CHAPTER - 2

THE PRIMARY UNITS OF SIGNIFICATION IN MADAME BOVARY
Gustave Flaubert’s Madame Bovary is supposed to be Madame de Renal of Stendhal’s Scarlet and Black, a quarter of a century later. Flaubert writes un livre sur rien of his novel Madame Bovary. Flaubert the hermit of Croisset had intended writing a novel out of nothing. Incidentally, the word Bovary is related to bovine which means cow or cattle. Flaubert begins the first chapter with the word we probably to take his readers into confidence. The readers might feel that the book is about them. Flaubert at the onset tells us that he will deal with the most ordinary by beginning his text with the word we. The fact that Charles, the school boy, in the first chapter is so ordinary helps to bring about forgetfulness on the part of the reader. Flaubert takes the small classroom sequence as a miniature structure to bring about dual expansion. The novel begins with little Charles’ first day at school. The title Madame Bovary obliterates the heroine’s real name Emma. Madame Bovary starts with Charles’ jeering school-fellows hooting his name Charbovari! Charles is docile. It does not occur to him to rebel. His mother, his teachers, his schoolmates, and finally the widow try to make a citizen out of him. They equip him with a profession that is totally unfit for him, but which he wears like the cap he has been given, mildly and without any protest. Charbovari is a Joycean neologism that contains an ox and a cart and discordant noise - un Charivari. The passage
is a signifier that claims as its signified *la laideur muette* (the mute ugliness).

By virtue of the following simile, however, *le visage d'un imbécile* (of an idiot's face) - Flaubert makes such interpretation specular. A new boy arrives, wearing that remarkably ugly hat. He is not yet in uniform, which was always military-style for schoolboys in those days. He is, quite untranslatably, *en bourgeois*.

Bourgeois: the word is present, discreetly, in the very opening sentence, simply the name of a code of dress. When he is asked to say his name, the new boy mumbles something quite inaudible. Then he bellows it out: *Charles Bovary!*

It sounds like *Charbovari*! His awkwardness makes him the target of raucous collective mockery. There is uproar in the class-room. They all shout his name - *Charbovari! Charbovari!* - and stamp their feet to its sound.

We have begun with a *charivari*: ritualized anarchy. Originally the charivari was a serenade of rough music made by villagers banging under the newly-weds' window with kettles and pans, deriding an incongruous marriage. More generally, it came to mean the anarchic ritual mockery of an unpopular person. Later, the custom gave its name to a satirical magazine published in Paris, *Le Charivari*, the favourite reading matter of Flaubert's boyhood.

Charles's strange hat has been traced back to a cartoon in an *issué* of *Le Charivari* which appeared when Flaubert was twelve years old. But its meaning, in the novel, comes primarily from its context. It is a real monster of a hat. It breaks most of the rules for an object that then conveyed so economically the niceties of male social status. It is compounded bizarrely from real pieces of animal material (the bear, the beaver, the whale and the rabbit), from the shapes and the colour of edible things (prunes and sausages), and from an abstract geometry of circles and ovoids and polygons. It may recall, distantly, various descriptions in classical epic writing of the warrior-hero's helmet. Usually
such objects are the naively superlative emblems of their wearer’s valour. This inglorious bourgeois artefact announces an idiot.

The story is being told by one of Charles’s classmates, remembering the scene in later life. There are clear traces of his schoolboy idiom. But we soon shift to a more spacious retrospect, looking rather back in time. We hear of Charles Bovary’s parents, the early days of their marriage, Charles’s boyhood in the village, the priest who taught him to read, his mother’s ambitions for him; then, jumping over his time at school, we learn about his days as a medical student and his mother’s manoeuvres to marry him to a rich widow. By the end of the first chapter Charles is established as a young village doctor, firmly under the thumb of his new wife.

The opening chapter has the compactness and the quick tempo of a short-story. The sense of a life is deftly sketched out for us. But we are left, already, with questions unanswered. What about the remarkable hat? Why does it disappear, never to be mentioned again, when it has been so abundantly described? Is Charles genuinely stupid? Does it matter if he is? Who is the novel going to be about? This young man seems far too dull to hold our interest.

Flaubert is exhibiting, by way of prelude, the drama of cultural formation. We follow, in the person of Charles, the making of an average bourgeois man. We see the lengthy schooling it requires, at the hands of father and priest, schoolteacher and professor. We see how it takes a subjection to the disciplines of reading and writing, what sacrifices it exacts to the occult powers of the printed word. We know that Flaubert had suffered as a child, being supposed stupid because he was a slow reader, a dreamer with his mouth sagging open. And he had escaped from it all at the last possible moment, by taking refuge
in illness. But Charles is not that clever. He is typically befuddled, indifferent, incompetent or just mechanically conscientious. He scrapes through, at each stage of his education, until he is perched, joylessly, in a job and a marriage and a house.

Only when this Charles meets Emma, the daughter of one of his patients, a rich farmer, is there another fully realized scene describing their first encounter. We see her through his eyes, at the farmhouse, in the kitchen, at the door or in the window. We notice her dress, hand, eyes, hair, lips. We hear her speak only one brief phrase.

There is so little dialogue, other than simple questions and answers. We notice that these characters do not speak their minds to each other. We are not certain of the value of what we are told. Everything seems to be, fictionally, normal. We know the who, the where, the when and the what. But the why escapes us. We may well overlook the real oddity of this as we move from the predominantly reported speech of the characters to the flowing voice of the story. There is an elusive but systematic ambiguity. These slightly peculiar features of the story are somehow connected: the paucity of the dialogue, the fleeting uncertainties of the narrative, the uncanny insistent authority of the writing itself.

It is also remarkable, in retrospect, that Emma's story should begin with these scenes from Charles's early life; remarkable too that it should end with the prolonged and inglorious tale of his descent into misery after her death. The husband's story clearly frames the story of his wife. Perhaps this is a form of subordination? A gesture of enclosure and control, whereby the feminine is put in its place, textually? It may conceivably be a sarcastic tribute to the social power of men. Or it may be only the heedless echo of that power. We
are left with our suspicions.

We do know that Flaubert, a bachelor who lived with his mother, richly detested husbands and fatherhood and so-called conjugal love. The letters he wrote at the time of his elder brother’s marriage are full of acid jokes about copulating newly-weds struck down by disaster. And he was evidently appalled, for deeper reasons, by his beloved sister’s choice of husband. He deeply resented his best friend’s marriage. Another person I love, he lamented in a letter, is lost to me. And he felt panic when his mistress, Louise Colet, tried to entangle him. He saw husbands and fathers, in the main, as banal tyrants. But the women of his class appeared to be more spirited, less sluggishly conformist than their men. He had been entranced, one summer in his early adolescence, by Elisa Schlesinger, the stylish and seductive wife harnessed to a mediocre husband.

The hat is like the human type of which it is the image. Charles did not choose to be a doctor, he did not choose his name nor his widow. The only thing in life he chooses is Emma. She is his first and last piece of self-expression; or not quite the last. Perhaps it was his studied diligence to stay in the middly of the class that seemed ridiculous. The linear unfolding includes Charles seeing Emma, old Roault’s daughter at his farm, Les Bertaux. Actually, he sees parts of her whole body. After the death of the widow, Charles marries Emma. The wedding cake is a bizarre combination of all kinds of cakes. At Vaubvessard, Emma meets the Viscount, dances with him and picks up a green silk cigar case as memoir. Ennui overcomes Emma. Completely misunderstanding Emma, Charles decides to move to Yonville l’Abbaye. When they leave Tostes, Madame Bovary is pregnant. Yonville houses among others the pharmacist Monsieur Homais, Justin, Mousier Léon, Monsieur Rodolphe and Lheureux. Rodolphe seduces Emma during the Agricultural show. Emma suffers a prolonged
illness after Rodolphe deserts her. It is Homais who tells Charles to take Emma to the opera where she again meets Léon. With Léon she begins her passionate relationship of desire. It was the Hirondelle that carries her from and to Yonville. She gets into debt and consumes arsenic. After Charles’ death, their daughter Berthe is sent by a poor distant aunt to work in a cotton mill. Monsieur Homais receives the Legion of Honor by the end of the book. The world in the novel is not a replica of the elements of reality but built on elements of the novel.

There is realistic illusion and constant obliteration of chronology. Assuming that the Legion of Honor was received from the king in 1848 because there was no king after ‘48, Flaubert gives 1812 as the only mentioned date. He is not concerned much about dates. Time is regulated by reference to feeling and chronology is there according to fiction and not time. A collection of traits give the text a proper reality that is to legitimize that, it is bringing forth.

People see a place that is recognizable but Flaubert is creating meanings out of all the indexes of the novel, dividing its sequences according to catalysts, informants, indicators. Built on the Paiva, Madame Bovary is never far from desire either in the convent or with Léon. But there is death in desire. Death is never far from desire. Emma’s death scene reminds one of her love scene with Léon. The slow procession march with the coffin is like Emma’s wedding march. The closed carriage Hirondelle haunts the text. It is like a phantom figure that is representative of desire. Its great constant movement is on the same track. It is only the learned doctor Larivière by his knowledge, and the stoic peasant woman by her poverty who bypass the times. The blind beggar’s indistinct lamentation of a vague distress is terrifying for Emma. He tries to get on to the Hirondelle. There is a constant reflection of things, feelings, from books to beings, transferring the whole series of experiences to objects.

The Hirondelle movement takes on such a momentum, that cannot stop anywhere.
It is as if the paradigmatic narration abandons itself to fatality. Trivialities win out in the end and the only survivor is an accomplice to profit and to progress. The poor families are almost cornered up as if like scandals who have to be closed in. Realistic force comes from the density of style giving an image of contradiction. Madame Bovary was like the bourgeoisie it represented, both real and grotesque and as Flaubert said historical events will actualize these events in the future.

At the same time that it is a texte de désir, Madame Bovary is also a texte de plaisir. If Flaubert brings classical realist representation to a new level of fullness in Madame Bovary in the celebrated pictorial tableaux, he also subverts such representation by rematerializing his medium. The chapter on Charles's operation on Hippolyte's clubfoot is constituted of pastiche in one form or another. The narrator's voice is not absent as was once thought, but it tends to disappear because it is only one voice among others, a tissue of voices. The hierarchy of discourses which characterizes classic realist narration and which is dominated by the privileged discourse of the narrator is temporarily subverted.

Madame Bovary, a novel for many readers still has a canonical stature as the most fully developed example of classic French realism. Our semiotic analysis is about the unfolding of the text as Emma moves from old Roualt's farm to the consuming of arsenic. As each image leads to the following image and the narrative progresses both in its formal and in its conceptual structure, Emma constitutes within herself the process of the becoming of the being.

In Flaubert's La Légende de Saint Julien l'Hospitalier, one follows the process of the becoming of the being; in Emma Bovary, it is her trying to become
which is significant. There are frozen images in Madame Bovary. Emma moves from the farm at Les Berlaux, to the Ursuline Convent to Tostes after marriage to Charles. She visits the Château of the Marquis at Vaubyessard to Yonville l’Abbaye. There is the Agricultural fair in between, Rodolphe’s house - La Huchette, the operation on Hippolyte’s clubfoot, Rouen to Emma consuming arsenic. As in St. Julien, there is a constant movement in Madame Bovary, and flashbacks dot the discourse as the narrative proceeds. Obsessed with purity, Flaubert shows in Emma daughter of a farmer by birth but aspiring to be an aristocrat by choice, the grossness and shallowness of the bourgeois glitter. Emma a provincial girl is attracted by that glitter. Mediation comes about at first via circulating library books stolen into the convent.

Les bonnes religieuses, qui avaient si bien présumé de sa vocation, s’aperçurent avec de grands étonnements que mademoiselle Roualt semblait échapper à leur soin..... Cet esprit, positif au milieu de ses enthousiasmes, qui avait aimé l’église pour ses fleurs, la musique pour les paroles des romances, et la littérature pour ses excitations passionnelles, s’insurgeait devant les mystères de la foi, de même qu’elle s’irritait davantage contre la discipline, qui était quelque chose d’antipathique à sa constitution. Quand son père la retira de pension, on ne fut point lâché de la voir partir. La supérieure trouvait même qu’elle était devenue, dans les derniers temps, peu réverencieuse envers la communauté. (p.66, 67)

The good sisters, who had been so sure about her vocation, realized with great astonishment that Mademoiselle Roualt seemed to be eluding their influence.... This temperament, positive
in the midst of its enthusiasms, which had loved the church for its flowers, the music for the romantic lyrics, and literature for its passion - inspiring stimulation, rebelled before the mysteries of faith in proportion to her growing irritation against the discipline, which was antipathetic to her nature. When her father came to take her from the convent, they were not sorry to see her go. The mother Superior even found that toward the end Emma had become quite irreverent toward the community (p.59).

When Charles came to Les Bertaux for the first time, she felt quite disillusioned, having nothing more to learn, nothing more to feel. St. Julien resides in three houses, actually two are palaces and one is a hut. Emma actually resides in four houses - Les Bertaux, the Ursuline Convent, Tostes after marriage to Charles and Yonville l’Abbaye. It is the constant deceiving of Emma by one and all as she moves from one house to another that is pathetic.

“But the uneasiness at a new role or perhaps the disturbance caused by the presence of this man, finally felt that marvellous passion that until now had been like a huge pink-winged bird soaring through the splendour of poetic skies. She could not believe that the calm in which she was now living was the happiness of which she had dreamed (p.59).

Mais l’anxiété d’un état nouveau, on peut - être l’irritation causée par la présence de cet homme. avait suffi à lui faire croire que’ elle possédait enfin cette passion merveilleuse qui jusqu’alors s’était tenue comme un grand oiseau au plumage rose planant dans la splendeur des ciels poétiques: - et elle
ne pouvait s’imaginer à présent que ce calme où elle vivait n’était le bonheur qu’elle avait rêvé (p. 67).

On one hand, she gives in to the deception of the age, only thinking that she was authenticating life itself. In her relationship with Rodolphe, she felt she was transfigured by some subtle change permeating her entire being.

Alors elle se rappela les héroïnes des livres qu’elle avait lus, et la légion lyrique de ces femmes adultères se mit à chanter dans sa mémoire avec des voix de sœurs qui la charmaient. Elle devenait elle-même comme une partie véritable de ces imaginations et relisait la longue rêverie de sa jeunesse, en se considérant dans ce type d’amoureuse qu’elle avait tant envié. D’ailleurs, Emma éprouvait une satisfaction de vengeance. N’avait-elle pas assez souffert! Mais elle triomphait maintenant, et l’amour, si longtemps contenu, jaillissait tout entier avec des bouillonnements joyeux. Elle le savourait sans remords, sans inquiétude, sans trouble (p.245).

“Then she remembered the heroines in the books she had read, and the lyrical legion of these adulterous women began to sing in her memory with sisterly voices enchanting her. She herself became a part of these fantasies. She was realizing the long dream of her adolescence, seeing herself as one of those amorous women she had so long envied. Moreover Emma was feeling a sensation of revenge. Had she not suffered enough? But now she was triumphing, and love, so long contained, burst forth in its entirety with joyous effervescence. She was
savoring it without remorse or anxiety, without feeling troubled

(p. 163).

In her passionate zeal, to live her own life, she is just like a child. But authentic values evade Emma for Flaubert portrays the inauthentic world in the text. In Emma's world of inauthenticity, values are also inauthentic. It is the glitter that seems authentic to her. For instance, at the theatre she felt transported to the readings of her childhood to the books of Walter Scott.

With Léon, Emma endeavored and desperately tried to keep alive her fading dream. Her life was in a trance-like transition. All that mattered was the momentum of the carriage wheels. Her entombed life was like the carriage. At the harbor, amid the wagons and the barrels in the streets, the inhabitants at the corners were wide-eyed with astonishment at an extraordinary spectacle in a provincial town - a constantly reappearing cab with closed blinds, shut up more tightly than a tomb and tossing about like a boat. As with remembering Léon, Rodolphe so the memory of the ball at the Château becomes a preoccupation for Emma.

"Et peu à peu, les physionomies se confondirent dans sa mémoire, elle oublia l'air des contredanses, elle ne vit plus si, nettement les livrées et les appartements; quelques détails s'en allèrent, mais le regret lui resta. Souvent, lorsque Charles était sorti, elle allait prendre dans l'armoire, entre les plis du linge où elle l'avait laissé, le porte - cigares en soie verte (p.91).

"Little by little the faces blurred in her memory, she forgot the quadrille tunes; she no longer saw the livery and the rooms so clearly; some of the details faded away, but the regret remained.
Often, when Charles had gone out, she would take the green silk cigar case out of the cupboard from between the piles of linen where she had left it (p. 73).

Rodolphe, Léon all of them fail her. When she gets into debt, none agree to help her. It is then that she realizes that she has had enough of the world around and decides to leave that world of falsity. On the one hand, Emma is identified with desire - and represents the grotesque side of the bourgeois life, and on the other, her suicide is an act of defiance. If her final act of defiance is conscious, if means that in spite of her former falsities she must have had some traces of authenticity behind the facade of her grotesque self. It is as if her grotesque self camouflaged those traces of authenticity. And it spite of everything Emma did try to live. What is most tragic about Flaubert’s Madame Bovary, is the very absence of tragedy. It is as if, what happened to Emma, could happen to anyone. And for that matter, Emma could be anyone. Emma’s tragedy is so common-place, the happenings are so bourgeois like, so regular that the existential problem of Emma’s being is often overlooked. The process of her trying to become culminates in her triumphant death act.

Flaubert shows his gratitude by addressing the dedication to his lawyer.

TO

MARIE‐ANTOINE‐JULES SÉNARD

Member of the Paris Bar

Ex‐President of National Assembly and

Former Minister of the Interior

Dear and illustrious Friend,
Allow me to inscribe your name on the first page of this book, which I dedicate to you as having been chiefly responsible for its publication. As a result of the magnificent way in which you conducted my case, my work has conferred upon me, its author, an authority which I had no reason to anticipate. I should like you, therefore, to accept this token of my gratitude. However great it be, it can never adequately repay either your eloquence or your devoted loyalty.

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

Paris, 12 April 1857.

In September 1851, when the first pages of Madame Bovary were drafted, Flaubert was thirty and had published nothing. He had, however, written a great deal: short stories on more of the less exotic subjects, semi-autobiographical narratives, a novel called L’Education sentimentale (not to be confused with the better known version of 1869), and the first draft of La Tentation de Saint Antoine, a grotesque fantasy in dialogue from. All in all, these works reveal a decided preference for the extravagant and the bizarre, although L’Education sentimentale is already a notable exception. While travelling in the Near East in 1850, he had three new projects in mind: Une nuit de Don Juan, Anubis, and a novel about a ‘young girl who dies a virgin and mystic after living with her father and mother in a small provincial town’ (letter of 14 November 1850).

It was this third subject which was to be taken up. Flaubert preserved the provincial setting and characters, together with something of the interplay between the mystical and the erotic, but invented a new heroine who would make the story, as he put it, more ‘entertaining’ for the reader. Despite this concession,
the writing of Madame Bovary was for Flaubert both an exercise and an experiment. From the outset, his letters speak of the atrocious stylistic difficulties the subject presented, and although there were moments of optimism and enthusiasm, his most characteristic feeling was one of disgust for the sheer banality of his materials. He viewed the whole enterprise as training ('gymnastics') for a later novel which would suit his own tastes and what he believed to be his own talents. The nearest he came to his ideal was Salammbo: a magnificent novel in its own way, but one which would hardly be read except by historians of literature, had Madame Bovary never been written.

The story of Flaubert’s fanatical self-mortification during the five years of composition although a highly readable one, might well seem to be just another of those colourful potraits of the artist which contributes nothing of real value to the understanding of the work itself. Yet it is always instructive to see a writer reaching the height of his powers by denying himself the very resources he feels most tempted to exploit. And in this instance one can go further. The absence of what Flaubert cut out in writing Madame Bovary arguably creates the most important part of the effect of the novel: it determines both the angle from which the action is viewed and the precise sense in which that action is tragic.

The pertinence of this way of looking at Madame Bovary - as an exercise in amputation - will, however, become clearer after a brief account of the experimental character of the novel. What was new about Madame Bovary in the 1850s? As a portrait of life in a country town it owes something to Balzac, who used provincial settings in many of his novels; Balzac’s Physiologic du mariage anticipates Flaubert’s anatomy of a marriage doomed to failure from the outset by inexperience and illusion; and the theme of lost illusions, the subject of
another of Balzac's novels, is a common place of French Romantic literature. Furthermore, a number of the motifs used in Madame Bovary had already appeared in Flaubert's own earlier writings. Thus the general conception of the novel's plot, subject, and characters could hardly be called experimental. What was exceptional for the mid-nineteenth century was the rigour with which Flaubert restricted himself to the petty details of everyday life, avoiding high drama and grand moral dilemmas. While writing the first half of the novel he referred more than once in his letters to the problems of making an almost eventless narrative interesting: *What worries me in my book is the element of entertainment. That side is weak; there is not enough action. I maintain, however, that ideas are action. It is more difficult to hold the reader's interest with them, I know, but if the style is right it can be done. I now have fifty pages in a row without a single event.* (letter of 15 January 1853)

By 'ideas', Flaubert seems to mean something like 'psychology': not explicit psychological analysis, of which there is very little in Madame Bovary, but the gradual accumulation of apparently trivial responses which finally, after long preparation, leads to the outbreak of 'action' in the convictional sense: *I think that this is rather characteristic of life itself. The sexual act may last only a minute, though it has been anticipated for months* (letter of 25 June 1853).

These aspects of the experiment allow Madame Bovary to be classed as a realist novel in the strict, historical sense of the term. It was in fact in the 1850s in France that 'realism' became a fashionable term of literary criticism and literacy history. Brought into prominence by the controversial experiments of the painter Gustave Courbet in the unadorned representation of mundane objects, it was subsequently adopted by a not very distinguished group of anti-
idealistic and socially progressive writers, in 1858, it was applied retrospectively by Taine, in an important essay, to the novels of Balzac. Baudelaire detested the more literal forms of realism as a denial of the aesthetic imagination: he believed that the artist’s task was to seek the conjunction of a precise, immediate representation of phenomena with the maximum degree of imaginative penetration (his *Salon* of 1859 provides a lucid series of essays on this topic). Flaubert’s view was remarkably similar, although it should be remembered that *Madame Bovary* was begun before realism became a burning issue. Thus his *boutade* 'I undertook this novel in hatred of realism’ (in a letter of 1856) should be understood as a reaction against a local variant of realism; it is clear from many references in the letters that he saw his own task as the aesthetic transformation of mundane and vulgar reality.

This is indeed another of the principal senses in which Flaubert thought of *Madame Bovary* as an experiment: *It is perhaps absurd to want to give prose the rhythm of verse (keeping it distinctly prose, however), and to write of ordinary life as one writes history of epic (but without falsifying the subject)... But on the other hand it is perhaps a great experiment, and very original. (letter of 27 March 1853)*

Four years later, Sainte-Beuve was to make much the same point in his review of the finished novel: 'One precious quality distinguishes M. Gustave Flaubert from the other more or less exact observers who in our time pride themselves on conscientiously reproducing reality, and nothing but reality, and who occasionally succeed: he has *style.*'

Flaubert’s conception of a prose which was flawlessly elegant in its colours and rhythms, without being either flowery or bombastic, and which might succeed
in fusing the vulgar with the poetic, could well be considered in relation to the contemporary emergence of the prose poem: Baudelaire's first experiments in this new genre date from the 1850s. But it is in a rather different context that Flaubert's cultivation of style makes its greatest impact on the novel. It is the counterpart of what is perhaps the most significant experiment of all: the suppression of the author as a source of reflections and judgements external to the narrative. At the earliest stages of composition, Flaubert speaks almost exclusively of the difficulty of stringing sentences together. In January 1852, he sketches a more general theory of style, defining it in a much quoted phrase as 'an absolute manner of seeing things'. Three weeks later, the decision to eliminate the authorial presence is explicit: 'I do not want my book to contain a single subjective reaction, nor a single reflection by the author. 'By December 1852, the absence of the author has become a special kind of presence: 'An author in his book must be like God in the universe, present everywhere and visible nowhere.' Flaubert will return to this point again and again. It has two aspects: rejection of first-person-singular, quasi-autobiographical narrative; and the exclusion of a moral discourse imposed from 'outside'. What Flaubert calls style - the aesthetic point of view - guarantees the moral autonomy of the novel.

Madame Bovary is not the first novel in which the narrative is presented without authorial commentary: the epistolary form of Les Liaisons dangereuses, to cite one example at random, has the same effect. And there are some apparent lapses. The narrator does appear briefly in the unexplained 'we' of the opening chapter, and the perfect tense is used here and there to imply a connection between the fictions of the novel and the real world ('nothing has changed in Yonville...'; 'He has just received the Legion of Honour'). Then there are general observations and aphorisms ('One should never touch idols: the gilt
may come off on one's hands'), and occasional uses of morally loaded vocabulary. But these intermittent instances do not add up to a consistent authorial presence, and in other respects a strict economy is maintained in order to ensure that the reader will not be conscious of a voice telling him how to interpret the story. The reader must, in the end, accept full responsibility for what he makes of it.

Flaubert's attempt to use the technique of non-intervention systematically in all his mature novels marks the beginning of a new and fruitful development in the history of the genre. The major innovations of novelists as different as Zola, Henry James, Gide, Woolf, Faulkner, and Alain Robbe-Grillet all have to do with the displacement of the author from the narrative scene. In retrospect, Flaubert's ideal of a 'book about nothing' (letter of 16 January 1852) with its implied suppression of plot (exciting adventures), character (interesting, large-as-life people), and even theme (love, adultery, ambition, art) as anything other than a pretext, may indeed seem remarkably close to the calling in question of standard conventions of the novel by the French 'new novelists' of the 1950s and 1960s.

The most celebrated and wide-ranging of Flaubert's techniques for 'showing' rather than 'telling' is a persistent use of irony, which he himself saw as innovative. Speaking of the conversation between Emma and Léon in Part Two, chapter II, he remarks: *It is something that could be taken seriously, and yet I fully intend it as grotesque. This will be the first time, I think, that a book makes fun of its leading lady and its leading man. The irony does not detract from the pathetic aspect, but rather intensifies it. In my third part, which will be full of farcical things, I want my readers to weep.* (letter of 9 October 1852)
Ironic narrative, as well as the analogous mixing of comedy and pathos, has a long history in which Ariosto and Cervantes are major landmarks: Don Quixote was one of Flaubert's favourite novels. Oddly enough, he was scornful of Stendhal's Le Rouge et le noir, which has some of the same characteristics. But the use of irony in Madame Bovary is highly distinctive. It is not simply a means of making fun of the characters by inflating and then deflating them. Only the crudest of misreadings would maintain that in Madame Bovary Flaubert is uniformly destructive of his characters. Nor does his irony consist in an alternation of contrasting tones or registers: he aimed at, and achieved, an extraordinary consistency of style.

Within this uniform medium, there are infinite nuances of irony, covering the whole spectrum from caricature (the officials at the agricultural show, Homais and Bournisien arguing beside the corpse) to an acutely tragic sense of the discrepancy between Emma's dreams and the real world.

Irony, as used by Flaubert, is thus a medium which creates a dual vision. In the 'honeymoon' episode of Part Three, chapter III, for example, a delicate equilibrium is maintained between the fresh immediacy of sounds, flavours, light and shade, sensations of all kinds, and the undercurrent of indications that Léon and Emma inflate their experience and turn it into a Romantic cliché. It is essential to avoid reducing this perpetual changing of angle to a fixed interpretation of character and action. The reader who is not disconcerted by the shift from the schoolroom scene of the opening chapter to the moments Charles spends looking out of his window in Rouen, or to his dawn arrival at Rouault's farm, has already grasped the sense of Flaubert's method. The key here, is to recognize that the novel invites us to share not the mental responses.
of the characters but the physical surface of the world - real or imagined - through which they move. The intensity of this world is preserved in scene after scene, regardless of the extent to which its value, as assessed by the character, is undermined. The principle is maintained even in the dialogue passages: utterances so evidently banal nevertheless emerge, in Flaubert's prose, elegant in sound and rhythm: *My characters are completely commonplace, but they have to speak in a literary style, and the politeness of the language takes away so much picturesque ness from their way of expressing themselves!* (letter of 19 September 1852). The immaculate evenness of style both creates the irony by which the world is seen so often as false and petty, and presents that same world as a thing of extra-ordinary beauty. No other novelist has ever preserved the fine-ness of that balance.

_I have dissected myself to the quick, with total honesty, at moments which were not in the least amusing* (letter of 6 June 1853). This remark epitomizes the dual vision of Flaubert's novels, the fusion of sensibility with the sharpest irony. It is also an example of the way Flaubert's imagination draws on medicine and, more precisely, on surgery - as a source of metaphor both in his letters and his fiction. That he was the son of a celebrated doctor, that as a child he surreptitiously looked through the windows of his father's mortuary, and that he was considered not bright enough to become a doctor him-self, is sufficient to give scope to anyone who wants to speculate on his psyche: Sartre's vast, unfinished study _L'Idiot de la famille_ takes this theme as its starting point. What is perhaps more pertinent here is simply the observation that, in _Madame Bovary_, the inadequate husband is also an inadequate doctor. Two hundred years previously, in Molière's comedy, the caricaturing of doctors as pedants and charlatans called in question no fundamental beliefs. But in the mid-nineteenth century, with the progress
of medical science and the transformation of society had already made the doctor a figure no less prestigious than the priest. Charles's impotence is more pathetic and more alarming. The point here is not that Flaubert is portraying contemporary attitudes to medical science (although he is no doubt doing that, too), but that, as a metaphor, medical incompetence goes deep.

At the metaphorical level, it needs little reflection to discern that the figure of the doctor is one variant of the figure of the artist: the remark quoted above, which refers to the sense in which Flaubert felt himself to be incorporating his personal experience into his novel, already suggests that the equivalence came naturally to him. But, before pursuing this and other equivalences, a more general point needs to be made. Flaubert's excision of the authorial presence from his novels - itself a kind of surgical operation - is accompanied by another form of invisibility. Aesthetically self-conscious novelists are inclined, at some point in their career, to make writing (or another art) the principal subject of a novel. Balzac's fiction is full of artists, geniuses, journalists, inventors, and the like; Henry James's Roderick Hudson, and a number of his short stories, enable him to analyse overtly the problems of the American artist; in Gide's Les Faux-monnayeurs, and Proust's A la recherche du temps perdu proves, in the end, to be an aesthetic odyssey. But none of Flaubert's mature novels place such a figure at the centre of the stage. His only extended experiment in this mode was the early version of L'Education sentimentale, and it is worth looking at this text briefly in order to see why the experiment was not repeated.

Henry and Jules, the two central characters, begin with idealistic visions of becoming great artists and lovers. Henry has a passionate affair, runs away.
with his mistress (a married woman who in some respects anticipates Emma Bovary), gets bored, and ends up as a successful but banal man of the world. Jules falls in love, is disillusioned with life, and turns to art as the only medium through which the powers of the imagination can be brought to fruition. The novel already illustrates a theme which will recur in the mature works, namely, that the attempt to make the real world conform to the world of the imagination is a fundamental error which can only end in disaster (Madame Bovary) or emotional bankruptcy (L'Education sentimentale of 1869). But Jules is a special case, since his abandonment of the world in favour of a hermit-like existence dedicated to art is the pretext for an overt exposition of the view of art Flaubert was to adopt in the years to come. The novel ends, in fact, with a substantial piece of aesthetic theory, attributed to Jules, but representing the nearest Flaubert was ever to come. The fact that the experiment was not to be repeated is no doubt due to the perception that the artist's solution is, paradoxically enough, death to the novel. There is literally nothing to say about Jules once he has assumed his pose as high priest of the imagination. Minor figures in the later novels provide a parody of art at its most banal - Binet and his napkin rings; Pellerin, the painter turned photographer, in the 1869 Education sentimentale. Otherwise, the portrait of Flaubert as an artist can only be constructed from his letters.

The excision, however, leaves its traces, and the most visible of these is the way Flaubert exploits in his narrative works themes which appear elsewhere as metaphors of the writer's condition. Next to the image of the doctor, one may here place that of the writer as a monk or hermit, enjoying 'debauches of the imagination' which are more intense than any lived experience. Jules's mediation on this theme recur in the correspondence and are mirrored in the scenarios of La Tentation de Saint Antoine and, in miniature, in La Légende
The association of abstinence with sexual desire is fundamental to this group of themes. In a letter of 24 April 1852, Flaubert speaks thus of his writing: *I am leading an austere life, stripped of all external pleasure, and am sustained only by a kind of permanent frenzy, which sometimes makes me weep tears of impotence but never abates. I love my work with a love that is frantic and perverted, as an ascetic loves the hair shirt that scratches his belly.*

Equivocations between sexual and religious longings dominate Emma's sensibility from convent to death-bed, and the pattern will reappear in *Salammbô, Trois contes,* and even *Bouvard et Pécuchet.*

In the correspondence Flaubert insistently, even obsessively, refers to sex in relation to writing. Metaphors of potency and importence are frequent. Rather less frequent, but no less striking, are his fantasies of self-castration. In a letter of 27 December 1852 he speaks of the shock he received when he read Balzac's *Louis Lambert:* *At the end, the hero wants to castrate himself, in a kind of mystical madness. During my wretchedness in Paris, when I was nineteen, I had that same wish... later I spent two entire years without touching a woman. (Last year, when I told you about my idea of entering a monastery, it was my old leaven rising in me again.) There comes a moment when one needs to make oneself suffer, needs to loathe one's flesh, to fling mud in its face, so hideous does it seem. Without my love of form, I would perhaps have been a great mystic.*

Louis Lambert, it should be added, is a genius whose mental (and physical) powers come to nothing.
The presentation of sex in the novels is much less sensational. It is usually left to the reader's imagination, as in the consummation of Emma's affair with Rodolphe, or the famous episode of the cab-ride with Léon. Indirection is Flaubert's most characteristic technique in this respect. One of the most sensual passages in the book is a description of Emma in full bloom at the height of her affair with Rodolphe, and elsewhere much of the powerful erotic effect is conveyed through reference to other pleasures and other sensations - the sound of melted snow dripping on Emma's tightly stretched parasol, the falling of ripe fruit and the scuttling of nocturnal beasts in the garden where she makes love with Rodolphe.

It is clear, then, that in Madame Bovary the 'debauches of the imagination' are achieved by a practice of veiling, suppression, and transference. From this it follows that sexual implications may be present in episodes which are not ostensibly erotic. It is at this point that we may return to Charles's double in-competence. The operation on Hippolyte's club-foot, which occurs at the very centre of the novel, is directly implicated in Emma's erotic motivation. She has begun to grow tired of Rodolphe, and her fantasy of Charles's fame as a surgeon momentarily arouses in her a sexual response. But his pathetic failure finishes him in her eyes, and she returns to Rodolphe with a renewed and blatantly physical passion. The turning-point takes the form of a scene in which Emma watches Charles pacing up and down the room while from outside come the terrible screams of Hippolyte as he undergoes amputation.

These remarks are not designed to assert the idiotic theory that what Madame Bovary is 'really' about is Flaubert's fears of castration or impotence. I merely wish to point to the fact that these different echoes of the writer and his exercise permeate all of Flaubert's work. Whether they are linked in his subconscious
is not in question here. The narrative is demonstrably fabricated from materials which, in Jules's meditations, or in the scarcely less fictional drama of the correspondence, are figures of the writer's problems.

The examples considered so far already suggest that the displacement of these materials from one side of the fence to the other may often take the form of an inversion. Charles's botched surgery is, in one sense, at the opposite end of the scale from Flaubert's accomplished stitching together of sentences to form a perfectly seamless textual body. But one can go further than this and say that the failure of the characters is a necessary condition of the artist's success. The world of Flaubert's novels is notoriously one in which all values are eroded, all dreams deflated. The only way for its inhabitants to achieve success is to remain immaculately and aggressively banal. Imagination is a disease which will infallibly cripple or kill unless one learns, like Henry, to immunize oneself against it. Emma enacts this predicament by attempting to apply to the real world an imaginative sensibility which can only be productive, according to Flaubert's logic, in the realm of art. Indeed, her error - the attempt to live life as if it were a novel - is one which is peculiarly visible to a novelist who has learnt Jules's lesson, and thus eminently suited, as Jules's story is not, to be the subject of a novel. Emma's experiments are doomed to disaster, one might say, because she fails to recognize that she is a character in a novel; the fact that the writer and reader know she is; provides the ultimate grounding for the novel's ironic perspective. What is loss for the character is gain for the novelist; Madame Bovary is the apotheosis of the mastered imagination, its subject the tragedy of imagination dissipated and broken on the wheel of reality. The pathos is all the greater because the subject is, in its basic essentials, a 'reality' subject: Emma perceives the triviality of everyday reality, but can't escape from it; the writer can.

-54-
At the point where Léon begins to tire of his vacuous relationship with Emma, Binet says to him:

'The trouble with you is that you don't know how to relax.'

'And what's the best way of doing that?'

'If I were you, I should invest in a lathe.'

'But I don't know how to work a lathe.'

'I hadn't thought of that,' said the other, stroking his chin with a mingled air of contempt and satisfaction. The exchange could almost be a burlesque passage between a travestied author and his even less well endowed character.

It is in this sense, above all, that the view of Madame Bovary as an exercise, of what Flaubert denied himself in order to write the novel, has its furthest reach. Like Cervantes, he uses at one remove all the materials and devices of the 'conventional' novel. The actual elopement of the 1845 Education sentimentale is replaced in Madame Bovary by an imagined elopement; Emma's dreams, although shown to be both precarious and dangerous, none the less bring into the novel the kind of exotic fantasies the writer and the reader hanker after; the pleasure of sex, the drama of death, the conversion of heroine into saint, are enacted for us in one form or another. The novel must work at that level - the level of conventional response - if its irony is to bite deep. It is as if Flaubert were out to beat the commonplace at its own game. The reader must sympathize with, identify with Emma, who is after all as seductive as a good novel, in order to grasp the point about the inauthenticity of such identification. But conversely, once the magic has begun to work, the reader is drawn deeper and deeper into a demonstration of the procedures by which we fictionalize our lives, or mistake the fictional for the real. When Flaubert had written
about half of his novel, the described what he was engaged in as 'a work of criticism, or rather of anatomy' (letter of 2 January 1854). The remark is true in more than one sense, but the sense we are concerned with here is the literary one: *Madame Bovary* as an exercise in literary criticism.

Novels can only produce their effect by making things interesting. Their materials, viewed dispassionately, are always commonplace. They deal endlessly in the same currency - quests, embraces, duels, suicides - while building upon it constantly changing imaginative structures. *Madame Bovary* is of course no exception: and, more than most novels, it reveals how the process works. Sexual desire and its consummation, as an unadorned commonplace, appears as unendingly repetitious, the nadir of all commonplaces: 'As the charm of novelty slipped from her like a dress, Rodolphe saw nothing but the naked horror of an eternal monotony of passion, always with the same face, always speaking the same words.' In order to be made interesting, it has constantly to be dressed up, refined on, deferred, transposed into sentimental poetry or romantic novels, the transaction itself must be disguised and displaced. So, too, in Emma's dealings with Lheureux, the circulation of bills of exchange, the naked and banal truth of commerce, supports an ever-growing superstructure of fantasies: Emma uses paper money to furnish the world of her imagination. And, most strikingly of all, language becomes in the mouth of the characters a grossly inflated of counterfeit currency. There is hardly a single oral utterance in the whole book which is not banal or inauthentic. The characters speak in double quotation marks: their dialogues are presented to us not as instances of communication but as examples of the kind of things people conventionally say. The same effect is conveyed outside the dialogue proper by the use of italics indicating that a phrase is an *idée reçue* (Flaubert's project for *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* developed as he was writing *Madame Bovary*). Language is shown...
to be doubly inauthentic in that it both exceeds and falls short of reality; it creates a world of its own, and is inadequate for the real world. The text actually makes both inauthenticities explicit, lest the reader should fail to infer them from the action: 'Human language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, when all the time we are longing to move the stars to pity'; 'feelings are endlessly extended by language, as though forced through a metal-press'.

Once the reader has noticed these themes, it is impossible for him not to notice also that the transaction between novels and their readers is itself inflationary. A novel provides indications which the reader interprets and supplements according to the directives of his own desire. It is a paper currency specifically designed to replace the real thing. From this point of view, Madame Bovary may be regarded as a showcase exhibiting the mechanisms of inflation. Emma is seen attaching to an accidentally discovered cigar case an imaginary narrative which gives it value and interest for her; Léon and Emma reread their pasts to make them conform to their present desires; Charles, finally, interprets the whole story as an illustration of the workings of fate. This last example is particularly instructive. The invocation of fate as an explanation of events is revealed explicitly as an idée reçue when Rodolphe inserts it into his letter to Emma; when Charles reproduces it, in his terminal conversation with Rodolphe, it is again marked as a common place ('And then, for the first and last time in his life, he uttered a deep thought'). But above all, Charles's attempt to make sense of what has happened to him strikes us as pathetic and ironic because he has never, throughout the novel, read or interpreted anything correctly. Just as the volumes of the medical dictionary he keeps in his consulting room remain uncut; just as he fails to understand the story of Lucia di Lammermoor; so, too, in his dealings with Emma, he proves totally incapable of reading her and the all too patent
story of her adultery. When his discovery of Emma's letters finally gives him no other way out, he explains the story for himself, and thus disposes of it, by the most banal of all interpretations.

The point might still seem to go beyond the evidence were these semi-implicit examples not supported by the recurrence throughout the novel of the theme of reading as such. Again and again, the text insists on the extent to which the characters drawn on books in their desire to make sense of their experience. Emma's reading at the convent is presented as determining her misreading of life; she and Léon constantly fictionalize their relationship; Emma's fantasies of elopement with Rodolphe are episodes from an imaginary novel, and in the scene at the opera which forms a prelude to her renewed relationship with Leon, she herself becomes conscious of that essential confusion between the real and the fictional from which she suffers. By portraying Emma as a reader, the novel deflates not only her false expectations but also the reader's: when she reads Balzac and George Sand, 'seeking in their pages satisfaction by proxy for all her longings', when she becomes momentarily aware of 'the triviality of those passions which art paints so much larger than life', the rug is jerked from beneath the reader's feet. What he is looking for is just as inauthentic as what the characters are looking her.

One might say, then, that Madame Bovary repeats with steadily diminishing returns the experiencing of a common place. Emma sets out 'to discover what it was that people in real life meant by such words as "bliss", "passion" and "intoxication" - words, all of them, which she had thought so fine when she read them in books'; the outcome will be that she discovers in adultery all the platitudes of marriage. As Madame Bovary moves towards its consummations, it describes an inverse movement, the movement of a critic uncovering the
procedures by which readers inflate a text.

When Emma, having just arrived at Yonville, meets Léon at the Golden Lion, they talk about reading. For Léon, this means above all becoming identified with the characters, and finding in the book an image of one's own feelings. Emma likes exciting stories, and hates 'low heroes and lukewarm sentiments of the sort one finds in real life'. And Léon caps this by claiming that reading compensates for the disillusionments of life by the portrayal of superior characters and feelings. The dialogue, which is the one Flaubert singles out as an example of a new use of irony, is an awful warning to the would be reader of Madame Bovary. There are many ways of misreading the novel, and most of them are itemized here. Another arises from taking too literally Flaubert's claim that 'My poor Bovary, without a doubt, a suffering and weeping at this very hour in twenty villages of France' (letter of 14 August 1853): he would have been amused to hear that, not long after his death, the villagers of Ry in Normandy believed their village was the model for Yonville and 'Bovarized' it to the point of exhibiting pears from a tree planted by Charles Bovary. Yet another type of misreading is represented by Henry James's surprise at the low intelligence of Flaubert's characters: the nuances of stupidity make as great a claim on the intelligence of writer and reader as the finesse of Charlotte Verver of Lambert Strether. The best solution, perhaps, is to recognize that Madame Bovary is a novel constructed with a high degree of self-consciousness by a novelist who is always ahead of his reader, and then to explore, sentence by sentence and episode by episode, the ways in which its elegant, amusing, and sensuous surface produces a mirage of tragedy.

Flaubert has divided the text in three parts; the first part has nine chapter, the second part has fifteen chapters while the third has ten chapters.
As I see it there are ten broad primary divisions in Madame Bovary

1) THE FARM AT LES BERTAUX,
2) THE URSULINE CONVENT,
3) TOSTES AFTER MARRIAGE TO CHARLES,
4) SHE VISITS THE CHÂTEAU OF THE MARQUIS AT VAUBYESSARD,
5) YONVILLE - 1 'ABBAYE,
6) THE AGRICULTURAL FAIR,
7) RODOLPHE'S HOUSE - LA HUCHETTE,
8) THE OPERATION ON HIPPOLYTE'S CLUBFOOT,
9) ROUEN14,
10) EMMA CONSUMES ARSENIC.

Within the ten macroensembles there are numerous smaller units. These microensembles go on to constitute the discourse of the text as Emma moves from one unit to another.

Charles sees old Roault's daughter Emma at his farm, Les Bertaux. Actually he only sees parts of her body.

The first macroensemble would include:

(1.a.i) A young woman came out.
i.a. She came to the threshold of the door.
i.b. She was there to receive Charles Bovary.

It is very clear that Charles had noticed that the person who had come to the door was a woman. He was aware of her appearance for he was sure that she was young in age.
(1.a.(ii)a) She was in a dress that was made of wool.
b) The dress was blue in colour.
c) It was trimmed with three flounces.

(1.a.(iii)(a) Emma invited Charles into the kitchen.
b) There was a large fire blazing in the kitchen.

Charles sees the kind of dress that Emma is wearing. There is implication of the softness of the dress for it is made of wool. The colour of the garment is again blue which immediately implies sensuousness. The dress is again not a plain one but trimmed with three flounces which throws light on Emma's artistic mentality.

1.a.(iv) Emma was about to saw some pads. Her father became impatient when it took her too long to find her worbox.

1.a.(v) She made no comment. But as she sewed she pricked her fingers. Then Emma put them into her mouth to suck them.

Emma's complete disinterest and boredom with life at the farm is evident. She does not even feel the need to answer when her father is impatient because of her delay in finding her workbox. Every gesture of Emma is artistic and shows the immense sensuality of her spirit. She pricks her fingers and puts them into her mouth to suck them. The act in itself emotes physical sensation. And for Charles each of her acts combine to make her more desirable to him.

1.a.vi.a. Charles was surprised at the whiteness of Emma's nails.
The nails gleamed and were finely tapered, cleaner than Dieppe ivories, and almond shaped.

Charles noticed at the same time that her hand was not attractive. They were not white enough and lacked softness in the outlines.

Charles sees each part of Emma's hand while she sucked her fingers in a sensuous way. It is as if each portion is broken up to reveal the strength of her character. The hardness of her hand shows Emma's birth in a farmer's household. At the same time her almond shaped gleaming nails reveals her want to reach out of her present state. The cleanliness of her nails reveals her disgust for the dirtiness of the farm. At the same time, her hands seemed too long and lacked softness in their outlines. The state of her hands reveal that she was used to the chores at the farm. It also reveals a certain hardness of her character. It was as if that she could do anything to get what she wanted in her hard peasant like manner. Unfortunately for Emma, Charles does not see the inside of her character but satisfies himself only with her exterior features.

Her real beauty was in her eyes.

Although her eyes were brown in colour, they seemed black because of the lashes.

And she looked at Charles with bold candor.

Every part of her features appeared to add to Emma's physical splendour for Charles. It seemed that the darkness of her lashes gave a sensous lustre to
her eyes. He seemed to find only candor, and boldness in her look. For a country doctor like Charles, the boldness of Emma's look and her courage to look up at strangers appealed to him. In the provinces where shyness in girls was the common thing, Emma's boldness appeared new for Charles. He became all the more enamoured of her looks rather than delving into her soul where he could have found for himself that her boldness came from her want to be different because she wanted to aspire to become some one other than a farmer's daughter.

1. a.8 (a) Emma did not like the country at all, especially now because she was almost solely responsible for the care of the farm.

It appears that Emma used to like the country sometimes back but for a special reason the farm had become detestable to her. Since her father had fractured his leg, she was given the duty of looking after the farm. It is obvious that though Emma was born in a peasant family, her wants in life were quite different. Being frustrated in her aspiration Emma had started hating the farm.

1. a.9. The room was chilly and Emma shivered a little while eating.

1. a.10. This caused her lips to part slightly. She had a habit of biting them when she was not talking.

Every natural gesture of Emma evokes desire in one way or the other. Since the room was cold, she started shivering a little. Her want of warmth, and her want to get out of her cold, lifeless, non-sensuous surroundings evokes intense desire in Emma. Emma shivered a little while eating and obviously this caused her lips to part slightly. Charles notices her open lips. Emma also
had this habit of biting her lips. For Charles, her natural gestures made Emma
more attractive. She appeared attractive enough to be immensely desirable
for Charles but he somehow could not see how desperately Emma wanted
to live. Her sensuous gestures were apparent but her inner wants remained
comouflaged.

1. b. (i) Emma wore a white, turned-down collar.

The colour white seems to hint on Emma's purity of thought. She is child
like in her thoughts, sublime and at the same time romantic.

1. b. (2) Her black hair was parted down the middle.

At the same time the blackness of Emma's hair evokes her strong physicality.
Emma had gathered her hair in a bun which was definitely a bit stylish in her
plain surroundings. It made her more desirable for Charles who refused to
see her innate want to be different from her provincial counterparts.

1. b. (5) Emma had her forehead pressed against the window, looking into
the garden.

Emma's listlessness with the mundanity around her is again reiterated. Her act
of looking out into the garden shows her disgust and disinterest in the chores
of the farm. It was as if her spirit wanted to leap out of the room to the
outside where she thought life awaited her.

1. b. (6) She stood by with a blush.
Every gesture of Emma has ripples of physicality. The touch of Emma’s body against Charles makes him want her more. It is surprising how Charles overlooks the psychic problematic of Emma’s character.

At last we meet the heroine, the woman who gives the book its title. Though when we meet her she is not yet Madame Bovary. She is still Mademoiselle Emma Rouault. Charles’s current wife is Madame Bovary, and so is his mother. Indeed there are three women in the book variously called Madame Bovary. The phrase, of course, refers to a social position: any woman who is the-wife-of-Bovary can be called Madame Bovary. The heroine is ordinarily referred to as Emma. Her mother-in-law is apparently the veritable Madame Bovary.

The story is going to explore the space between those two names, between the intimate reality of Emma and the public masquerade of Madame Bovary. Emma has to live buried ‘inside’ Madame Bovary.

All through the courtship and the events of their wedding-day, we hear scarcely a word spoken. We follow the early days of their marriage, the house they live in, her face as he sees it on the pillow in the morning light, his myopic pleasure in her, and, for the very first time, a hint of her feelings towards him. He is kissing her arm, and she is holding him away: ‘half laughing and half annoyed, just as one would with a clinging child’. When Emma finally comes into the foreground, she is already disappointed.

It is only when Flaubert has emphatically established that disappointment, that he takes us back into Emma’s early life. We now witness something of her cultural formation. Significantly, this making of the wife is more luxuriantly
detailed, more closely, rendered, than the parallel making of the husband.

We follow her education in conventional piety at a convent school. We are also offered a sustained evocation of her unofficial adolescent reading. This is a crucial point in the representation of Emma. The plausible imaginative immediacy of the writing masks a large unargued assumption that Emma's nascent feminine romanticism is only an inferior schoolgirl version of the real thing. Her romanticism is fashioned from the historical novels of Scott and the lyric poetry of Lamartine. All this is adulterated by the indiscriminate addition of quantities of anonymous sub-literary trash: oriental ballads, sentimental fiction, keepsake albums, picture-books and love-songs. Flaubert assumes that women are the perpetually credulous and eternally subordinate consumers of the most mediocre fantasy. It is not, he implies, a political problem of education and conditioning, but seems to be in the nature of the feminine itself.

Emma's reading exists in a radically disconnected form: as scenes, bit of stories, vivid fragments. In all of this there is no narrative, no sustained history, no refashioning of herself. As a reader she only wants what she can incorporate easily into the stereotyped repertoire of her fantasies. We are told that she reads Blazac and George Sand. But she evidently misses the point. The romantic feminism of George Sand and Balzac, their stories of the self-education and emancipation of the women of the 1830s, are apparently lost on Emma Rouault, but actually it is not so as we shall see.

We look over her shoulder, and we are immersed along with her in these potent unrealities. We are drawn, with great skill, into a sustained imaginative contact with Emma. We feel that we are inside her head, under her skin, as we read. We seem to know her - thoughts and sensations, desires and fantasies and
Much of the book's abiding power over its readers comes from this mirage of intimacy. There is an intensely pleasurable primary identification with Emma. As we read we undergo a chastely textual metamorphosis, a very delicate seduction. Though quite disembodied, we are still drawn in, for it is a vital part of Flaubert's design to arouse his readers sexually. Not simply with a desire for Emma, though that is certainly a part of it. More gently, more subversively, with a desire to be Emma, to partake of her sensations and her feelings. Flaubert, we may speculate, found in the imagining and the writing of Emma Bovary a safe place to play at being a woman. The famous ironies have their origin and their energy in the powerful contrary need to disavow such a potentially contaminating femininity. Irony cleans away all those secret stains. Irony is the path that leads safely back to official realities.

The spell is constantly being broken, renewed and broken again and again, by small disconcerting touches, by details that work against Emma, against her vision and her desire and her sense of things. We always feel the ironic chill of disenchantment, like the dismaying banality that can blight any object of desire, undo its magic, destroy its power and leave us puzzling over a thing so diminished.

It is the tense alternation of feeling, of pathos and irony, of intimacy and estrangement, that makes up the sweet and sour pleasure of Madame Bovary. The final vindicative sourness comes with the taste of the white arsenic powder in her mouth (an inky taste, says Flaubert), the imagination of which caused the author to vomit repeatedly as he wrote the closing scenes.
Emma Bovary is the first in a processing of troubled and insubordinate young wives; she is the model for those adulterous bourgeois heroines who dominate seventy years of European fiction. Emma Bovary is the precursor of Thérèse Raquin, Anna Karenin, Hedda Gabler, Sue Bridehead, Ursula Brangwen and Molly Bloom. It can be no coincidence that most of the works in which these heroines appear were prosecuted for immorality when they were first published.

But among all of this scandalous company, Emma Bovary’s punishment is the most terrible, the most lingering. She is poisoned by her own hand; she dies in a pain that is exactly adjusted to the intensity of our preceding identification. Even before her end, morality has been reasserted in its most conventional form. She is thwarted and betrayed by the commonplace egotistical prudence of those lovers who pose as her liberators. Her men are both content to play the grand passion, the romance of lawless desire, as long as they can return to the comforts of home when they’ve had their fill.

Emma’s education and her early life, as depicted by Flaubert, have prepared her for silence and acquiescence. Characteristically, we see her at home, indoors, at the window. She is looking out for something, waiting for something to happen. She is stifling in a shabby little room cluttered with ordinary things, stifling in the everyday tedium of village life. When we see her out of doors, she is often anxious, exposed, afflicted, shivering in the wind, sweating with heat, stumbling across a ploughed field in the early dawn, or freezing cold, in a carriage on the way back from the town of Rouen.

It is a remarkable though inconspicuous fact that we only hear Emma, for the first time, some months after her marriage. She has walked out alone to the edge of the woods with her dog. She says simply, 'Oh, why, dear God, did
I marry him?' Only the question is spoken aloud. And there is no dramatic scene of self-knowledge, recognition and resolve. There is only this meagre question, spoken aloud. It reaches no other human ear. Only her dog hears it. Yet it releases a sequence of memories and fantasies, set far away, in her school-days. Here, two generations before Freud's discovery of the unconscious, we find Flaubert already mapping the shadowy places of female inner space. Emma's imaginings are never marked, explicitly and negatively, as unreal. The scenes that she stages in the secret theatre of fantasy are told as though they were real. They are indistinguishable, textually, from real events. Grand passions are played out in her mind, with appropriately lavish costume, sumptuous decor, melodramatic script. Emma preciously invents the cinema while gazing on the pages of her keepsake album.

There are certain affinities between Flaubert and Freud. Both men begin from the enigma (so-called) of female sexuality. We know that Flaubert was fascinated by hysteria. He was writing in an age which had just invented the case-history. For his unpublished *The Temptation of Saint Antony* he had immersed himself in this new psychiatric literature, recognizing that hysteria was a buried treasure for any novelist. He savoured especially the implicit grotesquerie of the genre. The meticulously prosaic medical documentation of bizarrely abnormal human behaviour was greatly to his taste. Having been regarded in his early twenties as an epileptic, he saw himself - perhaps mischievously - as 'a case'. He was most impressed when a local doctor suggested to him that he was a hysterical old woman. And he gleefully announced that his excessive taste for herrings was 'hysterical' in origin.

For all that, *Madame Bovary* conspicuously not a 'study in hysteria'. It does not centre on enabling the woman to tell her story. It does not trace
out the broken and involuted form of the Freudian enigma. Nor does it attempt an archaeological reconstruction of forgotten experiences. Even the word *hysteria* is never used. Is this perhaps a deliberate silence? It is surely an interesting renunciation, in view of Flaubert's known engagement with the issue. He does not mention (nobody mentions) hysteria. The word is nerves. Emma, we are told several times suffers from a nervous ailment.

In popular belief as well as in learned discourse, the nerves were the threads which join together the body and the mind. They were the unexplored source of mysterious disorders, the inexplicable nervous ailments which partially afflicted young women. Artists were also conventionally nervous. For the nerves are the material basis of the emotions. Like the strings on a violin, they can quiver when touched, they can snap if wound too tight. Emma's nerves are described in these terms, and these terms recur precisely in various references to his own nerves contained in Flaubert's letters.

Emma's ailment, like that of her creator, marks out a limit, a boundary which is as much ideological as it is medical. She is full of secret riches of feeling which are hoarded from use, enjoyed only in solitude. Her wine turns all to vinegar. The unspoken words find utterance in bodily symptoms: the coughing, the loss of weight. As readers we know what it is that fills her silence. We follow the history of her emotions, the inner chronicle of her frustrations. We are granted immediate experience of the process of self-suppression which culminates in her being diagnosed as having a nervous ailment.

Not until nearly the end of the story does her self-imposed silence explode into words. She makes a very long, angry and eloquent speech against Rodolphe's refusal to give her the money she needs to pay her debts. She speaks out
against the inequalities that have trapped her. She runs from Rodolphe's house and is struck down by hallucinations, when the earth begins to shake and 'everything in her head . poured out at once, in a single spasm, like a thousand fireworks exploding'.

Everything pours out, the unspoken bursts through in the form of 'fiery red globules... they clustered together, they penetrated her; everything disappeared'. It is a fiery sexual punishment. And her next action is to stuff her mouth with the powdery white arsenic that kills her. Her last, posthumous utterance is the 'black liquid' that streamed out, like vomit, from between her lips, staining the white satin wedding-dress in which she is to be buried.

**The second ensemble unfolds thus:**

2.a.(1) At the Ursuline Convent Emma had read Paul and Virginia.

2.a.(2) When she was thirteen, his father took her to the city to enter her in the convent.

At the onset of adolescence or teenage, Emma is introduced to the life at the convent. The convent on the one hand is different to the farm life that she was accustomed to since childhood. She then moved from the farm in the province to the city life. Though she was put in the strict convent, the trivial falsities of city life kept bringing in the inauthentic values of life through the medium of books. Emma had read Paul et Virginie and dreamed about the bamboo cottage. At her impressionistic age books lent touches of extra inauthentic colour to her dreams.
2.a.(3) Far from being bored in the convent, she was happy at first in the company of the kind sisters but later all that changed.

2.a. Emma responded to bodily modesty and the salvation of her soul as do tightly reined horses; the bit slipped from her teeth and she stopped short.

Since Emma was accustomed to the countryside she started liking the convent because it was different. Difference in life and the fact that she had crossed over from the farm to the city makes her like the convent. The fragrance of the altar added languor to world of dreams. Far from being religious, there she felt the glow of candles and the vignettes added to the unconscious physicality within her.

2.a.7. Little Emma knew the countryside well.

2.b.(ii) There was an old maid who came to the convent for one week every month to work in the laundry. The girls would often steal out of class to visit her. She would bring books.

The lending libraries were very popular in that age. Life the Paiva Emma is never far from desire. Even in the convent, Emma desires through the books, fills her imagination with the romantic heroes and heroines of the books. She falls a prey to the illusion of the false livelihood pattern of the counts and viscounts that the books portrayed. Mediation occurs and Emma aspires to lead a life of an aristocrat. We witness the exteriority of her desires but the existential and human problems of Emma are over looked. Emma looks for sustenance in the books and moves further away from reality. At the same
time what is realistic about her is her want to become something or someone other than a mere provincial peasant's daughter.

2.b.5. After her mother's death, she was tired of all this but did not want to admit it.

Emma showed human sentiment after her mother's death. Sadness enveloped her. Then she started feeling the general boredom of life and forgot about her sadness. It meant no more to her. Her want to come out of her surroundings made every other happening trivial for her. This fact that she desired for falsities speaks for the falsehood in life of the age on the whole.

2.b.6. Emma seemed to be eluding the influences of the runs.

2.b.7. Emma was given advice about bodily modesty and the salvation of her soul.

2.b.8. She responded like a tightly reined horse - she stopped short and the bit slipped from her teeth.

Emma was not very religious. All the same, she had been drawn to the Mass because of the fragrance and the colours of the candles that invoked unknown sensations in her. Control of sensuous dreams was unknown to her. It was as if the good sisters were trying to put reins of control on her imagination. Her passionate nature could not agree to it and she felt that rebellion was her only way to freedom. What she wanted was a glittering life of an aristocrat but the reality of the convent with the authoritarian sisters disgusted her. She loved literature for its passion-inspiring stimulation and felt that discipline would
break her desires. The mother superior who was sure of her vocation too did not understand her nature. Emma goes through a series of misunderstandings, mostly because the men and women who come into contact with her never really understand her real nature. Her ways sometimes appear unnatural and mysterious but her real wants remain latent.

The third ensemble is about the illusions and the disillusionment of Emma after her marriage to Charles at Tostes.

3.a.(1) Emma went up to the bedrooms. There was a bouquet of orange blossoms.

3.a.(2) Emma looked at it. It was the marriage bouquet, the other one's bouquet.

3.a.(ii) Charles noticed her glance, picked it up and took it to the attic.

3.a.(iii) Emma wondered what would happen to her bouquet if by chance she died. Her wedding bouquet was packed away in a box.

The extreme sensitivity of Emma's character is aptly revealed. The insensitivity and dumbness of Charles comes through. He has desired Emma for her physical attributes but had not felt the need to look beyond her beauty. In spite of the simplicity of his provincial nature, if Charles had only been a little alive to her as a human being, he would have thought of putting away the dried up bouquet. The fact remains that he did not and Emma's marriage starts on a jarring note. Love and desire do not appear to be a mixture as they appear for Charles. She kept wondering about her wedding bouquet and the
impermanence of her relationship with Charles suddenly occurs to her. For the first time the idea of death dawns on her. Childhood and adolescence had but romantic dreams but the realization of those dreams in marriage to Charles who was supposedly in love with Emma for the first time brings the image of death to her otherwise sensuous nature.

3. a. (4) A meal, a walk together constituted the continuity of happiness for Charles.

For Charles, the presence of Emma was enough to bring happiness, nothing had been as pleasurable for him as his acquirement of a wife like Emma. At school, Charles' classmates hooting "Charbovari" had not been pleasurable. He had married a widow according to his mother's wish, Charles did not chose to be a doctor, he did not choose his name nor his widow. He chose only one thing in his life — Emma. She is his first and last piece of self-expression. Perhaps it was his fantastic ability to remain mediocre that seems ridiculous. He is so overwhelmed with the fact that he had been able to exercise his choice, that he is quite oblivious to Emma's inner nature and her innate wants.

3. a. 5. Before she had married, Emma felt she was in love but now she thought, she must have deceived herself.

3. a. 6. Emma could not believe that this peaceful living was the happiness of which she had dreamed.

Without emotional support from Charles who does not see her, growing frustration with married life, Emma continues to drift back to her state of ennui. Mediation had already set in via the stolen circulating library books. Emma's inner dream
world of counts and viscounts needed a violent thrust to break it down. Emma's child-like quality in believing that a wonderful life awaited her in the manor-houses reveals the purity of her spirit and mind. She did not let anyone else share her dream world of illusions for the person whom she thought was most capable of doing so appeared unpresentable, docile and ridiculous. Emma appeared an enigma for Charles and in his stoic steady love for her, he never ever thought of sharing her real feelings, fears and love.

3 a 7. Emma took her small greyhound Djali for a walk.

3 a 8. First she would look around for any change since her last visit. Then she would dig the tip of her parasol with brief thrusts and ask herself "why did I get married."

Behind her calmness Emma hid a violence that comes through in her act of digging the tip of her parasol with brief thrusts. Her passionate, pure self facing frustration and deception at every step and every person gradually adds to the violence in herself. The man with whom Emma thought that her world of dreams would be realized deceives her. She realized that Charles was quite incapable of making her dream world come true and Emma recedes further into a new sense of violence. It was with this new sense that she wanted to break out of her sheer domesticity. She wanted to live but live in a violent way. Be it social transgression, but Emma wanted to break the gap between her limited class status and the super strata of dreams. She questions the system of values with a vengeance unheard of in the era in which she lived. Incidentally Emma's dog Djali is named after the goat Djali owned by Esmeralda, the gypsy dancer, in Victor Hugo's Notre - Dame de Paris.
Towards the end of September she was invited to Vaubyessard, the home of the Marquis d'Andervilliers'.

The fourth ensemble deals with Emma's experiences at the Château of the Marquis:

4.a.(i) Emma arrived at Vaubyessard at nightfall.

4.a.(ii) The Château was of modern construction and was built in the Italian style.

4.a.(iii) The Marquis led Emma into the foyer.

4.a.(iii)a. The foyer had a high ceiling, was paved with marble tiles and the combination of steps and voices echoing in it made Emma feel she was in a church.

4.a.(iii)b. Emma smelled the fragrance of the flowers and the aroma of fine linens, of well-seasoned meat and truffles.

4.b.1 (b) The candles in the candlebra played their long flames over the silver platter covers as in a church.

4.c. The napkins were folded in the shape of bishop's miters.

Incidentally Emma arrives at Vaubyessard at nightfall. It is her night at the château that heightens Emma's illusions and desires. Emma having read about the amorous pleasures of the counts, princesses looks forward towards the
fulfilment of her dreams. It is the marquis who leads Emma into the foyer of the Chateau where she thinks her dreams are to come true. The high ceilings and paved marble tiles are reminiscent of the church in her Convent. The combination of steps on the marble and the voices echoing reminded Emma of the church. Emma stared at the pictures of the ancestors of the Marquis. She felt that she had come in contact with the men of whom she had read so much. She admired the amorous exploits of these aristocrats and stared in awe. The lamps left the room in shadow and helped to highlight the cracks in the varnish. In this grotesque play of light, Emma satisfied herself by looking at the visible lighter part of the painting. So, she saw eyes somewhere or red suits in another. It was almost as if each part of the figures of the canvasses were broken up and Emma saw only parts of those. If she had cared to look beyond the gloss of those garter buckles and powdered shoulders her dream-world of falsities would have been shattered but she enjoyed her new found world of illusion and inspiration. At Dinner, Emma was greeted by a warm smell of flower, fine linens and meat. This curious mixture heightened her sensuousness, and she saw the cardles playing their elongated flames over the silver, reminiscent of the Mass at her Convent. Likewise there were bunches of flowers set in a line along the entire table as in a church Mass. Moreover the napkins were folded in the shape of bishop's mitters. The amazing similarity of the church Mass and the dinner table was so striking that each action of Emma became a sacred offering, an oblation of sorts and a spiritual realization of a long dreamt of dream come true.

4.b.(ii) Among the women was an old man eating, with a napkin knotted in his back like a child

4.b.(iii) It was the father-in-law of the Marquis, the old Duke of Laverdière
4 b (iv) He had led a thoroughly debauched life filled with duels, wagers and abductions, had run through his fortune and been a terror for his entire family.

4 b (v) A servant behind his chair was shouting into his car the names of dishes that the old man would point to with his finger, mumbling.

4 b (vi) Emma stared at the slack-mouthed old man for he had lived at the court.

The grotesque figure of the old duke inspires admiration in Emma. Rather than being disgusted she is enamoured of the old man as someone extraordinary and august. The old duke is not a Rablaisque figure but shows the plight of the human body after several wasted years of debauchery. Emma stared at him in awe because he had shared the bed of queens. At the same time she does not see the reckless amorality of the aristocracy, the wasting of a fortune over illogical pastimes and the utter irresponsibility of throwing around the hard earned profits of the landed peasants. The old duke is a representative of the aristocrats who were born in families that led luxurious lifestyles with the accumulated taxes paid by the peasants. In total disregard of the peasant's living conditions they squandered their so-called wealth on unworthy duels and wagers. It is an irony of the situation that Emma being a farmer's daughter wanted to be an aristocrat by choice. She wanted to change her otherwise placid lifestyle. She moves towards the falsities of life and the persons she chooses end up being the wrong choices. None of them understand her and Emma remains in the world of illusions. She wanted to live differently her desires remain a driving passion till the very end.
4. c. 1. Emma dressed with the meticulous care of an actress making her debut.

4. c. 2. Her black eyes seemed even blacker and her hair gleamed.

4. c. 3. She restrained herself from running down the stair-case at the sounds of the horn.

4. c. 4. The men had the complexion of wealth that is nurtured by a diet of exquisitely prepared food.

4. c. 5. The men had indifferent glances, but their genteel manner did not completely mask the brutality that comes from the handling of thorough bred horses, fallen women and the like.

4. c. 6. Emma heard a gentleman talking about Italy with a pale young woman.

4. c. 7. A servant climbing on a chair broke two window panes and at the noise of the shattered glass, Emma looked up.

4. c. 8. She saw some peasants, their faces pressed to the window, staring at her from the garden.

4. c. 9. The memory of Les Bertaux came back to her. She was again reminded of the farm, of her father and herself skimming the cream.
4. c. 10. The splendour of the Château and the ballroom some-how made Emma forget the past of her real life and she went back to her enjoyment of the unreal life.

Emma had read about the amorous lifestyles of the actresses. Moreover the aristocrats frequented the theatres where these actors and actresses performed. She imagined their occupations as lofty and glorious. So, she prepared herself as an actress puts on make-up. The ballroom was a suitable tableau for Emma and she felt that she was about to enact the role of her lifetime. She did not let Charles share her inner feelings and criticized his typical ridiculous gawkishness. She looked for genteel manners that Charles lacked or even the brutality of the counts that Charles could never have. She had dreamed of a night like that so often that she thought it was to be an unreal one. She wanted to live it fully and tragically like an actress does in a play. Thus life appeared as a tableau to Emma. In anticipation of her dream which she thought was about to come true, her eyes blackened in sensuousness. It seemed that Emma's passion shined in her hair. Emma way childlike in her desire to run down the staircase at the sounds of the horn. Emma knew the difference in the complexion of the men at the Château. She had the eye to sense the cleanliness of their look that came from the handling of horses and fallen women. In her passion to live differently Emma admired the a moral brutality of these men. They were so different to the steady placidity of men like Charles. Emma desired through the books that she had read about far away romantic places. She heard a gentleman talking about Italy and felt attracted towards such people who had the lucky opportunity to visit her land of dreams. She had not visited those lands but the people with whom she was dancing had and thus, they in turn were more glorious to Emma. The man who had visited Italy talked to a young woman who had a pale complexion. Emma's glowing passion is in
direct contrast to the woman’s pale complexion. Then something happened that disturbed her. A servant broke two windows panes and the sound of the shattered glass shattered her dreamworld of illusions but only for while. She saw some peasants staring at her from the garden with their faces pressed to the window. It is an interesting semiotic signal in the whole ensemble. Emma sensed this tension of their staring glance and got disturbed. She remembered the other realistic life that she had led so far. The farm at Les Bertaux and the image of her father came back to her memory. She was reminded of her actual self, as a peasant’s daughter who had skimmed milk and now a village doctor’s wife. But in her passionate zeal to enjoy her dream she flung aside the memories of her real life.

4. d. 1. One of the dancers familiarly addressed as viscount came a second time to invite Madame Bovary. His extremely low-cut wasitcoat seemed molded on his chest.

4. d. 2. Emma felt a numbness in the rapid movements of the dance.

4. d. 3. At night after the dance, Emma tried to stay awake to prolong the illusion of the luxurious life that she knew she would have to abandon.

4. d. 4. After taking leave of the Marquis, Emma and Charles left for home. Some horsemen passed them and Emma thought she recognized the viscount.

4. d. 5. As Charles tied a cord around the breech band he saw a cigar case on the ground. It had a coat of arms on it.

4. d. 6. Since it still had two cigars in it, Charlis decided to keep it.
4.d.7. At home, Emma seized the cigar and threw it into the bottom of the cupboard.

4.d.8. The next day was long and Emma felt that her trip to Vaubyessard had made a gap in her life.

4.d.9. The memory of the ball became a preoccupation for Emma. Some of the details faded but the regret remained.

4.d.10. Emma subscribed to the work-basket a woman's magazine and to the Sylph of salons and devoured all the reviews of the opening nights, races and soirees.

4.d.11. Emma started looking sad when they rang vespers on Sunday. She became more difficult to understand and became pale, suffering heart palpitations.

4.d.12. Charles misunderstanding her ailment thought it was a nervous disorder and decided to move to another town name Yonville - 'Abbaye'.

4.d.13. Emma threw her wedding bouquet into the fire and watched it burn.

The bouquet disintegrated symbolically ending Emma's marriage. Emma's disillusionment with marriage was complete. Charles had consulted his professor at Rouen and had heeded his expert advice that Emma had been suffering from a nervous disorder. Without trying to understand her psychic problematic Charles decided to shift to Yonville.
The fifth ensemble deals with Emma's life at Yonville.

5.a.1. The Polish doctor who had been at Yonville had run away.

5.a.2. Madame Bovary's greyhound had run off across the fields. Emma burst into tears and accused Charles of causing the tragedy.

5.a.3. The carriage in which they were travelling to Yonville was the Hirondelle.

5.a.4. Emma entered the kitchen and walked to the fireplace.

5.a.5. She took hold of her dress at the knees with the tip of two fingers.

5.a.6. The fire cast a glow over her entire body, its harsh glare penetrating the cloth of her dress, the even pores of her white skin. The wind coming in from the direction of the half open door intensified the reflection.

5.a.7. On the other side of the fireplace a fair-haired young man looked at her in silence.

5.a.8. He was the clerk and his name was Monsieur Léon.

5.a.9. From the moment she entered the hall of her new home Emma left the cold of the plaster falling over her shoulders like a damp cloth.

5.a.10. It was the fourth time that Emma was sleeping in an unknown place. The first had been the day she entered the convent, the second her
arrival at Tostes, the third at Vaubyessard, the fourth here at Yonville and each had turned out to mark a new phase in her life.

5. a. 11. She got up in the next morning and noticed the clerk in the square. Charles had chosen a town which had a Polish doctor before him who had run away. Madame Bovary's dog too runs away. The two semiotic signs signal the happenings that await Emma at Yonville. Incidentally it is the carriage Hirondelle that takes them to the town from which the Polish doctor had run away. The Hirondelle acts as the mode of transport that takes her to Yonville. She alights at Yonville and goes to the kitchen to warm her feet. The kitchen fire is symbolic, for Emma looked for warmth and understanding. Her misunderstood yearnings manifest themselves in desire. Her reflected glow attracts the clerk who had become bored with the town. The clerk sees the glowing passion in Emma near the kitchen fire. He too sees only the sensuous desire of her physicality and not her pure inner dreams. It was the fourth time that Emma had moved to a different place. She had looked for difference in life and had only found frustration at every end.

5. b. 1. The local pharmacist Homais proved to be a good neighbour.

5. b. 2. He had an apprentice called Justin.

5. b. 3. Madame Bovary's pregnancy made Charles happy and cherish her more anticipating the bond of flesh that was to deepen with the birth of a child.

5. b. 4. Emma gave birth on a Sunday to a baby girl.
At the news she fainted.

At the Vaubyessard château she had heard the Marquise call some young woman 'Berthe' so she named her daughter Berthe.

Madame Bovary met Léon on the way to the nurse.

Justin keeps watching Madame Bovary.

Léon's attraction for Emma grows.

Monsieur Lheureux tries selling scarves to Emma.

Felicité talks about the young girl who cried on her belly. It went away after her marriage she said. Emma said, *it began after my marriage*.

Léon leaves for Rouen.

Monsieur Rodolphe comes to Charles the doctor, to get one of his servants bled.

He sees Emma and sees her for the first time.

He is attracted by Emma's sensuous presence and decides to work upon the plan of acquiring her physically on the day of the Agricultural Show.

The ensemble introduces the characters that are to play the key figures in Emma's
life from thereon. The tragic overtone of what is to come is felt from the very beginning. The two men who desire Emma are also introduced.

The sixth ensemble unfolds thus:

1.a.1. The great occasion of the famous Agricultural show arrived.

1.a.2. There were poles against the four pillars of the Town Hall. Each pole had gold inscriptions on small green canvas standards saying 'Trade', 'Agriculture', 'Industry' and 'Fine Arts'.

1.a.3. The pharmacist was wearing a black dress coat, nankeen trousers, beaver shoes, and most surprising for him - a hat with a low crown.

1.a.4. Homais explains to madame Lefrancois that chemistry was connected to farming.

The inscriptions on the four poles saying trade, agriculture, industry and fine arts show a curious mixture that the Agriculture fair was to be. It is the inclusion of fine Arts with the other three that is Trade, Agriculture and Industry that is ridiculous. Homais appeared dressed for the occasion in a hat with a low crown. Homais who knows nothing of the rigours of farming is a home-bred pharmacist. His intentions of trying to become knowledgeable is apparent in his attempt at trying to link chemistry and agriculture. He had already manipulated his way to be included as a member of the organising committee. His desire to reach the officials who were to come to the Agricultural show is obvious. Madame Lefrancois blankly asks him whether he knew anything of farming. In answer Homais tries in a round about manner to show off his bookish knowledge of botany, hygiene and the like. Madame Lefrancois is baffled but that does
not deter Homais from proclaiming that his article on Cidar; the manufacture and effects to the "Agricultural Society of Rouen" had earned him the honour of being received as a member of the agricultural, pomology subsection. Homais wanted to prove that by virtue of the selection he was at an advantageous position that gave him the authority to pass judgement on the proceedings at the Agricultural Show.

Emma can never get enough: never enough money, enough love, enough pleasure. Homais, on the other hand, embodies a coarse and robust abundance. Emma and Homais - in French the two names suggest femme and homme - woman and man. Homais is the gross comic ballast to Emma's yearning but not-quite-tragic sublimities. Homais and Emma, masculine and feminine, they stand for the contrary energies that Flaubert himself awkwardly encompassed.

There may be more to Homais than is usually recognized, more of Flaubert in Homais than he acknowledged himself, because his incontestable imaginative allegiance was to Emma. She is his first love, but Homais is evidently a close second.

Homais is the focus for Flaubert's satire on the bourgeois. He stands for that most potent discursive force in provincial life: the neighbour. He serves to expose the ideological decay of an erstwhile revolutionary class, though that is not quite how Flaubert would have phrased it. Ever since early adolescence, Flaubert had regarded bourgeois existence as an immense, indistinct, unmitigated state of mindlessness. His *Dictionary of Received Ideas* was a monument to this precocious insight. For Flaubert, each bourgeois phrase, each bourgeois feeling, each bourgeois opinion, is touched by the hilarious dismaying suspicion of fakery. Solemnly and energetically proclaiming their clichés to each other,
perhaps the bourgeois are indeed simply machines. They are stuck, like busy
automata, in their perpetual false consciousness. There are hints of this sombre
vision in Madame Bovary. Received ideas circulate unchallenged. But the
suspicion is never allowed to take conclusive shape. The case remains teasingly
unproven.

The busiest of them all Homais does what is most obvious, he talks a great
deal. As soon as he comes on to the scene, at the beginning of Part Two, he
takes over the conversation. He plays the part of an usurping comic narrator.
He greets the newly arrived Charles and Emma. He tells them everything about
the public life of Yonville. He is an invulnerably self-important know-all. The
great torrent of Homais's talk splendidly fills up much of the space left empty
by Flaubert's impersonal mode of story-telling. One suspect that Homais's omniscience,
his cheerful journalists mastery of the native formulae of narrative writing, his
boundless opinions, are, in part, an affectionate parodic homage to the novelist
Balzac. Balzac was Flaubert's immediate and immense literary precursor, and
he had died only the year before Madame Bovary was begun. The initial
problem for any debutant French novelist, in 1851, was how to avoid writing
like a pale imitation of Balzac. How could Flaubert exorcize such a mighty
ghost? In Homais he takes control of Balzac's paternal voice. He incorporates
it, in comic form.

Truly abundant, though, Homais is even more than this incorporation of the
Balzacian mode. He is clearly also a comic monomaniac: the crafty hypocrite,
the medical charlatan, the quack, a figure out of Molière or Ben Jonson, with
his plausible veneer of expert jargon. Yet Homais, unlike his forerunners, is
not reassuringly exposed and humiliated at the end of the action. In a sombre
deviation from comic tradition, Homais survives, triumphantly uncorrected.

- 89 -
Beyond Balzac and Molière, Homais has his deepest roots in Rabelais. He is constantly associated with eating and drinking (though not with lechery, which is assigned to Rodolphe). Homais makes his first appearance at the height of epic scenes of cooking in the kitchen of the village inn. Thereafter he frequently invites himself to the Bovary dinner-table and offers copious expert advice on all aspects of cooking. We discover, on the day of the agricultural show (an idealizing official celebration of food) that Homais is the author of an academic treatise on cider. It clearly belongs to the Rabelaisian genre 'Praise of Boozing'.

As a pharmacist Homais is the resourceful maker of all kinds of pills and potions. His magic foods promise to restore the eater's immortality. He is the pioneer of chocolate, the maker of jam, and the guardian of arsenic. In the midst of Emma's final crisis, as she begins her journey from Rouen to Yonville, we come across Homais, in the Hirondelle, bringing home as a special treat for his wife, a parcel of special breakfast rolls, the cheminots. The cheminots are described in an unusual digressive paragraph which is explicitly Rabelaisian in its idiom. This is residual homage to an author Flaubert greatly admired. It is also a finely calculated opening-out on to a spacious and benign common reality, a world of breakfast rolls of something nice to eat, just beyond the infernal circle inhabited by Emma. Finally, in the scene of the vigil over Emma's corpse, when Homais and the priest Bournisien engage in fierce and farcical debate over religion, their altercation ends with the great ideological antagonists eating and drinking together (whisky, cheese and brioche are specified) in an impulse of simple human complicity. Flaubert seems to have felt that this was possibly offensive or just too distractingly incongruous. He cut this particular paragraph from both the first edition of 1857 and from the final edition of 1874. He restored it in the editions of 1862, 1869 and 1873. It suggests that he couldn't make up his mind. Comedy and tragedy, food and corpses,
were all simpler when kept further apart.

This grotesque and indestructible abundance, a la Rabelais, is the foundation of Flaubert's satire on the bourgeois. It serves to mitigate and to enrich the singular aggressiveness of satire. It is worth emphasizing that Homais is historically a typical mid nineteenth-century provincial intellectual: a petit bourgeois polymath with predominantly scientific interests, a man engaged in the kind of 'local' writing that was widely published under the patronage of the regional academies. His type has now almost disappeared, and this makes Homais seem more bizarre, posthumously, than he was in his own day. We seize on the superficially bizarre, and we miss how representative he is.

Homais embodies the progressive modernizing aspirations of his class, as well as the historical contradictions that class endures. Homais shows us the revolutionary 1790s as they might be remembered from the prosperous 1840s. He is vehemently anti-clerical. He maintains the republican anti-clericalism of 1789, the radicalism of the heroic age. But he stands for an anti-clericalism that has outlived its own best energies. In Homais it has decayed and faded to a merely mischievous, compulsive reflex.

To put it differently, he provides the focus of a satire on anti-clericalism. If we take the final confrontation between Homais and Bournisien, as they argue through the night, in the room where Emma's dead body is laid out, we find only a banal and farcical echo of the great debates of the late eighteenth century between two petty and inept village antagonists. Characteristically for Flaubert, the argument has been comically diminished to a brandishing of antithetical phrases and texts. It is in no sense a real debate.
We could compare it with a parallel scene in the early pages of Victor Hugo's novel *Les Misérables*. Hugo, born a generation before Flaubert, was writing in the late 1840s. He stages exactly the same argument as that between Homais and Bournisien. But in Hugo's version the moral stature of each of the speakers is potently idealized. The saintly liberal bishop is humbled by his critic, an aged, eloquent, splendidly impenitent supporter of the revolutionary *Convention*, a man who has remained stubbornly loyal to the values of the most radical phase of the French Revolution.

The comparison between Flaubert and Hugo in their treatment of anti-clericalism reveals the immense ideological distance between two successive generations of writers who are both nominally bourgeois.

The adjunct to Homais's anti-clericalism is his faith in science. And here too Flaubert diminishes, to comic effect, the intellectual energies in play. In the age of Darwin, Pasteur, Helmholtz and James Clerk Maxwell, all of them near-contemporaries of Flaubert, Homais, the village pharmacist mixing potions in his-so-called laboratory, is a puny specimen indeed. He is not, of course, a scientist in any real sense. He is merely a man who talks a great deal about science, with naive evangelical optimism.

Above all, Homais is a man of the printed word. Since the early 1830s the printed word had entered a new phase of its history. It was now pouring out, in disconcertingly crude abundance, from the new steam-powered printing presses. The socially efficacious printed word, propagated by these epic engines of discourse, is Homais's special province. His house is covered in gigantic lettering, advertising the pharmacy's wares. He is an avid reader and a conscientious collector of newspapers, as well as being an occasional contributor. He is rather
unexpectedly like Emma in this respect. They share a passion for printed matter. Homais's taste is for the newspaper, the scientific journal and the learned treatise; Emma's is for romantic fiction, illustrated fashion magazines and sub-Gothic horror stories. Both are creatures of print.

Homais becomes ever more powerful in the final chapters, now that he has disposed of the Blind Man, and the wifeless Charles is fading away with grief. He is enthroned as 'the happiest of fathers, the most fortunate of men'. His public apotheosis comes in the book's closing sentence, as he is awarded the Legion of Honour. But his secret glory is played out a few pages before this, when he appears in bed wearing his Pulvermacher hydroelectric body-chain, before the eyes of his adoring wife. It is a most bizarre vision, pulling together conjugal eroticism (endlessly mocked by Flaubert), pseudo-medical gadgetry, and a bourgeois exoticism which is at once mythological-classical-oriental. It sets off a hilarious explosion of incongruities. This is followed by the account of Homais's part in devising a tomb for Emma, his chastely classical emblem and inscription merely cloak the miserable chaos of adultery, debt and suicide. By the end Homais controls everything, even sexuality itself. The Blind Man has been put away, Madame Homais has been erotically bedazzled, the adulteress has been inscribed as a loving wife (amabiliem conjugem, in the words of her epitaph). All professional rivals have been put to flight. The last sentence in the book shifts ominously into the present tense, implying his perpetual dominion, beyond even the formal ending of the story.

2.a.1. Madame Lefrancois mentions Lheureux and how he had foreclosed Monsieur Guillamin's eating place.

2.a.2. Homais proceeds to pay his respects to Madame Bovary.
2.a.3. Madame Bovary was already holding on to Monsieur Rodolphe Boulanger's arm.

2.a.4. Noticing Homais from a distance, Rodolphe began walking faster in order to avoid him.

2.a.5. Emma followed suit.

2.a.6. Rodolphe looked at her out of the corner of his life.

2.a.7. He noticed that her outer profile was calm.

2.a.8. She stood out against the bright sunlight.

2.a.9. Rodolphe also noticed her eyes with their long curving lashes, directed straight ahead. They were opened wide but due to the blood pulsing gently beneath her delicate skin seemed slightly narrowed by the cheekbones.

2.a.10. The pearly edges of Emma's white teeth were visible between her lips.

2.a.11. Emma laughed as a warning gesture to Rodolphe.

2.a.12. Misunderstanding her gesture Rodolphe wondered whether she was laughing at him.

2.a.13. Pulling Emma along, Rodolphe cleverly headed down a pathway
leaving Monsieur Lheureux behind.

2.a.14. Rodolphe tries to make Emma believe that he was in love with her.

Madame Lefrançois informed Homais that Lheureux was about to take over the eating place that was a rival to her inn. This was obvious proof of the fact that all was not well in Yonville, the small provincial village. Beneath the placidity of the quiet village, there exists ripples of tension. The famous agricultural show in the village is an annual event during which agricultural hands are rewarded. As the name of the fair denotes the event is meant for field hands and all those concerned with agriculture. But, it is during such an event that Homais and Lheureux bring to light the reality of economics. It is Lheureux who has forced monsieur Guillaumin to close the shutters of his eating place. Prior to Emma's understanding of his true intentions, Rodolphe had resolved to ensnare her during the Agricultural show. Rodolphe had found the local doctor's wife very pleasing and had decided to try his charms with her. Madame Bovary was already holding on to Rodolphe Boulanger's arm in a detached but at the same time close manner. Rodolphe began looking at Emma's profile. It was a calm exterior but beneath that calmness lay turmoil and a curious mixture of her emotions. Emma desperately needed vent and felt Rodolphe could perhaps provide that gasp of fresh air. Perhaps making up her mind, Emma follows Rodolphe into the pathway in order to avoid Homais who was following them. Madame Bovary was almost out of breach after the brisk get away and nudged Rodolphe in an intimate manner. She had wanted to share the fun of it but Rodolphe completely misunderstands the gesture. He gauges her physical attributes much in the likes of Charles. He looks at each part of her body. What affected him most were her eyes that seemed to look straight
ahead. Rodolphe even misunderstood Emma's warning laughter for Monsieur Lheureux was again at their side. Emma was trying to include Rodolphe in her world of candid feelings, emotions and childlike fun but Rodolphe could only attribute her intimate gestures to her immense physical presence. It was as if Emma was only desire incarnate for Rodolphe. And he began to make her believe that he was in love with her.

3.a.1. Emma tries to find out. She asks with a slight cough.

3.a.2. Rodolphe cleverly leaves his answer open.

3.a.3. The animals were all there at the fair. The calves, cows, pigs were to be judged.

3.a.4. The farmers were also filed into an arena formed by a long rope.

3.a.5. Outside the arena, a huge black bull stood muzzled with an iron ring through its nostrils while a child in tatters held him by a rope.

3.a.6. It was obvious that Rodolphe knew the judges and he showed the guard his blue ticket so that they could move about more freely.

3.a.7. Rodolphe began discussing provincial mediocrity.

3.a.8. Rodolphe also lamented his loneliness and lack of friends.

3.a.9. Lestiboudois the grave digger carried a scaffolding of church chairs.
3.a.10. The grave digger had discovered his method of profiting from the show.

3.a.11. The straw filled chairs smelling of incense were being argued over by the villagers.

Emma's childlike naturalness came through in her blush and her freshness and Rodolphe was quick to notice it. He kept hinting at the pleasure of being with her on such an auspicious day. Emma is hesitant about Rodolphe and tries guessing in an obvious manner. She asks Rodolphe whether he was in love giving a slight cough. Rodolphe, the Parisian rake knows her thoughts and play his game of hide and seek in a deft manner. As a backdrop to this act of clever ensnaring of Emma was the row of animals and farmers who were to be judged. The animals were all muzzled up while the farmers were also loved up in an arena formed by a rope supported by stakes. What was most eye-catching was the great big bull tied and muzzled and held by a child in tatters. Rodolphe is at home with the Parisian judges who had come to Yonville for the event. In an obvious manner to impress Emma he showed his blue ticket to move more freely in the restricted area. Rodolphe the town rake had taken it upon himself to make Emma get attracted to him. He had already found out that it was Emma's romantic dreams that needed to be stirred. Rodolphe had only wanted her physically and in order to acquire her he utters romantic fillers to deceive Emma. What Rodolphe failed to understand was Emma's emotional needs. That she was an almost emotionally fragile wreck was beyond Rodolphe's comprehension. Beneath the calm exterior lay Emma's disturbed soul that yearned for strong emotional sustenance. Perhaps Emma had understood that Rodolphe was the wrong person. The fact that she wanted change, a difference in her otherwise listless life perhaps goads her to embrace Rodolphe's empty fillers.
The outcome was an empty physical relationship in which only Emma gave but received no sustenance in return from Rodolphe.

The seventh ensemble unfolds as follows:

1.a.1. Rodolphe went off for a hunting trip the week after the show.

1.a.2. He did not meet Emma for six weeks after the Agricultural Showr.

1.a.3. Rodolphe felt that Emma's impatience would perhaps increase her love for him.

1.a.4. When he returned to meet her, Emma turned pale.

1.a.5. And Rodolphe realised that his plan had been successful.

1.a.6. Rodolphe calls her by her name "Emma", as opposed to polite custom.

1.a.7. He tells her that it is her name that reverberates in his soul.

1.a.8. Rodolphe also taunts Emma saying - "Madame Bovary!" Everyone calls you that. And it's not even your name, it is someone else's.

1.a.9. For Emma, it was the first time that someone had spoken to her in a manner that had only been a possibility in her dreams.

1.a.10. When Emma answered his romantic query with a meaningful sob,
Rodolphe knew that his plan had been fulfilled.

1. a. 11. In a deft manner, Rodolphe expressed his desire to look around Emma's house.

1. a. 12. Without guessing the intention behind his move Emma in all her innocence agrees to show him around.

1. a. 13. Charles began telling Rodolphe about his wife's attacks of breathlessness.

1. a. 14. Rodolphe immediately suggested that horse-riding would be good for her health.

1. a. 15. Emma initially refused the proposal saying that they did not own a pony.

1. a. 16. Rodolphe without letting the opportunity go by immediately offered one of his horses for Emma.

1. a. 17. Charles coaxed Emma in accepting Rodolphe's offer.

1. a. 18. Emma further pointed out to Charles that she did not even possess a riding habit.

1. a. 19. Charles agreed to order for a new riding habit for her.

1. a. 20. With Emma's outfit ready Charles without anticipating any foul play, write to Rodolphe that the horse riding sessions would perhaps be the
best possible medicine for her problems.

2 a.1. The next day Rodolphe arrived with two riding horses; one having a side saddle meant for Emma.

2 a.2. Emma was charmed by Rodolphe's riding gear and felt that he had appeared as the prince of her dreams.

2 a.3. Justin the pharmacist's assistant slipped out of the shop to see them for he admired Emma from a distance.

2 a.4. Even Emma's daughter and Felicité wished her before they rode off.

2 a.5. Emma's horse began to gallop and she let herself to the rocking movement.

2 a.6. Initially Rodolphe exchanged a few words with her as they galloped side by side.

2 a.7. Rodolphe and Emma entered a forest at a gallop.

2 a.8. After a while Emma dismounted and Rodolphe began tying the horses.

2 a.9. They reached a spacious clearing where Rodolphe tried his charms on Emma.
2. a. 10. Emma's relationship of intense desire began that day with Rodolphe.

2. a. 11. Emma was excited about finally having a lover of her own.

2. a. 12. She had read about the heroines in the books having exciting lovers.

2. a. 13. Emma also felt a satisfied feeling of vengeance for she felt that she had suffered enough.

2. a. 14. Rodolphe was the viscount or the prince of her dreams.

2. a. 15. For Rodolphe though Emma was only another woman to be loved and left afterwards.

2. a. 16. Emma on the other hand felt she had entered that dream world of princes and that had been possible because of Rodolphe.

3. a. 1. La Huchette, Rodolphe's house was like the dream-house for Emma.

3. a. 2. Often when Charles had left before dawn, Emma would stealthily dress and walk down to the water's edge.

3. a. 3. The first time Rodolphe appeared shocked to see her.

3. a. 4. Fooling the unsuspecting Charles then became a habit for Emma.

3. a. 5. After succeeding in deceiving Charles the first time, Emma would often run to La Huchette.
3.a.6. One day Rodolphe appeared annoyed with her sudden visit.

3.a.7. He felt that Emma's impatient visits might give them away one fine day.

3.a.8. Emma was terrified of her love because she did not want it to get destroyed at any cost.

3.a.9. Emma felt that was the only sustaining force in her otherwise common place listless life.

3.a.10. One day while coming back from La Huchette, Emma ran into Captain Binet who had been hunting for ducks.

3.a.11. Emma managed to give an explanation by saying that she had been to the wet nurse.

3.a.12. Binet perhaps had guessed about where she had been.

3.a.13. The next day, Binet met Emma at the pharmacist's shop.

3.a.14. With a sly look Binet remarked about Emma not getting bogged by the foul weather.

3.a.15. Emma had removed the key of the garden gate.

3.a.16. All through the winter Rodolphe would come to the garden. Sometimes
four times in one week.

3. a. 17. He usually threw gravel against the shutters to signal his presence.

3. a. 18. She would sneak out after Charles slept.

3. a. 19. They usually stayed in the arbor on the bench of rotting wood.

3. a. 20. When it rained, they took shelter in the consulting room.

4. a. 1. Once Emma began talking of pistols.

4. a. 2. Rodolphe said that he could crush Charles without needing pistols.

4. a. 3. Emma had become quite sentimental and wanted marriage.

4. a. 4. Old Roault sent his turkey and a letter for Emma.

4. a. 5. The memory of Les Bertaux came back to her.

4. a. 6. As she remembered her father she felt herself becoming unhappy.

4. a. 7. She knew she had been happy then when she had dreamt, had illusions. Now she had no illusions.

The eighth ensemble unfolds thus:

1. a. 1. An article had been published praising a new method for curing.
Incidentally Homais had read about it and had taken it upon himself to have operations for talipes as he called it.

He incites Emma into believing that her husband Charles could surely cure a clubfoot.

The patient Hippolyte was available.

The idea got on to Emma's head for she wanted reputation, fortune and other substantial things to lean on rather than simplicity, faith, love.

Urged by her Charles ordered Doctor Duval's book on clubfoot from Rouen.

Homais began coaxing Hippolyte to have the operation.

A box like contraption was constructed by the local carpenter and all preparations were made.

The operation was about cutting a tendon as Charles had imagined.

It was done and much to Hippolyte's delight, was done over with in too less time so that he announced to all that he would be able to walk all once again.

Homais began to write an article on it.
2. a. 4. But Hippolyte's foot had not been cured after all and he was in a dying state almost five days later.

2. a. 5. Monsieur Cavinet, a learned doctor saw the gangrenous leg and said amputation was necessary.

2. a. 6. Charles proved to be a failure all over again for Emma.

2. a. 7. And in all bitterness, she went back to her love life with Rodolphe.

The ninth ensemble unfolds thus:

1. a. 1. Emma arranged herself like a courtesan. And she waited for her prince.

1. a. 2. Justin helped Felicité in cleaning Emma's muddy boots.

1. a. 3. Emma presented Rodolphe a hunting crop with a silver gilt handle and besides other memories also a cigar case identical to the viscount’s, the one Charles had picked up on the road and which Emma had been saying.

1. a. 4. Emma coaxed Rodolphe to take her away to some other place.

1. a. 5. Rodolphe hastefully assures her that he would.

1. a. 6. The thought of her dream which was to come true made Emma more beautiful.
They were to go off a month later on a Monday that was to be September.

Rodolphe contemplated on Emma's beauty and on the immense amount of money that might be wasted in becoming an expatriate, with a child and Emma.

And he decides that it would be too foolish a venture for him.

Rodolphe was like the prince of Emma's dreams because he came from that world about which she had dreamt of since her childhood days. Emma be dressed herself up like a courtesan to appear more desirable for Rodolphe. Rodolphe on the other hand looked upon her only as another of his mistresses and cooperated in the game of deception that Emma was playing unknowingly with her ownself and he with her. Emma presented Rodolphe a cigar case that was identical to the viscount's, that Charles had picked up on the road back from the Chateau. Emma's love for beautiful valuable artefacts and objects went so far as buying them from Lheureux at unaffordable prices and presenting them to Rodolphe. Emma in her sincerity and love for Rodolphe wanted to go away with him. For Emma though Charles appeared more detestable for she felt that she could belong to only one person at a time and that would be the person she loved - Rodolphe. But, Rodolphe could not live up to her expectations. He had seen the life and the shallow livelihood patterns of those that Emma wanted to emulate. For Rodolphe, life had no more illusions. In his utter cynicism and contempt for life he looked upon her as only another woman to be deceived. He had heard her amorous words from the lips of so many fallen women that they appeared empty to him. At the same time
Rodolphe felt guilty about Emma's simplicity and sincere love for him, so much so that he could not resist promising her that he would take her away from Yonville to the lands of her dreams - Paris, Genoa. At the same time, the thought of the ridiculous amount of money that would have to be spent in the project held him back and Rodolphe decided to leave Emma for good. Her beauty and her freshness had made him stop with her for so long and he decided to leave her forever.

2.a.1. Rodolphe had a collection of letters and momentoes of all his mistresses stuffed in an old Rheims biscuit box.

2.a.2. Rodolphe sent his farewell letter with the seal having the motto Amor Nel Cor, to Emma in a basket of apricots.

2.a.3. Girard the plowboy took the basket to Madame Bovary.

2.a.4. Emma took the letter to the attic room, felt faint after reading it and decides to end her life.

2.a.5. Felicite intervened and Emma went back to Charles, her family and her former boring marital life.

2.a.6. Rodolphe's blue tillbury passed by and Emma fainted.

2.a.7. Charles got into debt with Lheureux while Emma was convalescing.

2.a.8. Emma's brain fever increased and one day she asked for communion.
2 a.9. Emma tried to become pure by embracing religion but there too she found deceptions.

2 a.10. Thus she became charitable.

3 a.1. The Homais children would be brought by Justin who silently admired Emma from a distance.

3 a.2. Emma did not know that the kind of love that she craved for was throbbing so close to her.

3 a.3. Homais suggested that Charles should take her to Rouen to see a theatre.

3 a.4. Charles and Emma decided to take his advice and left for Rouen.

3 a.5. It was Lucia di Lammermoor - an opera and when Lagardy appeared, Emma felt being transported to the readings of her youth - of Walter Scott and the library subscriptions.

3 a.6. Charles could hardly understand the music or the play much to Emma's irritation.

3 a.7. After the first Act, Charles met Léon.

3 a.8. Léon without missing the opportunity came over the wish Emma his former love.
3.a.9. Emma immediately remembered the walks that she used to take with Léon.

3.a.10. Léon cleverly asked them to stay on for the end of the play.

3.a.11. Since Charles had to leave Emma stayed on.

4.a.1. Léon was seeing Emma after three years and his passion for her revived his desire to possess her.

4.a.2. Léon declared his love for her.

4.a.3. They got into a cab and the lumbering vehicle started on its journey to nowhere or anywhere.

4.a.4. The cab appeared as an astonishing spectacle in a provincial town. It was like a tomb and tossing about like a boat.

4.a.5. Emma convinced Charles that she would have to go to Rouen for her music lessons.

4.a.6. So, it was decided that Emma would go to met Léon in a hotel room.

4.a.7. Emma again began giving Léon expensive gifts, buying them from Lheureux.

4.a.8. While coming back in the Hirondelle a poor beggar in rags would
appear in the middle of all the carriages. His wail would echo into the night.

The only real criticism of Homais comes from Rodolphe. In conversation with Emma, on the day of the agricultural show, he makes various disparaging remarks about the pharmacist. But nothing comes of them, and Homais flourishes undiminished. It is curious that Rodolphe and Homais never appear together again. Rodolphe, uniquely, does not come within Homais's powerful reach. He alone is not subjected to his orthodoxies. Or so it appears. Why the segregation of these two men? Why can they not appear together, the neighbour and the lover?

If Homais is the public face of the bourgeois, paternalistic, public spirited and progressive, then Rodolphe is the other side: the wild, virile, unfettered libertine, the rebellious, sub-Byronic man of the world. As such, he is merely the legitimate antithesis of Homais. He is only disappointingly, the other side of the same thing. At heart Rodolphe and Homais are brothers. There is, in Flaubert's view of the matter, only one possible sexuality. The libertine is no freer, no more authentic in his desires, than the paterfamilias he scorns. His transgressions obey the same laws. The husband, away from home, reverts to the suppressed libertinism of his youth. This is clear from the fact that Homais, as soon as he escapes from his pharmacy in Yonville, picks up the Rodophe ethos (or at least its idiom). In conversation with Léon, he affects a facile and cynical connoisseurship of all the varieties of female flesh.

This is the only scene in the novel which shows men talking openly about women. It offers the briefest comic glimpse into the social world of the nineteenth-century bourgeois male. The prevailing tone is ingeniously and aggressively prurient. It is a tone rarely heard in novels of the period, though it is the
common currency of Flaubert's letter to his male friends. In this code of erotic innuendo, the symbolism of the phallic was, inevitably, the centrepiece. Pistols and swords, umbrellas and cigars all carry their charge of half-hidden meaning, their whispered intimations of desire.

The cigar, phallic symbol par excellence, is much in evidence. As Emma and Charles make their way home from the ball at La Vaubyessard, Charles happens upon the Viscount's green silk cigar-case, dropped by the roadside. He picks it up, and chokes ignominiously on the aristocrat's cigars. Emma takes possession of the cigar-case itself and weaves an elaborate aristocratic romance around this female symbol. Rodolphe's trite post-coital cigar and accompanying pen-knife are obvious enough. More curious than these 'official' symbols, though, are the variously veiled or distorted emblems which point to the heart of a peculiarly Flaubertian sexuality.

Consider all the jokes about Léon and his over more melodramatic desire for Emma. First there is the cactus plant he brings as a gift. Later, on the eve of their first adultery, only the massive spire of Rouen cathedral itself will suffice to suggest the dimensions of his desire. And the hotel room in Rouen, where Emma and Léon meet to make love, is equipped with 'arrow-headed curtain rods' and 'big balls on the fender' as well as a pair of 'those big pink shells that sound like the sea when you hold them to your ear'.

The gross obviousness of such symbols is most likely their point. They allow for many an ingenious unofficial reference to the physical realities of love, at a time when the printed word and family conversation were both intricately inhibited in sexual matters. Meanwhile, of course, there flourished that parallel secret world of salacious masculine conversation. Its apparent freedom was
merely the legitimate antithesis of the social repression of sexuality. The unspoken-but-obvious is a special code for the initiated, an amusing and reassuring stratagem, a happy complicity.

But there is another, darker vein of sexual reference in Madame Bovary. It points towards a realm of anxious fantasy, to the thought that the phallus may be lost or may attach itself to the woman's body. There is a network of references to feet, boots and shoes: at its most grotesquely explicit in the figure of the ostler Hippolyte. His deformed foot, we recall, is operated upon, most incompetently. It develops gangrene. It is then amputated and replaced by an elaborate artificial leg. (Flaubert's father had died in 1846, after weeks of agony, from an unsuccessful operation for an abscess of his thigh, involving gangrene.)

Hippolyte has quite the ugliest foot. Emma has the most remarkably elegant. The men all notice her feet. This was a period of such all-concealing female costume that erotic interest was characteristically displaced on to the ankle or the foot, glimpsed briefly below a long and voluminous skirt. Charles savours the sound of her clogs on the kitchen-floor in the farmhouse. Léon gazes at her for the first time, on the evening of her arrival in Yonville, as she lifts her dress and holds out to the fire 'a foot clad in a small black boot'. Rodolphe, following her closely along the forest-path, 'glimpsed-just between that black hem and the black boot-the delicacy of her white stocking, like a snippet of her nakedness'. Justin, the adolescent boy who secretly adores Emma, delights in 'doing her boots', cleaning 'the mud of her assignations' from the fabric. And Léon, in the great days of their love, gives her 'pink satin slippers, edged with swansdown' and observes the effect very closely: 'When she sat on his knee, her leg, to short to reach the floor, would swing in the air; and the dainty
shoe, which had no heel, would dangle from the toes of her bare foot.'

The four men who look at Emma (Charles, Léon, Rodolphe and Justin) fasten their eyes on her nails, her eyes, her teeth, hands, hair and feet. Just the edges of her body, just the title details. Their vision of Emma - and we are offered no other - is decidedly fetishistic. Her dresses, for instance, are always described with an emphatic connoisseur's precision. We know the fabric (merino, nankeen, cashmere) and the style (waistline, number of flounces, ribbons, fringes). Female toilette in general - the mysteries of knickers, petticoats and camisoles, the niceties of bandeau, chignon and corsage - all these are the focus of a perpetual excited interest.

But at the centre of these frills, where her body would be, there is a kind of blackness. There is much imagined nakedness, many clandestine erotic intimations of what might be there, beneath the coverings. This is one of Flaubert's 'specialities'. At such moments the writing slows down. The syntax is aptly involuted, the sentences are sensuously complicated. There is a special imaginative tempo, a place for reverie and delectation.

But never the thing itself. Never the simple reality of a woman's unadorned flesh. There is always, interposed, some appendage or other, some accessory, something to draw the eye, to hold the imagination, to secure an image safely within the code of masculine desire.

As a young man, Flaubert had surreptitiously refused to become a lawyer. The thought of being useful was quite odious to him. True to the defiant, mischievous ethos of its maker, there is not much evidence of socially productive labour in Madame Bovary. There is only the pharmacist Homais, secluded in the
little room he calls the Capharnaum, his holy of holies, where he mixes and labels his medicines, only the village tax-collector Binet, working alone up in his attic, turning wooden serviette rings on his lathe. These two striking parallel images of passionate, solitary and gratuitous labour may also bring to mind a picture of Flaubert sitting at his desk, struggling with the rhythm of every phrase. Homais, Binet and Flaubert create around themselves a special enclosed space, a protected solitude. Each has a dignified alibi for his pursuit of the rapturous masculine fantasy of totally self-sufficient activity.

Flaubert working at his writing, in his own terms. But his writing was not work, in social terms. While writing this book he was not yet the famous author of Madame Bovary. He was merely a man of mooest private means in his early thirties who spent most of his time producing voluminous manuscripts of uncertain value. His first sustained composition, the work of his mid twenties, The Temptation of Saint Antony, had been abandoned, rather ominously, on the advice of his friends. The image of Binet at his lathe was perhaps a defensively joking self-caricature.

I have already mentioned Flaubert's idiosyncratic but exact sense of cultural formation. He demonstrated with poignant clarity the shaping social power of written language upon the inner lives of his main characters. But he had an even larger ambition than this. He grasped, ahead of his time, the pervasive quality of the modern. In the month before he began writing Madame Bovary he had visited the Crystal Palace Great Exhibition in London. There he would have seen displayed, in a ritual of world-historical self-congratulation, the global triumph of capitalism. It took the material form of a spectacular network of commodities.
Unobtrusively, Flaubert endeavoured to document in unprecedented detail the everyday cultural artefacts of his age. He attended with great imaginative precision not simply to the external contours of such objects, inert in themselves, but also to the vagaries of their actual use. He often evokes individual acts of reading, writing and looking. We behold, for example, a set of ancestral portraits, a fashion-plate, a map of Paris, a variety of legal documents, a medical journal, a women's magazine, an almanac, a list of medical lectures, the engravings in a keepsake album, a picture torn from a perfumier's catalogue, a daguerreotype portrait, a treatise on cider, an operatic performance, a work of medical pornography, 'a forged receipt for piano lessons, the ledger in a draper's shop, a bailiff's inventory of property for auction. The list is not at all systematic, but it confirms how habitually observant Flaubert was in such matters.

Such documentary exactness has a purpose that reaches beyond the satiric mimicry which inspired The Dictionary of Received Ideas. Flaubert's transcriptions are designed to foreground, comprehensively, the cultural process of reading and writing. These transcriptions are a vital and neglected feature of his style. His narrative method, so disconcertingly impersonal, is not mere fastidiousness. Flaubert, ever the clandestine anti-bourgeois, judiciously abstains from the habitual forms of persuasion.

Writing such as this invites us, delectably, to reinvent our reading.

The tenth ensemble unfolds thus:

1. a. 1. Emma did not fail to lavish all sorts of dresses, food and presents on Léon.
Lheureux demands his money from Emma.

In order to avoid the embarrassment of facing Charles with lies she rushed to Léon for the money and he refuses her.

She even tried placating Monsieur guillaumin but without any help.

Emma decided to ask Rodolphe for the money and pleaded with him.

Her final disillusionment with life is complete when Rodolphe refuses to give her the money.

She went to the pharmacist's store and Justin gave the bottle of arsenic that she wanted.

After taking the arsenic Emma wrote a letter to Charles sealed it and took to her bed in a state of agony.

Her wait for death was gruesome and volatile.

Her death procession was like her wedding march.

After her death Charles found the box of letters that Emma had from Léon. Rodolphe's potrait was there too.

Charles died in his love for Emma and Berthe was sent to a relative while Homais received the Legion of Honour for his publications and good
work during the cholera epidemic.

It was not easy for Flaubert to begin his narrative for he did not know from where to begin. Flaubert faced this immense problem of writing this text because he had to tell a story which was not necessarily chronological in time. It is interesting to note that Emma goes first to Rodolphe the older man and then to Léon the younger man. Léon takes on the son-image and Emma lavishes money on him, in return asks for money only once. The oedipus complex is traced to her relationship with Rodolphe, old enough to be her father. It is she in her maternal stance, who goes to Rouen to Léon who is young and could be her son. Yet all her relationships are non-relations. Even her husband the doctor was once divorced. Flaubert must have faced the problem of how and where to put the relations in the novel.

There are semiotic signs of the tragic elements in the discourse. The tragic undercurrent signifies the forebodings of the relations to come. There are always signs of deception that appear in all the three relationships.

With, Charles, with Rodolphe and with Léon, every romantic encounter in inflected with the tragic element. Existentially Emma reflects and in each case becomes conscious that something is wrong. There is a hierarchy of semiotic signals and psychic climaxes. The conceptual structure of Madame Bovary depends on that discourse of reflections and at that level of the discourse there is continuity.

Born in 1821, Flaubert was the son of a highly successful provincial doctor, the director and chief surgeon of the municipal hospital in the town of Rouen. His family lived in the gloomy residential wing of the hospital, in the midst of blood and death, as Flaubert always remembered it. Just over the wall
of the garden where he played as a child, there were corpses laid out in the dissecting-room. He and his sister would peep over the wall to observe their father, with his sleeves rolled up, probing and slicing, pausing to wave them angrily away from the forbidden spectacle.

Because he was merely the younger son, Gustave Flaubert was to be a lawyer. He began the training for his allotted profession with a heavy heart. But then in 1844, when he was twenty-three, the first of a series of disasters struck his family. On the very threshold of his adult career, he experienced the first of his so-called nervous attacks. Stricken by convulsions and hallucinations, he fell into a coma, followed by days of drowsiness and weeks of exhaustion. It was like an epileptic fit, though never conclusively diagnosed. But it was enough to keep him at home. He now had to abandon the legal studies he so detested. Henceforth he could enjoy the unmolested leisure of the convalescent. This was exactly what he wanted: time to write, time to savour the world.

In the following year, 1845, his sister Caroline, three years his junior and still and adored companion, was married. In Flaubert's opinion, the man of her choice was 'mediocrity incarnate', quite the stupidest of all his contemporaries.

In November 1845 Flaubert's father fell ill, with an abscess on his leg. He died of gangrene, after weeks of agony. Six days later, Caroline gave birth to a daughter, in that same house, where her father had just died. She caught puerperal fever and died six weeks later.

The premature deaths of his father and sister, along with the marriage of his elder brother, left Flaubert, aged twenty-five, at the head of a strange and sorrowful family. Mother and son, both of them twice bereft, set up house
together, along with the motherless infant daughter of Caroline. The arrangement lasted for most of Flaubert's adult life. It was a family of sorts: man and a woman and a child.

In 1849, after a decent interval had elapsed, Flaubert set off on an eighteen month tour of the Near East. The letters he wrote from Egypt chronicle in exuberant detail the delights of temples and brothels. The grotesque conjunction of the sacred and the profane pleased him deeply. He spent a large part of his inheritance and he caught syphilis.

He returned to France in 1851. That autumn, in the month before his thirtieth birthday, he began work on *Madame Bovary*. He had promised himself and his friends that his first book would be a thunderclap. His debut was indeed to be his masterpiece.

For his subject Flaubert took the unheroic, mediocre, provincial, everyday heart of petit bourgeois village life. He listened intently to the language of his class. He mimicked unerringly the pompous rhythms of paternal cliche as they sounded benignly from the lips of the doctor, the lawyer, the journalist and the priest. He had been listening since childhood, and he had a connoisseur's ear. He kept a scrap-book, entitled *The Dictionary of Received Ideas*, in which he collected and classified the choicest specimens. He marked the different voices, the public and the private, all the rival major dialects of medicine and science, romanticism and religion.

Gustave Flaubert, the contemporary of Baudelaire, Marx and George Eliot, never attempted any conspicuous escape from the constraints of his class. On the contrary, he stayed at home, most of his life, an awkward, disenchanted,
mocking, loyal member of the bourgeoisie.

He saw that there was little point in attacking them openly. In 1851 only the quixotic revolutionary would have possessed such an infinite surplus of courage, hope and energy. As it seemed to Flaubert, there was quite obviously no better world, no other world than this. Consider the history of France over the preceding sixty years. Two revolutions, in 1789 and in 1848, had strengthened the power of the bourgeoisie and thereby proved, apparently, that there was no real alternative. For those seeking an escape there were only vivid enclosed worlds of fantasy. Baudelaire called them artificial paradises: wine, hashish, opium, prostitution, anarchism, occultism, dandyism, the Orient. Flaubert had tasted several of them and chosen to return home. The age of Byron was over. To Flaubert it made much better sense, and it would, he felt sure, be rather more agreeable, to attack his kind not by open rebellion, not in an embittered tirade, but by demoralizing his class from within.

To this end, he took first of all the stalest, the most predictable plot. It featured a man and a wife: he mediocre and contented, she bored and beautiful. She yearns for romance, takes a lover and eventually kills herself, in the midst of debt and despair. To quicken this commonplace stuff he invented a new style, weaving together the erotic, the sentimental and the ironic, in a perpetual tension, making it seem quite impersonal, and meticulously prosaic. Everyone talks in clichés, with not a word out of place, the rhythm holding it all together. He wanted to avoid, above all, the wretched flowing style, so soothing for the bourgeois reader whose taste in fiction had been formed by his great precursors, Walter Scott, Balzac, George Sand and Victor Hugo.

The style Flaubert invented for Madame Bovary was supremely influential.
Though its origins are deeply idiosyncratic, it was to become the characteristic idiom of later realist fiction. It is now so pervasively familiar that it sounds like the true voice of modernity. Zola, Chekhov and Joyce, Kafka, Sartre and Camus: all take lessons from Flaubert.

Flaubert cut dialogue down to a minimum. The characters have no long speeches. The unspoken comes into sharp focus. There is no one obviously telling the story. There is simply a voice coming from somewhere, it could almost be one of the characters. The world of quite unremarkable everyday things is described, in engagingly vivid detail: the dusty smell of a village church, the stale warmth of a school classroom, the sound of a family eating a meal together, the feel of dried mud flaking off an elegant woman's boot.

Flaubert was naturally fluent and copious as a writer, but it took him five years to write Madame Bovary. He worked fastidiously, compulsively, often sixteen hours a day, revising every sentence many times over, until it sounded exactly and exquisitely as it should. In the new age of mass production, in a world of cheap crude fiction manufactured in quantity, every sentence of this novel was to declare the enormity of the labour that had gone into its making. It was to be a luxury item, gratuitously crafted and minutely detailed. His mother remarked, judiciously, that the pursuit of the perfect phrase had desiccated his heart.

Madame Bovary carries as its subtitle Mœurs de province. This might be translated as Provincial Lives. The phrase implies, of course, the familiar indiscriminate contrast between Paris and the rest of France. The Parisian, according to popular belief, was a superior self-important creature: elegant, educated, pretentious, superficial and cynical. The provincial, according to
the same mythology, was in every way inferior: uncouth, narrow-minded, and avaricious, governed by petty jealousies and engrossed in sanctimonious gossip.

Before Flaubert, in the 1830s and the 1840s, the novelist Balzac had energetically contributed to these stereotypes; and Flaubert, not surprisingly, is content to perpetuate them. The traditional contrast between Paris and the provinces is an essential part of Flaubert's design.

The novel was written in the early 1850s. In France this was the first decade of the railway. It was a time when the new means of communication - the railway, the telegraph and the newspaper - were accelerating the circulation of people, commodities and information. The country village was beginning to feel the first shock of the new. The old small-scale local economy was changing. This was particularly evident in the northern region (Flanders, Normandy and Picardy), which had the most technically advanced agriculture, the best soils, the biggest farms and the richest farmers in France. Though Flaubert was writing Madame Bovary at a time and in a place of rapid social change, he contrived to locate it just outside this fast-encroaching modernity, in the last years of the old world. He emphasized this by including fleeting references to present realities, little details and phrases which cumulatively frame the pastness of the story. The so-called local colour, the Normandy idioms and the place-names both real and imaginary, add up to a code of deliberately parochial reference. They are silent gestures towards a fading common life of regional peculiarities.

And the recurring semiotic codes help to decode the feminine discourse flowing in Flaubert's great novel Madame Bovary.
NOTES

1. Charbovari: The class's wild reaction to the world Charbovari makes more sense once we realize that they are implicitly giving Charles's name a further twist, miming the sound Charbovari as a charivari. They are enacting a spontaneous collective pun. Originally, the charivari was a serenade of rough music made by a crowd of villagers banging on kettles and pans under the windows of a newly-wed couple. It was used especially to deride an incongruous marriage. Perhaps this is an ominous anticipation of Charles's fate as a husband. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century charivari described the anarchic ritual mockery of an unpopular person. Le Charivari was also the name of a satirical magazine published in Paris during the early nineteenth century. It was the favourite reading of Flaubert's boyhood, and when he was twelve years old, in 1833, there appeared within its pages a cartoon of a grotesque composite hat which may be the distant model for the one worn by Charles Bovary. Critics have often pointed to the peculiar recurrence in Flaubert's writings of various forms of the surname Bovary. In addition to Charles Bovary he creates characters called Bouvard, Bouvigny and Bouvignard. And there was a hotel-keeper in Cairo, where Flaubert stayed in 1850, called Bouvaret.

2. Hat of the Composite order. The Composite Order is a precise architectural term. It designates one of the five kinds of classical column. To the original three Greek orders of Ionic, Doric and Corinthian, the Romans added the Composite and the Tuscan. The Composite was a mixture of Ionic and Corinthian.

3. Medicine: Flaubert was at the College royal in Rouen between 1832 and 1840, for the most part as a boarder. An almost exact contemporary there of Flaubert's elder brother, Achille, was Eugène Delamare, the principal model for Charles Bovary. The outline biography of Delamere fits reasonably neatly: he was medical officer in Ry, married a Mademoiselle Mutel five years old than he was, was soon widowed and married the seventeen-year old Delphine Couturier who gave birth to a daughter, and died in 1848, aged twenty-six. Delamare died in 1849. However,
Delamare's character was apparently that of an active local politician who was an inconstant authoritarian husband. Less is known about his second wife and there is no firm evidence that she killed herself. (A.M. Gossez, Homais et Bovary hommes politiques, Mercure de France, 15 July 1911) The Officer of Health, riding along: Charles is often referred to, flatteringly, as a doctor by the other characters. But he is in fact qualified only as an Officer of Health. This is an important nuance of professional status. Throughout the nineteenth century Officers of Health were decidedly inferior creatures, glorified medical orderlies who were permitted to practise medicine only within their department. They were not supposed to perform major surgical operations except under the supervision of a doctor. The post had been created in 1803, among Napoleon's reforms, in the hope of bringing medical services to the poorer regions of France. It was finally abolished in 1892, after many years of pressure from doctors.

4. Les Bertaux: Eugene Delamare's second wife, Delphine Couturier (see note above), lived just outside Blainville-Crevon in the ferme du Vieux-Château, now named 'ferme Madame Bovary' in certain maps. The route through Longueville and Saint-Victor is fanciful.

5. Vaubyessard: The visit to La Vaubyessard is based on a memory of Flaubert's visit with his parents to the Marquis de Pomereu's fête seigneurale in 1836. The Marquis lived at the Château du Héron (now destroyed) just east of Ry and he had been a member of the Seine-Inferieure Conseil general between 1829 and 1833. So impressive was the occasion for the fourteen-year-old boy that Flaubert recalled it and his subsequent dawn walk through the park in a letter written years later to his friend Louis Bouilhet from Egypt (13 March 1850). The description of a ball in chapter V of an early work, Quidquid volueris (1837), is a more immediate reflection of the event.

6. Yonville-l' Abbaye: a fictitious name, based on the rue de la Croix d'Yonville to the west of the Hôtel-Dieu in Rouen and close to the house at Déville owned by Flaubert's father until 1844. 'Yonville-l'Abbaye itself is a place which doesn't exist, so too with the Rieulle [sic], etc.' (letter to Emile Cailteaux, 4 June 1857) Yonville has many
of the spatial characteristics of Ry where the Delamare family lived, but the directions given are of a journey to Forges-les-Eaux where Flaubert, his mother and his niece Caroline had stayed in 1848. They were taking refuge from Caroline’s deranged widowed father Emile Hamard and they stayed with a family friend, Maitre Beaufils (see letter to Ernest Chevalier, 4 Aug. 1848). Ry is, for reasons of discretion and mystification, never mentioned in *Madame Bovary* and it is not known whether Flaubert ever went there. Some of the site characteristics of Forges (the Bray grazing district close by and the long red gashes of the iron-ore seams which help to create the spa waters) are evident. Flaubert’s imaginary Yonville lies about 32 km or 20 miles from Rouen. In the topography of *Madame Bovary* no place-names outside Normandy are fictitious. Street and area names in Rouen also exist (or existed at the time). In Normandy, place-names exist in the given geographical context with the exception of the following: Andervilliers, Banneville, Barfeuchères, Barnevill; le Bas-Diauville, Les Bertaux, La Fresnaye, Givry-Saint-Martin; hill of Leux, La Huchette, La Panville, the Rieule (river), Saint-Jean uplands, Sassetot-la-Guerrière, Thibourville, La Vaubyessard, Yonville-l’ Abbaye; Yverbonville.


8. Monsieur Rodolphe Boulanger de la Huchette: Louis Campion has been considered the likely model for Rodolphe Boulanger. He lived at Villiers, 2 km south of Ry, in a house which has since become known on I.G.N. maps as La Huchette. His relationship with Delphine Delamare remains mysterious but suggestive. The name Rodolphe would have been familiar to contemporary readers of popular fiction. There is a Rodolphe in Eugène Sue’s *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842-3). He is a mysterious prince in disguise who haunts the Paris underworld, punishing the wicked and rewarding the virtuous. There is also a Rodolphe in Henry Murger’s *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* (1848).

9. The famous Agricultural show: this chapter set at the comices agricoles is the longest in the novel and took nearly five months to complete.
between July and December 1853 Flaubert had visited a comice agricole at Grand-Couronne, a little downstream from Croisset in July 1852, which he described as 'one of these inept ceremonies' (letter to Louise Colet, 18 July 1852). The record of the Nouvelliste de Rouen of 19 and 20 July 1852 shows that Flaubert drew much material from what he had witnessed. The comice agricole was instituted in the late eighteenth century as a free association for the improvement of agriculture. The term became transferred to the shows, which proliferated after 1830, and comices agricoles (covering either a canton, an arrondissement or even a département) offered prizes for good use and development of agricultural implements, for breeding and cross-breeding, for soil use and for pasture development, for irrigation and for upkeep of agricultural buildings. Hard-working and long-serving farm-hands, shepherds, and farm servants could receive awards.

10. The cab Hirondelle: Hirondelle in French stands for 'swallow'; in fact the cab-ride must have begun about midday. The cab stopped: the cab-ride may have been based in part on a scene in chapter xi of Merimee's La Double Meprise (1833). It can be followed quite clearly to the hill of Deville after which it visits real place 'at random' (as the text states). The Revue de Paris serial publication of Madame Bovary in 1856 left out the cab-ride for reasons of discretion but Senard defending Flaubert at his trial was not afraid to read it out in full.

11. It was Dr. Lariviere, 'under whom he had once studied' (p 200). He had advised the move from Tostes for the improvement of Emma's health. In Lariviere there is something of a portrait of Flaubert's father, who became a doctor in 1818. He died in office in January 1846.

12. An Ursuline convent: there were two in Rouen belonging to this order devoted to teaching, one in the rue Coqueréaumont and the other in the rue Morant.

13. Dedication: Sénard was the lawyer who conducted Flaubert's defence in the case rought against him, the publishers and the printer after Madame Bovary had been serialized in La Revue de Paris.
14. Rouen: the city was then the fifth largest in France with a population of 1,000,000, a considerable port and commercial centre.

15. Paul et Virginie: this novel of 1787 by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre describes the close friendship between two French children on the Ile de France (Mauritius), a friendship which grows into adolescent love in the exotic world of the Indian Ocean and which ends in tragedy. It was a highly influential work of French Pre-Romanticism. Paul is of course not the brother of Virginie, but Emma's own brother who had died young.

16. Amor nel cor: probably a quotation from Dante, Vita Nuova XXIII. 31, which reads 'piansemi Amor nel core, ove dimora' ('Love wept in my heart where he abides'). Louise Colet had given Flaubert a seal with the identical motto. When she had read the novel, and because Flaubert had at his insistence ended their affair in 1854, she felt herself mocked. Presumably the wound smarted, for in 1859 she wrote a poem called Amor nel cor in which she half-openly derided Flaubert.

17. The Theatre: this is the Théâtre des Arts, built in 1775 and destroyed by fire in 1876, facing the river opposite the suspension bridge. It had a capacity of two thousand. It even had a motto based on the words Castigat ridendo mores. See G. Daniels, 'Emma Bovary's Opera', French Studies, July 1878, for a very sensitive and informative article on Emma's visit to the Opera. Guess whom I ran into?: originally Flaubert had planned that Léon and Emma should meet again in Paris but 'at the theatre'.

18. Lucie de Lammermoor: Walter Scott's The Bride of Lammermoor (1819) had been adapted by Donizetti for his opera Lucia di Lammermoor. The French version referred to in this chapter had a libretto by Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vácz with additional music by Donizetti. Flaubert had seen the original Italian version in Constantinople (letter to Mme Flaubert, 14 Nov. 1850).

19. Remembering her early reading: The plot follows that of The Bride of Lammermoor, but is much reduced. Henri Ashton wishes his sister Lucie to marry Sir Arthur Bucklaw. Lucie has pledged herself to Edgar.
Ravenswood, with whom her family has quarrelled. Ashton, helped by Gilbert his evil henchman, convinces Lucie that Edgar has abandoned her. The wretched girl consents to marry Sir Arthur, when Edgar appears. Ashton's plot is revealed to Lucie. Edgar thinks Lucie is unfaithful and she, marrying Arthur, becomes mad and stabs him on her wedding night. Edgar challenges Ashton to a duel but he attends to his dying sister instead. Edgar learns the whole truth and kills himself in front of Ashton, who is now racked by remorse. Edgar Lagardy appeared: Flaubert gives him the same first name as that of his role. Traditionally the model for Lagardy is the tenor G.H. Roger. 'Oh bel ange, ma Lucie!' song by the dying Edgar (Act iv. vi.) Tamburini, Rubini, Persiani, Grisi: famous Italian opera singers of the early nineteenth century. Léon had intended to hear 'the Italian singers' in Paris Grisi was a prima donna, Persiani also composed.

20. Walter Scott: 'I am doing a conversation between a young man and a young woman about literature, the sea, the mountains, music, all the poetical subjects. It is something that could be taken seriously, and yet I fully intend it as grotesque. This will be the first time, I think, that a book makes fun of its leading lady and its leading man. The irony does not detract from the pathetic aspect, but rather intensifies it' (letter to Louise Colet, 9 Oct. 1852). Flaubert seems to have acknowledged the greatness of both Voltaire and Rousseau whilst infinitely preferring the former (letter to Mme Roger des Genettes, 1859 or 1860). He had a low opinion of Delille, who was a popular eighteenth century nature poet (see Hommage à Louis Bouilhet, III). Scott was seen as the archetypal Romantic novelist (see Bouvard et Pecuchet, ch. V).

21. The image revealed... these visions of the world: the Romantic literature read by Emma had some roots in Northern Europe, popularized in De la littérature by Mme de Stael, who extolled the world of Ossian and the bards, Shakespeare, and Germanic and Scandinavian legend rather than the classical world of the Mediterranean. Byron (Don Juan) and Hugo (Les Orientales) were largely responsible for a new vision of Italy, Greece and the near East as places of warmth and exoticism. The classical view of the Mediterranean was of a literature and culture characterized by harmony and restraint. A letter from Flaubert to his
mistress Louise Colet (3 March 1852) describes his painstaking researches into some of the more ephemeral aspects of Romanticism: 'For two days now I have been trying to enter into the dreams of young girls, and for this have been navigating in the milky oceans of books about castles, and troubadours in white-plumed velvet hats'. Lamartian melancholy: Lamartine's poem Le Lac (published in 1820) regrets the passing of love, undermined by death but recalled in the beauty of natural scenery.

22. She found it impossible to open her mouth: At this point Flaubert deleted from his manuscript a short passage describing Rodolphe's feelings at seeing Emma again. Originally it read: *And in spite of all her efforts, she found it impossible to open her mouth. Rodolphe was gazing at her as though her absence had metamorphosed her into a different woman - and he felt himself assailed by a sudden desire; the situation inflaming his appetite with a new voluptuousness, in which old pleasures would be recaptured. But human respect restrained him - and in a tone of feigned gallantry he said: You haven't changed, you're as charming as every you were.*

23. Arsenic and a sudden spasm of nausea: 'When I wrote the description of the poisoning of Mme Bovary I had the taste of arsenic so much in my mouth, I had taken so much poison myself that I gave myself two bouts of indigestion one after the other - two real bouts for I threw up all my dinner' (letter to Hippolyte Taine, Nov. 1866).