] Fromont jeune et Risler aîné, p. 48.

[15] Fromont jeune et Risler aîné, p. 99.

[16] Fromont jeune et Risler aîné, p. 109.

[17] Fromont jeune et Risler aîné, p. 56.

[18] Hippolyte-Fournier, cited in Vol. VI of Oeuvres complètes, by Daudet, p. 482.

[19] Anatole France, cited in Vol. VI of Oeuvres complètes, by Daudet, p. 483.

[20] Anatole France, cited in Vol. VI of Oeuvres complètes, by Daudet, p. 484.

[21] Daudet, Jack in Vol. VI of Oeuvres complètes, p. 177.

[22] Jack, p. 176.

[23] Jack, p. 182.

[24] Jack, p. 183.

[25] Jack, p. 5.

[26] Jack, p. 226.

[27] Jack, p. 227.

[28] See Urszula Dambsca-Prokop, Le Style indirect libre dans la prose narrative d'Alphonse Daudet (Cracow: Universitet Jagielonski, 1960).

[29] Jack, p. 227.

[30] Jack, dedicatory page.

[31] Daudet, Le Nabab, moeurs parisiennes in Vol. VII of Oeuvres complètes, p. 255.

[32] Le Nabab, p. 339.

[33] Le Nabab, p. 274.

[34] Le Nabab, p. 274.

[35] Le Nabab, p. 274.

[36] Le Nabab, p. 373.

[37] Daudet, Les Rois en exil, roman parisien in Vol. VIII of Oeuvres complètes, p. 162.

[38] Les Rois en exil, p. 145.

[39] Les Rois en exil, p. 32.

[40] *Les Rois en exil*, p. 118.

[41] *Les Rois en exil*, pp. 121-122.

[42] *Les Rois en exil*, p. 260.

[43] Daudet, *Trente Ans*, pp. 325-6.

Conclusion

The Scythian character is the most sophiscated literary expression of Turgenev's desire for a humanist society. By their insight into their part, and their culture's past, by their ability to examine experience critically and independently, Shubin, Arkady Kirsanov, Litvinov, and Solomin prove their readiness to function as "new men," working for modest, but lasting, social change, hopeful that their efforts will contribute to the advent of a society based on the dignity of the individual. These four characters provide a key to the humanist thought which his fellow "auteurs sifflés" valued in Turgenev's work.

The French novelists in the Société des Cinq demonstrated their affinity with Turgenev by creating key figures whose resemblance to the Scythian character is more pronounced in novels published later in their association with the Russian realist.

From 1863, when the Goncourts first made Turgenev's acquaintance, until Jules' death in 1870, the brothers argued convincingly in their novels that commercialized urban society destroys the individual. After Jules' death, Edmond shifted the importance of key figures closer to the Scythian character's function of protecting the worth of the

individual in order to avoid social disintegration. Elisa's struggle for hope, and Nello's battle for pride surpass the efforts of characters in preceding Goncourt novels to oppose repression and fragmentation, which erode the strength of society.

Even Flaubert moved from despair to renewed hope for humanity in his novels of contemporary life published during his friendship with Turgenev. Frédéric Moreau is powerless to express his perception of the truth about bourgeois life. But Bouvard and Pécuchet, like the Scythians, withdraw from the petty society around them in order to formulate a new and better way of life. From their tiny copying room buried deep in the provinces, the two bachelors imitate Pavel Kirsanov, Litvinov, and Solomin, becoming a source of hope for constructive social change.

Differing beliefs in the purpose of literature created a fair degree of animosity between Zola and Turgenev. Nonetheless, Zola's novels of this period reflect a growing sympathy with Turgenev's humanist ideals. Eugène and Gervaise, helpless instruments of their passion, serve the inevitable natural process of destruction and renewal which Zola believed society undergoes. But Serge and Hélène resist annihilation in the struggle between passion and nature, and provide continuity and energy for the process of social renewal. It is in Nana, Zola's last novel published during his association with the Société des Cinq, that this process reveals its similarity to Turgenev's notion of progress

toward humanism. Through the key figure of Nana, Zola depicts the demise of an old society, implying the resurgence of a new and better one, built by characters who, like Turgenev's Scythian, have withdrawn from urban chaos so that they can renew society after cataclysm.

Of the four French novelists in the Société des Cinq, Daudet understood most clearly Turgenev's belief in the value of provincial life in determining progress towards a humanist society. Key figures in Daudet's novels bring compassion and humility from the provinces. However, early characters such as Daniel, Risler, and Jack are victims of a venal urban society, while Paul and Elysée, who appear in Daudet's novels published after 1874, choose to reform this society. By advancing humanity toward the goal of alleviating unnecessary suffering, Paul and Elysée join Turgenev's Scythian characters in bringing about constructive, lasting social change.

Turgenev was in Russia when Goncourt, Zola, and Daudet visited Flaubert for the last time at Croisset. On that cold day late in March, a few weeks before Flaubert's death, the four Frenchmen proposed a toast to the absent Russian. That gesture attests to more than solidarity of spirit with Turgenev. It verifies for literary history that Turgenev's Scythian character had left his mark on the works of the Goncourts, Flaubert, Zola, and Daudet.

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