CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION
Mais elle, sa vie était froide comme un grenier dont la lucarne est au nord, et l'ennui, araignée silencieuse, filait sa toile dans l'ombre à tous les coins de son coeur.

(P.74)

Jan Kott says in the tragic world the dead return. The tragic hero is alone among people, perhaps because he lives, like Antigone, in the world of the dead. In the world of those who have been murdered, or whom he has murdered himself. The dead demand, first, to be buried, but later they demand redress. The return of the dead and their stubborn demands are the most obvious form of destiny in both ancient and Elizabethan tragedy. To the end, the dead do not want to die; the living are still their ultimate nourishment. The succeeding generations must satisfy the demands of the dead give meaning to their defeat and restore justice to the world. But, this mediation through time and through history only ends in tragedy, with new corpses filling the stage. The dead eat the living.

The most concise summary of the The Aeneid if limited to one line could be: Troy fell so that Rome might be born. The formula contains an undisturbed faith in the purpose of history; history as mediation. Troy - obliteratered from the surface of the earth—is an example of the vanity of all things that—time
is not history any more, but only immense jaws which devour everything. Euripedes gave the names of the gods to depraved eros, to the contradictory passions which tear human hearts, and to the cruel snares of fate. It is the knowledge of the human condition that is tragic.

The tragic hero is the scapegoat - a sign, a symbol and a figure of mediation. The tragic opposition exists between suffering which does not justify anything and myth which justifies all. In that mythical theophany there takes place a transformation of the cruel god into the just god, and of time which devours everything into history achieving its aim. In tragic anthropology it is only the scapegoats' names that keep changing. There is no tragedy without myth, but tragedy is, at the same time, its annihilation. Tragedy is an appeal to mediation and, at the same time a demonstration of the impossibility of such mediation.

‘On the other hand, Racine’, quoting Aristotle, calls Euripedes, whom he admired so much ‘the most tragic of all poets’. And the words can be applied with equal felicity to Racine himself. Racine was a writer of the avant-garde. His plays are of a ruthlessness, an extremism, an amorality, which in his own day, shocked the conservatives, mystified the average theatre-goer and appealed to the radicals. Louis XIV, was an enthusiastic admirer. In Shakespeare the opposing forces destroying man are cosmic like the pressure of war or the imminence of chaos whereas in Racine destruction operates through passions within the heart of man. It may have been a moment of infinite pity, an illuminating moment of insight into the hopelessness of human relations, when Pyrrhus, face to face with Hermione, lets slip the unforgivable remark: 'Rien ne vous engageait à m'aimer en effet'.

The tragic conflict as well as the suggested order, reflects the moral and even
political climate of the age: order in Sophocles and Euripides refers to a pagan conception of man, whereas in Corneille and Racine it is linked with Christian views on the human condition. The ritualistic shape of a tragedy which presupposes that the audience participates in a kind of sacred ceremony again varies with the customs and tastes of the audience. This accounts for the importance of the Chorus in Greek tragedy, the frequency of wrestling matches and duels in Shakespeare, and the fact that Racinian tragedy has been described as a high mass celebrated to the glory of the Sun King.\(^3\)

Racine's individual greatness as a tragic dramatist is to analyse the particular way in which he deals with the essential elements of the tragedy: the tragic hero, the opposing forces, the clash, the outcome, order and ceremony. A tragedy forms a united whole. In Racine the fusion, between the different elements is as complete as possible. And this fusion is directed towards a definite purpose: that of producing intense emotion produced by tragedy which has always been recognized as being a particular kind of mixture of fear and pity. Fear of a superior force antagonistic to man and sympathy for the hero who stands for humanity are obviously part of the essence of the genre.

Perhaps of all the tragic dramatists who have successfully striven towards the perfect fusion of all the elements which constitute a tragedy, Racine is the one who has come nearest to an absolute perfection. Everything in his tragedies is directed towards one single aim: to bring the tragic emotion to the highest degree of intensity, this intensity depends on both the singleness of purpose and the complexity of the technique. I say complexity although it is usual to praise in Racine an extreme simplicity in the elements of his dramatic technique. Stylization, which is a simplifying process and paradox, which is a complex synthesis, are equally used by the dramatist when they serve his purpose.
In Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, it is Emma who is tragic; there seems to be an absence of tragedy. Victor Brombert wonders how far *Madame Bovary* can be considered an autobiography. Flaubert feels that it cannot be an autobiography this subject was alien to him - that this story is fully imagined. But there seems to be a contradiction because Flaubert has also said — *Madame Bovary c'est moi*. Brombert feels that whatever Flaubert says Emma Bovary was not an arbitrary choice. The book was like an undercurrent — slow work and long preparation that happens in the subconscience.

Brombert feels that pleasure of the body leads to the deception of the body. *Passion et vertu...... Mazza*. Mazza is obsessed with the deception of the skin. In a letter from Constantinople to Louis Bouilhet Flaubert has given three literary projects—

1. Don Juan  
2. Story of Anubis - lady who wanted be possessed by god.  
3. Story of a young girl.

All three stories seem to have the same central focus.

In *Madame Bovary* there seems to be a exterior and interior — a double perspective. Flaubert seems to be within and without and keeps his style in indirect speech. This is a very free style in which a summary of conversation can be given and at the same time an interior monologue becomes possible. Whatever the character says that is always somewhat near to the author's thought indicating in *Madame Bovary* that Flaubert is becoming personal.

*N'importe! Elle n'était pas heureuse, ne l'avait jamais été, D'ou' venait donc cette insuffisance de la vie, cette pourriture instantanée des choses*
où elle s'appuyait?..... Mais, s'il y avait quelque part un être fort et beau, une nature valencuse, pleine à la fois d'exaltation et de raffinements, un cœur de poète sous une forme d'ange, lyre aux cordes d'airain, sonnant vers le ciel des épithalamies élégiaques, pourquoi, par hasard, ne le trouverait — elle pas? Oh! quelle impossibilité! Rien, d'ailleurs, ne valait la peine d'une recherche; tout mentait! Chaque sourire cachait un bâillement d'ennui, chaque joye une malédiction, tout plaisir son dégoût, et les meilleurs baisers ne vous laissaient sur la lèvre qu'une irréalisable envie d'une volupté plus haute (III, 6).

For Emma, life was like a long corridor at the end of which was a closed door. The idea corresponds with the claustrophic kind of atmosphere that Flaubert has developed throughout the novel. The indirect style of speech in the passage quoted above correspond with the sentiments and authorial view of Flaubert.

Perhaps, it was a nineteenth century problem of the authors who thought that is is possible to write in an objective manner. In actuality that is not totally possible. The romantic dream cannot be separate from the author's project—especially because the romantic age preceded Flaubert's own age—that of réalisme which was a reaction against the Romantic age. The passage quoted above is very lyric and poetic but in it Flaubert describes a very mundane thought so commonplace that it may be found inmany others. Due to this the readers of Flaubert are confused between the language of lyricism and the mundane. The mundane language has been turned to lyric. May be, here we touch the secrets of lyric realism—lyrisme réaliste. Brombert feels it is realistic lyricism because the realism of Flaubert has been made lyric—réalisme lyrique.
Perhaps the fundamental problem of the Realistic age in literature is this struggling—the tension between the style that the indirect objective that Realism demands and what he—the author pretends to write. It was in the nineteenth century that the critics made their first appearance in the history of literature. The nineteenth century author was critic and author both himself such as Baudelaire. In Flaubert also there are traces of this tension and that is why there comes a difference between the narrator and author. Generally, otherwise the person who is narrating is usually the author. Due to its self—critical nature in the nineteenth century there is a break with the past. So when the author is narrating the reader might feel that he has distanced himself— that was fundamental to the realists that writing objectively was possible. Iago talks objectively of Desdemona but betrays the true opinion of her that she is good. Likewise Rodolphe reflects objectively on Emma but the reader gets to know about Emma's beauty.

Flaubert shows two types of relations in Madame Bovary
a) First person with object.
Nineteenth century authors tried to see human beings as objects as in a scientific experiment which when dealing with human beings is not possible. Obviously, sentiments get involved. That was the mistake that nineteenth century authors committed. Nineteenth century realisme style separates the reality which is non-poetic from the effort of being poetic of the author. This poetic urge forces itself through a descriptive passage. There is a narrow difference between the two because it is a natural urge in any author to make a passage poetic.

While Flaubert's novel recognized success and fame he always knew that the difficulty in his novel came from a strange contradiction of opinion which was based on his realistic writings. The source of this contradiction was his style,
people used to get confused, for Flaubert this difference of opinion implied a double demand.

a) He should be realistic.

b) He should not become too poetic.

Flaubert says that writing was like walking on a thin hair having two ditches — one of lyricism and one of vulgarism — a tight-rope walking. Flaubert is also a descriptive author—his courage lies in his imposition of an intensely personal theme.

Descendant tout en amphithéâtre et noyée dans le brouillard.... Ainsi vu d'en haut, le paysage tout entier avait l'air immobile comme une peinture;.... l'eau de grands poissons noirs arrêtés. Les cheminées.... des boulevards... comme des flots aériens qui se brisaient en silence contre une falaise.

5) On the surface it would appear to be a description of topographic detail but it is not a simple description. Flaubert is describing the view as seen through the eyes of Emma and the view is recreated through her vision. b) She sees what she wants to see and what she can see. Her desires colour the panorama — the movement, form, colours all are determined by her desires. Her dreams and her anticipations transform this Rouen into a Babylonia which is filled with promises and dangers — almost like her own state. The imagery in the panorama — the spacial — village etc. on the road — these descriptions are playing with the notion of broadening of her innate want to break off — of flying off — of herself. But the scene denotes signs also of confusion and mist, e.g. clouds, mist, ships — (unknown future) etc. She moves with her ideas. But they cannot be associated with life; an idea is like a painting. The whole scenery in the
passage is immobile like a picture that corresponds with her ideas. But they
cannot be associated with life; an ideas is like a model that stands still. The
whole scenery in the passage is immobile like a picture that corresponds with
her ideas - that of a model that stands still.

This vision is moving because she is on her way to meet Léon. This image
that Emma is seeing has not been interfered with; it is what Emma has seen.
From this passage one can deduce a third fact - there is an opposition in it
c) - it is mobile and immobile.

Also —

(1) It is a description of a village which is a static place  (2) Which she is
seeing again in movement.

To grow, to go back are notions characteristic of Flaubert. This mobility that
is still and monotonous of a certain and scenery has a special relationship with
Flaubert. It is like an optical illusion - a sense of movement and immobilization,
that is enforced in his writing. This irremediable immobilization is reinforced
by the image of ink. (1) No remedy no cure for this immobilization - in his
nature - this boredom, so everything seems still (2) Painting - immobile painting.
(3) Words shut up all mental movement. This evasion for Emma is impossible
and this dream is futile. Though this problematic, it is the sensitivity of Flaubert
that is revealed. Evasion is impossible as is shown in most of his novels.

If Flaubert had wanted he could have written a book which would hold its
own by its own internal force, having no connections with the outside world.
Then he could have proved that poetry is purely subjective. In the convent
Emma was stopped from reading stolen circulating library books. From here
these images of evasion come to her because she wanted to break free.
in the text are in three parts —

1. Clear visual images

Dreams of the prince who would come to save her — Madonna or angel with golden wings. 2nd stage - these images are a little confused, country side images - (she wanted to be free and go to far off places like greece, Italy Turkey)

3rd stage - chaotic confused state haphazhard by - these images used to come in roman ruins, trees, swans swimming in the pond. They used to come without any link. Dream of evasion is almost interlinked with her desire of dying e.g. dying swans. Then she would fall back into her state of boredom by falling sick. These images used to appease her-a little but not satisfy her. The cyclic movement of the images is the innovations of Flaubert's dream - bored - confusion - death images. These cycles - Emma is walking towards her death and these cycles keep repeating. They are like a whole metaphor that is heading towards her death.

Boredom in the text is a theme by itself. Emma is always reminded of boredom. Flaubert uses imperfect tense and in the repetitive action Emma's ennui is aptly conveyed. In this repetition also Flaubert expresses his humour. Boredom is expressed in the text through the liquid images: day by day flowed by. Emma's father tells Charles of his wife's death - it is as if there is no sadness in it but it is just that the passing of the days has become a symbol of chronic sorrow.

From the beginning till the end Emma is looking at the horizon-the open window becomes a symbol of her waiting. But, this waiting only brings her bitterness. When there is movement to another place that too brings sorrow. So there is an urge for the inaccessible in Emma - as if happiness might be there in
after life if not in this life. That is why Rodolphe is so seducing for Emma for she thinks that she will see distant lands, she will be able to cross fixed boundaries and attain happiness. This urge for evasion ends up in alarming her lovers. So death is almost a logical end for her when she is able to move towards the ultimately inaccessible.

Love in Flaubert's novels has a quality of sacrilege in them and sexuality has, been associated with mystic images e.g. Léon meets Emma in the cathedral. In her death Emma goes back to the images of her convent days when she felt that happiness lies after death.

Emma's leap towards the inaccessible always leads to her isolation. Flaubert himself faces these falls once he returns to his plane of imagination. Madame Bovary recounts Emma's desires, deceptions and at the same time it also recounts a more profound story - the Bovarysme of the author. This story is not seen in the intrigue of the story but in the metaphoric structures of the cycles - the circles of boredom and monotony, images of evasion (space, movement, window). These cycles throughout the novel express a tension between the desire of expansion and the fear of limit, restriction and immobility - a basic conflict between expansion and contraction.

There is also a paradox in the movement. Emma likes roaming about in an immobile manner. This paradox is visible in the excursions of Emma. The whole village Yonville depicts boredom - the people, their doings everything is the same. The cemetery (II, 1) is filled with graves so much that there are no ups and downs - the graves permit no visual change. This absence of perspective is correlated with juxtapositioning of words which are closely placed. Thus the novel form is the ideal for Flaubert that allows this cramped style.
But, slowly all these physionomies get confused in Emma's brain, she confused things, could not distinguish between values and where conventional morals found distinctions she found similarities.

Emma confused the pure joys of the heart. And the biggest tragedy in Madame Bovary is that Emma finds out that her dreams would never find fruition. So, temporal time suffices to please her—she almost detaches herself from time. This evasion in the fictive time makes her neglect her child, house, responsibilities. Towards the end Emma acquired a certain majesty in her sorrow—(fatal love)—and in death she expresses a serenity as if of a duty accomplished. Emma's refusal to live is like a final denial to submit one self to life which can never reach the heights of her dreams.

Inspite of this life which is hostile remains victorious. That is where the structure of the novel makes sense which as in the beginning and in the end surmounts, transcends the adventures of Emma because between her death and the last line of the book there is a difference of three chapters. Emma atleast dreams of having wings. There are worse things - beyond mediocrity it is existence which is the cause of it.

Emma can be elavated beyond the level of pure animal stage and she becomes an aristocrat of dreams. In the tying up and sidelining of her hair, Emma affirms her masculinity. It is almost an inverseeion of roles — Léon is the mistress of Emma which suggests a symbiosis between the author and the created character. Or, is it the infusion of the spirit into the veins of Emma an inversion of the male into the female? Flaubert cannot abstain himself from his writing, Georges Poulet in Les métamorphoses du Cercle gives a few examples to show how Emma looks for changes in the novel Madame Bovary.
and mental space. The circles converge on one dot — when Emma jabs brief thrusts with the tip of her umbrella. Emma keeps turning with the circles but she just cannot cross the barriers.

From these converging circles Emma looks for fresh hope. Her thoughts are like ripples that enlarge and move towards the shore of the pond and again come back. In her monotonous life, then stones in the form of lovers are dropped accidentally, just by chance or circumstance.

In Emma's life there are four such stones thrown - Leon (1), Rodolphe, Leon
Viscount. Through the image of the centre and the circle outside, Flaubert has been able to present the layers of the human substance — the vital plane and the emotional plane. Consciousness appears at a central point around which we find a flight of feelings and memories coming inwards and going outwards. Emma is haunted by her narrow existence. And this novel becomes the reference point. There seems to be variety in the universe but no order. From this state of disorder the novel attains order because of its central object. The word circulation is recurrent in Flaubert's Schema — the central axis bringing order to the whole text. This element is the central hearth of the novel — Emma's love that creates the ambience. Flaubert gives another beautiful example in the ball where Emma is dancing with the world moving in circles around her while her partner the Viscount serves as the only pivot.

Flaubert attached a lot of importance to objects. Objects can be read as a language in Madame Bovary. There are three groups of objects:

1) Coat, hat, boots.
   When Emma plans to run away with Rodolphe she buys lots of clothes as if to hide her love from her husband.

2) Almirah, boxes, drawers — These objects carry a certain volume within them. One can imagine why Emma bought these objects — she needed obscure corners to protect her secrets e.g. Viscount's cigar case, Rodolphe's letters etc.

3) Table, chair, stuffed bed — whenever she wants support Emma goes to these objects.
Flaubert is the first writer who used objects to convey messages like in a language spoken. But, human beings can also be taken as objects — Charles.

In his notes for the fourth volume, which would have concentrated on Madame Bovary, Sartre asks, "Why write the first three volumes if one does not find them again on each page of the fourth?" It would be inconceivable for him to have meant by this that the enhancement of our understanding of Madame Bovary as a literary work was the sole justification of all that preceded. Obviously, he felt that if his method had been accurately applied, a discussion of the book would inevitably bring us back constantly to points established earlier. It is probably in much the same spirit that he has remarked that "anyone could write the fourth volume" by simply drawing the logical conclusions from the interpretation already laid down and continuing to apply the same hermeneutic. Sartre perhaps does feel that the three volumes of the Family Idiot can be taken as constituting a unified and not obviously truncated study in a way that would have been impossible if he had been forced to stop after the first or second volume. The study of Madame Bovary was to have shown how the work was a totalization of Flaubert as a "singular universal" expressing his period uniquely. If Sartre’s interpretation proved to be convincing, it would not only add to our understanding of the novel and its author, but would offer the test and proof, so to speak, of Sartre’s method. I suspect that for devotees of literature the fourth volume might have been the most interesting of all, and some readers would doubtless have been content to enjoy the harvest without following Sartre’s laborious tilling of the soil. Yet I find myself wondering if he would actually have written the final volume even if his health had not failed him. While seemingly knowing no limit in his exhaustive exploration of current projects, he never felt inclined to return for further amplification and clarification to ground already explored. The truth is that in the three existing volumes we have considerable information.
as to how Sartre would interpret Madame Bovary, both the work itself and its connection with the life of the author. His notes for the concluding volume offer certain new formulations and much elaboration, but nothing that suggests a startlingly different approach which could not have been anticipated. In this sense only I think, not that "anybody could write the fourth volume," but that any reader of the first three would know how to read Madame Bovary from a Sartrean perspective.

It would be idiotic to attempt to construct what the unwritten work might have been—in the manner that classical scholars try to reconstruct lost Greek tragedies on the basis of ancient plot summaries, vase paintings, etc. What does seem to me to be worth doing is to examine what Sartre has actually said about the novel, both in scattered passages in the published work and in the unpublished notes. And first I should say something about the notes. They are precisely that—notes. They are in no way an outline of a projected work. There are no completed sections, rarely even a fully worked-out paragraph. They are the first preliminary notations by an author getting ready to write a book which has not yet fully taken shape. They are distressingly like one's own efforts in the early, still disorganized stage of writing. The notes include comments on or by other critics and biographers of Flaubert, references to relevant passages in Flaubert's Correspondence, some detailed analysis of tense progressions in passages from Madame Bovary, a few somewhat random observations about style, descriptions, symbols, dialogue, etc. In addition and most important are interpretive observations of key points to be made concerning the characters or basic theme of the novel, repeated (sometimes in the same words) throughout the unorganized pages. Obviously, any use of these notes requires the greatest caution. It would be entirely unfair to deal with these private jottings as one would with a printed passage from a completed work. Yet when important
It is true and it is an oversimplification to say that *Madame Bovary* centers on the conflict between the realistic and the romantic attitudes. Certainly Emma's foolish illusions are contrasted with Homais' unattractive and stupid realism. Neither extreme is acceptable, and Flaubert (unlike Molière) suggests no sensible middle path. Sartre has remarked that the novel is definitely post-romantic, that it is the story of "a soul brought to death by romanticism." But it is a work "against Romanticism by a man profoundly influenced by it." I think anyone would agree with this judgement; it explains in part our difficulty in pinpointing Flaubert's ambivalent feeling toward his heroine. Sartre, however, makes a further observation which offers a fuller and more accurate grasp of the essential issue.

*Madame Bovary is* less the trial of the romantic illusion than the trial of a romanticism incapable of sustaining its illusions to the end. *The trial of a romanticism for which twenty years of excess have destroyed its power to believe in its own illusions, of a literature reduced to admitting that it is only literature.*

This statement is fundamental to Sartre's reading of the novel—both in the interpretation of its plot and in the analysis of its stylistic features. The essential conflict in *Madame Bovary* has nothing to do with romanticism and realism either as literary movements or as life styles. It is the tension between the real and the imaginary, which is quite a different thing.
To explain just what this difference is, I will refer to a comment by Sartre on the relation between Madame Bovary and the Temptation of Saint Anthony. It was Baudelaire who, in a review which delighted Flaubert, declared the subject matter of the two books to be the same. He declared that both the saint and Emma were tempted and harrassed by "all the demons of illusion," by all the "follies" and "lubricities" of the material world. I suggest that we may distinguish between illusions, in the sense of fantasies, and real sensory pleasures and that it is in their way of relating the two that Sartre sees the essential difference between Emma and Anthony. He says,

Saint Anthony's temptations are imaginary. He would be damned if he took them for realities. Mme Bovary is damned because she does not remain in the imaginary, and seeks to make it real (le réaliser).

Emma's fault is not that she prefers the imaginary to the real, but that she betrays the imaginary by substituting the real in its place, by setting for the real in the hope that she may find the imaginary in it.

It may be helpful to contrast a "realistic" summation of the novel's theme with what Sartre is giving us. I suspect that in hundreds of classrooms intelligent but unwary teachers have presented Madame Bovary's story in some such form as the following:

Emma destroys herself and her life by allowing her foolish dreams of passion and romance, inspired by trashy literature, to poison her life. She arouses our sympathy because the men she meets are unworthy of her and the village of Yonville would stifle any sensitive woman. If we try to imagine what might have saved her, we must postulate two things: (1) A more refined, intelligent, and perceptive husband who might have taken her to live at least in Rouen,
if not in Paris. (2) A conversion on Emma's part so that she would be able to discern true worth where it existed and to be content with it. In short, we must hypothesize another woman, another life, no longer the story of Emma Bovary. As things are, her tragedy derived partly from her dreary environment, but her own foolishness was responsible for her not recognizing Charles' devotion and sterling character or even the romantic adoration of Justin. Emma Bovary might have been different if she had not read so many bad novels.

Even at this level of interpretation we encounter a difficulty, for which Flaubert is responsible. Was it the particular kind of books Emma read that ruined her character, or was she destroyed by literature as such? Flaubert seems to hesitate. The novels she got from the maid at the convent were certainly pure kitsch and probably most of those from the lending library. Flaubert tells us that Emma also read *Paul et Virginie* and the works of Sir Walter Scott. On the boat with Léon she quoted a line from Lamartine. Sartre points out that her stolen nocturnal readings at school resemble those of Gustave and his classmates at the lycée. They read Chateaubriand and Byron. We are told that even before she met Charles, Emma considered herself disillusioned, with nothing henceforth left for her to learn or to feel. The description suits the adolescent blâses better than it does Emma. This is one place where the "c'est moi" fits a little too closely. In any case, nobody would suggest that good books might have saved Emma. Even within the limits of a realist interpretation, it is a confusion between the regions of the real and of the imaginary which is responsible for her un-happiness. And here we would say that her mistake lay in her in-ability to accept the real.

Sartre gives us an almost total transformation of the theme as just stated. I may summarize his view as follows: 

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What ennobles Emma is that she cherishes a dream for something higher than this world of human mortality can satisfy. She partakes of the grandeur of insatisfaction. The cause of her suffering, that which also renders her ridiculous, is the fact that she fails to understand that what she desires is unreal and cannot be satisfied in the world. What she betrays is not the real but the imaginary. To have struggled to be content with Charles' devotion and Justin's idealistic adoration would have been just as much a travesty as her attempt to find fulfillment in her liaisons with Léon and Rodolphe. It is wrong to think that a different husband or a more stimulating environment would have prevented the tragedy. No man in any city could have satisfied her desire for what does not exist except in the imaginary. What might have saved her? That which saved Flaubert: art, which knowingly creates the imaginary and assigns greater value to the unreal than to the real. But Emma was not an artist. For her the sole solution was death. Only death and art escape the real.

Sartre notes that Madame Bovary and Don Quixote have the same subject. Other critics have recognized Cervantes' influence on Flaubert. Harry Levin states that Flaubert's target was "to set forth what Kierkegaard had spied out, to invade the continent of sentimentality, to create a female Quixote—mock-romantic where Cervantes had been mock-heroic." But Sartre lays stress on the resemblance, not in the satiric intent of the two authors, but in the qualities of the hero and heroine—the grandeur of their aspirations, their fallen greatness, the tragedy that dignifies their foolishness—in short (in Flaubert's eyes, at least), their essential rightness in the face of common sense.

One can sum up Sartre's view of the novel's theme if we said that for him
Flaubert, in his story of Emma Bovary, is simultaneously making a metaphysical affirmation and demonstrating what he believes to be a psychological truth.

The metaphysical claim is one consequence of le survol, the species acternitatis, which looks on life from the point of view of death. From this standpoint the basic polarity is seen to be not simply between Emma and Homais. In opposition to her, Sartre would pair the scientistic druggist, Homais, and the curé, Bournisien. It is they who together block off all hope of escape from the unsatisfying world of banal reality. Flaubert believed that the more sensitive of human beings yearn for fulfilling totality, a beauty or truth or meaning which is worthy of their total devotion, which will take them out of themselves. We recall his expression of this half-pantheistic impulse in the image of the vessel of holy water, reflecting only the living colors of the light coming through the stained glass. Homais, the caricatured representative of science and rationality, denies this hope, scoffing at all mystic rubbish, jeering at any notion of God or soul. The world is only what it seems to be, and it is people like Homais who succeed in it. Bournisien is a satiric portrait of the Church at its poorest, not its best. But as Homais stands for accepted reason, so Bournisien speaks for established religion. We feel, Sartre points out, that both science and religion could have been better represented, even at Yonville, and this increases our sense of the pathos of Emma's situation. Yet the universal implication is there, too. In Flaubert's view science as such blights our highest aspirations, and religious dogma parodies our longing for the infinite by confining it in finite forms—"the black stone or the old man with a beard." The fault common to both Homais and Bournisien is their willingness to be satisfied with the human situation. Flaubert was right to juxtapose them asleep in the death chamber of the woman whom nothing could satisfy.
From the point of view of death all human enterprise is futile. At the end of the novel, Homais receives the Cross of the Legion of Honor. Otherwise, as Flaubert writes, "since the events which are about to be related, nothing has really changed at Yonville" (P. 391). Sartre adds that Charles and Emma, the only ones who had wanted something better, are gone and forgotten. It is as though they had never lived. The living are nourished by the dead as Lestiboudois eats the potatoes he raises in the graveyard. Only art can incarnate the eternal unreal.

Flaubert's psychological intention may be epitomized in the key sentence that Sartre repeats several times in the notes as well as in the published volumes—"I am too small for myself." At first this may seem to be only a repetition or an elaboration of the metaphysical assertion, and indeed the two are interdependent.

Some of the most interesting ideas of Bankim relate to romanticism, beauty and femininity; and it is to these themes that one can turn to, while dealing with the conceptual oppositions of purity - Impurity, Crime and Justice, Fidelity and Infidelity.

Considering his deep sensitivity, romanticism and love of the human form it would be somewhat naive to call Bankim a conservative in social thinking. We are perhaps closer to the truth if we said that the disjunction between woman as an object of beauty and romantic love and woman as found in commonplace social roles-the mother, the wife the daughter, the sister-was sharper in the case of Bankim that in any other Bengali writer of his generation. In the nineteenth century, writers and intellectuals rare visualized woman simultaneously in these two forms and were prone to exaggerate one or the other. Bankim's close friends and contemporaries Chandranath Basu and Akshay Sarkar for example, seldom...
talk of the appeal and power of feminine beauty, they only condemn it as Bankim himself does after a stage with the important distinction however, that this is not the only conclusion in Bankim who is both spoke of gender-relations and the woman's assigned place is society as a mid nineteenth century Victorian was expected to do but he also spoke of the overpowering qualities of love and how life could be sublimated with love, of the power that woman held over men, of the man that was incomplete without the woman. Tragically however, it is the power of feminine beauty that gave birth to the mutual attraction between the sexes that could only be sinful and fatal in its consequences-Bankim himself once offered the analogy of the flame and the moth. Admittedly this romanticism and worship of beauty came from the West and arrived well before Bankim was an established writer. Nonetheless, beauty as an earthshaking force is neither so apparent in the epic poetry of Madhusudan, the romantic verse of Nabin Chandra or in the historical romances before his time. Roshanara (Anguriya Binmoy) is not a figure one can easily correlate to Ayesha (Durgeshnandini). Interestingly enough, Bankim not only gave beauty an autonomous importance but also occasionally subjected it to personal standards as in Krishnakanter Will (1878) where Bharma's major failing is that according to accepted standards she is neither fair skinned nor beautiful. Elsewhere, (in Durgeshnandini) Jagat Singha knows Tilottama to be beautiful merely by the sound of her voice, in Rajani (1877) the blind flower seller knows that the man she loves is handsome without having ever been told so and apparently only on the basis of a casual touch. Actually Bankim's infatuation and involvement with his characters was so great that on several occasions he betrays his presence even where this would constitute a frivolous error. In Rajani itself the blind girl could see that Hiralal was gazing around the room. Some mention has been made of Bankim's rich vocabulary and his constructive use of different linguistic style's but arguably he also occasionally fails to achieve this when in terms of literary
structure this could be terribly important. Again, the best example comes from Rajani wherein there is virtually no qualitative difference between the speech patterns of the uneducated girl brought up as a flower seller, Sachindra, the medical practitioner, Labangalatika, again an illiterate housewife, and Amarnath, a man of wide reading and great introspective qualities even when structurally, the novel is built up as we know, as a series of personal narratives. Bankim's major complaint with Deenabandhu was that the latter would create characters which were rarely found in real life. In Bankim's own novel Radharani (1877) however, we find a semi educated girl of nineteen (Radharani) in possession of a personal library and also ultimately proposing to her childhood love an act that may be a little uncharacteristic of even her European counterpart. Indira (in the novel Indira) is gifted with a finesse and sensitivity that one could reasonably expect to find in urban, educated women, from not very puritan households like Sucharita or Lalita in Rabindranath's Gora (1907) or Bejoya in Sarat Chandra's Dutta (1918). In Anandmath Santi, clad in a sari, rides a horse—the impracticability is this case did not perhaps occur at all to Bankim because she was destined to play bigger roles. Why did Bankim himself commit the error of producing characters the like of which were rarely found in real life? Bankim ultimately retained enough faith in the power and potentialities of the woman. Nonetheless such incongruities, have also to be understood in the light of the mixed impact of European浪漫ism on the Hindu mind. Writers like Bankim initially sought to understand European ideals of femininity so that they might better understand and propagate their own ideals of Sita, Savitri and Shakuntala. However, what happened in effect was quite the opposite. Beginning again from Bankim, there was a new movement to realize European ideals in Hindu women. Shakuntala's being invested with neo-romantic qualities may thus explain the backlash of reaction originating in Bankim's lifetime of recasting Hindu female ideals in the traditional Hindu mould of which Chandranath.
Basu’s *Shakuntala Tattwa* (1881) is an excellent example. Notwithstanding the prudishness so evident in much of his writing, it was Bankim who gave the human body a new respectability—an idea obviously related to his knowledge and perception of Post-Renaissance art and aesthetics compared to which he considered Hindu art to be decidedly inferior. There is no doubt a degree of harshness in these judgements, but the beauty of Gupta icons or Chola bronzes remained as unrevealed to him and other men of his generation as many other facets of Indian history. While Bankim was prepared to set love on an idealistic (but not ethereal) course, he was also increasingly haunted by the idea of the human body as a repository of sin. Beauty was beauty but also tragically the source of man’s greatest temptation. Did this paradox originate in some traumatic experience in Bankim’s life? Bankim Chandra was married the first time to Mohani Debi (February 1949) when he was eleven and his wife only five. He lost his wife after ten years of marital life in 1859 and was married a second time to Rajlakshmi Debi of Halishar within only a few months of this event. By all accounts Bankim led a long and happily married life with his second wife who survived her husband and whose positive influence on his life Bankim freely acknowledged. Prima facie therefore, it does not seem as though Bankim lived under some shadow of sorrow or sought feminine company.

*... the world, which seems, to lie before us like a land of dreams,*

*So various, so beautiful, so new, Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain; And we are here as on a darkling plain Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, Where ignorant armies clash by night.* (Matthew Arnold *’Dover Beach’*)

Arnold’s words serve very well to sum up the cultural and philosophical confusion.
into which the French Revolution and its aftermath plunged intellectual society in France. What the Revolution did, in effect, was to discredit the approach to life which was associated with the thinkers of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, an approach which had itself undermined the traditional concepts of moral and metaphysical authority that had remained relatively unchanged since the Middle Ages. Until the mid-eighteenth century two major concepts in particular had not seriously been challenged. Firstly, that eternal truths about the nature of the universe and of man exist, if only man can establish them. Secondly, that the structure of the universe can be represented by an hierarchical system of relationships, of which an eternal principle forms the apex. Permanent ethical values thus exist independently of man, and it is the task of the theologian or philosopher, acting in the interests of mankind in general, to establish them, so that the individual may conform as nearly as possible to the abstract standard.

The so-called *philosophes*, a group of thinkers in the latter part of the eighteenth century, working in the name of reason and drawing on a wide range of recent scientific enquiry, notably the work of the Englishmen Newton and Locke, raised doubts about the nature of man's place in the universe. Their doubts were not necessarily intended to undermine the validity of either of the concepts outlined above, but they did serve to put a new importance on man himself rather than on abstractions existing independently of man. Whether, like Voltaire, they approved of reason and science as the sole arbiters of truth, or, like Rousseau, they promoted the value of intuition, whether like the deists they believed that God was a remote metaphysical principle, or like Diderot they doubted the need to postulate the existence of a God at all, they were all convinced of the significance of man, and of the possibility of his moral perfection. The Revolution seemed to offer the opportunity for man's rebirth, by its eradication of those social ills which were thought to be preventing the realisation of his
progress. But the Revolution came and went, and there was nothing in its aftermath to suggest that the state of man had moved one bit closer to perfection than before. Indeed, the behaviour of man to man during the Terror suggested that there was very little basis at all for supposing that man was naturally moral, or, if he were, then society had corrupted him irredeemably.

Post-Revolutionary society found itself, therefore, in a serious chaos of values. The philosophes had disposed of the old certainties; they had not succeeded in substituting any new ones. It is hardly surprising, then, that the primary characteristic of early nineteenth-century thought is revolt: the abandonment of all attempts to universalise, a fundamental disbelief in systems of any sort, the rejection of all solutions to human problems based on the primacy of reason. This is not to say that the existence of absolute values was universally denied, or reason totally excluded from a role in human life. It was man's capacity to attain a knowledge of absolute values, especially by purely rational processes, that was doubted. If man was to progress, it could only be intuitively, tentatively, towards some distant undefinable metaphysical goal, quite unobtainable in this material existence. Such a relapse into intuition and subjectivity was not total. But the new systematisers, the Positivists, had to take its existence into account, and it was, in any case, thirty years or more into the century before their doctrines gained much headway.

A negative principle such as revolt necessarily leads to very disparate positive manifestations. Some thinkers remained in a state of despair. Others postulated solutions applicable only to the individual or to an élite. Social thinking tended to be utopian, philosophy metaphysical. Above all there was a constant reiteration of dissatisfaction with the material world, with what man could achieve in the material world, with the information offered to man by the material world. As
Gérard de Nerval perceptively described it in his short story *Sylvie* (1853)

_We lived then in strange times, like those which usually follow upon revolutions or the decline of great reigns... It was a mixture of activity, hesitation, and idleness, of brilliant utopias, religious or philosophical aspirations and vague enthusiasms, mingled with certain feelings of rebirth; boredom, past discords, uncertain hopes... But ambition was not appropriate to our youth, and the avid hunt that was then going on for positions and honours kept us at a distance from all possible spheres of active life. All we had left for a refuge was the poet's ivory tower where we climbed ever higher and higher to escape from the crowd.... Finally we breathed in the pure air of solitude, drank oblivion from the golden goblet of legend, became intoxicated upon poetry and love. Love, alas! Indistinct shapes, shades of pink and blue, metaphysical fantoms!_

It was the age par excellence of the grand battle from which few ages are entirely exempt: the struggle between illusion and reality.
NOTES


2. Much of what Racine wrote deal with epic heroes but the intensity of passion is what he is more remembered for.

3. Louis XIV is referred to as the sunking.


5. This is a beautiful passage - on her way to Rouen to meet Léon, Emma passes through open countryside, Villages, ports while sitting in the Hirondelle - the moving scenes reflect her moods and her thoughts.

6. Flaubert used this cramped style in Madame Bovary that suited him to convey images. In plays one has to leave a lot of space.

7. Poulet relates to Flaubert as being obsessed with circles.

8. The diagrams help to decode Emma's inner wants.

9. All quotations without page references are taken from Sartre's unpublished and unnumbered notes.