A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MYTH IN STENDHAL'S LE ROUGE ET LE NOIR AND FLAUBERT'S MADAME BOVARY

THESIS

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The study is a comparative analysis of Stendhal's romantic interpretation and Flaubert's realistic interpretation of outdated myths. The first purpose of the study is to reveal the linear development of Julien Sorel and Emma Bovary in quest of their respective myths. The second is to reveal technical devices used by the authors that lead to diverse interpretations of the myths.

The sources of data used in the study are Le Rouge et le noir and Madame Bovary and secondary materials concerning the two novels.

The study is divided into five chapters including an introduction, two chapters that develop Julien's and Emma's respective myths, a chapter concerning technical devices used in the novels and a conclusion.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Stendhal in Le Rouge et le noir and Flaubert in Madame Bovary depict in the characters of Julien Sorel and Emma Bovary the pursuit of an idealized way of life that each, for different reasons, has little chance of attaining. In effect, both authors describe the pursuit of a myth, a dream that is no longer valid in the society in which their protagonists live. Le Rouge et le noir, published in 1830, relates a viewpoint held by Julien Sorel that had lost its efficacy with the fall of Napoleon some fifteen years prior. Madame Bovary, published in 1857, depicts an attitude prevalent in French literature nearly a generation earlier and which is no longer in accord with Flaubert's concept of reality. Both Julien Sorel and Emma Bovary reach into the past and pattern their thoughts and actions after a way of life that has become outdated. Julien espouses the Napoleonic myth long after Napoleon has fallen. Similarly, Emma espouses the romantic myth, an idealized and mystical concept of reality and self, after the glory of romanticism has yielded to the literary and philosophical concepts of realism.

Stendhal and Flaubert trace the linear development and the consequences of Julien's and Emma's respective myths in the two novels. Julien's myth is in many ways comparable to

Emma's myth. Both characters espouse an ideal that is in direct conflict with the values of the societies in which they function. Constant disillusionment in the face of reality conducts both characters to the ultimate form of escapism, death. The diversity in the consequences of Julien's myth and Emma's ideal resides primarily in the difference between Stendhal's romantic outlook on life and Flaubert's realistic attitude.

Stendhal develops Julien's myth from the attitude of the romantic author. Julien's conflict becomes twofold during the course of the novel. His Napoleonic sense of duty and his idealism are in conflict with the reality of a corrupted society. Furthermore, Julien's ambition and the methods he must employ to realize his ambition are in conflict with his romantic impulses. Flaubert relates Emma Bovary's myth from the viewpoint of the realistic author. Her romantic aspirations are in direct conflict with the interpretation of reality that Flaubert adopts in the novel.

The difference in the romantic attitude in Le Rouge et le noir and the realistic attitude in Madame Bovary is revealed by the manner in which each author ends his novel. In the end, Julien relinquishes his Napoleonic ambition and dies with full knowledge of self. Before dying he finds happiness and fulfillment through the love of Madame de Rênal and in the knowledge that he has not compromised with the society he scorns. Mathilde de La Mole carries his severed head in

romantic fashion to a cave in a mountain and buries it with her own hands. Emma adheres to her mystical-romantic myth until she dies and consequently realizes no happiness or fulfillment in life or in death. She, unlike Julien, undergoes the real agony of death and is escorted to her grave without the presence of her lovers, Rodolphe and Leon.

Both Stendhal and Flaubert may justifiably be called didactic authors because of their respective methods of inserting subjective judgments into the novels. Each author illustrates the functioning of a myth in his hero and proceeds to deflate the myth by subjecting it to his own biased opinion of reality. Julien's concept of life is based on Stendhal's doctrine of Beylism, a doctrine by which the individual seeks to realize the greatest amount of happiness that society has to offer.[1] A moral and political system of individuality affirmed by the energy of the Stendhalian hero separates him from the masses and motivates him to combat social prejudices and corruption.[2] Julien incorporates the Napoleonic myth into the doctrine of Beylism and is consequently disillusioned and unhappy until he relinquishes the myth and follows his natural impulses. The Napoleonic myth usurps Julien's energy and destroys the happiness he could have realized in his love

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[1]Robert Vigneron, "Beylisme, Romanticisme, Réalisme," Modern Philology, LVI(1958), 101.

[2]André Lagarde and Laurent Michard, XIX^e Siècle: Les Grands auteurs français du programme (Paris, 1968), p. 328.

relationship with Madame de Rênal. Emma suffers from the doctrine of Bovaryism, "the capacity of seeing oneself other than one is. . . [she] does not know what her possibilities are nor what she is capable of achieving, and that is her tragedy."[3] Her concept of life consists of the "thirst for the impossible," a disease resulting from the "confrontation of dream and reality."[4] Emma's ideal creates in her a false concept of love as well as a false concept of reality. She perishes not because of love but because of a weakness and a general lack of foresight, a naïveté that disposes her to be duped.[5] Both Julien and Emma are from the beginning destined to be duped by self-inflicted erroneous concepts of self and reality. As their respective myths evolve, Stendhal and Flaubert reveal their own interpretations of reality that are not in accord with the thoughts and actions of Julien and Emma. Consequently, both authors render judgments of the world views they have depicted in their characters while subjectively denouncing the reality of corrupt societies in which men like Valenod and Homais reign through unscrupulous tactics.

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[3]Enid Starkie, Flaubert: The Making of the Master (London, 1967), p. 299.

[4]Victor Brombert, "Flaubert and the Impossible Artist-Hero," Southern Review, V(1968), 986.

[5]Albert Thibaudet, Gustave Flaubert (Paris, 1935), p. 101.

CHAPTER II

JULIEN SOREL IN QUEST OF A MYTH

Le Rouge et le noir is on one plane the story of a young ambitious idealist who desires to "faire fortune"[1] in a society whose moral code is based on hypocrisy. On another plane it is the story of the failure of the Napoleonic myth, an ideal of military grandeur that had previously allowed poor but energetic men like Julien Sorel to succeed in society through sheer determination. For an entire generation Napoleon's rapid rise to fame had stoked the fires of ambition in many a young man's breast. Napoleon, son of a noble but poor Corsican family, had risen from total obscurity on that remote island, and through sheer force of will and intellect had achieved the pinnacle of military power and social acceptance in the space of a few years. Second lieutenant at the age of sixteen, general at the age of twenty-four and head of the government at the age of thirty, Napoleon inspired many a dream for success in contravention of the rigid social strictures of the era. Napoleon exemplified the realization of success based on personal merit, ability and dynamism rather than on family name or compromise of personal integrity in shoddy political deals.

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[1]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir (Paris, 1960), p. 23.

Stendhal traces the development of Julien's psyche as he endeavors to integrate the Napoleonic myth with his natural impulses and with the society in which he must function. According to Josephson, Stendhal "pictures a society whose false authorities and pharisaical social code breed individual and group maladjustment."[2] Julien Sorel is a prime example of individual maladjustment to a society in which hypocrisy is a prerequisite to success. Julien's Napoleonic aspirations are in conflict with the reality of a corrupted society. In addition, he suffers from an inner conflict between Napoleonic duty and romantic impulses. Julien's inner conflict has led Josephson to say that he is "perhaps the first truly split personality in the novel."[3]

Julien's adoption of the Napoleonic myth is partially the result of a limited and distorted education. Exclusive of the old army surgeon's military lessons and Father Chélan's theology lessons, Julien is self-taught. Rousseau's Confessions is "le seul livre à l'aide duquel son imagination se figurait le monde. Le recueil des bulletins de la grande armée et le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène complétaient son Coran."[4] The fusion of Napoleonic military grandeur with Rousseauistic

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[2]Matthew Josephson, Stendhal or the Pursuit of Happiness (New York, 1946), p. 348.

[3]Ibid., p. 343.

[4]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 20.

idealism creates in Julien a sense of social justice and a desire to rise above his social class. As Julien's myth evolves, he rapidly develops a Napoleonic sense of duty that is in constant conflict with his natural romantic instincts and timidity. Victor Brombert writes perceptively of Julien's inner conflict: "Pride and timidity are at war in the psyche of this young plebeian who is subjected but not resigned to the social and political pressures of his time."[5] He suppresses his emotions to follow the two ruling passions of his life, pride and ambition.[6] Julien's timidity and recurring moments of emotional sensibility earn the pity of certain characters in the novel. His pride, however, does not allow him to profit from the sympathy of others. He consequently endeavors to conceal his emotions, deceiving himself in the process and becoming vulnerable to the awesome Mathilde and to the reality of a corrupted and unsympathetic society.

The environment of Verrières is a second significant factor in the development of Julien's myth, for "environment does not determine a man's character, but it does determine his fate."[7] Julien is forced to use Verrières as a stepping stone to greater things: "Pour Julien, faire fortune, c'était d'abord sortir de Verrières; il abhorrait sa patrie. Tout ce

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[5]Victor Brombert, Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom (New York, 1968), p. 64.

[6]William M. Schutte, editor, Six Novelists (Pittsburgh, 1959), p. 6.

[7]Martin Turnell, The Novel in France (New York, 1951), p. 146.

qu'il y voyait glaçait son imagination."[8] The pounding noise of the machine making nails under the operation of girls' delicate hands as well as the high walls around the town create a claustral and unnatural atmosphere. Brombert notes: "The contrast between the strident mechanism and the delicate human figures conveys the notion of an inhuman ceremony. Nature is being brutalized and profaned by the ogre of mercantilism."[9] Turnell sees in the walls "the ramparts which separate the two worlds of the privileged and the unprivileged. They are also the fortifications which preserve the bourgeois world from the incursions of peasants and workers."[10] The barbaric pruning of the trees, a form of emasculation, is indicative of the values of the society of Verrières, this conformity symbolizing "the pervasive tyranny of inhibitions and servile social conventions."[11] The environment of Verrières defies nature and is in direct conflict with the Rousseauistic social values Julien has read about. Julien's world view requires him to scale the physical walls and to penetrate social barriers without revealing that he is opposed to their existence. He must consequently act against his nature and espouse hypocrisy in order to cope with the environment that surrounds him.

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[8]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 23.

[9]Brombert, p. 62.

[10]Turnell, p. 142.

[11]Brombert, p. 63.

Julien's progression in pursuit of the Napoleonic myth occurs in four different environments: Verrières society, the seminary in Besançon, Parisian high society and finally prison. In each successive stage he will, in the pursuit of his ideal to succeed in society, compromise his basic quest for justice and personal happiness.

Julien is deeply absorbed in the Napoleonic myth at the beginning of the novel. He is first seen sitting on a rafter above everyone else, a position of elevation worthy of a Napoleonic figure, and Stendhal will return Julien to points of elevation throughout the novel. Stendhal, however, early indicates that Julien is no Napoleon. He allows his father to beat him with a stick and later stands before him with tear-filled eyes. Julien rebels against his father only when his pride is in danger of being compromised in the eyes of society. His pride is comparable to that of Alfred de Vigny's Chatterton as he reveals that he would die rather than be forced to eat with servants, an idea Julien obtained through his reading of Rousseau's Confessions. Assured that he will not be treated like a servant, Julien goes to the church to practice the hypocrisy he must employ to realize his ambition. After crying "Aux armes!"[12] he is ready to penetrate the walls of class separation and engage in his first battle.

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[12]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 23.

As Julien approaches Monsieur de Rênal's estate, he loses his courage and lapses into a state of disarray. This early indication of Julien's emotional instability reveals his inability to function consistently in harmony with the Napoleonic ideals he has espoused. Madame de Rênal indeed "eut pitié de cette pauvre créature, arrêté à la porte d'entrée."[13] Julien's feminine looks and tear-filled eyes win him more favor than he would have enjoyed if he had arrived with Napoleonic boldness. When his courage returns, Julien yields to an impulse and boldly kisses Madame de Rênal's hand. She quickly forgives his audacity and again pities him when his two brothers beat him severely. Madame de Rênal, who had upon first seeing Julien called him "mon enfant,"[14] takes him in as one of her children: "Mme. de Rênal lui eut bientôt pardonné son ignorance extrême qui était une grâce de plus, et la rudesse de ses façons qu'elle parvint à corriger."[15] Her pity wounds Julien's pride and he rebels against the favor she shows him: "L'amour pour Mme. de Rênal devint de plus en plus impossible dans le coeur orgueilleux de Julien."[16]

Julien's trip to Vergy reveals the romantic side of his nature. He momentarily drops his mask of hypocrisy and becomes lost in the beauty of his environment. Stendhal offers an insight into the true Julien: "Après tant de contrainte et

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[13] Ibid., p. 26.

[14] Ibid., p. 26.

[15] Ibid., p. 37.

[16] Ibid., p. 39.

de politique habile, seul, loin des regards des hommes, et, par instinct, ne craignant point Mme. de Rênal, il se livrait au plaisir d'exister, si vif à cet âge, et au milieu des plus belles montagnes du monde."[17] The hypocrisy Julien forces himself to practice is contrary to his nature. He does not trust his impulses and will consequently act agains his will, becoming his own antagonist in the process.

Julien's happiness subsides as Napoleonic duty smothers his natural impulses. While conversing with Madame de Rênal his hand accidentally touches hers:

> Cette main se retira bien vite; mais Julien pensa qu'il était son devoir d'obtenir que l'on ne retirât pas cette main quand il la touchait. L'idée d'un devoir à accomplir, et d'un ridicule ou plutôt d'un sentiment d'infériorité à encourir si l'on n'y parvenait pas, éloigna sur-le-champ tout plaisir de son coeur.[18]

Julien is completely absorbed in the Napoleonic myth as he wages war against Madame de Rênal, his enemy "avec lequel il va falloir se battre."[19] In order to conquer his timidity, Julien sets a deadline by which time he must have seized Madame de Rênal's hand: "Au moment précis où dix heures sonneront, j'exécuterai ce que, pendant toute la journée, je me suis promis de faire ce soir, ou je monterai chez moi me brûler la cervelle."[20] After going through with his plan Julien is overcome by relief: "Son âme fut inondée de bonheur, non qu'il aimât Mme. de Rênal, mais un affreux supplice venait

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[17] Ibid., p. 50.

[18] Ibid., p. 51.

[19] Ibid., p. 52.

[20] Ibid., p. 53.

de cesser."[21] Julien's success in concealing his weakness makes him victorious in his first battle. Stendhal says, somewhat ironically, in expression of Julien's thought: "Il avait fait son devoir, et un devoir héroïque."[22] Success increases Julien's courage and the next day he says to himself, "il faut dire à cette femme que je l'aime."[23]

Julien's pride destroys the happiness and even the memory of his success. Monsieur de Rênal's insolent remarks wound Julien's pride and he consequently regards the mayor as his most ardent enemy. The victory he enjoys by obtaining a leave of absence from the mayor reinforces in his mind the validity of his Napoleonic myth: "J'ai gagné une bataille, se dit-il aussitôt qu'il se vit dans les bois et loin du regard des hommes, j'ai donc gagné une bataille!"[24]

Julien's escape into the country has the same effect on him as his previous escape to Vergy. Alone, he forgets his ambition and becomes lost in the beauty of nature. He again assumes a lofty physical position reminiscent of his position at the sawmill: ". . . il se trouva debout sur un roc immense et bien sûr d'être séparé de tous les hommes. Cette position physique le fit sourire, elle lui peignait la position qu'il brûlait d'atteindre au moral."[25] Julien had fallen from the rafter in his father's sawmill. He will likewise fall from the elevated social position he later assumes. Here Stendhal

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[21] Ibid., p. 53. [22] Ibid., p. 55. [23] Ibid., p. 55.

[24] Ibid., p. 61. [25] Ibid., p. 62.

explicitly states Julien's ambition for himself. He is motivated by no crass desire for material gain, as are all the people who surround him. What he seeks is a position of moral rectitude which will isolate and set him above all the grossly materialistic, money-grubbing, political wheeler-dealers by whom he feels surrounded. As he watches the soaring movements of a hawk Julien turns his thoughts to his hero, Napoleon, and Stendhal foreshadows Julien's destiny:

> Quelque épervier parti des grandes roches au-dessus de sa tête était aperçu par lui, de temps à autre, décrivant en silence ses cercles immenses. L'oeil de Julien suivait machinalement l'oiseau de proie. Ses mouvements tranquilles et puissants le frappaient, il enviait cette force, il enviait cet isolement.
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> C'était la destinée de Napoléon, serait-ce un jour la sienne?[26]

The grandeur and power of the hawk, reminiscent of the eagle, symbolic of Napoleon, are in direct contrast with Julien's weakness and confinement.

Julien's brief leave of absence has not healed his wounded pride, and he is still angered by the mayor's harsh words as he returns to Vergy. He becomes bolder in his actions, as if to defy those who are opposed to the realization of his myth. In the presence of Monsieur de Rênal, Julien risks all by seizing Madame de Rênal's hand and showering it with kisses. While Madame de Rênal is torturing herself with the word adultery, Julien's thoughts are guided by his ambition. He thinks only of the profit to be derived from his bold actions.

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[26] Ibid., p. 63.

To heal his wounded pride and profit from his actions with the mayor's wife, Julien obtains a three day leave of absence. He retreats into the mountains where he can be alone. Stendhal again compares Julien to a bird of prey:

> Caché comme un oiseau de proie, au milieu des roches nues qui couronnent la grande montagne, il pouvait apercevoir de bien loin tout homme qui se serait approché de lui. Il découvrit une petite grotte au milieu de la pente presque verticale d'un des rochers. Il prit sa course, et bientôt fut établi dans cette retraite. Ici, dit-il, avec des yeux brillants de joie, les hommes ne sauraient me faire de mal.[27]

Alone in the cave Julien enjoys a feeling of freedom and relief. He consequently drops his mask of hypocrisy and reveals his true emotions: "Il aimait avec passion, il était aimé. S'il se séparait d'elle [Mme. de Rênal] pour quelques instants, c'était pour aller se couvrir de gloire et mériter d'en être encore plus aimé."[28]

Julien's decision to seduce Madame de Rênal is the result of his ambition, not his love for her. Alone in the cave, Julien had dropped his mask of hypocrisy. As he returns to society, he opts to follow his ambition rather than settle for the security Fouqué had offered him: "Comme Hercule, il se trouvait non entre le vice et la vertu, mais entre la médiocrité suivie d'un bien-être assuré et tous les rêves héroïques de sa jeunesse."[29] He consequently employs Napoleonic

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[27] Ibid., p. 72.

[28] Ibid., p. 72.

[29] Ibid., p. 75.

strategy to seduce Madame de Rênal and falls into one blunder after another because he does not trust himself to act naturally. The duty of seducing Madame de Rênal is a burden to Julien, comparable to the burden he had overcome by holding her hand: ". . . son rôle de séducteur lui pesait si horriblement, que s'il eût pu suivre son penchant, il se fût retiré dans sa chambre pour plusieurs jours, et n'eût plus vu ces dames."[30] Compelled by duty to go through with the seduction, Julien reluctantly approaches Madame de Rênal's bedroom "souffrant plus mille fois que s'il eût marché à la mort."[31] Ironically, his success is not the result of his well planned Napoleonic strategy. He ultimately succumbs to the same emotional sensitivity he had displayed on first seeing Madame de Rênal:

> Julien oublia ses vains projets et revint à son rôle naturel; ne pas plaire à une femme si charmante lui parut le plus grand des malheurs. Il ne répondit à ses reproches qu'en se jetant à ses pieds, en embrassant ses genoux. Comme elle lui parlait avec une extrême dureté, il fondit en larmes.[32]

He enjoys a victory "à laquelle ne l'eût pas conduit toute son adresse si maladroite."[33] Julien, however, keeps before him constantly a sense of duty which eradicates all pleasure: "En un mot, ce qui faisait de Julien un être supérieur fut précisément ce qui l'empêcha de goûter le bonheur qui se plaçait sous ses pas. C'est une jeune fille de seize ans, qui

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[30] Ibid., p. 84.

[31] Ibid., p. 86.

[32] Ibid., p. 86.

[33] Ibid., p. 86.

a des couleurs charmantes, et qui, pour aller au bal, a la folie de mettre du rouge."[34] Julien does not trust himself to act naturally. He constantly endeavors to conceal his emotions by wearing a Napoleonic mask. He consequently conceals his natural charm in the process of role playing. Stendhal's commentary on Julien underscores his essential innocence, his naïveté, his freshness in this very corrupt society. His thoughts after the seduction are concerned only with the question of whether or not he played his role well.

During the next few days following the seduction, Julien seems to be completely absorbed in thoughts of love: "En peu de jours, Julien, rendu à toute l'ardeur de son âge, fut éperdument amoureux. . . Il avait perdu presque tout à fait l'idée du rôle à jouer."[35] He sporadically forgets his ambition and acts like a true romantic hero lost in reverie:

> Dans ses moments d'oubli d'ambition, Julien admirait avec transport jusqu'aux chapeaux, jusqu'aux robes de Mme. de Rênal. Il ne pouvait se rassasier du plaisir de sentir leur parfum. Il ouvrait son armoire de glace et restait des heures entières admirant la beauté et l'arrangement de tout ce qu'il y trouvait.[36]

Such moments of ecstasy are rapidly effaced as Julien returns to his role of experienced seducer in order to further his ambition: "Son amour était encore de l'ambition; c'était de la joie de posséder, lui pauvre être malheureux et si méprisé, une femme aussi noble et aussi belle."[37] Mistrustful, suspicious

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[34] Ibid., p. 86.

[35] Ibid., p. 90.

[36] Ibid., p. 91.

[37] Ibid., p. 91.

of everyone's motives, including Madame de Rênal's, Julien is incapable of appreciating the depth of true emotion he has awakened in his conquest.

Stendhal reinforces the ambiguity and dual role of Julien in the ceremonies accompanying the arrival of the King of ____. Julien dresses in a blue uniform to serve as a guard of honor in the parade. He sees himself as an officer in Napoleon's army and his bliss has no bounds. Julien is only teased with the blue uniform, however, for he soon has to trade it for a black cassock in order to serve in the church ceremony. His sentiments remain with the glory associated with the blue uniform for "sous les longs plis de sa soutane on pouvait apercevoir les éperons du garde d'honneur."[38] Julien willingly trades his black cassock for the blue jacket Monsieur de la Mole gives him later.

As the mayor begins to receive anonymous letters, Julien's love for Madame de Rênal becomes more intense. Julien's intensified love brings to the surface the romantic side of his nature. He, like Emma Bovary, seems to be excited by taking unnecessary risks. Stendhal says: "Julien tomba dans toutes les folies de l'amour. . . "[39] The letters intensify the love affair for both Julien and Madame de Rênal: "Cette grande crise morale changea la nature du sentiment qui unissait Julien à sa maîtresse. Son amour ne fut plus seulement de l'admiration

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[38] Ibid., p. 103.

[39] Ibid., p. 116.

pour la beauté, l'orgueil de la posséder."[40] He compromises his Napoleonic ideal by allowing Madame de Rênal to dominate him. Julien's love and the risk involved in continuing his affair efface momentarily his passions of ambition and pride. He consequently succumbs to Madame de Rênal's orders. It is she who devises the plan of sending her husband a false anonymous letter. She orders Julien to cut words out of a book in order to produce the letter. She further orders Julien to go for a walk in the woods with the children while she carries out her plan. Madame de Rênal proves to be a better strategist than Julien. Her calculating schemes have led one critic to say that "Madame Bovary is Madame de Rênal a quarter of a century later."[41] Madame de Rênal, however, schemes to prolong her present situation. Madame Bovary, like Julien, schemes to find fulfillment in the future.

Throughout the novel Stendhal has spoken of a corrupt system of social values. Julien has only sketchily defined ideas, gleaned from his readings of Rousseau, of what society should be. The dinner at Monsieur Valenod's house brings out his repugnance of social injustice, an injustice his emotions will not allow him to accept. He is horrified by the fact that the wealth which surrounds him in the Valenod household was accumulated at the expense of the poor. It is with great

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[40] Ibid., p. 117.

[41] René Girard, Deceit, Desire and the Novel (Baltimore, 1965), p. 149.

difficulty that Julien manages to conceal his wrath toward Monsieur Valenod and the guests: "Malgré toute son hypocrisie si souvent exercée, il sentit une grosse larme couler le long de sa joue."[42] The dinner at Valenod's house and the dishonest sale of an old house in Verrières allow Julien a first-hand glimpse of the corruption so prevalent in society. It is this type of social injustice and corruption that Julien must accept in order to realize his ambition. At this point in the novel Julien is angered by the injustice of corrupt society. Yet, ironically, when later placed in another environment, he goes on a secret mission that defies all of his social ideals.

Increasing gossip and more anonymous letters make it necessary for the mayor to rid his house of Julien's presence. Julien, who had been profoundly impressed by the Bishop of Agde's ability to dissemble during the Verrières church ceremony, as well as by the splendor of his garb, by his youth, and by the immense power at his command, opts to enter the seminary in Besançon to pursue his ambition rather than settle for the security Fouqué offers him as his assistant in a business enterprise. Julien's choice to continue the pursuit of his ambition after realizing that hypocrisy and acceptance of social injustice are prerequisite to his success implies the deterioration of his social ideal. He feels that his dream of succeeding in society can be effectively served from the seminary as well as from the château of the Mayor of Verrières.

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[42]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 139.

Julien finds the city of Besançon to be very similar to Verrières: "La hauteur des murs, la profondeur des fossés, l'air terrible des canons l'avaient occupé pendant plusieurs heures. . . "[43] He once again finds himself confronted with walls that he must penetrate. He is deeply impressed by the sight of moats and cannons, symbols of the military glory that had previously been associated with Besançon. The setting reinforces the duality of Julien's ambition, in a manner reminiscent of the dual role he played in Verrières during the parade and the church ceremony. He has come to Besançon in order to advance in the ranks of the clergy. His true sentiments, however, are associated with military aspirations: "Quelle différence pour moi, dit-il en soupirant, si j'arrivais dans cette noble ville de guerre pour être sous-lieutenant dans un des régiments chargés de la défendre!"[44] Julien is still absorbed in his Napoleonic myth as he almost enters into a duel with a man who stares at him in a café.

Julien had stood outside Monsieur de Rênal's gate for a long time before acquiring the courage to enter. It is with even greater reluctance that he rings the bell to enter the seminary. The grim look of the porter who greets him is in direct contrast to the pity Madame de Rênal had shown him previously. The look of M. Pirard is so frightening that Julien ultimately faints and falls to the floor in a manner reminiscent

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[43] Ibid., p. 161.

[44] Ibid., p. 161.

of his fall in the opening pages of the book: "C'était la physionomie du tigre goûtant par avance le plaisir de dévorer sa proie."[44] The atmosphere of the seminary is claustral and decadent. Flowerpots are neglected and the walls are pock-marked by time. In such an environment, Julien, the friend of nature, welcomes the sight of trees: "Il regarda les arbres; cette vue lui fit du bien, comme s'il eût aperçu d'anciens amis."[45] As in the past, the beauty of nature restores Julien and evokes his romantic inclinations.

The return of Julien's courage is accompanied by the return of his ambition. He turns to his only weapon, hypocrisy, and endeavors to rise academically above the other students in the seminary through the application of Napoleonic strategy. He says to himself: "Sous Napoléon, j'eusse été sergent; parmi ces futurs curés, je serai grand vicaire."[46] Julien rapidly learns that he is facing a strong enemy, as his foolish mistakes soon make him an outcast. Thoughts of leaving the seminary are dismissed by the challenge presented to Julien: ". . . je mériterais d'être submergé, si je m'endors pendant la tempête! s'écria Julien."[47]

Julien wins the favor of Father Chas-Bernard by displaying Napoleonic courage in draping the church pillars. He does well in high places and he is never reluctant to rise above others when afforded the opportunity to do so. Due to his

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[44] Ibid., p. 171.

[45] Ibid., p. 172.

[46] Ibid., p. 176.

[47] Ibid., p. 186.

magnificent courage, Father Chas-Bernard wishes to introduce Julien to the bishop. Julien's sensibility, however, effaces the favor he had won through Napoleonic tactics. The sight of Madame de Rênal in the church brings Julien to his knees and he is consequently unable to meet the bishop, a move that could have well served his ambition. Emotional effusion has led to Julien's successful seduction of Madame de Rênal. There is, however, no pity for him in the seminary. Julien's hope of realizing his ambition diminishes as he drops his mask of hypocrisy and reveals his emotional instability.

Ironically, after such a defeat, Julien wins the favor of Father Pirard during a moment of weakness. Father Pirard has been unjustifiably ousted from the seminary and now shares with Julien the humiliation of being an outcast. When Julien learns that Father Pirard has been removed, "Il s'approcha de l'abbé Pirard et lui prit la main, qu'il porta à ses lèvres."[48] The comfort of having a friend to talk to brings out Julien's true emotions: "Il y avait si longtemps que Julien n'avait entendu une voix amie, qu'il faut lui pardonner une faiblesse; il fondit en larmes. L'abbé Pirard lui ouvrit les bras; ce moment fut bien doux pour tous les deux."[49] The relationship Julien establishes with Father Pirard during a moment of emotional weakness serves his ambition more effectively than his Napoleonic schemes of hypocrisy. Through Pirard, Julien obtains the position of

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[48] Ibid., p. 196.

[49] Ibid., p. 197.

secretary to the influential Marquis de la Mole, one of the king-makers in Parisian society.

Before going to Paris to embark upon his new career, however, Julien returns to Verrières to see Madame de Rênal. The risk of being caught intensifies his desire to see her. He uses a ladder to scale the walls that surround Monsieur de Rênal's estate. The dogs in the garden, although they have not seen Julien for some time, do not prevent his entry. They welcome him instead: "Quel accueil me feront les chiens de garde? pensait-il. Toute la question est là. Les chiens aboyèrent, et s'avancèrent au galop sur lui; mais il siffla doucement, et ils vinrent le caresser."[50] The friendliness of the dogs indicates that Julien is a friend of nature, not a butcher of trees like the mayor. Once inside Madame de Rênal's bedroom, Julien is overjoyed by her reproach: "Ce refus de tutoiement, cette façon brusque de briser un lien si tendre, et sur lequel il comptait encore, portèrent jusqu'au délire le transport d'amour de Julien."[51] He, like Emma Bovary, finds fulfillment in self-denial. Julien later affirms the satisfaction he enjoyed because of Madame de Rênal's rejection, ". . . quelles délices les deux premières heures, quand son amie voulait sincèrement le renvoyer. . ."[52] Julien's tears ultimately arouse Madame de Rênal's pity and as in the past she succumbs to his desires.

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[50] Ibid., p. 214. [51] Ibid., p. 216. [52] Ibid., p. 231.

The seminary reveals to Julien the hypocrisy and political corruption of the clergy. His desire to rise above the other seminary students through a sense of ambition causes him to make many blunders. The failure of ambitious determination to further Julien's cause in the seminary leads him to entertain doubts about the Napoleonic myth for the first time. Julien's increasing detachment from the Napoleonic myth is demonstrated by his apathetic attitude in the coach that takes him to Paris. During the trip from Verrières to Paris Falcoz and Saint-Giraud discuss the merits and failures of Napoleon. Julien's hero is accused of having made possible the success of men like Monsieur de Rênal and Valenod. Julien is surprised at the attacks on Napoleon. He does not, however, come to the defense of his hero. This is an indication that the validity of Julien's Napoleonic ideal has diminished. Furthermore, Julien is removed from ambitious dreams of the future. His thoughts are centered on his love for Madame de Rênal and the welfare of her children.

Julien is increasingly disturbed by the corruption and hypocrisy he finds in each environment in which he functions. Upon his arrival in Paris he says to himself, "Me voici donc dans le centre de l'intrigue et de l'hypocrisie!"[53] The Hotel de La Mole is a new battlefield for Julien as is Paris itself. He must learn to adapt his strategy to his environment, a talent he had displayed in Verrières and in Besançon.

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[53] Ibid., p. 232.

As in the past, Julien wins the favor of his enemy by displaying his own weakness. He humiliates himself in front of the La Mole family by confessing that he fell from his horse while riding with Norbert. His act of humiliation wins the favor of the entire family, even Mathilde de La Mole. Julien's Napoleonic courage returns and he risks his life on Norbert's horse the next day.

Julien is introduced into affluent Parisian society through the frequent evening receptions at the Hotel de La Mole. He is stricken by the contrast between the glamour and the banal conversations of the guests. The customs and values of the elite Parisian society are not far removed from the customs and values of the provincial society of Verrières:

> Ainsi, pensait Julien en les entendant rire dans l'escalier, il m'a été donné de voir l'autre extrême de ma situation! Je n'ai pas vingt louis de rente, et je me suis trouvé côte à côte avec un homme qui a vingt louis de rente par heure, et l'on se moquait de lui. . . . Une telle vue guérit de l'envie.[54]

The hypocrisy and corruption of society create a dilemma for Julien. He must accept it and become a part of the corruption or relinquish his ambition to succeed.

Julien's desire to succeed in society is accompanied by increasing boldness and pride and a tendency toward impulsive actions as his true nature asserts itself. At the cafe in Besançon Julien had almost entered into a duel with a man who had stared at him. In Paris, he does indeed fight a duel because

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[54] Ibid., p. 261.

of an insult from the Chevalier de Beauvoisis' coachman. Julien is wounded in the duel, an indication that he is not suited to military battle. The fact that he fights a duel, however, reveals his courage and by chance pushes him closer to the realization of his ambition. The Chevalier de Beauvoisis is dismayed when he discovers that he has fought with a mere secretary. He is influential in obtaining a decoration for Julien, a decoration that is the result of Julien's military weakness, not his Napoleonic grandeur. Ironically, Julien is not detached from his father who has treated him with malice in Verrières. Julien's generosity combined with increasing power obtains a lucrative post for his father.

Julien enters deeper into his Napoleonic myth as he discovers the attributes of his romantic counterpart, Mathilde de La Mole. He attends a ball at the insistence of Mathilde and meets Count Altamira, a man noble in the eyes of Mathilde because he has been condemned to die. Julien's eyes reveal that he too is infatuated with the count. Count Altamira poses to Julien the most important question of his life, whether or not the end justifies the means: "Je vous répondrai, dit Altamira d'un air triste, quand vous aurez tué un homme en duel, ce qui est bien moins laid que de le faire exécuter par un bourreau. Ma foi! dit Julien, qui veut la fin veut les moyens."[55] Julien is ultimately forced to decide whether or not the end justifies the means, whether or not he can deny the reality of social injustice in order to realize his ambition through hypocrisy.

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[55] Ibid., p. 294.

Julien's extravagant deeds bring Mathilde's admiration for him to the surface. As their relationship evolves, Julien and Mathilde retrogress into the sixteenth century. Julien becomes Boniface de La Mole, one of many roles he assumes in the novel, and Mathilde becomes Queen Marguerite. Stendhal foreshadows Julien's destiny through his relationship with Mathilde:

> Mais ce qui touchait Mlle. Mathilde. . . c'est que la reine Marguerite de Navarre, cachée dans une maison de la place de Grève, osa faire demander au bourreau la tête de son amant. Et la nuit suivante, à minuit, elle prit cette tête dans sa voiture, et alla l'enterrer elle-même dans une chapelle située au pied de la colline de Montmartre.[56]

Mathilde soon decides that Julien has the potentiality of becoming another Danton and <u>decides</u> to fall in love with him:

> Du moment qu'elle eut décidé qu'elle aimait Julien, elle ne s'ennuya plus. Tous les jours elle se félicitait du parti qu'elle avait pris de se donner une grande passion. Cet amusement a bien des dangers, pensait-elle. Tant mieux! mille fois tant mieux![57]

Mathilde, like Julien and Madame Bovary, is intrigued by the risk involved in doing the extraordinary.

Although Julien suspects the existence of a conspiracy against him, he is willing to risk his life in order to triumph over the Marquis de Croisenois. He is envious of the marquis' inherited power, power a common man must scheme to obtain since the fall of Napoleon, "Alors un homme comme moi était tué, ou

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[56] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 301.

[57] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 315.

général à trente-six ans."[58] Ambition brings the force of Julien's hypocrisy to the surface and he advances "en riant comme Méphistophélès" and comparing himself to Tartufe "dont il savait le rôle par coeur."[59] Despite Julien's determination to triumph over the Marquis de Croisenois, his suspicion of a conspiracy almost deters him from going through with the seduction of Mathilde. He undergoes extensive suffering and soul searching in the garden of the Hotel de La Mole, reminiscent of the suffering of Rousseau's Saint-Preux and Goethe's Werther.[60] Julien's pride ultimately intervenes and propels him toward his duty, ". . . si je refuse, je me méprise moi-même dans la suite! Toute la vie cette action sera un grand sujet de doute, et, pour moi, un tel doute est le plus cuisant des malheurs. . ."[61]

Julien had boldly risked his life when he climbed up to Madame de Rênal's bedroom window at one o'clock in the morning. He was unarmed although he was not certain that she was in her bedroom that night. As he climbs the ladder to enter Mathilde's bedroom, "il monta doucement le pistolet à la main, étonné de n'être pas attaqué."[62] He had in the end abandoned his role

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[58] *Ibid.*, p. 323.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 323.

[60] Maurice Bardèche, *Stendhal: Romancier* (Paris, 1947), p. 205.

[61] Stendhal, *Le Rouge et le noir*, p. 334.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 338.

playing in order to seduce Madame de Rênal. In Mathilde's bedroom the situation is different: "Julien était fort embarrassé, il ne savait comment se conduire, il n'avait pas d'amour du tout."[63] As a last resort, Julien relies on his memory and for the sake of conversation recites lines from Rousseau's Nouvelle Héloïse. Julien's awkwardness in Mathilde's bedroom has prompted Turnell's comment that Julien is not truly a romantic hero for "a Romantic hero would certainly have worked himself up into a fine frenzy by a torrent of words."[64] Nevertheless, it can not be justifiably denied that Julien is a romantic hero. His true romantic nature may be discerned only after he later dismisses his Napoleonic myth and denies ambition. Mathilde satisfies Julien's ambition through a sense of duty: "Elle avait décidé que s'il osait arriver chez elle avec le secours de l'échelle du jardinier, ainsi qu'il était prescrit, elle serait tout à lui."[65] Playing a role destroys the happiness of the occasion for both Julien and Mathilde: "Quelle différence, grand Dieu! avec son dernier séjour de vingt-quatre heures à Verrières! Ces belles façons de Paris ont trouvé le secret de tout gâter, même l'amour, se disait-il. . ."[66]

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[63] Ibid., p. 338.

[64] Turnell, p. 150.

[65] Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 341.

[66] Ibid., p. 342.

Julien's relationship with Madame de Rênal had been promoted by his ambition and duty but in the end it had developed into love. His relationship with Mathilde is begun out of a sense of ambition and duty. Pride pushes both Mathilde and Julien into melodramatic deeds. Therefore, Julien is again seen climbing up the ladder to Mathilde's bedroom and taking great risks while Mathilde calls him her master and to prove it cuts off part of her hair and throws it down to him. Julien, forced constantly to suppress his emotions by playing a role, becomes increasingly dominated by Mathilde who is more skilled in the art of hypocrisy: "Pour la première fois de sa vie, Julien se trouvait soumis à l'action d'un esprit supérieur animé contre lui de la haine la plus violente."[67]

The degree of Mathilde's domination is demonstrated by the secret mission Julien goes on for the Marquis. He is used by Monsieur de La Mole as a messenger for a group of conspirators who seek to bring English troops back into France in an effort to counter the resurgence of liberal power. It is surprising that Julien, who had been angered by the social injustice he had been exposed to in Verrières, would participate in a scheme that denies his liberal social values. It is this type of hypocrisy that Julien must ultimately adopt if he is to succeed in his ambition. At this point in the novel, Julien apparently still feels that the end justifies the means.

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[67] Ibid., p. 366.

His actions do not bother him. Julien, however, seems to be in a trance as he participates in the mission and does not consider the conséquences of what he is doing: "A peine Julien avait-il été hors de la vue du marquis qu'il avait oublié et la note secrète et la mission pour ne songer qu'au mépris de Mathilde."[68] Julien's inability to sever his thoughts from Mathilde leads him to act against all his prior inclinations and diminishes any glory he might have enjoyed for having successfully accomplished his mission.

Julien returns to Paris even more obsessed with Mathilde. This infatuation has deprived him of his ability to think clearly and tarnished his ambition to attain high position in the clergy:

> Julien pouvait espérer un évêché, si M. de La Mole arrivait au ministère; mais à ses yeux tous ces grands intérêts s'étaient comme recouverts d'un voile. Son imagination ne les apercevait plus que vaguement et pour ainsi dire dans le lointain. L'affreux malheur qui en faisait un maniaque lui montrait tous les intérêts de la vie dans sa manière d'être avec Mlle. de La Mole. Il calculait qu'après cinq ou six ans de soins, il parviendrait à s'en faire aimer de nouveau.[69]

Even Julien's eyes reveal that he is entranced and dominated by Mathilde, "ses yeux même, ainsi que dans l'extrême souffrance physique, avaient perdu tout leur feu."[70] Julien's loss of ambition is momentarily accompanied by loss of pride. He says to himself, ". . . couvrir de ridicule cet être si

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[68] Ibid., p. 386. [69] Ibid., p. 401. [70] Ibid., p. 402.

odieux, que j'appelle moi, m'amusera."[71] He is apathetic to the opportunity he has to dine with influential members of the church hierarchy who have the power to further his ambition: "Quel pas immense j'ai fait, se dit Julien en souriant avec mélancolie, et combien il m'est indifférent."[72]

The role Julien constantly plays in front of Mathilde drains his mental and physical energy. He consequently moves closer to despair and considers suicide as a solution to his torment: "Ah! que je serais plus sage, se disait-il, de démarquer mon ligne, et d'aller dans quelque forêt solitaire, à vingt lieues de Paris, finir cette exécrable vie! Inconnu dans le pays, ma mort serait cachée pendant quinze jours, et qui songerait à moi après quinze jours!"[73] Like a typical dejected romantic lover Julien ultimately asks himself, "Pourquoi suis-je moi?"[74] He is revivified when Mathilde finds Madame de Fervaque's unopened letters and falls to Julien's feet in tears, a position Julien had often assumed before Madame de Rênal. Julien has at last conquered Mathilde's pride as he says to himself, "La voilà donc, cette orgueilleuse, à mes pieds!"[75]

After Mathilde's declaration of love for Julien, he begins to compare Mathilde to Madame de Rênal: "Mme. de Rênal trouvait des raisons pour faire ce que son coeur lui dictait: cette

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[71] Ibid., p. 405.

[72] Ibid., p. 409.

[73] Ibid., p. 414.

[74] Ibid., p. 414.

[75] Ibid., p. 418.

jeune fille du grand monde ne laisse son coeur s'émouvoir que lorsqu'elle s'est prouvé par bonnes raisons qu'il doit être ému."[76] The comparison teaches Julien that he must instill fear in Mathilde: "Même dans ses moments les plus heureux, Mme. de Rênal doutait toujours que mon amour fût égal au sien. Ici, c'est un démon que je subjugue, donc il faut subjuguer."[77] Mathilde is once again his most ardent enemy and he will use Napoleonic strategy to subjugate her: "LUI FAIRE PEUR, s'écria-t-il. . . L'ennemi ne m'obéira qu'autant que je lui ferai peur, alors il n'osera me mépriser."[78] To instill fear into Mathilde, Julien must appear to be apathetic toward her. At great expense to himself emotionally, he must suppress his true feelings and follow his Napoleonic strategy: "Julien l'embrassa, mais à l'instant la main de fer du devoir saisit son coeur. Si elle voit combien je l'adore, je la perds."[79]

The return of Julien's ambition brings about the return of his pride and honor. When he learns that Mathilde is bearing his child he wonders first of all what his duty is and secondly where his interest lies. He tries to give the Marquis de La Mole an explanation because he owes it to him. His explanation is, however, hypocritical in that it is inspired by Molière's character, Tartufe. Continuing to use

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[76] Ibid., p. 421.

[77] Ibid., p. 425.

[78] Ibid., p. 425.

[79] Ibid., p. 426.

Tartufe as an example, he decides to confess to Father Pirard: "Le génie de Tartufe vint au secours de Julien: Eh bien, j'irai me confesser à lui. . ."[80]

Julien had earlier been unmoved by the possibility of obtaining an authoritative position in the church. The news that Monsieur de La Mole has provided him with a military commission and a noble title has the reverse effect on him: "On peut se la figurer par l'ambition de toute sa vie, et par la passion qu'il avait maintenant pour son fils. Le changement de nom le frappait d'étonnement."[81] Military advancement is the most highly desired result of Julien's Napoleonic quest. He has at last realized his ambition: "Après tout, pensait-il, mon roman est fini, et à moi seul tout le mérite. J'ai su me faire aimer de ce monstre d'orgueil, . . . son père ne peut vivre sans elle et elle sans moi."[82] Julien's success in his ambition makes him hard and haughty. Stendhal, who has the advantage of viewing his character from the inside as well as from the outside, momentarily detaches himself from Julien in order to criticize his arrogance: "Son air impassible, ses yeux sévères et presque méchants, sa pâleur, son inaltérable sang-froid commencèrent sa réputation dès le premier jour."[83] The other officers in the regiment find everything in Julien except youth. He is more than ever consumed by ambition: "A peine lieutenant, par faveur et

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[80] Ibid., p. 436.

[81] Ibid., p. 444.

[82] Ibid., p. 444.

[83] Ibid., p. 446.

depuis deux jours, il calculait déjà que, pour commander en chef à trente ans, au plus tard, comme tous les grands généraux, il fallait à vingt-trois être plus que lieutenant. Il ne pensait qu'à la gloire et à son fils."[84] It is a difficult trail indeed that Julien is blazing for himself.

Julien's attempted murder of Madame de Rênal has long created controversy among the critics. The act destroys everything that Julien has worked so hard to obtain. His attempted murder of Madame de Rênal is an impulsive act that is the result of an uncontrollable passion. He had almost impulsively killed Mathilde earlier when she had wounded his pride. Madame de Rênal's letter similarly wounds Julien's pride while pulling him down from his ivory tower and belittling him in the eyes of others and in his own eyes. According to Castex, Julien's crime is the necessary result of his sense of Napoleonic duty.[85] Julien, however, appears not to be fully conscious of what he is doing. Julien had intended to write to Mathilde en route to Verrières; his inability to write during the rapid trip implies that he is agitated, dazed, trance-like: "Dans cette route rapide, il ne put écrire à Mathilde comme il en avait le projet, sa main ne formait sur le papier que des traits illisibles."[86] He furthermore has

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[84] Ibid., p. 447.

[85] P.-G. Castex, Le Rouge et le noir de Stendhal (Paris, 1967), p. 129.

[86] Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 449.

great difficulty in conversing with the gunsmith upon his arrival in Verrières: "Julien eut beaucoup de peine à lui faire comprendre qu'il voulait une paire de pistolets."[87] Julien's crime is the result of a mechanical impulse that transcends the realm of reason: "Machinalement Julien voulut avoir recours à ses petits pistolets, mais un second gendarme s'emparait de ses bras."[88] He is still entranced when carried away to prison: ". . . on lui mit les fers aux mains, on le laissa seul; la porte se ferma sur lui à double tour; tout cela fut exécuté très vite, et il y fut insensible."[89] Stendhal seeks to reinforce the impression of irreality through the device of telescoping. Julien, normally so analytical, remains closed to the reader. Stendhal does not open up Julien's thoughts to analysis. Instead, events are presented externally, and are condensed to an extreme degree: less than one page relates the entire incident.

Julien's reason begins to return only after he has been left alone to sleep. He writes to Mathilde, a chore he considers to be his duty. Julien had previously quoted Tartufe when under pressure. In his letter to Mathilde, Julien quotes Iago, a much more villainous character than Tartufe. Julien realizes that he is going to die and asks to be left alone and forgotten. He writes to Mathilde, "Ne parlez jamais de moi, même à mon fils: le silence est la seule façon de

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[87] Ibid., p. 449. [88] Ibid., p. 451. [89] Ibid., p. 451.

m'honorer."[90] He wishes to be forgotten by Mathilde but not by the people of Verrières. He seeks to be remembered as a martyr in their eyes: "Il me reste un moyen d'être considérable à leurs yeux: c'est de jeter au peuple des pièces d'or en allant au supplice. Ma mémoire, liée à l'idée de l'or, sera resplendissante pour eux."[91] He considers such an act to be his last duty for he is still filled with a Napoleonic sense of pride and honor.

Only after Julien learns that he has not killed Madame de Rênal does he fully regain his senses: ". . . en cet instant seulement, venait de cesser l'état d'irritation physique et de demi-folie où il était plongé depuis son départ de Paris pour Verrières."[92] Julien consciously relinquishes his ambition after being transferred to a gothic tower in Besançon: "La vie n'était point ennuyeuse pour lui, il considérait toutes choses sous un nouvel aspect. Il n'avait plus d'ambition."[93] But lack of ambition does not fully terminate Julien's adherence to the Napoleonic myth. The fact that Napoleon lived after being condemned prevents Julien from committing suicide.

The return of Julien's reason turns his thoughts toward the reality of death. Father Chélan's visit saddens him and shows him the horror of the death that awaits him: "Il venait

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[90] Ibid., p. 453.

[91] Ibid., p. 454.

[92] Ibid., p. 455.

[93] Ibid., p. 456.

de voir la mort, et dans toute sa laideur. Toutes les illusions de grandeur d'âme et de générosité s'étaient dissipées comme un nuage devant la tempête."[94] Mathilde's first visits to the prison counter the effect of Father Chélan's visit. Her romantic ideas of Boniface de La Mole and joint suicide with Julien begin to bore him and death becomes more attractive in his eyes: ". . . à vrai dire il était fatigué d'héroïsme. C'eût été à une tendresse simple, naïve et presque timide, qu'il se fût trouvé sensible. . . "[95]

Julien's wish for simplicity and peace of mind leads his thoughts to former happiness with Madame de Rênal at Vergy. He attempts to cut off the reality of Mathilde's presence through dreams of the past and ultimately says to her: "Laissez-moi ma vie idéale. Vos petites tracasseries, vos détails de la vie réelle, plus ou moins froissants pour moi, me tireraient du ciel. . . . il paraît que mon destin est de mourir en rêvant."[96] Thoughts of death end Julien's hypocrisy and he says to himself, "Il est singulier pourtant que je n'aie connu l'art de jouir de la vie que depuis que j'en vois le terme si près de moi."[97]

Julien's thoughts, reduced to simplicity in the gothic tower, turn toward a sense of duty to self in the courtroom. The insolent look of Valenod brings out his sense of social

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[94] Ibid., p. 459.

[95] Ibid., p. 470.

[96] Ibid., p. 475.

[97] Ibid., p. 475.

justice and martyrdom as he impulsively rises to address the jurors. He contends that his crime of attempted murder is only secondary to his real crime of having "l'audace de se mêler à ce que l'orgueil des gens riches appelle la société."[98] Ironically, the jurors enter their chamber to render verdict on Julien at one o'clock in the morning, the hour at which he had entered Madame de Rênal's bedroom in Verrières and Mathilde de La Mole's bedroom in Paris.

Julien later reflects upon his courtroom speech in the presence of Mathilde. He verifies that his speech was sincere and impulsive: "J'improvisais, et pour la première fois de ma vie."[99] Julien is ready to suffer the consequences of his crime and does not wish to appeal the court's decision: ". . . en ce moment, je me sens le courage de mourir sans trop faire rire à mes dépens. . . . Mourons."[100] Julien's Napoleonic myth is entirely deflated. His ambition has ended and he can no longer endure his hypocritical life. Julien consequently refuses the opportunities to escape which are offered by Mathilde and Fouqué. He has wearied of compromise with a corrupt society and will struggle no more.

Withdrawn from the world and ready to die with dignity, Julien is visited by Madame de Rênal in prison. He immediately falls to her feet as he had done so often in the past, overcome by love: "Jamais il n'avait été aussi fou d'amour."[101]

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[98] Ibid., p. 482.

[99] Ibid., p. 486.

[100] Ibid., p. 488.

[101] Ibid., p. 491.

Stripped of deceptive ambition, Julien follows only his natural emotions and for the first time realizes the extent of Madame de Rênal's love for him: "Ce n'était plus l'ivresse de l'amour, c'était reconnaissance extrême. Il venait d'apercevoir, pour la première fois, toute l'étendue du sacrifice qu'elle lui avait fait."[102]

As Julien thinks about society and life, he adopts the view that he is not as guilty of having committed a crime as are men like Valenod who harm society every day through hypocrisy and social injustice. His philosophy leads him again to consider suicide and to reflect on the nature of God. He examines his past actions and admits that duty to self, not God, has been his guide. His only remorse comes from the absence of Madame de Rênal, not from the absence of God. Julien's probe into his life is self-revealing and allows him to go to his death with a certain degree of fulfillment: "Julien se sentait fort et résolu comme l'homme qui voit clair dans son âme."[103] Weary of an unbearable life and of the role he must constantly play in the presence of Mathilde, Julien admits that he welcomes death as the end of his suffering: ". . . la fin du drame doit être bien proche, se disait-il; c'est une excuse pour moi si je ne sais pas mieux dissimuler."[104] Like Emma Bovary, he seeks peace from the reality of life through death.

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[102] Ibid., p. 492.

[103] Ibid., p. 501.

[104] Ibid., p. 503.

During the last days of his life, Julien thinks only of the present. He dismisses thoughts of the future that had so often led him astray:

> Pour Julien, excepté dans les moments usurpés par la présence de Mathilde, il vivait d'amour et sans presque songer à l'avenir. . . . Autrefois, lui [Madame de Rêna] disait Julien, quand j'aurais pu être si heureux pendant nos promenades dans les bois de Vergy, une ambition fougueuse entraînait mon âme dans les pays imaginaires. Au lieu de serrer contre mon coeur ce bras charmant qui était si près de mes lèvres, l'avenir m'enlevait à toi; j'étais aux innombrables combats que j'aurais à soutenir pour bâtir une fortune colossale.[105]

Julien's romantic nature has completely effaced his thoughts of the Napoleonic myth.

Julien does not relinquish his pride with his ambition. Pride creates in him a desire to die with dignity. He will not compromise his pride before his confessor who seeks glory in the eyes of the people of Besançon:

> Et que me restera-t-il, répondit froidement Julien, si je me méprise moi-même? J'ai été ambitieux, je ne veux point me blâmer; alors, j'ai agi suivant les convenances du temps. . . . à vue de pays, je me ferais fort malheureux, si je me livrais à quelque lâcheté. . . [106]

Stripped of all hypocrisy and ambition, Julien, the romantic, returns to nature when he dies:

> Par bonheur, le jour où on lui annonça qu'il fallait mourir, un beau soleil réjouissait la nature, et Julien était en veine de courage. Marcher au grand air fut pour lui une sensation délicieuse, comme la promenade à terre pour le navigateur qui longtemps a été à la mer.[107]

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[105] Ibid., p. 504.

[106] Ibid., p. 505.

[107] Ibid., p. 506.

Julien is interred in the mountain cave where he had earlier found rest from the world, symbolizing a return to the womb where he at last finds fulfillment.[108]

Thus, Julien finds fulfillment not through Napoleonic ambition but through a return to nature and through self-realization. He lives by the Napoleonic myth and consequently ambition destroys his happiness. Julien ultimately transcends the myth and dies a romantic death complete with similarities to sixteenth century heroes as well as to John the Baptist. Only death can bring fulfillment to Julien because any alternative would have led to the espousal of a hypocritical moral code that is prerequisite to success in the corrupt society that surrounds him.

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[108]Josephson, p. 347.

CHAPTER III

EMMA BOVARY IN QUEST OF A MYTH

At one level Madame Bovary is the story of a young woman who desires to find happiness and fulfillment through an ethereal love relationship that the real world can not satisfy. In a larger sense the novel is the description of a myth that victimized many young people during the early nineteenth century in France including Flaubert himself. Emma Bovary is a child of René in pursuit of the romantic myth, a myth Flaubert treats as an incurable disease that ultimately leads to self-destruction. Enid Starkie says Flaubert chose the subject of romanticism in the novel because he wanted to study it clinically as a disease: "He knew, from the effects on himself, its deliquescing nature, how it prevented any clear thinking, any clear and objective view of self, and how it led to senseless dreaming which impeded all action."[1] According to Martin Turnell, the major theme of Madame Bovary is "the Romantic longing for a happiness which the world of common experience can never satisfy, the disillusionment which springs from the clash between the inner dream and an empty, hostile universe."[2] Flaubert traces the development of Emma's inner dream as she

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[1]Enid Starkie, Flaubert: The Making of the Master (London, 1967), p. 297.

[2]Martin Turnell, The Novel in France (New York, 1951), p. 258.

evolved from virgin to adulteress and would-be prostitute, from idealist with hope of fulfillment to idealist with an inner death wish. He carefully surrounds Emma with recurring and often contrasting symbols and images to reinforce the principal conflict between mythological romanticism and disillusioning reality.

Flaubert relates the impact of Emma's education in retrospect, after she has married Charles and plunged into the world of reality. Her education, however, is very essential to the linear development of her romantic myth. Her inner dream, in fact, is born and cultivated during her stay at an Ursiline convent where Flaubert says, speaking in a tone of irony, she received "une belle éducation."[3] Her education has a double effect on her. She is early attracted to scenes of suffering and self-sacrifice: "Au lieu de suivre la messe, elle regardait dans son livre les vignettes pieuses bordées d'azur, et elle aimait la brébis malade, le sacré coeur percé de flèches aiguës, ou le pauvre Jésus qui tombe en marchant sur sa croix."[4] As reality tarnishes Emma's desires, she becomes increasingly masochistic in her search for fulfillment. The efficacy of suffering pulls her away from the common discipline and ennui of orthodox religion.

Emma gains access to romantic literature during her stay at the convent and consequently is to an extent self-taught like

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[3]Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary (Paris, 1951), p. 341.

[4]Ibid., p. 357.

Julien. She develops a desire to escape into the past, into a world where heroic lovers live in unimpeded bliss:

> Elle aurait voulu vivre dans quelque vieux manoir, comme ces châtelaines au long corsage qui, sous le trèfle des ogives, passaient leurs jours, le coude sur la pierre et le menton dans la main, à regarder venir du fond de la campagne un chevalier à plume blanche qui galope sur un cheval noir.[5]

The critics have stressed the harmful effects of romantic literature on Emma. According to Bart, "the most serious harm done to Emma was through her contact with shoddy romantic literature."[6] Tillet agrees that "by the time she left her convent school, she was corrupted by the nonsense of popular pseudo-Romantic literature and art."[7]

The influence of romantic literature in the development of Emma's dream is thus of considerable importance. More important, however, is the myth created by the fusion of idealistic literature and idealistic religion, which leads Emma to search for an incarnation of God and man to fulfill her desires. The search pulls her into a vicious circle in which momentary gratification of physical desire is effaced by the disillusionment of reality, a circle that culminates in the desire to escape through death.

When Charles Bovary first comes to Les Bertaux, Emma is enveloped in a world of boredom and disillusionment. Her escape

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[5]Ibid., p. 359.

[6]Benjamin F. Bart, Flaubert (New York, 1967), p. 274.

[7]Margaret Tillet, On Reading Flaubert (London, 1961), p. 15.

from the convent has not gratified her desire for fulfillment. She is imprisoned psychologically by disillusionment and physically by the atmosphere of the farm which is encircled by clumps of trees and hedges. Like Julien, Emma functions in a claustral atmosphere: "Emma is imprisoned in a double circle--a circle which is at once physical and psychological. It is the physical circle formed by the nondescript country. . . and the psychological circle formed by the people with their maddeningly stupid remarks."[8] Shut off from the world and believing herself to have nothing more to learn or to feel, she often stands with her forehead pressed against the windowpanes. She has seizures of vertigo at which time her voice diminishes into murmurs and her eyelids are half closed as her thoughts drift away into reverie. Charles' frequent visits to Les Bertaux revive in Emma the search for an ideal lover that began when she left the convent. In such an environment, Charles, despite all his mediocrity, is in Emma's eyes a knight in shining armor who has come to rescue her from the boredom of country life. His marriage proposal revivifies Emma's inner dream.

To signal Charles that Emma has consented to marry him, Monsieur Roualt throws open the window shutter in Emma's room. The open window evokes a means of escape for Emma. She no longer stands with her forehead pressed against the windowpane.

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[8]Martin Turnell, "Madame Bovary," Sewanee Review, LXV(1957), 548.

Instead, she prepares to fly away from ennui through marriage. Always faithful to her romantic ideal, Emma wishes to be married at midnight by torchlight. Her wedding, to which Flaubert devotes a full chapter, is treated as a carnival in which the country people in attendance serve as clowns usurping Emma's dream to further their own gluttony and vulgarity. Emma's wedding is the first in a series of disillusionments that prepare her to seek fulfillment in adultery.

When Charles and Emma arrive in Tostes, the people look out their windows to see the doctor's new wife. Emma is now on the opposite side of the window symbolic of the freedom she momentarily enjoys as the result of her escape from Les Bertaux. This scene is comparable to a later scene at la Vaubyessard in which the windows separate the peasants who are looking in from the glamour inside that enraptures Emma. In both instances, Emma has momentarily escaped from reality and is lost in pursuit of her dream.

Emma's eyes, half closed in reverie at Les Bertaux, become clouded during her daily routine at Tostes. She is confused since marriage has not fulfilled her desires. The platitudes of marriage imprison Emma and lead her back to the window where she tries to recapture her lost illusions:

> Avant qu'elle se mariât, elle avait cru avoir de l'amour; mais le bonheur qui aurait dû résulter de cet amour n'étant pas venu, il fallait qu'elle se fût trompée, songeait-elle. Et Emma cherchait à savoir ce que l'on entendait au juste dans la vie par les mots de félicité, de passion et d'ivresse, qui lui avaient paru si beaux dans les livres.[9]

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[9]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 356.

She tries to imagine what married life would be like in another world, a world comparable to the one described in the romantic novels she has read:

> Il lui semblait que certains lieux sur la terre devaient produire du bonheur, comme une plante particulière au sol et qui pousse mal tout autre part. Que ne pouvait-elle s'accouder sur le balcon des chalets suisses ou enfermer sa tristesse dans un cottage écossais, avec un mari vêtu d'un habit de velours noir à longues basques, et qui porte des bottes molles, un chapeau pointu et des manchettes![10]

Emma's hope of fulfillment through marriage has become completely effaced as ennui invades every corner of her mind and she asks herself, "Pourquoi, mon Dieu, me suis-je mariée?"[11] She has completed the first cycle of desire, frustration and disillusionment.

The disillusionment of marriage leads Emma to seek fulfillment elsewhere. The ball at la Vaubyessard rekindles her pursuit of the romantic myth. La Vaubyessard convinces her that the world she has read about in romantic novels actually exists, and from that time forward she associates her dream with glamour.[12] Emma is particularly impressed with the Duke of Laverdière, an old man who eats like a child, letting drops of gravy fall from his mouth throughout the meal. She overlooks his unrefined eating habits because he is of the nobility and because he has been to bed with queens. He is very likely syphlitic, like the blind beggar Emma encounters later.

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[10] Ibid., pl 362.

[11] Ibid., p. 365.

[12] Albert Thibaudet, Gustave Flaubert (Paris, 1935), p. 105.

For Emma, however, glamour conceals the ugliness of reality at la Vaubyessard. In contrast, she becomes increasingly disgusted with Charles' eating habits. Her ultimate ruin will come as the result of her efforts to hide the ugliness of daily life with the trappings of glamour.

During the ball, Emma's eyes, of uncertain hue after her marriage to Charles, become darker that ever before. The look in her eyes indicates an emotional intensification resulting from her environment. The glamour of her present environment makes Emma's past life on the farm seem non-existent to her. After the ball Emma stands before a window, staying awake to prolong the illusion of the luxurious life she has just sampled but must now give up. The window is open, reminiscent of the open window that signaled her escape from Les Bertaux. Once again Emma prepares to flee from the reality of daily life in search of the mythical romance she has found at la Vaubyessard.

Emma returns to Tostes with two symbols of the glamour she had savoured at la Vaubyessard. The cigar case Charles finds on the road reminds Emma of the viscount with whom she had danced at the ball. She later gives a similar cigar case to her lover, Rodolphe. Such a token is worthy of a romantic lover but the sight of Charles smoking one of the cigars is thoroughly disgusting to Emma. She notices upon her return to Tostes that her shoes have been stained by the yellow wax of the dance floor at la Vaubyessard. Flaubert says, "Son coeur était comme eux: au frottement de la richesse, il s'était

placé dessus quelque chose qui ne s'éffacerait pas."[13] The wax that clings to her shoes at the ball is later contrasted with crushing irony to the mud that sticks to her shoes as she runs across the fields to meet her lover, Rodolphe.

The glamour of la Vaubyessard creates in Emma a desire to live in Paris. For her, Paris is another world, similar to the world of some mythical Swiss chalet which she imagines to be the ideal environment for newlyweds. The enjoyment of Parisian life as she imagines it is not restricted to married lovers; she dreams only of pure, unimpeded love:

> Tout ce qui l'entourait immédiatement, campagne ennuyeuse, petits bourgeois imbéciles, médiocrité de l'existence, lui semblait une exception dans le monde, un hasard particulier où elle se trouvait prise, tandis qu'au delà s'étendait à perte de vue l'immense pays des félicités et des passions. Elle confondait, dans son désir, les sensualités du luxe avec les joies du coeur, l'élégance des habitudes et les délicatesses du sentiment. Ne fallait-il pas à l'amour, comme aux plantes indiennes, des terrains préparés, une température particulière?[14]

According to Marceau, if Emma had sufficiently revolted against the mediocrity surrounding her by fleeing to Paris she would ultimately have been saved.[15] Certainly Paris represents for Emma the glamour of her ideal, but there is no evidence that a move to Paris would have saved her. Indeed, how could any earthly environment have satisfied the mystical-religious

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[13]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 376.

[14]Ibid., p. 93.

[15]Felicien Marceau, "Emma Bovary," Revue de Paris, (Jan., 1959), 42.

ideal that formed such an integral part of her vision? Her infatuation with Paris only indicates that she associates glamour with her dream, a dream that will cause desire and disillusionment wherever she may go. She begins to decorate her house with luxurious furniture in an effort to hide the ugliness of reality in Tostes.

Materialism alone, however, does not fulfill Emma's dream. Disillusionment again begins to dominate her life and like a typical romantic with no hope left she says, "J'ai tout lu."[16] Flaubert reinforces Emma's disillusionment and moral deterioration with references to windows and the plaster curé in the garden. The windows she so often looks through while expecting some superhuman figure to rescue her become covered with frost, completely shutting her off from the outside world. The plaster curé deteriorates under the influence of the harsh weather and acquires scabs on its face. The deterioration of the plaster curé coincides with Emma's moral deterioration.[17] At this point in the novel, the curé has lost its right foot. During the ensuing move to Yonville, the curé falls from the carriage and shatters on the ground, indicating Emma's complete moral deterioration. The curé symbolizes the brittleness of religion as well as the brittleness of Emma's virtue.[18] Emma's moral

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[16]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 383.

[17]Martin Turnell, "Madame Bovary," Sewanee Review, LXV(1957), 539.

[18]Raymond Giraud, ed., Flaubert: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964), p. 103.

deterioration is further implied by the fact that before moving she burns her wedding bouquet, the last material remnant of her attachment to Charles. According to Turnell, "The burning of the wedding bouquet. . . is a sign that morally and psychologically Emma's marriage has come to an end, and points to the way in which her home will be 'burnt up' by her financial and emotional extravagances."[19]

The psychological and physical claustral effect of Tostes culminates in Emma's nervous malady. Her hope is restored by the move to Yonville, for she is convinced that things can not be the same in different places. Emma's desire for fulfillment is further intensified by the hope that she will bear a son and by the presence of Leon, her romantic counterpart. As in the past, harsh reality creeps into Emma's life and smothers all of her romantic dreams.

Flaubert describes the region of Yonville as barren and backward. The houses there are surrounded by trees and hedges. As one approaches the village, the yards become narrower and the houses move closer together. The barrenness of Yonville is the direct antithesis of the glamour of Paris, a glamour Emma expected to find by fleeing from Tostes. The physical characteristics of the region create a claustral atmosphere, the image of a circle that will gradually shrink around Emma and by consequence suffocate her.

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[19]Turnell, Sewanee Review, p. 538.

Emma has dreamed of having a son that she could shape into a man like those she had read about in romantic novels. She feels that bearing a son would compensate for all of her past frustrations. She faints when confronted with the reality that her child is a girl. Her disappointment culminates in neglect of the child and at times hatred for her.

The presence of Leon restores hope in Emma as Charles had done earlier. During her first conversation with Leon Emma says with dark wide opened eyes, "Je déteste les héros communs et les sentiments tempérés, comme il y a dans la nature."[20] As Emma and Leon grow more friendly, they stand at their respective windows looking at each other like Pyramus and Thisbe. Emma soon finds that there is a crack in the wall, an early indication of the relationship that will develop with Leon:

> L'amour, croyait-elle, devait arriver tout à coup, avec de grands éclats et des fulgurations,--ouragan des cieux qui tombe sur la vie, la bouleverse, arrache les volontés comme des feuilles et emporte à l'abîme le coeur entier. Elle ne savait pas que, sur la terrasse des maisons, la pluie fait des lacs quand les gouttières sont bouchées, et elle fût ainsi demeurée en sa sécurité lorsqu'elle découvrait subitement une lézarde dans le mur.[21]

Emma creates an image of Leon in her mind that transcends the limits of reality: "Elle était amoureuse de Léon, et elle recherchait la solitude, afin de pouvoir plus à l'aise se délecter en son image. La vue de sa personne troublait la

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[20]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 401.

[21]Ibid., p. 416.

volupté de cette méditation."[22] Emma separates herself from Leon for another reason. In the convent, she had linked sacrifice to fulfillment of desire. She had often created vows to keep and she had mourned her mother's death until the hypocrisy of her tears began to bore her. She now contents herself by refusing material refinements offered by Lheureux and by remaining faithful to her husband out of a sense of matrimonial duty. Masochism, an integral aspect of Emma's myth, intensifies her desire:

> Alors, les appétits de la chair, les convoitises d'argent et les mélancolies de la passion, tout se confondait dans une même souffrance;--et au lieu d'en détourner sa pensée, elle l'y attachait davantage, s'excitant à la douleur et en cherchant partout les occasions.[23]

Bored with the hypocrisy of self-denial, Emma dreams of fleeing with Leon to some remote land. Disillusionment has dulled her imagination and her ideal world is not so clearly defined as was her vision of a Swiss chalet or Paris: "Des tentations la prenaient de s'enfuir avec Léon, quelque part, bien loin, pour essayer une destinée nouvelle; mais aussitôt il s'ouvrait dans son âme un gouffre vague, plein d'obscurité."[24] Leon's departure climaxes Emma's disillusionment in Yonville. As she looks through the window watching him leave, clouds begin to gather in the direction of Rouen. The ensuing physical storm is no match for the storm that takes place in Emma's mind. The absence of Leon coupled with her regret for not

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[22] Ibid., p. 423. [23] Ibid., p. 423. [24] Ibid., p. 424.

having given herself to him intensifies Emma's desire. She compares her chagrin to the previous disappointment that had resulted when she returned home from la Vaubyessard: "Comme au retour de la Vaubyessard, quand les quadrilles tourbillonnaient dans sa tête, elle avait une mélancolie morne, un désespoir engourdi."[25]

The ringing of the Angelus accompanied by the beauty of spring revives in Emma memories of the convent. She expects religion to save her from despair. Emma wishes to blot out the rest of the world through devotion. Her idea of religion, however, consists of bluish clouds of incense and towering candlesticks accompanied by the scent of flowers. Orthodox religion, represented by the ineptitude of Father Bournisien, drives Emma into further despair rather that helping her.

Each of Emma's hopes decays and she is again driven back to the window to search for an escape. She is standing at the window when she first sees Rodolphe. According to Turnell, "Emma's first sight of Rodolphe is an ironical comment on the Romantic image of the Lady watching the arrival of the Knight with the white plume riding the black steed from a tower or a balcony, which haunts Emma's imagination."[26] Emma had plunged into marriage when Charles came to rescue her from Les Bertaux. Rodolphe arrives at a very opportune time to lead Emma out of the boredom of marriage and into the next phase of her life,

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[25]Ibid., p. 437.

[26]Martin Turnell, Sewanee Review, p. 540.

adultery. He is attracted to her because of her large black eyes that pierce the heart, eyes that had sparkled in the midst of the glamour at la Vaubyessard. Emma's eyes reveal that she is emotionally reawakened by the hope that she will find fulfillment in adultery.

According to Starkie, "Flaubert wanted to strip adultery of the glory it had been given by Romantic authors, including his own earlier works. Emma Bovary still regarded it romantically and considered that it raised those who practiced it above the common herd."[27] Flaubert surrounds Emma and Rodolphe with barnyard imagery as Rodolphe tries to seduce her. At the Comices Agricoles, Flaubert mocks the advances of Rodolphe by integrating the dialogue between Rodolphe and Emma with the speeches pertaining to agriculture and devotion taking place outside:

> . . . the conseiller de prefecture's speech alternates with the dialogue between the lovers; the platitudes about religion, duty, progress and patriotism and Rodolphe's platitudes about enduring passion answer one another mockingly, cancel one another out, leaving the reader with the impression that love and duty are mere shams, that nothing has value.[28]

Nevertheless, Emma momentarily transcends reality by falling into Rodolphe's trap. With black sparkling eyes she congratulates herself for having found a lover who she believes will fulfill her desires:

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[27]Enid Starkie, Flaubert: The Making of the Master (London, 1967), p. 298.

[28]Martin Turnell, The Novel in France, p. 270.

> Elle entrait dans quelque chose de merveilleux où tout serait passion, extase, délire; une immensité bleuâtre l'entourait, les sommets du sentiment étincelaient sous sa pensée, l'existence ordinaire n'apparaissait qu'au loin, tout en bas, dans l'ombre, entre les intervalles de ces hauteurs.[29]

Emma begins to identify with the adulterous heroines of the romantic novels she had read in the convent: "Elle devenait elle-même comme une partie véritable de ces imaginations et réalisait la longue rêverie de sa jeunesse, en se considérant dans ce type d'amoureuse qu'elle avait tant envié."[30]

Emma's idealized concept of adultery is constantly contested by secondary images that foreshadow her ensuing disillusionment. She and Rodolphe first make love on the ground, reminiscent of the previously mentioned pigs who wallow in mud and manure. Afterwards, Rodolphe smokes a cigar while mending a broken bridle with his knife. He smokes cigars and carries a knife, habits which Emma had earlier found disgusting and bourgeois in Charles. Emma and Rodolphe are reminiscent of Pyramus and Thisbe as they exchange love letters through a crack in the terrace wall, a crack Flaubert had referred to earlier when discussing Emma's relationship with Leon. Moreover, as the relationship advances, Emma becomes extremely possessive. She exchanges locks of hair with Rodolphe and asks him for a ring. Ironically, it is Charles who requests a lock of Emma's hair after she has died. Her request for a

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[29]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 473.

[30]Ibid., p. 474.

ring evokes the napkin rings Binet makes on a lathe the sound of which haunts Emma.

As lack of fulfillment with Rodolphe begins to tarnish Emma's inner dream, she again looks back to her past life and discovers that she was happy without knowing it. Her life on the farm which had seemed so non-existent in the midst of the glamour of la Vaubyessard is viewed as a time of irretrievable bliss because it was a time in which she still held illusions about life:

> Quel bonheur dans ce temps-là! quelle liberté! quel espoir! quelle abondance d'illusions! Il n'en restait plus maintenant! Elle en avait dépensé à toutes les aventures de son âme, par toutes les conditions successives, dans la virginité, dans le mariage et dans l'amour;--les perdant ainsi continuellement le long de sa vie, comme un voyageur qui laisse quelque chose de sa richesse à toutes les auberges de la route.[31]

As the disillusionment of adultery increases, Emma tries to repent. She had earlier sought redemption through religion. She now seeks fulfillment through sacrifice to her husband. Emma is willing to relinquish her love for Rodolphe to the furtherance of Charles' reputation, something she now considers to be more solid than love. His bungled efforts on the club-foot operation of Hippolyte have the same devastating effect on Emma that religion had previously had. She breaks the barometer on the wall by slamming the door to flee from Charles. The storm so often alluded to by the author begins soon afterward.

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[31] Ibid., p. 483.

Emma, who had previously complimented herself for being sensible when confronted by Lheureux, now plunges desperately into a paroxysm of materialism. She wishes to make her lover more worthy of her dreams by adorning him with the glamour that had so enraptured her at la Vaubyessard. Emma had earlier turned to materialism to hide the ugliness of reality in Tostes. Her despair has now grown more intense in Yonville and she has lost all sense of financial responsibility. Bart states that "her materialism, not her sensuality, causes her death."[32] Marceau contends that Lheureux, not Leon or Rodolphe destroys Emma.[33] Materialism is undeniably a destructive force in Emma's life. It is erroneous, however, to separate her materialism from her sensuality or to single out Lheureux as Emma's chief antagonist. Her materialism, in fact, is the direct result of her sensuality. It is born out of the disillusionment created by Emma's romantic myth. Furthermore, Emma is not materialistic in an orthodox sense. Her materialism is part of her romantic ideal, an ideal that feeds on a glamourous environment; it is not materialism dictated by a given social standard.

Emma's increasing materialistic tendencies are accompanied by increasing audacity. She has lost all sense of financial awareness as well as all sense of propriety. She seems to be daring anyone to contradict her as she accompanies Rodolphe

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[32]Bart, p. 319.

[33]Marceau, p. 38.

through the streets of Yonville with a cigarette hanging from her mouth. In addition, Emma devises a signal to beckon Rodolphe when she needs him. After a violent argument with Charles' mother, Emma beckons Rodolphe by attaching a piece of white paper to her window shade, in contrast to the signal by which Charles once learned that Emma would marry him. The signal is reminiscent of the one employed by Madame de Rênal to beckon Julien back to the house after she had outwitted her husband. As Emma signals Rodolphe, she is again eager to flee from boredom. The hope of escaping the reality of Yonville with Rodolphe intensifies Emma's dream and she lapses into momentary happiness: "Ses convoitises, ses chagrins, l'expérience du plaisir, et ses illsuions toujours jeunes, comme font aux fleurs le fumier, la pluie, les vents du soleil, l'avaient par graduation développée, et elle s'épanouissait enfin dans la plénitude de sa nature."[34]

Despite constant disillusionment, Emma remains faithful to her romantic myth. The disappointment caused by Rodolphe's letter almost leads her to suicide. Emma contemplates jumping through the attic window to her death, the ultimate escape from reality:

> Elle se tenait tout au bord, presque suspendue, entourée d'un grand espace. Le bleu du ciel l'envahissait, l'air circulait dans sa tête creuse, elle n'avait qu'à céder, qu'à se laisser prendre; et le ronflement du tour ne discontinuait pas, comme une voix furieuse qui l'appelait.[35]

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[34]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 503.

[35]Ibid., p. 513.

Her romanticized version of suicide is followed by a romanticized version of natural death. Romanticized death revivifies Emma's dream of idealized religion. She sees an image of endless love, a love that transcends all other love:

> Alors elle laissa retomber sa tête, croyant entendre dans les espaces le chant des harpes séraphiques et apercevoir en un ciel d'azur, sur un trône d'or, au milieu des saints tenant des palmes vertes, Dieu le Père tout éclatant de majesté, et qui d'un signe faisait descendre vers la terre des anges aux ailes de flamme pour l'emporter dans leurs bras.[36]

This romanticized version of death is contrasted to the actual death scene later in which "there is no possibility of romanticism, . . . only hideous reality."[37]

Emma emerges from the disillusionment of Rodolphe's rejection with a sense of matrimonial devotion and self-sacrifice. She has not, however, completely relinquished her desire for an ethereal love relationship, a love she might have found in different circumstances:

> . . . si, dans la fraîcheur de sa beauté, avant les souillures du mariage et la délusion de l'adultère, elle avait pu placer sa vie sur quelque grand coeur solide, alors la vertu, la tendresse, les voluptés et le devoir se confondant, jamais elle ne serait descendue d'une félecité si haute.[38]

Disillusionment, however, has begun to efface the attractiveness of idealized love. Emma says to herself, "ce bonheur là, sans doute, était un mensonge imaginé pour le désespoir de tout désir."[39] She regards death to be the ultimate fulfillment of her desires and dreams. Alone with Leon in her

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[36] Ibid., p. 520.

[37] Starkie, p. 291.

[38] Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 531.

Rouen hotel room "Emma l'interrompait pour se plaindre de sa maladie où elle avait manqué mourir, quel dommage! elle ne souffrirait plus maintenant."[40] Through a sense of conjugal devotion and self-sacrifice, Emma endeavors to resist Leon's advances in the Rouen church by abandoning her thoughts to prayer:

> . . . pour attirer le secours divin, elle s'emplissait les yeux des splendeurs du tabernacle, elle aspirait le parfum des juliennes blanches épanouies dans les grands vases, et prêtait l'oreille au silence de l'église, qui ne faisait qu'accroître le tumulte de son coeur.[41]

Emma's idealized concept of religion is not satisfied by commonplace religion. The flesh-and-blood verger in the church proves to be as useless to Emma as Father Bournisien had earlier been when she had sought the aid of religion.

The failure of everyday religion to fulfill Emma's desires at this crucial point following Rodolphe's abandonment drives her back into adultery. Before Emma's move to Yonville, she had burned her wedding bouquet and the petals had floated up the chimney like black butterflies. As Leon crudely seduces her in a cab, she tears up the letter that would have kept her faithful to Charles and the pieces of paper flutter like white butterflies in a field of red clover. Turnell states: "The butterflies stand for the transitoriness of the relationship with Leon. The red clover is a symbol of adultery."[42] The destruction of the letter, like the burning of the wedding

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[39] Ibid., p. 531. [40] Ibid., p. 539. [41] Ibid., p. 545.

[42] Turnell, The Novel in France, p. 274.

bouquet, marks the end of Emma's fidelity, fidelity that had been restored after she had been rejected by Rodolphe.

Emma's relationship with Leon rapidly deteriorates under the influence of several disillusioning factors. She becomes more desperate in pursuit of her dream and less attuned to the world of reality. Emma would like to drift into undisturbed reverie so that Leon might more satisfactorily fulfill her dream: "Elle aurait voulu ne rien entendre, ne rien voir, afin de ne pas déranger le recueillement de son amour qui allait se perdant, quoi qu'elle fît, sous les sensations extérieures."[43] Emma begins to consider Leon as uncourageous and consequently unworthy of her dream: "Le dénigrement de ce que nous aimons, toujours nous en détache quelque peu. Il ne faut pas toucher aux idoles: la dorure en reste aux mains."[44]

Emma's discouragement with Leon and the sight of the walls of her convent make her again long for dreams that might have been fulfilled in different circumstances:

> . . . s'il y avait quelque part un être fort et beau, une nature valeureuse, pleine à la fois d'exaltation et de raffinements, un coeur de poète sous une forme d'ange, lyre aux cordes d'airain, sonnant vers le ciel des épithalames élégiaques pourquoi, par hasard, ne le trouverait-elle pas?[45]

Emma does not find in Leon the incarnation of God and man of which she has dreamed: "Elle était aussi dégoûtée de lui qu'il était fatigué d'elle. Emma retrouvait dans l'adultère toutes les platitudes du mariage."[46] In writing to Leon during the

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[43]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 556. [44]Ibid., p. 582.

[45]Ibid., p. 584. [46]Ibid., p. 590.

last stages of their affair she begins to imagine another man, an ethereal figure that she can not clearly define in her mind:

> Mais, en écrivant, elle percevait un autre homme, un fantôme fait de ses plus ardents souvenirs, de ses lectures les plus belles, de ses convoitises les plus fortes; et il devenait à la fin si véritable, et accessible, qu'elle en palpitait émerveillée, sans pouvoir néanmoins le nettement imaginer, tant il se perdait, comme un dieu, sous l'abondance de ses attributs. Il habitait la contrée bleuâtre où les échelles de soie se balancent à des balcons, sous le souffle des fleurs, dans la clarté de la lune.[47]

Disappointment in Leon augments Emma's materialistic desires. When Leon questions her excessive spending, she silently dreams of even more extravagance: ". . . telle que l'envie d'avoir, pour l'amener à Rouen, un tilbury bleu, attelé d'un cheval anglais, et conduit par un groom en bottes à revers."[48] Completely absorbed in her desire to hide reality with glamour, "Emma vivait tout occupée des siennes, et ne s'inquiétait pas plus de l'argent qu'une archiduchesse."[49] As she plunges deeper into Lheureux's trap Emma has no concept of the reality of her financial situation. Despite the fact that her extravagant spending is ruining her, she does not relinquish the glamour that is an integral part of her romantic myth. When she goes to Rouen in an effort to borrow money from Leon she insists that they go to an expensive hotel room to talk instead of remaining in Leon's unattractive room.

During her relationship with Leon, Emma becomes increasingly attracted to the macabre. She begins to lie impulsively

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[47] Ibid., p. 590. [48] Ibid., p. 571. [49] Ibid., p. 584.

and she becomes bolder in public with her lover. She reads adulterous novels filled with scenes of vulgarity and violence. Emma had earlier dreamed of the adventures of young ladies who attended all-night masked balls. She plunges into a symbolic underworld by attending such a ball in Rouen where she behaves like one possessed and becomes thoroughly disillusioned: "Elle mit un pantalon de velours et des bas rouges, avec une perruque à catogan et un lampion sur l'oreille. Elle sauta toute la nuit, au son furieux des trombones; on faisait cercle autour d'elle. . ."[50] The circle formed around her by clerks, medical students and a salesman increasingly suffocates her physically and psychologically until she can no longer breathe. She ultimately faints and has to be carried to the window. The ugliness of the masked ball is a direct contrast to the glamour Emma had found at la Vaubyessard. There, she had stood at the window after the dance trying to prolong the illusion of luxurious life. At the masked ball, she is carried to the window gasping for air and nauseated.

As disillusionment with Leon destroys Emma's hope, she once again seeks to escape from reality. After her frustration with the masked ball, she wished to flee like a bird. Her inability to do so leads her by necessity into the snare of prostitution. Ironically, she rejects the advances of Monsieur Guillaumin who could have saved her only to offer herself unsuccessfully to Rodolphe and to Binet.

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[50] Ibid., p. 590.

Disillusioned by lack of fulfillment in virginity, marriage, adultery and attempted prostitution, Emma advances toward her last illusion, fulfillment through death. Emma's earlier romanticized version of death had convinced her that dying would be an easy matter: "Ah! c'est bien peu de chose, la mort! pensait-elle: je vais dormir, et tout sera fini."[51] In the early stages of her suffering after having swallowed poison, she is restored by the sacrament and seems to have found fulfillment:

> Elle tourna sa figure lentement, et parut saisie de joie à voir tout à coup l'étoile violette, sans doute retrouvant au milieu d'un apaisement extraordinaire la volupté perdue de ses premiers élancements mystiques avec des visions de béatitude éternelle qui commençait.
>
> Le prêtre se releva pour prendre le crucifix; alors elle allongea le cou comme quelqu'un qui a soif, et, collant ses lèvres sur le corps de l'Homme-Dieu, elle y déposa de toute sa force expirante le plus grand baiser d'amour qu'elle eût jamais donné.[52]

Emma seems to have at last satisfied her vision by discovering the incarnation of man and God that she could not find in real life. It is, however, debatable that Emma finds fulfillment through death.

The convulsions of suffering and the macabre reality of Emma's death efface the momentary joy the sacrament had given her. Before dying, Emma acquires brown blotches on her face reminiscent of the white scabs the plaster curé had acquired on its face before falling from the carriage to shatter on

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[51] Ibid., p. 613.

[52] Ibid., p. 622.

the ground. Furthermore, as she is near death Emma sees in Charles a love that she had previously been unaware of. The song of the blind beggar and Emma's hideous laughter as she struggles for her last breath imply that she is as disillusioned by the reality of death as she was disillusioned by the reality of life. The corruptive influence of Emma's myth does not end with her death. Flaubert treats her myth as a contagious disease that victimizes Charles after Emma has died.[53] Charles seeks to become as much like Emma as possible:

> Pour lui plaire, comme si elle vivait encore, il adopta ses prédilections, ses idées; il acheta des bottes vernies, il prit l'usage des cravates blanches. Il mettait du cosmétique à ses moustaches, il souscrivit comme elle des billets à ordre. Elle le corrompait par delà le tombeau.[54]

In contrast to Julien Sorel, Emma finds no glory in her death. She never relinquishes her inner dream, a dream treated as an incurable and consuming disease. Emma's constant efforts to transcend the reality of life through her uncompromising romantic myth-making culminate in her inability to transcend the reality of life or death.

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[53]Victor Brombert, The Novels of Flaubert: A Study of Themes and Techniques (Princeton, 1966), p. 85.

[54]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 638.

CHAPTER IV

TECHNICAL SIMILARITIES AND DISSIMILARITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF JULIEN'S AND EMMA'S MYTHS

A comparative analysis of the techniques employed by Stendhal and Flaubert in the two novels reflects the major difference in the authorial viewpoint from which Julien's and Emma's myths are related. Stendhal, the romantic writer, producing Le Rouge et le noir in 1830, has depicted an essentially romantic hero in whom the affirmation of the individual is of overriding importance. Flaubert, the realist, writing a generation later, has produced a protagonist with many traits similar to those of Julien, but the merciless realist does not allow Emma the redemptive grace of a noble death as does Stendhal to his hero.

Stendhal's and Flaubert's differing viewpoints reflect their diverse interpretations of the myths they develop in their respective characters. Stendhal begins Le Rouge et le noir in the third person, shifts to the impersonal on and by the sixth page begins alternately to employ the first person singular je with the third person subject pronoun. Since Julien speaks and thinks in the first person singular, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine whose thoughts are being disclosed when je is employed, Stendhal's or Julien's. Stendhal's utilization of je integrated with Julien's use of je

directly links the author to the myth he depicts in his character. Stendhal consequently has the advantage of viewing Julien's myth from the inside as well as from the outside. Brombert notes: "The author's numerous interventions, often ironic and self-protective, thus assume a poetic function. The omniscience of the novelist protects the inner life of his protagonists, allowing them the necessary freedom to pursue their own dreams."[1] Stendhal, who was also ensnared by the Napoleonic myth, thus "transfers his sensibility to his fictional characters, and grants himself the privilege of reliving, but also of transcending, his private predicament."[2] In contrast, Flaubert begins Madame Bovary in the first person plural and rapidly shifts to the third person subject pronoun for the remainder of the novel. The fact that Flaubert employs the nous form removes him further from direct comment than if he had used the first person singular subject pronoun. Flaubert drops nous as subject pronoun for greater detachment by the time Emma is introduced into the novel. He consequently develops the entirety of Emma's myth from the outside as an observer. Stendhal's attachment to his character leads him in the end to detach himself and Julien from the Napoleonic myth. Julien consequently is allowed to die in romantic glory. Flaubert, who constantly remains detached from his character in his

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[1]Victor Brombert, Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom (New York, 1968), p. 74.

[2]Ibid., p. 75.

point of view, keeps Emma ensnared by her myth to the end and reveals the ever present agony that results from her mythical interpretation of reality.

Both Stendhal and Flaubert employ metaphors to develop the conflict between their characters' myths and the environment in which these characters function. Stendhal comments metaphorically on the corruption that exists in the Besançon seminary by highlighting a sinister quality in the eyes of the porter who greets Julien: "La pupille saillante et verte de ses yeux s'arrondissait comme celle d'un chat."[3] The reference to a cat suggests the trickery and craftiness of the seminary environment that ultimately impedes Julien's realization of the Napoleonic myth. Flaubert metaphorically describes the non-productive town of Yonville l'Abbaye: "On l'aperçoit de loin, tout couché en long sur la rive, comme un gardeur de vaches qui fait la sieste au bord de l'eau."[4] The town is situated in a "nondescript, characterless country, a wasteland lying on the borders of three different provinces and belonging to none of them."[5] The environment of Yonville is the direct antithesis of Emma's mythical conception of Paris.

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[3]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir (Paris, 1960), p. 168.

[4]Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary (Paris, 1951), p. 389.

[5]Martin Turnell, "Madame Bovary," Sewanee Review, LXV (1957), 536.

Stendhal and Flaubert employ symbolism and imagery throughout their respective novels to reinforce the development of Julien's and Emma's myths. A comparative analysis of the two author's symbols and images reveals that they employ similar symbols and images to reinforce common characteristics present in both Julien's and Emma's myths.

Stendhal uses the wall as a symbol of class separation and for its military significance. The wall serves as a barrier between Julien and the realization of his Napoleonic myth in high society. Nineteenth century French society viewed the erection of walls as a means of protecting their material belongings from intrusions of the peasants. Walls were a status symbol in the eyes of the provincial nobility: "En Franche-Comté, plus on bâtit de murs, plus on hérisse sa propriété de pierres rangées les unes au-dessus des autres, plus on acquiert de droits aux respects de ses voisins."[6] The wall is a social and a military challenge to Julien's myth. He finds walls that he must penetrate in each environment in which he functions. Julien successfully penetrates the walls of Verrières, Besançon and the Hotel de La Mole. He is, however, finally trapped by the prison walls of the gothic tower. Flaubert uses the closed window to convey the idea of the separation of Emma from the realization of her myth. Throughout the novel she frequently stands with her forehead pressed against the windowpane in a state of intense depression.

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[6]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 5.

Flaubert uses the open window to evoke Emma's brief escapes from depression. The opening of a window signals her escape from Les Bertaux through marriage. Emma stands before an open window at la Vaubyessard endeavoring to prolong the experience of her initiation into a glamourous environment. Walls and closed windows isolate the two characters while creating a claustral atmosphere that leads them to seek a means of escape.

Julien and Emma are both compared to birds as they seek to escape from their respective positions in life. Julien is compared to the Napoleonic eagle whose power and freedom he envies but can never obtain without compromise. Emma also envies the freedom of movement characteristic of a bird: "Elle aurait voulu, s'échappant comme un oiseau, aller se rajeunir quelque part, bien loin, dans les espaces immaculés."[7]

References to storms reinforce the emotional instability of Julien and Emma as well as the chaos created as the result of their respective myths. Rain begins to fall shortly after Julien has convinced himself to seize Madame de Rênal's hand in the presence of her husband, and Stendhal says: "Chez cet être singulier, c'était presque tous les jours tempête."[8] Flaubert reinforces Emma's mental torment and foreshadows the chaos that develops in Rouen due to her pursuit of mythical romance. As Leon departs for Rouen Emma watches the

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[7]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 591.

[8]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 64.

gathering clouds: "Ils s'amoncelaient au couchant, du côté de Rouen, et roulaient vite leurs volutes noires, . . ."[9] She later jars the barometer from the wall by slamming the door to escape her husband.

The cigar case Emma clings to is reminiscent of the spurs Julien forgets to remove after the parade. Both symbols represent a way of life that Julien and Emma have sampled but must give up due to the reality of their positions in life.

Both Stendhal and Flaubert employ color symbolism. Most critics agree that in Le Rouge et le noir red represents military grandeur while black represents the clergy. Julien is torn between the red and the black in his ambition. His attachment to the red, the Napoleonic myth, ultimately foils his chances of becoming successful in the black, the clergy. Flaubert's color symbolism is not as clearly defined. Turnell states that red in Madame Bovary is a symbol of adultery.[10] He furthermore contends that "most of her [Emma's] journeys, whether real or imaginary, are a search for the pays bleu, the land of Romantic love."[11] The contrast between the red and the blue consequently represents the conflict between adultery and Emma's myth.

The blind beggar is one of the most obvious symbols in Madame Bovary. Emma first encounters him early in her

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[9]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 435.

[10]Martin Turnell, The Novel in France (New York, 1951), p. 274.

[11]Martin Turnell, "Madame Bovary," Sewanee Review, LXV (1957), 542.

relationship with Leon and she is profoundly troubled by his presence and by his song: "Cela lui descendait au fond de l'âme comme un tourbillon dans un abîme, et l'emportait parmi les espaces d'une mélancolie sans bornes."[12] After Emma's unsuccessful venture to Rouen to borrow money, the blind beggar again appears singing his scatological song and performing like an animal for money. Emma impulsively tosses him her last five francs. It has been argued that the blind beggar is a symbol of death or even perhaps a symbol of the devil.[13] Such an interpretation is supported by the presence of the blind beggar outside Emma's window as she dies in pain and terror. Father Chélan is a similar symbol of death to Julien. When Chélan visits him in prison, Julien has the distinct impression that he is in the presence of death. The ill and feeble old man appears like a skeleton, and Julien's resolve to die well is momentarily shattered. Julien ultimately conquers his fear of death while Emma dies laughing hideously in anguish.

Julien's myth progresses through Stendhal's use of mock-epic battle terminology. Julien frequently shouts "Aux armes!"[14] and is obsessed by thoughts of battles with the enemy, of strategies and victories. He makes battle plans for his

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[12]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 569.

[13]Turnell, The Novel in France, p. 275.

[14]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 25.

conquests, that is, the seduction of the women. He constantly measures himself against Napoleon. Emma's myth progresses through Flaubert's similar device of ironic comparison. She patterns her thoughts and actions after heroines she has read about in romantic novels. She names her dog Djali, the name of Esmeralda's goat in Victor Hugo's romantic novel, Notre Dame de Paris. Flaubert extends the ironic device to his description of Charles' operation on Hippolyte's club foot when he mockingly compares Charles to renowned innovators in the field of medicine:[15]

> Ni Ambrose Paré, appliquant pour la première fois depuis Celse, après quinze siècles d'intervalle, la ligature immédiate d'une artère; ni Dupuytren allant ouvrir un abcès à travers une couche épaisse d'encéphale; ni Gensoul, quand il fit la première ablation de maxillaire supérieur, n'avaient certes le coeur si palpitant, la main si frémissante, l'intellect aussi tendu que M. Bovary quand il approcha d'Hippolyte, son ténotome entre les doigts.[16]

The scene becomes even more mocking when consideration is given to Flaubert's earlier reference to Charles' medical limitations. On entering Charles' study for the first time, for example, Emma notices "les tomes du Dictionnaire des sciences médicales, non coupés."[17]

Stendhal employs the technique of the interior monologue in Le Rouge et le noir to reveal the psychological development of Julien's Napoleonic myth. The interior monologue reveals

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[15]George Levine, "Madame Bovary and the Disappearing Author," Modern Fiction Studies, IX(1963), 111.

[16]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 486. [17]Ibid., p. 354.

the conflict between Julien's impulses and the force of the Napoleonic myth that propels him to act against his will. Instead of telling the reader that Julien abhors cowardice, for example, Stendhal has Julien say to himself, "Il y aurait de la lâcheté à moi de ne pas exécuter une action qui peut m'être utile."[18] In contrast, Emma Bovary's myth is developed solely by Flaubert in the third person. Emma, unlike Julien, is not free to chart her own course. Flaubert charts it for her. The technique of the interior monologue allows Stendhal to reveal quite graphically Julien's psychological conflict and his ultimate self-realization in prison. The reader, unable to penetrate directly into Emma's thoughts, can only resort to external and sometimes ambiguous indications about what is going on within her soul.

The technical devices employed by Stendhal and Flaubert allow them to develop Julien's and Emma's myths from differing vantage points while revealing the effects of environment on their characters. Stendhal's intrusions into the novel and his utilization of the interior monologue are correlative to the type of novel he wrote, a psychological novel that requires an understanding of the framework of Julien's mind. Flaubert's technical devices are likewise well suited to the type of novel he wrote, a novel which by allusion relates the impact of reality on the actions of Emma Bovary.

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[18]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 29.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Julien Sorel and Emma Bovary are in quest of an ideal, causing them to pattern their lives along the lines of myths prominent in their time. Despite basic differences in the orientation of the quest upon which each embarks, several common characteristics are present in the myths. The development of the myths may be approached in terms of cause and effect. Each character adopts a false system of values as the result of a distorted education. Their values transcend the restrictions of reality, making of the two characters exceptions to the norm. Julien's education leads him to pattern his thoughts and actions after Napoleon. Emma's education creates in her a desire for fulfillment through love and self-sacrifice. Distorted education creates in both Julien and Emma a desire to escape the reality of their positions in life. The effects of their educations are revealed in their actions as they encounter harsh reality and endeavor to transcend it.

Distorted education contributes to a distorted interpretation of love in both Julien and Emma. There is no love between Julien and his family. Julien's knowledge of love is in the beginning based on his reading of the Bible and on questionable advice obtained from Fouqué. He uses love as a

weapon to further his ambition and consequently misinterprets Madame de Rênal's affection for him. He realizes no enduring happiness from love until he relinquishes his ambition in prison. Emma's concept of love is based on her reading of romantic novels in the convent. Her search for an ideal love relationship culminates in the disillusionment of marriage, adultery and attempted prostitution. Real love is beyond the conception of Julien or Emma because they have nothing in their experience to compare it to. Both characters use love to further their respective myths. Their concepts of love prove to be as deceptive as the myths they espouse.

Julien and Emma both display generosity as they become entangled in their myths. Julien acquires a sense of social justice through his readings of Rousseau. The Napoleonic myth leads him to seek martyrdom and fame in the eyes of the poor through generosity. He obtains a position in Verrières for his father and sends a large sum of money to Father Chélan for distribution among the poor. His generosity is sincere but out of place in the society that surrounds him. Julien is generous, not a hypocrite by nature, but in a corrupted society, generosity has no place.[1] Emma is charitable toward the poor people of Yonville. Her generosity results from her desire to obtain fulfillment through sacrifice. Ironically, she extends her generosity to the blind beggar

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[1]Maurice Bardèche, Stendhal: Romancier (Paris, 1947), p. 195.

whose song haunts her as she is dying. The charity of Julien and Emma renders them sympathetic in the eyes of the reader as well as in the eyes of their creators, Stendhal and Flaubert.

Ironically, both Julien and Emma, who are considered to be romantic characters, turn away from religion, traditionally an integral part of the true romantic's life. They have, however, incorporated idealized religion into their myths since orthodox religion is not satisfactory. Julien rejects the hypocrisy of religion that is represented by the clandestine workings of the Congrégation. As he approaches death he rejects the God of Christianity in favor of Fénelon's God. Emma's concept of religion is based on memories of reverie at the convent: ". . . elle s'assoupit doucement à la langueur mystique qui s'exhale des parfums de l'autel, de la fraîcheur des bénitiers et du rayonnement des cierges."[2] Official religion as represented by Father Bournisien does not satisfy her search for an incarnation of man and God.

Julien and Emma are physically delicate and timid by nature. Julien is thin and frail and has the appearance of a young girl. His natural frailty makes him an unlikely candidate for Napoleonic aspiration and throughout the novel proves to be an enemy to the realization of his ambition. He faints when he first encounters Father Pirard and almost faints again when he sees Madame de Rênal in the church at Besançon. Le

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[2]Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary (Paris, 1951), p. 357.

Breton asserts that Julien is the victim of a nervous malady.[3] Emma is also victimized by a nervous malady that results from constant ennui and disillusionment. She faints when told that her child is not a boy and again after reading Rodolphe's letter of rejection. Julien and Emma reveal their timidity the first time they encounter strangers. Julien is so terrified by the presence of Madame de Rênal that he is momentarily speechless. Emma blushes in the presence of Charles at Les Bertaux when she accidentally brushes against him while reaching for his riding crop. The timidity and physical delicacy of Julien and Emma make them vulnerable to the crudeness of the respective societies in which they must function.

Both Julien and Emma are doomed characters. Due to the pursuit of their respective myths, they ultimately become the victims of fate. Stendhal comments on Julien's ability to suppress his emotions and by consequence remain worthy of Mathilde's admiration: "C'est, selon moi, l'un des plus beaux traits de son caractère; un être capable d'un tel effort sur lui-même peut aller loin, si fata sinant."[4] Stendhal thus implies that it is Julien's fate to die for espousing a myth that has unfortunately become outdated. Emma's fate is no less marked. Disillusioned by matrimony she asks herself "s'il n'y aurait pas eu moyen, par d'autres combinaisons du hasard,

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[3]André Le Breton, Le Rouge et le noir de Stendhal (Paris, 1966), p. 273.

[4]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir (Paris, 1960), p. 424.

de rencontrer un autre homme."[5] Ironically, after Emma has committed suicide Charles says to Rodolphe, "Je ne vous en veux pas. . . C'est la faute de la fatalité!"[6] Fate dictates death to those who attempt to live by a myth that transcends the realm of reality.

Julien and Emma ultimately seek fulfillment through death because their myths have failed them. As previously pointed out, Julien, in the end, must decide whether or not the end justifies the means. He must retain his mask of hypocrisy in order to succeed in a corrupt society or expose his true sentiments and become respectable to himself. He opts to die and consequently commits suicide by speaking truthfully to the jurors at his trial. According to Josephson, ". . . the subversive Julien Sorel goes to his end, in scenes as rich in substance of religious legend as they are Freudian: there is the alienated libido and the expiating martyr, in love with death."[7] Emma's fusion of romanticism with idealized religion creates in her a desire for fulfillment through self-denial and self-sacrifice. She soon begins to realize the efficacy of sacrifice and rapidly evolves into a sporadic masochist. Endless disillusionment intensifies Emma's masochistic tendencies and leads her to seek fulfillment through death.

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[5]Flaubert, Madame Bovary, p. 365. [6]Ibid., p. 644.

[7]Matthew Josephson, Stendhal or the Pursuit of Happiness (New York, 1946), p. 341.

She, like Julien, can not compromise her ideal with the austerity of reality. Consequently, illusions about life lead both Julien and Emma to suicide.

In Le Rouge et le noir and Madame Bovary Julien and Emma are in quest of a myth. Both characters espouse the quest motif and go on journeys to gain self-knowledge and fulfillment. The difference in Julien's quest and Emma's is a matter of interpretation as to whether or not each character does indeed gain self-knowledge and fulfillment. During the course of their respective journeys, Julien and Emma both plunge into a symbolic underworld. Julien's underworld journey occurs in prison. He probes into his mind in search of self-realization. Julien analyses the hypocrisy and sense of duty that guided his past actions: "Le devoir que je m'étais prescrit, à tort ou à raison. . . a été comme le tronc d'un arbre solide auquel je m'appuyais pendant l'orage; je vacillais, j'étais agité. Après tout je n'étais qu'un homme. . . Mais je n'étais pas emporté."[8] Julien subsequently relinquishes his ambition and goes to his death fulfilled in his desires and with full knowledge of self. He imparts the knowledge gained from his journey to the people in the courtroom and to Madame de Rênal before dying. Emma plunges into the underworld by attending a masked ball. She returns from the ball totally disillusioned without having gained insight into her life.

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[8]Stendhal, Le Rouge et le noir, p. 500.

Emma does not gain fulfillment or self-knowledge as the result of her journey. She goes to her death still entangled in her mystical-romantic myth. Emma is consequently equally deceived by the reality of life and death.

Julien and Emma seek fulfillment through the quest of myths that fail them in the end. Julien's Napoleonic myth is in conflict with his most fundamental emotional impulses. Stendhal's device of the interior monologue reveals his character's dilemma and in the end allows him to detach Julien from the Napoleonic myth. Julien consequently transcends the corruption of his environment and dies with full self-knowledge. Emma's myth is in direct conflict with the reality of her environment. Flaubert does not allow her to transcend her mystical-romantic myth. She consequently goes to her death completely disillusioned and without self-knowledge.

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