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HENRY JAMES AND GUSTAVE FLAUBERT:

THE CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Jeanine Baker Varner

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DEDICATION

To my husband, Paul S. Varner, for sharing.

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ABSTRACT

Henry James's fascination with France is evident in his writings about France and especially about French authors. He shows a particular, continuing fascination with one French author, Gustave Flaubert, with whom he formed a friendship during his year in France, 1875-1876. The personal relationship between the two novelists was an important one, but the critical relationship was more important, for James wrote six critical essays on Flaubert from 1874 to 1902.

These six essays offer high praise for the work of Flaubert, especially for his style. They also offer one major adverse criticism of Flaubert. In them, James repeatedly states that in two of his novels, Madame Bovary and L'Education Sentimentale, Flaubert created characters who were too limited as reflectors and registers.

A comparison of Madame Bovary with James's The Portrait of a Lady and of L'Education Sentimentale with James's The Princess Casamassima suggests that the critical relationship between James and Flaubert stimulated a creative and a stylistic relationship, that James was influenced in his creation of these novels by his strong approval of Flaubert's style and his strong disapproval of Flaubert's limited central characters.

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CHAPTER I

JAMES, FRANCE, AND FLAUBERT

Peculiarly prophetic was that earliest memory, the memory of himself sitting on someone's lap, wagging his small feet under a flowing robe and gazing from a carriage window at "the admirable aspect of the Place and the Colonne Vendôme."¹ Henry James, Jr., in only his second year had thus experienced for the first time a fascination with France.

Whether he could recall gazing at the Place Vendôme at that age or whether he actually reconstructed the scene from subsequent parental accounts of it does not really matter. What does matter is that the fascination with France matured as the infant matured, as Henry James, Jr., became Henry James, novelist.

James's precocious fascination with France was encouraged by the continual international wanderings of the James family, wanderings which were, in retrospect, a bit embarrassing in their frequency to James as autobiographer, who feared giving of "poor father's impulsive journeyings" the "impression of aimless vacillation."² But it was his

¹Henry James, A Small Boy and Others (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), pp. 53-54.

²Leon Edel, Henry James, The Untried Years, 1843-1870, Vol. I of Henry James (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1953-1972), p. 138. Edel shows that in his autobiography James tried to minimize his parents' wanderings by failing to mention one of their brief stays back in America in 1858.

father's vacillations, aimless or not, which caused James to spend five of his first fifteen years in Europe, much of that time in Paris.

The first time James went to France he stayed but "for a short time in the second year of . . . [his] life."³ His family left Europe in the October following his birth in April of 1843, visited France during the next year, and returned to America in late summer or early autumn, 1845. Although the stay in France was short, it made an impression, James was sure, upon his "most infantine sensibility."⁴

Surely the impression was stronger the next time James went to France, when he was twelve years old. Then in the summer of 1855, he made his first visit to the Louvre while stopping over in Paris enroute to Geneva. Back in Paris in the summer of 1856 because of those "vacillations" of his father, James saw much more of Paris, living and learning in that city and Boulogne-sur-mer for two full years. Shifts in location were frequent, shifts in schools and tutors were more frequent, so that, years later, in writing his autobiography, James felt that in describing those years he revealed "so many choppings and changes and interruptions and volatilities (as on our parents' part, dear people) in our young education that the aspect of it grew in a manner foolish on my hands."⁵

³ A Small Boy and Others, p. 53.

⁴ A Small Boy and Others, p. 53.

⁵ Quoted in The Untried Years, p. 139.

He may have felt a bit foolish, but he was deeply impressed by his "young education" in Europe and especially in France. After many years he wrote of the "nostalgic cup" which had been "applied to . . . [his] lips even before . . . [he] was conscious of it." He explained, "Hurried off to London and Paris immediately after my birth and then and there, I was ever afterwards strangely to feel, that poison had entered by veins."⁶ Even if it contained a kind of "poison," the "cup" which was "applied to his lips" in his childhood and teenage years tempted him also as a young man. James was again in Paris and Boulogne briefly in 1869 while traveling throughout Europe, and in 1872 he returned with his sister Alice and his aunt Kate for another brief visit.

The brief visits would not suffice. He returned to Paris again in 1875 — but not for a visit. "I take possession of the old world — I inhale it — I appropriate it!" he exclaimed soon after his crossing from America. In many ways, he did take possession of Paris from November of 1875 until December of 1876. Intending to serve as a correspondent to the New York Tribune, he in fact did less corresponding than possessing, inhaling, appropriating.⁷ Soon after arriving in Paris, he

⁶ Henry James, The Novels and Tales of Henry James, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), XIII, xix.

⁷ Edel, Henry James, The Conquest of London, 1870-1881, Vol. II of Henry James, pp. 200, 237, quotes James's letter to his family in Quincy Street. He explains also that despite James's initial excitement over his arrival in Paris as correspondent for the New York Tribune, he soon realized that his letters were in "too vague and diffuse a key" and were doomed to failure.

experienced what Leon Edel describes as "one of the sacred moments of his life" — his meeting with Ivan Turgenev, who was destined to become his lifelong friend.⁸ Turgenev in turn made it possible for James to meet many other important literary figures in Paris, especially Gustave Flaubert. After meeting him, along with Edmond de Goncourt, and Emile Zola, James wrote, "Je suis lancé en plein Olympe."⁹ He did not always react with such awe to the Olympians he met, but nevertheless, as much as he could, he involved himself in their society, as well as in the society of various salons. He was so involved that after several months he could write to William Dean Howells that he was "turning into an old, and very contented, Parisian."¹⁰ He frequently complained, however, that he saw too few genuine Parisians and too many cosmopolitans, especially too many American expatriates. Particularly in a letter to his brother William he complained, revealing "the more extreme expression of his feelings: his satiety with the French mind, his belief that all he got out of France was a great deal of the Boulevard and 'third rate Americanism.'"¹¹ So, feeling an "eternal outsider,"¹²

⁸ Edel, II, 203.

⁹ Henry James, Henry James Letters, ed. Leon Edel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), II, 24.

¹⁰ Henry James Letters, II, 51.

¹¹ Edel, II, 268.

¹² Henry James, The Notebooks of Henry James, ed. F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 26.

he left Paris in December of 1876, admitting, however, that "anyone who has ever lived in Paris will always have a corner of affection for it in his heart and will often go back."¹³

And he did. By September of 1877 he had left his home in London for another visit to Paris. With delight he renewed old friendships and returned to his habitual cafe, where "the garçon remarked that monsieur had been away a long time, and led him to his favorite table and brought him his usual newspaper."¹⁴ This visit was brief, no more than a month, but another visit followed in 1879 when, throughout the autumn and during part of the winter, friendships with Turgenev and others were once again renewed.

While traveling from London to the continent in March of 1880 and again in February of 1881 he passed through Paris, but it was not until 1882 that he could linger more than a few days in France. In 1882, he spent all of October in traveling throughout the countryside to gain material for a travel book, A Little Tour in France, and he returned to Paris for several days in November, when he again visited his dying friend Turgenev.

Paris promised to be rather desolate after the deaths of his friends, Flaubert in 1880 and then Turgenev in 1883, but James returned in February of 1884, determined to see again the other acquaintances of

¹³Quoted in Edel, II, 268.

¹⁴Henry James, "Occasional Paris" in Portraits of Places (1883; rpt. New York: Lear Publishers, 1948), p. 130.

his French year -- 1875-1876. He saw Goncourt, Daudet, Zola, and others and for a month renewed friendships in the salons, of whose society he had frequently complained when he lived in Paris. In the autumns of 1885 and 1889 he returned again to visit those friends, as he did also in 1893, when he cultivated particularly the friendship of Daudet.

In 1899 he went to Paris briefly and then on to the Riviera to visit his friend Paul Bourget, and in 1907 and 1908 he again visited friends -- notably Edith Wharton -- but afterwards refused invitations to return: "He . . . [had] become a quiet 'Sussex burgher' who . . . [had] 'great occasional bouffées of fond memory and longing from his dear old past Paris.'"¹⁵

"Dear old past Paris" was in James's memory throughout his life; if he was not there, he was often longing to be. And in his writings, as well as in his wanderings, he was often there. James's fascination with France is as evident in his writings about France and French authors as in his continual longing to visit the country -- to possess it, to inhale it, to appropriate it.

James dealt with France and French authors in several ways -- in travel literature, in translations, in fiction, and in criticism. James wrote about France in much of his travel literature. One entire travel volume of his, A Little Tour in France (1884), was in fact devoted specifically to sketches of French scenes, especially scenes

¹⁵ Jeanne Delbaere-Garant, Henry James: The Vision of France (Paris: Société d'Éditions Les Belles Lettres, 1970), p. 20.

from the château country and the Midi. He also wrote dozens of French sketches and articles on French life for various pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers; some of these were collected in Transatlantic Sketches (1883), while he published others in a series of letters from France for the New York Tribune in 1876.

James's translations of French works certainly did not appear with the frequency of the travel literature, yet their very appearance demonstrates James's fascination with France and French authors. Although he did not ordinarily want his own works translated and although he certainly did not often want to translate the works of others, James did nevertheless render a few French works into English. As a young man he translated — but never published — Prosper Mérimée's La Vénus d'Ille.¹⁶ He also rendered into English a French prose poem by Turgenev,¹⁷ as he did an article about that friend after his death.¹⁸ The article about Turgenev was written by Daudet, and in addition to that work James translated another work by Daudet, Port Tarascon.¹⁹

¹⁶ Henry James, Notes of a Son and Brother (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1914), p. 88.

¹⁷ Henry James, [Ivan Turgenev] (unsigned note and translation of a prose poem from the French), The Nation, 23 (5 Oct. 1876), 213.

¹⁸ Henry James, trans., "Tourgénéff in Paris: Reminiscences by Daudet," Century Magazine, O.S. 27 (Nov. 1882), 49-53.

¹⁹ Henry James, trans., Port Tarascon: The Last Adventures of the Illustrious Tartarin, by Alphonse Daudet (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1890).

James translated only one other work, an article by Maurice Barrès entitled "Les Saints de la France" for The Book of France.²⁰

As his translations of the works of other writers were few but significant, so were the French settings of James's own fiction. Attempting to show James's developing consciousness of France, Jeanne Delbaere-Garant carefully identifies the relatively few works by him with French settings: "A Tragedy of Error" (1864), "Gabrielle de Bergerac" (1869), "Madame de Mauves" (1874), The American (1887), a group of stories labeled five-finger exercises²¹ (1876-1886), The Princess Casamassima (1886), "The Reverberator" (1888), The Tragic Muse (1890), What Maisie Knew (1897), The Awkward Age (1899), The Ambassadors (1903), and "The Velvet Glove" (1909). These works, according to Delbaere-Garant, are significant in showing that, with him, the "picture of France undergoes a gradual transformation that clearly reflects the evolution of James's ideas and sensibility."²² The transformation, she argues, is basically from a moralistic approach to an aesthetic

²⁰ Henry James, trans., "Les Saints de la France," by Maurice Barrès, in The Book of France, ed. Winifred Stephens (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1915), pp. 176-182.

²¹ In her chapter on five-finger exercises, Delbaere-Garant refers to a number of stories which D. W. Jefferson says "would be a useful exercise for anyone embarking upon a systematic study of American manners in fiction," Henry James and the Modern Reader (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), p. 66. Delbaere-Garant herself deals specifically with "Four Meetings," "The Siege of London," "Rose-Agathe," "A Bundle of Letters," "The Pension Beaurepas," and "The Point of View."

²² Delbaere-Garant, p. 395.

approach, from a condemnation of a more or less corrupt France to an appreciation (especially in The Ambassadors) of a France which is really the essence of "what James meant by 'life' in his other works."²³

Although The Ambassadors does indeed show James's appreciation of France, his appreciation — his personal fascination with France — seems even more clearly shown in his criticism than in his fiction. It is shown in the number of years he devoted to criticism of French authors, his earliest piece having appeared in 1865, his latest in 1914. It is also shown in the number of pieces he devoted to criticism of French authors — ninety-one.²⁴ And it is shown in the contributions he made in that criticism. As Field says, "Henry James contributed in a major way to the introduction of French fiction to a genteel nineteenth-century British and American public; his criticism of French literature is one of the most extensive, sophisticated, and instructive commentaries on nineteenth-century French fiction and letters which has been produced in America."²⁵ He clearly demonstrated his fascination with France and French authors by creating, in turn, a fascination with French literature among his British and American public.

One French author for whom James showed a particular, continuing fascination was Gustave Flaubert. Taken to the Flaubert cénacle in

²³Delbaere-Garant, p. 399.

²⁴As identified by Mary L. Field, "Henry James's Criticism of French Literature: A Bibliography and Checklist," American Literary Realism, 7 (1974), 379-394.

²⁵Field, p. 379.

December, 1875, by his friend Turgenev, James was immediately fascinated and spoke, in fact, of being "lancé en plein Olympe."²⁶ He soon began to seek out Flaubert "as often as decently possible,"²⁷ and his fascination was further stimulated by a visit with Flaubert alone, away from the constraints of the cénacle. This private visit in March, 1875, led to others throughout James's "French" year — 1875-1876 — and James finally came to count the "powerful, serious, melancholy, manly, deeply corrupted, yet not corrupting" Flaubert his friend, a friend who, James wrote in his journal, was "head and shoulders above the others, the men I saw at his house on Sunday afternoons. . . ."²⁸

James's fascination with Flaubert was evident not only in his journal but in his critical writings as well. And that critical fascination was enduring; James's critical articles on Flaubert appeared as early as 1874 and as late as 1902. In 1874 James's review "Flaubert's Temptation of St. Anthony" appeared. It was followed in 1876 by the article "The Minor French Novelists," which concerned Charles de Bernard and Gustave Flaubert. In 1893 James reviewed the Correspondance de Gustave Flaubert, Quatrième Série in the article "Gustave Flaubert." He wrote of Flaubert again in 1897 in the article "London" and in 1899 in "The Present Literary Situation in France." In 1902 he wrote his

²⁶Henry James Letters, p. 24.

²⁷Edel, II, 220.

²⁸The Notebooks of Henry James, p. 26.

final critical tribute to his friend Flaubert — an introduction to an English translation of Madame Bovary.²⁹

This tribute alone might be motivation enough to cause critics of both James and Flaubert to examine closely the personal and the professional relationship of the two novelists. Rather surprisingly, however, few critics have been motivated to examine either relationship in much detail.

Some study of James's personal relationship with Flaubert has been provoked by Ford Madox Hueffer's belief that James hated Flaubert. Admitting that it is not his "business to be unnecessarily biographical," Hueffer says, nevertheless, "I cannot resist mentioning a glimpse of a letter that was kindly afforded me by a French writer a little time ago. The letter was written by Flaubert, and recounts how Turgénieff had brought to see him a young American who had enraged Flaubert beyond belief. He had, this young American, spoken disrespectfully of the style of Prosper Mérimée."³⁰ Hueffer feels sure that this disrespectful young American was Henry James, and Van Wyck Brooks seems to feel

²⁹"Flaubert's Temptation of St. Anthony," unsigned review of La Tentation de Saint Antoine, by Gustave Flaubert, Nation, 18 (4 June 1874), 365-366; "The Minor French Novelists," Galaxy, 21 (Feb. 1876), 219-233; "Gustave Flaubert," review of Correspondance de Gustave Flaubert, Quatrième Série, Macmillan's, 67 (Mar. 1893), 332-343; "London," Harper's Weekly, 41 (21 Aug. 1897), 834; "The Present Literary Situation in France," North American Review, 169 (1899), 488-500; "Gustave Flaubert," in Madame Bovary, by Gustave Flaubert, trans. W. G. Blaydes (London: William Heinemann, 1902), pp. v-xliii.

³⁰Ford Madox Hueffer, Henry James: A Critical Study (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1916), pp. 55-56.

so also, suggesting that James's true attitude towards Flaubert and towards France in general can be discerned from such reports as Mr. Hueffer's, who "tells us that . . . [James] cherished for Flaubert, in reality, a 'lasting, deep rancor,' that he 'hated' him, that he referred again and again to Flaubert as having abused him in the discussion of Prosper Mérimée, that he could never forgive the master for having opened his own door in a dressing-gown."³¹ Evaluating James's attitude towards his year in France, Mervyn Jones-Evans resurrects the story of Flaubert's "opening his door to . . . [James] clad only in a dressing gown."³² Edel, however, finally lays it to rest when he mentions James's own description of Flaubert's clothing on the occasion — "a long, colloquial dressing gown" — and explains that the dressing gown with matching trousers was a "costume often affected by French men of letters." Concerning Hueffer's belief that "ever after James hated Flaubert and his work," Edel writes simply, "there is abundant testimony to the contrary."³³ One possible testimony to a friendly relationship between James and Flaubert is suggested by Jean Bruneau, who writes, "Aucune trace . . . ne semblait subsister, du côté français, des relations établies par le jeune romancier américain. Une erreur de lecture portant sur la signature de Henry James avait enseveli dans le Catalogue des manuscrits de la Collection Lovenjoul une lettre de

³¹Van Wyck Brooks, The Pilgrimage of Henry James (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1925), p. 59.

³²Mervyn Jones-Evans, "Henry James's Year in France," Horizon, 14 (1946), p. 56.

³³Edel, II, 215.

James à Flaubert."³⁴ This letter was simply a letter introducing Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton, to Flaubert, but it was indeed important, according to Bruneau, in that "elle permet d'abord de ruiner définitivement deux légendes, nées en Angleterre par les soins de Ford Madox Ford [Hueffer], suivant lesquelles James aurait méprisé Flaubert et son oeuvre pour une histoire de robe de chambre, et se serait brouillé avec lui à propos du style du Mérimée."³⁵

Most study of the personal relationship of James and Flaubert has thus been brief and anecdotal — or in the case of Edel and Bruneau, brief and anti-anecdotal.³⁶ More serious and more extensive study, however, has been devoted to the professional relationship between James and Flaubert.

James's criticism of Flaubert's works, for instance, has been studied by several scholars. In Henry James's Criticism of French Literature: A Bibliography and a Checklist, Mary L. Field includes a section on James's criticism of Flaubert's works.³⁷ In The Early Development of Henry James, Cornelia P. Kelley also includes an examination of James's criticism of Flaubert, determining that

³⁴ Jean Bruneau, "Une Lettre Inédite de Henry James à Gustave Flaubert autour de Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton," Revue de Littérature Comparée, 42 (1968), 520.

³⁵ Bruneau, p. 524.

³⁶ In his biography of James, Edel does deal extensively with the relationship between James and Flaubert, but his account of that relationship is scattered throughout the five volumes.

³⁷ Field, pp. 379-394.

"'perverted ingenuity and wasted power,' then, impressed James as the outstanding traits of Flaubert and the Goncourts who were the most characteristic writers in France in 1875."³⁸

Morris Roberts in his very thorough Henry James's Criticism agrees that, in some respects, James thought that Flaubert and his circle were "gifted and perverse children," yet Roberts does show how in later essays James is kinder and fairer towards Flaubert than in the earlier ones.³⁹ David A. Cook in "James and Flaubert: The Evolution of Perception" shows similarly how James's critical articles on Flaubert "manifest radical shifts in tone, perspective and judgment." He explains how "as his art matured and his popular success declined, James grew more sympathetic to the plight of the aging novelist who lavished infinite care upon the form of creations which went virtually ignored by all but a small circle of intimates and a handful of connoisseurs, because that position was rapidly becoming his own." His final appreciation of Madame Bovary, Cook concludes, was "an index of his mature critical thought."⁴⁰

In their close examination of James's criticism, such studies as Cook's reveal much about the professional relationship between James and

³⁸ Cornelia Pulsifer Kelley, The Early Development of Henry James, in University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, No. 15 (Urbana: Illinois University Press, 1930), p. 220.

³⁹ Morris Roberts, Henry James's Criticism (1929; rpt. New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1965), p. 41.

⁴⁰ David A. Cook, "James and Flaubert: The Evolution of Perception," Comparative Literature, 15 (1973), 296.

Flaubert. So, likewise, do several close studies of similarities in the works of the two novelists.

Lyall Powers, in his book Henry James and the Naturalist Movement, explains that James's development during and after his French year was "clearly in the direction of the Flaubert circle."⁴¹

W. C. D. Pacey, in "Henry James and His French Contemporaries," agreeing that James was clearly influenced by the Flaubert circle, suggests the nature and extent of the influence: "Briefly it was their rendering of sense impressions and their technical dexterity which attracted him, their lack of moral and intellectual insight (as he saw it) which repelled him."⁴² Flaubert's "technical dexterity" was particularly impressive:

There is no doubt at all that James was immensely impressed by Flaubert's artistic conscience, by his intense care in the choice of words and phrases and rhythms; everything which James ever wrote about Flaubert testifies to this. But the relationship is closer than mere general admiration. "This quest and multiplication of the image," James wrote of Flaubert, "was accordingly his high elegance." Is it not also the high elegance of Henry James? Is not the clue to James's later style to be found in this "quest and multiplication of the image" together with a restless search for the "mot juste"?

Emphasizing this similarity in imagery as well as similarities in adverbial richness, long rhythms, and restriction in point of view,

⁴¹Lyall H. Powers, Henry James and the Naturalist Movement (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1971), p. 27.

⁴²W. C. D. Pacey, "Henry James and His French Contemporaries," American Literature, 13 (1941-1942), 241.

Pacey concludes that "Flaubert's influence upon James was almost wholly a stylistic one."⁴³

In his article "Henry James, Gustave Flaubert, and the Ideal Style," Strother Purdy also emphasizes the stylistic influence of Flaubert upon James: "To the principles of composition, the view of style, that Flaubert pronounced and employed . . . [James] returned again and again to praise."⁴⁴ Purdy concludes, in fact, that James developed a theory of the mot juste similar to the famous one Flaubert announced in 1878: "We believe there is a certain particular phrase, better than any other, for everything in the world, and the thoroughly accomplished writer ends by finding it."⁴⁵

In her dissertation "The Image in the Mirror: Henry James and the French Realists," Elsie Gray Minter also examines James's admiration for Flaubert's style, his craftsmanship. In summary, she writes, "These then are the elements of Flaubert's craftsmanship which James observed, adopted and adapted and incorporated into his own works: the gradual unfolding of the portrait which is to be presented, the revelation of milieu as the personages move within it, the description of things intermingled as they present themselves to the eyes of characters; the simplicity of the structure involved; the concern with form, with

⁴³Pacey, p. 253.

⁴⁴Strother B. Purdy, "Henry James, Gustave Flaubert, and the Ideal Style," Language and Style, 3 (1970), 163.

⁴⁵Purdy, p. 164.

language; the objective, impressive impersonality which results in restricted point of view; the increasing conflict between appearance and reality."⁴⁶

While Minter, then, as well as Purdy, Pacey, Powers, and others,⁴⁷ shows the general influence, primarily stylistic, of Flaubert upon James, a few other critics show a more specific relationship between certain works of Flaubert and certain works of James. In considering the imagery of James in The Crystal Cage: Adventures of the Imagination in the Fiction of Henry James, Daniel J. Schneider, for example, points out the similarity between the romantic consciousness of Flaubert's *Emma Bovary* and that of James's *Fleda Vetch* in The Spoils of Poynton.⁴⁸

Also considering the imagery of James, R. V. Stallman notes the similarity between the "romantic melody"⁴⁹ of *Emma Bovary* and that of James's *Isabel Archer*. One reason Stallman notes this similarity is that he finds in The Portrait of a Lady an allusion to Madame Bovary. When Henrietta Stackpole, shocked by Isabel's view of happiness as being "a swift carriage, of a dark night, rattling with four horses

⁴⁶Elsie Gray Minter, "The Image in the Mirror: Henry James and the French Realists," Diss. University of North Carolina 1962, p. 58.

⁴⁷In his 1970 New York University dissertation, "Henry James and the French Novelists," David Adams Leeming also includes a section on the relationship of James and Flaubert.

⁴⁸Daniel J. Schneider, The Crystal Cage: Adventures of the Imagination in the Fiction of Henry James (Lawrence, Kansas: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), pp. 159ff.

⁴⁹R. W. Stallman, The Houses that James Built and Other Literary Studies (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1961), p. 17.

over roads that one can't see," says, "Mr. Goodwood certainly didn't teach you to say such things as that — like the heroine of an immoral novel," Stallman identifies the novel as Flaubert's Madame Bovary, "from which James has recast Isabel's image of happiness."⁵⁰

In his article "Henry James and the French Mind: The International Theme in Madame de Mauves," H. A. Bouraoui also points out a reference to Flaubert in a James novel. He explains that in Madame de Mauves, "Longmore condemns M. de Mauves' failure to appreciate his wife's fineness as akin to 'the taste for Gérôme in painting and for M. Gustave Flaubert in literature.'" But he adds that "however James may have deprecated the absence of a moral view in Flaubert, he nevertheless admired and imitated his craftsmanship, calling him 'the novelist's novelist.'" Bouraoui explains that, in fact, Madame de Mauves herself seems to embody a number of faint echoes of Flaubert's heroine, Emma Bovary:

If Emma spent the days of her convent upbringing reading Walter Scott novels, Euphemia has evidently spent hers acquiring the romance of Europe from history books and genealogical charts. The marriage bond is confused in her mind with a Puritanical religious zeal, as Emma's is by a religious mysticism which veils her sensuality. The Prince Charming of whom she dreams, however, is no nearer the feudal ideal than Emma's Rodolphe Boulanger . . . Emma's Rodolphe, we remember, shares equally M. de Mauves' passion for women and for cigars. Emma, after her seduction, floats in a dream of romantic bliss, while Rodolphe, "le cigar aux dents, raccommodeait avec son canif une des deux brides cassées." James even manages to remind us of the Rodolphe of the "Comices agricoles" scene, using his barnyard technique to woo Emma, when he describes the

⁵⁰ Stallman, p. 14.

Baron listening to the poetry of the nightingales "with the comfortable smile of one of his country neighbors whose big ox should have taken the prize at a fair."⁵¹

While Bouraoui, then, shows several important similarities between Madame de Mauves and Madame Bovary, Charles R. Anderson in his book Person, Place, and Thing in Henry James's Novels shows some similarities between The Portrait of a Lady and Madame Bovary, explaining that "the influence of Flaubert and the other French realists — an influence always confined to techniques — has its full impact on the novel that marks the great turning point in . . . [James's] career, The Portrait of a Lady (1881)."⁵² He contends that Madame Bovary, which

was very much in James's mind at the time he was composing his own early masterpiece, is also concerned with an unhappy marriage, but it would be hard to imagine any story further removed from Isabel's. What drew James to Flaubert was not his subject or his theme, neither of which he found "morally interesting," nor the heroine of his greatest novel, who was "really too small an affair." What made Flaubert for all serious modern novelists the one who carried "the flag of the guild" was his complete dedication to art. . . . Those aspects of Flaubert's theory most admired by him were, quite naturally, the ones that most influenced him as a practicing novelist. His eloquent praise of form and style in Madame Bovary can with equal justice be applied to The Portrait of a Lady; there could scarcely be a better description of the development of James's fictional art in the four years following publication of The American (1877).⁵³

⁵¹H. A. Bouraoui, "Henry James and the French Mind: The International Theme in 'Madame de Mauves,'" Novel, 4 (1970), 74.

⁵²Charles R. Anderson, Person, Place, and Thing in Henry James's Novels (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1977), p. 71.

⁵³Anderson, pp. 84-85.

Departing from matters of style alone, Philip R. Grover studies some other similarities between James and Flaubert in "Two Modes of Possessing — Conquest and Appreciation: 'The Princess Casamassima' and 'L'Education Sentimentale.'" He shows that, to James, "the fabric of civilization that has been built, its grandeurs, splendours, treasures, and felicities, are a possession of the human race, they are not merely the luxurious toys of a privileged and pampered few. . . . And they are not to be identified, for James, as merely class acquisitions which can and should disappear with the classes which may, in the past, have encouraged and promoted their existence. They represent human possibilities and human achievements — and possibilities and achievements of the profoundest human value." Grover shows, furthermore, that "this emphasis on art and the treasures in which it is embodied places James, in one sense, within a French tradition. . . ." Yet he shows as well that in "the mode of possessing" James differs significantly from Flaubert and other French writers: "The place, the external world, is subordinated to the human world as well as to the individual will, intelligence, and sensibility of the observer through his responsiveness and expanded sympathetic understanding. He does not use the world, or possess some power over it or acquire some social, political, or economic position within it. It is his because he feels it. . . ."

According to Grover, both James and Flaubert express "the agglutinative imagination of man as he tries to subsume the world to himself. But James's mode of possession is by receptive assimilation rather than by exertion of the will and the acquisition of power to command or to

own."⁵⁴ James's subject may be similar to Flaubert's; what is different is his vision of it.

Certainly David Gervais in Henry James and Gustave Flaubert would agree, the sub-title of his book being, in fact, A Study in Contrasts. Gervais insists that "Flaubert and James are too different for there to be any point in making them out to be less unlike each other than they really are."⁵⁵ His study, in fact, examines systematically neither their personal relationship nor their critical relationship. In fact, while seldom treating the two writers significantly in the same chapter, Gervais is not really concerned with the relationship of James and Flaubert; he is concerned with "the possibility of tragic art in the novels of the nineteenth-century," with "how difficult the nineteenth-century novelists found it to create a real tragic emotion."⁵⁶

James and Flaubert, then, serve Gervais as examples of nineteenth-century novelists reacting to that difficulty. In no way does he suggest that James's tragedy is a reaction to that of Flaubert. Rather, he is suggesting that James's notion of tragedy is very different from that of Flaubert, that James is "a novelist whose own art is untragic" while Flaubert is "a novelist whose art, at its best, can be tragic."⁵⁷

⁵⁴Philip R. Grover, "Two Modes of Possessing - Conquest and Appreciation: 'The Princess Casamassima' and 'L'Education Sentimentale,'" Modern Language Review, 66 (1971), 771.

⁵⁵David Gervais, Henry James and Gustave Flaubert: A Study in Contrasts (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978), pp. x-xi.

⁵⁶Gervais, pp. xii, 223.

⁵⁷Gervais, p. xii.

Flaubert's art, Gervais believes, can be genuinely tragic, but it is not always, for in his art there is "a constant struggle between two kinds of impersonality; the first is authentic and helps him to see life and death (especially death) with real clarity; the second is spurious and . . . tries to evade suffering by cancelling the human bonds which his true impersonality reveals to him."⁵⁸ An example of such false impersonality, to Gervais, is Flaubert's treatment of the blind beggar at the end of Madame Bovary, while an example of true impersonality is his treatment in the same novel of the vigil, at once tragic and ironic, of Homais and Bournisien over Emma's body: "This ability to step back from the pathos of Emma's death is the kind of thing I mean in speaking of Flaubert's true impersonality. The feeling is tragic because it is not exclusive, because everything the scene suggests is rendered without evasion and all of the author's feelings about these characters, his irony and his compassion, come together in the same poetry."⁵⁹

Because James's art, by contrast, is evasive, Gervais believes, it is not tragic, even though some of it is intended to be; consequently, James could not fully appreciate the genuinely tragic art of Flaubert. In The Portrait of a Lady, for example, "it is true that James goes out of his way to set Isabel up as a tragedy queen," but the novel is ultimately "a subtle evasion of the tragic."⁶⁰ Briefly, James evades

⁵⁸Gervais, p. 8.

⁵⁹Gervais, pp. 68-69.

⁶⁰Gervais, pp. 149, 191, 159, 154, 152, 92, 150, 155.

the tragic in two ways, Gervais believes. The first way is to spotlight Isabel's "individual tragedy so brightly that all other suffering in the book comes to seem like a back-drop to it." James hides from the reader the feelings of the other characters, the fiçelles, and "by limiting the humanity of the people she is in contact with he . . . [cushions] her against them." Thus he produces melodrama, not tragedy. The second way in which James evades the tragic, according to Gervais, is to hide his most genuine — and perhaps most negative — feelings about his characters and to turn instead to disingenuous wording and to "the strange Jamesian celebration of renunciation." In The Portrait of a Lady, for example, James "enhances Isabel's dignity under the guise of candid criticism" and, feeling "an untragic need to find a reassuring consolation in the thought of human dignity," allows her "to renounce the life inside her" rather than face tragedy. The reader, Gervais believes, is left wondering how to find the real — the tragic — Isabel beneath the veil of James's admiration for her.

Gervais' study of what he calls Flaubert's tragic and James's untragic art — its taking refuge in renunciation and its holding "back from its own deepest insights"⁶¹ — is, without doubt, thought-provoking and perhaps useful to an understanding of the difficulty the nineteenth-century novelists experienced in attempting to create a real tragic emotion. It is not, however, particularly useful to an understanding

⁶¹Gervais, p. xii.

of the relationship of two very closely related novelists; it seems to hold back from its own insights into the relationship. Gervais seldom studies the relationship between the two novelists, and even when, in his last chapter, he proposes to make "a direct comparison of their work,"⁶² he simply examines how untragic James's work is compared with that of Flaubert. After examining The Princess Casamassima and L'Education Sentimentale, for example, he asks, "What lessons, then, does The Princess Casamassima contain for the reader of L'Education and of James's critique of Flaubert?" and answers condescendingly — despite his apology at the beginning of the chapter for having been "too condescending to James" — that "it shows us how James's need to 'communicate' with his hero could make his art factitious, how his most apparently dramatic situations are often those where he is most personal and definite about where the reader's 'sympathy' is to go."⁶³

It is evident that Gervais' own sympathies go anywhere except to James. He is so unsympathetic with James's art, in fact, that his rather random and unsupportable condemnations of James — his "disingenuous" passages, his "hedgingly poetic rhetoric," his "subterfuge"⁶⁴ — in support of his thesis concerning nineteenth-century tragedy tend to obscure the relationship of James and Flaubert. Certain only that James's own art is untragic and that James thus could never understand or appreciate the

⁶²Gervais, p. xi.

⁶³Gervais, pp. 198, 208.

⁶⁴Gervais, pp. 152, 179, 161.

tragedy of Flaubert, Gervais concludes, finally, that "L'ineptie consiste à vouloir conclure."⁶⁵

Perhaps the complexity of the relationship of James and Flaubert might make one hesitant to conclude. But certainly one need not hesitate to begin — to study the personal relationship of the two, to analyze their professional relationship in criticism and fiction, to examine the similarities in their work, to probe — without condescension to either — the possibility of influence. One might discover, then, the closeness of the relationship and the extensiveness of the lessons James learned from the master Flaubert.

⁶⁵Gervais, p. 223.

CHAPTER II

THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

"He was at once the most nationally conscious and least national of novelists."¹ Leon Edel thus describes Henry James's plight as an "international" novelist. Such was his plight also as a visitor in France, a visitor in 1875 to the Flaubert cénacle. He approached the circle hoping to be included; he was not.

Strains of triumph were heard when he felt he might be included. He was impressed at meeting Turgenev, a "magnificent creature" to whom James "took an unprecedented fancy": "He seemed very simple and kind, etc.; his face and shoulders are hugely broad, his stature very high, and his whole aspect and temperament of a larger and manlier kind than I have ever yet encountered in a scribbler. I should think acquaintance with him would be a mine of satisfaction."² And he was thrilled when the impressive Turgenev took him to the Flaubert cénacle, where he felt that he was in fact "lancé en plein Olympe."³ Of the Olympians themselves, he wrote, "I have been seeing something of Daudet, Goncourt, Zola; and there is nothing more interesting to me now than the effort and the experiment of their little group, with its truly infernal

¹Leon Edel, "Henry James: The Americano-European Legend," University of Toronto Quarterly, 36(July, 1967), 322.

²Henry James Letters, II, 10-11.

³Henry James Letters, II, 24.

intelligence of art, form, manner — its intense artistic life. They do the only kind of work, today, that I respect; and in spite of their handling of unclean things, they are at least serious and honest. The floods of tepid soap and water which under the name of novels are being vomited forth in England, seem to me, by contrast, to do little honour to our race."⁴

But sounds of defeat were soon heard also. After a little more than a year, James left Paris and recalled several years later that he had felt he would be an "eternal outsider."⁵ Leon Edel explains that "he felt himself distinctly an outsider even though he had access, as artist, to the Flaubertian cénacle; indeed, this made him feel more of an outsider than ever."⁶ He felt that he did not have sufficient access to "pure Parisianism,"⁷ and he was not satisfied with the cénacle to which he did have access. He explained, "I have seen almost nothing of the literary fraternity, and there are fifty reasons why I should not become intimate with them. I don't like their wares, and they don't like any others; and besides, they are not accueillants. Tourguéneff is worth the whole heap of them, and yet he himself swallows them down in a manner that excites my extreme wonder."⁸ James was amazed that

⁴Quoted in Edel, Henry James, The Middle Years, 1882-1895, Vol. III of Henry James, p. 103.

⁵The Notebooks of Henry James, p. 26.

⁶Edel, II, 227.

⁷Henry James Letters, II, 51.

⁸Henry James Letters, II, 52.

Turgenev, another outsider, could accept this "little rabble of Flaubert's satellites, fellows not worthy to unlace his shoe-ties."⁹

Whom did James immediately dislike in the Flaubert cénacle? James's immediate reaction to several of the "'grandsons of Balzac'"¹⁰ was rather negative. In his early visits, he met, among others, Emile Zola, whom he pronounced "a very common fellow";¹¹ Alphonse Daudet, who, he felt, was "an extreme imitator of Dickens — but a froid without D.'s real exuberance;"¹² and Edmond de Goncourt, who, James reported with evident disapproval, was working on a subject "into which he was going very far" — "Flaubert: 'What is it?' E. de G. 'A whore-house de province.'"¹³

Why did James react so negatively to these "grandsons of Balzac" — Balzac, whom he had admired, analyzed, and even imitated for years and who had probably been his greatest master? As we have seen, Ford Madox Hueffer and Van Wyck Brooks attribute his supposed hatred of French writers, and France in general, to snubs received from Flaubert — Flaubert's anger at James for criticizing Prosper Mérimée and Flaubert's appearance at his own door in a dressing gown. But the Mérimée incident might not have involved James at all. No one knows who the young

⁹ Henry James Letters, II, 29.

¹⁰ Powers, p. 1. This is James's own term.

¹¹ Henry James Letters, II, 15.

¹² Henry James Letters, II, 44.

¹³ Henry James Letters, II, 23.

American writer was who had abused Mérimée, and apparently, Jean Bruneau explains, Hueffer assumed because of the initial H in a letter that the writer must have been James. The initial, Bruneau believes, probably referred to Henry Harrisse.¹⁴ And Hueffer himself does admit that "James never mentioned the incident."¹⁵ Nor was the dressing-gown incident really an incident; James did not consider Flaubert's dress to be a snub, for he recognized that the dressing gown was just a garment "one has always associated with literature in France -- the uniform really of freedom of talk."¹⁶

There do, however, seem to be two apparent reasons for James's negative reaction to several of the writers of the Flaubert cénacle. The first is that, as Edel explains, most of the writers of the cénacle whom he immediately disliked, including Zola, Daudet, and Goncourt, were themselves "the 'received' rather than the receiving."¹⁷ They probably did not pay sufficient attention to James because they were

¹⁴Bruneau, p. 526.

¹⁵Ford Madox Hueffer, Portraits from Life (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1937), p. 15. In Return to Yesterday (New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1932), p. 207, Ford says of the incident, however, "James himself referred to the occasion several times."

¹⁶Henry James, "Gustave Flaubert," in Notes on Novelists, With Some Other Notes (1914; rpt. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), p. 71. Although this essay first appeared as a critical introduction to Madame Bovary, trans. W. G. Blaydes (London: William Heinemann, 1902), pp. v-xiii, citations from the essay refer to the more accessible reprint in Notes on Novelists, and subsequent page numbers will appear parenthetically within the text.

¹⁷Edel, II, 225.

busy paying attention to the impression they themselves were making. For the same reason, they ignored some of their contemporary French writers. James objected, writing in a letter to the New York Tribune, "You ask a writer whose productions you admire some question about any other writer, for whose works you also have a relish. 'Oh, he is of the School of This or That: he is of the queue of So and So,' he answers. 'We think nothing of him: you mustn't talk of him here; for us he doesn't exist.'"¹⁸ In a letter to his friend Thomas Sergeant Perry, James explained, "J'ai rencontré chez . . . [Flaubert] deux fois sa petite école — Zola, Goncourt, Daudet et etc. Cela m'a intéressé bien qu'évidemment je ne pousserai pas bien loin dans leur intimité. Ce sont des garçons d'un grand talent, mais je les trouve affreusement bornes,"¹⁹ especially, James surely thought, in their attitudes towards other writers, himself included.

The second reason he immediately disliked some of the writers of the Flaubert cénacle is closely related to the first; he felt that they were very limited in their awareness and understanding of life beyond their little circle. He complained, for example, "I also spent a Sunday afternoon again at Flaubert's with his cénacle: E. de Goncourt, Alphonse Daudet, etc. They are a queer lot, and intellectually very remote from my own sympathies. They are extremely narrow, and it makes

¹⁸James, "Parisian Life," New York Tribune, 5 Feb. 1976, rpt. in Henry James: Parisian Sketches: Letters to the New York Tribune, 1875-1976, ed. Leon Edel and Ilse Dusoier Lind (New York: New York University Press, 1957), p. 55.

¹⁹Henry James Letters, II, 24.

me rather scorn them that not a mother's son of them can read English. But this hardly matters, for they couldn't really understand it if they did."²⁰ They knew so little of life, and what they knew was so dirty; James felt that, "like the women whom they painted, they prostituted their virtue."²¹

For these reasons, James immediately disliked much of the Flaubert circle, from which he felt excluded. Naturally, because he felt excluded, he was glad to cut them out of his life as a matter of vengeance. Hence, he left Paris in 1876, when his "last layers of resistance to a long-encroaching weariness and satiety with the French mind . . . [fell from him] like a garment": "I have done with 'em, forever, and am turning English all over."²²

But, Marie-Reine Garnier explains, his experience in Paris "avait gravé dans l'esthétique du littérateur américaine un certain nombre de traits. Il feignait en partant d'en ignorer l'importance, cependant rien ne les effaça jamais."²³ And after a few years of absence from the Flaubert cénacle, his opinion of writers such as Zola, Daudet, and Goncourt had changed. By the time he returned to Paris for a month-long visit in 1884, he was writing, "I spent last evening at Alphonse Daudet's, and was much impressed with the intense seriousness of that

²⁰Henry James Letters, II, 20-21.

²¹Kelley, p. 220.

²²Henry James Letters, II, 58.

²³Marie-Reine Garnier, Henry James et la France (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1927), p. 6.

little group — himself, Zola, Goncourt, etc."²⁴ Years of absence from them, years of reading their works, years of increasing security as a writer — for whatever reason, James came to admit that "they are children of decadence . . . a brilliant one. . . . In spite of this they represent a great deal of truth."²⁵ "It is possible to determine," W. C. D. Pacey explains, what James liked and disliked in these children of brilliant decadence. "Briefly, it was their rendering of sense impressions and their technical dexterity which attracted him, their lack of moral and intellectual insight (as he saw it) which repelled him."²⁶ But clearly, he was increasingly attracted to and appreciative of them. Years later, one of the minor figures of James's first visit to the cénacle sought him out in London; James was friendly to Guy de Maupassant, came to admire him, and wrote a brilliant essay of appreciation of his works.²⁷ He became more attracted to the others also — he even came to be a close friend of Daudet — and he wrote about them with appreciation in several critical articles, including reviews of Zola's Une Page D'Amour (1878) and Nana (1880) and

²⁴Quoted in Edel, III, 101.

²⁵Quoted in Edel, III, 104.

²⁶Pacey, p. 241.

²⁷In addition to his most important article on Maupassant, "Guy de Maupassant," Fortnightly Review, 49 (Mar. 1888), 364-386, James wrote another essay, "Guy de Maupassant," which appeared in 1889 as an article in Harper's Weekly, 33 (19 Oct. 1889), 834-835 and as an introduction to The Odd Number, Thirteen Tales by Guy de Maupassant, trans. Jonathan Sturges (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1889), pp. vii-xvii.

a major assessment of the novelist in the Atlantic (1903);²⁸ a review of Daudet's Fromont Jeune et Risler Aîné (1875) and three other studies of the novelist (1882, 1883, 1897);²⁹ a note on Edmond de Goncourt's La Fille Elisa (1877), a review of "The Journal of the Brothers de Goncourt" (1888), as well as brief mention of the brothers' novels in "The Minor French Novelists" (1876).³⁰

Some of the writers of the Flaubert cénacle James did not come to like; some of them he liked immediately. He immediately liked (even loved) Turgenev and Flaubert; he wrote to his friend, Thomas Sargeant Perry, wondering, "I hardly know which, personally, I prefer."³¹

Describing his first meeting with the Russian novelist, James wrote to his Aunt Kate, "Turgénieff made me very welcome and I took an unprecedented fancy to him." James was very grateful to Turgenev for his attention to him, as revealed also, for example, in a letter to

²⁸"Une Page D'Amour," unsigned review of Une Page D'Amour, by Emile Zola, Nation, 26 (May 1878), 361-362; "Nana," review of Nana, by Emile Zola, Parisian, 48 (Feb. 1880), 9; "Emile Zola," Atlantic Monthly, 92 (Aug. 1903), 193-210.

²⁹"Fromont Jeune et Risler Aîné," unsigned review of Fromont Jeune et Risler Aîné, by Alphonse Daudet, Galaxy, 20 (Aug. 1875), 276-280; "Alphonse Daudet," Atlantic Monthly, 49 (June 1882), 846-851; "Alphonse Daudet," Century Magazine, 26 (Aug. 1883), 498-509; "Alphonse Daudet," Literature, 1 (Dec. 1897), 306-307.

³⁰"Edmond de Goncourt's La Fille Elisa," unsigned note, Nation, 24 (10 May 1877), 280; "The Journal of the Brothers de Goncourt," review of Edmond and Jules de Goncourt's Journal, Fortnightly Review, 50 (Oct. 1888), 502-520; "The Minor French Novelists," Galaxy, 21 (Feb. 1876), 219-233.

³¹Quoted in Philip Grover, Henry James and The French Novel: A Study in Inspiration (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1973), p. 197.

William Dean Howells: "Yes, I see a good deal of Tourguéneff and am excellent friends with him. He has been very kind to me and has inspired me with an extreme regard. He is everything that one could desire — robust, sympathetic, modest, simple, profound, intelligent, naïf — in fine angelic. He has also made me acquainted with G. Flaubert, to whom I have likewise taken a great fancy. . . ." Turgenev had flattered James not only by welcoming him to his own home but also by taking him to the Flaubert cénacle. And after these initial meetings, the friendship of James and Turgenev continued with "unabated regard." James said, ". . . J'ai conçu pour lui la plus vive affection"; to James he was truly "the most loveable of men."³² Their friendship continued throughout James's "French" year, and it would surely have continued "unabated" had James not left for England in 1876 and had Turgenev not died in 1883. Edel describes their tender parting: "He made Henry promise to write from London; he promised he would answer. 'Adieu, cher ami,' the Russian said as they parted. The friendly words, the tone, went to Henry's heart. Ivan Sergeyevich had been 'adorable' to the end."³³ James had liked him because, unlike some of the "grand-sons of Balzac," he had flattered him with his attentions. But there was apparently one other main reason why he liked him: he liked him because he was like him.

³²Henry James Letters, II, 10, 23, 14, 24, 52.

³³Edel, II, 270.

Leon Edel points out many similarities between James and Turgenev. He mentions, for instance, that in leaving his homeland to go to Paris, each writer left behind him a society which was in the process of significant social change, with the blending of the aristocracy and the peasantry. In addition to similar social backgrounds, the writers had similar family backgrounds; each, for example, had a mother who was tyrannical. And, more importantly, Edel notes, there were similarities in their writing — in their creation of atmosphere, in their penetration into character, in their realism, in their emphasis upon renunciation in the lives of their characters. "Small wonder," Edel writes, "that Henry, in his first essay on Turgenev, had singled out a series of themes in his novels which might have been his own."³⁴ And small wonder it is that James continued to write essays on his friend, including a review of Frühlingsfluthen and Ein König Lear Des Dorfes (1874) and a review of Terres Vierges (1877), an article "Ivan Turgénieff" (1884), an essay introducing the Turgenev volume of the Library of the World's Best Literature (1896), an unsigned note and translation from the French of a prose poem by Turgenev (1876), and an anonymous translation of "Tourgénéff in Paris: Reminiscences by Daudet" (1883).³⁵

³⁴Edel, II, 205-207.

³⁵"Frühlingsfluthen. Ein König Lear Des Dorfes. Zwei Nouvelles. Von Iwan Turgéniew," review of Frühlingsfluthen and Ein König Lear Des Dorfes, by Ivan Turgenev, North American Review, 118 (Apr. 1874), 326-356; "Ivan Turgenev's New Novel," review of Terres Vierges, by Ivan Turgenev, trans. E. Durand-Gréville, Nation, 24 (Apr. 1877), 252-253; "Ivan Turgénieff," Atlantic Monthly, 53 (Jan. 1884), 42-55; "Ivan

Like Turgenev, Flaubert was another writer whom James did not grow to like; James liked him immediately. On December 20, 1875, James wrote to his father, ". . . Last Sunday . . . [Turgenev] took me and introduced me to Gustave Flaubert. I took a mighty fancy to F. as well; he is not at all what his books led me to expect. 'C'est un naïf,' as Tourgénéff says — a great, stout, handsome, simple, kindly, elderly fellow, rather embarrassed at having a stranger presented to him, and bothering himself over what he can say and do."³⁶ Clearly, James was flattered by Flaubert's attention as he was by that of Turgenev. Remembering in his final essay on Flaubert his earliest visits to the novelist, James commented on Flaubert's "accessibility": "He was liberally accessible to his friends during the months he regularly spent in Paris. Sensitive, passionate, perverse, not less than immediately sociable — for if he detested his collective contemporaries this dropped, thanks to his humanising shyness, before the individual encounter. . . . My main remembrance is of a conception of courtesy in him, an accessibility to the human relation that only wanted to be sure of the way taken or to take" (Notes on Novelists, pp. 71-72).

Tourgénéff, " Library of the World's Best Literature, No. 25 (New York: R. S. Peale and J. A. Hill, Publishers, 1896), 15057-15062; [Ivan Turgenev], (unsigned note and translation of a prose poem from the French), Nation, 24 (5 Oct. 1876), 213; "Tourgénéff in Paris: Reminiscences by Daudet," anonymous translation, Century Magazine, 27 (Nov. 1883), 49-53.

³⁶ Henry James Letters, II, 14.

In this essay, in one of his notebooks, and in a letter to his father he described in particular one "very pleasant call upon Flaubert, whom I like personally more and more each time I see him."³⁷ On this occasion he found Flaubert "by exception alone" (Notes on Novelists, p. 73); "there was something I greatly liked in him, and he was very kind to me."³⁸ He liked Flaubert, he admitted, much more than he liked the other members of the cénacle. Although the two were seldom alone, when in 1876 James had to say goodbye to Flaubert — for the last time, since Flaubert would die in 1880 — he again "had him for an hour alone," after which he wrote to William Dean Howells, "He is a very fine fellow, and the most interesting man and strongest artist of his circle."³⁹

It was only natural that James would be drawn toward Flaubert, that he would indeed feel him to be "a very fine fellow." As with Turgenev, surely James liked Flaubert because he was like him in many respects. Both writers had extremely strong family ties, ties which often bound them too tightly. Each had a prominent, successful father and a brother with whom he competed, each had an exceptionally close relationship with a sister and each had a mother who manipulated him with her immense love. During Flaubert's trip to the East, for example, he wrote very loving letters to his mother, yet they were letters filled with guilt at his having left her. Similarly, during James's year in

³⁷Henry James Letters, II, 38.

³⁸The Notebooks of Henry James, p. 26.

³⁹Henry James Letters, II, 52-53.

France, he wrote to his mother letters filled with devotion but also with abject apologies at her slightest rebuke. Both writers remained bachelors, developed a remarkable sociability, and yet longed for — and required — a certain solitude for their writing. Devoted to the word in their impersonal, finely chiseled fiction, offended by the ordinary reader who could not appreciate that devotion, both writers struggled to reconcile themselves to uneven personal and popular success.

Certainly, then, it was only natural that James would like both the man and the artist. James admitted that he liked "the man better than the artist."⁴⁰ But that admission was a high compliment to the man, for James considered Flaubert the "novelist's novelist" (Notes on Novelists, p. 108) and wrote about that novelist in four major and two minor critical essays between 1874 and 1902, essays whose very criticism is the highest of compliments.

⁴⁰Henry James Letters, II, 36.

CHAPTER III

THE CRITICAL RELATIONSHIP

It was a high personal compliment James paid the French novelist when he wrote to Thomas Sargeant Perry of his beloved Turgenev and Flaubert, wondering, "I hardly know which, personally, I prefer."¹ It was perhaps a higher personal compliment when, writing to William Dean Howells of Flaubert, he admitted, "I like the man better than the artist."² James may have liked the man better, but he clearly liked the artist also. His highest compliments of Flaubert are found in a series of four major and two minor critical essays which appeared between 1874 and 1902.

James's first major critical essay on Flaubert was "Flaubert's Temptation of St. Anthony," which initially appeared in 1874. In this essay James describes his reaction upon reading the new novel: "This volume, we confess, has been a surprise to us." James explains that he had expected a "novel of that realistic type which the author had already vigorously cultivated, with Saint Anthony and his temptation standing simply as a symbol of the argument"; that is, he had expected a contemporary setting and contemporary characters. Nevertheless, he feels that the novel is realistic, even without the contemporary

¹Quoted in Grover, Henry James and the French Novel, p. 197.

²Henry James Letters, II, 36.

setting and contemporary characters, a fact that does not prevent his concluding that "it is a ponderous failure; but it is an interesting failure as well. . . ." ³

La Tentation de Saint Antoine, James goes onto say, shows Flaubert as "an extraordinary example of a writer outliving his genius." This statement might seem to reveal that James does not in 1874 recognize that Flaubert's novel was one on which he had worked throughout his literary career. But in later essays, published in 1893 and 1902, James acknowledges that La Tentation de Saint Antoine was the culmination of years of dreams and hard work, inspired especially by Flaubert's 1849 journey to the East with Maxime du Camp. What James seems to mean by suggesting that Flaubert had outlived his genius is that, to him, the novel could never compare favorably with Madame Bovary. Fifteen years prior to the publication of La Tentation de Saint Antoine, James explains in the 1874 review, Flaubert had shown his genius in Madame Bovary, a revelation of what the imagination may accomplish under a powerful impulse to mirror the unmitigated realities of life. Madame Bovary, he continues, "has always seemed to us a great work, and capable really of being applied to educational purposes. It is an elaborate picture of vice, but it represents it as . . . indefeasibly commingled with misery. . . ."

³James, "Flaubert's Temptation of St. Anthony," in Literary Reviews and Essays by Henry James on American, English, and French Literature, ed. Albert Mordell (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1957), p. 145. Although this article first appeared in the Nation, 18 (4 June 1874), 365-366, citations from the article refer to the more accessible reprint in Literary Reviews and Essays, and page numbers will appear parenthetically within the text.

But while James appreciates the "elaborate marvels of description" in Madame Bovary because "they were also, by good luck, extremely interesting in themselves" (Literary Reviews, p. 146), he cannot appreciate the description in Salammbô, L'Education Sentimentale, or La Tentation de Saint Antoine. Although in these works, particularly the last, there is a "constant appeal to observation," it is "without the underlying moral unity of what is called a 'purpose'. . . ." The reader expects "a high moral interest" (Literary Reviews, p. 147) in La Tentation de Saint Antoine, James is sure, yet the reader cannot find such an interest and is left wondering what Flaubert wanted to achieve. The problem with Flaubert's novel thus becomes clear to James: "He has simply wished to be tremendously pictorial, and the opportunity for spiritual analysis has been the last thing in his thoughts. It is a matter of regret that a writer with the pluck and energy to grapple with so pregnant a theme should have been so indifferent to its most characteristic side" (Literary Reviews, p. 149). It is true that the novel is picturesque, James admits, but it is a cold, unpleasant, artificial picturesque, a fault that is not Flaubert's alone, however. In this early essay he criticizes at once Flaubert and his contemporaries — he becomes more precise in distinguishing Flaubert from the rest of the cénacle in later essays — for having "pushed so far the education of the senses and the cultivation of the grotesque in literature and the arts that it has left them morally stranded and helpless." He concludes, in fact, that "in the perception of the materially curious, in fantastic refinement of taste and marked ingenuity of expression, they seem to us now to have reached the limits of the possible" (Literary Reviews, p. 150).

In his second essay on Flaubert, James returns to a study of this problem as he sees it, but he returns also to an analysis of the power of Flaubert, especially of the power which produced Madame Bovary. In "Charles de Bernard and Gustave Flaubert" James writes that Flaubert "is altogether the most characteristic and powerful representative of what has lately been most original in the evolution of the French imagination . . . ;" that is, "the realistic, descriptive novel which sprang out of Balzac, began in its effort at intensity of illusion where Balzac halted, and which, whether or no it has surpassed him, has at least exceeded him."⁴ Although, to James, "M. Flaubert can write nothing that does not repay attention" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 254), in Madame Bovary his realism is especially powerful. As in the first essay, James here admires the moral interest of Madame Bovary: "It is a book adapted for the reverse of what is called family reading, and yet we remember thinking, the first time we read it, in the heat of our admiration for its power, that it would make the most useful of Sunday-school tracts" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 255). Its moral interest is a result of its realism, James explains. "Practically M. Flaubert is a potent moralist; whether, when he wrote his book, he

⁴James, "Charles de Bernard and Gustave Flaubert," in French Poets and Novelists (London: Macmillan and Co., 1878), p. 253. Although this essay appeared first as part of an article "The Minor French Novelists," Galaxy, 21 (Feb. 1876), 219-233, citations from the essay refer to the more accessible reprint in French Poets and Novelists, and page numbers will appear parenthetically within the text.

was so theoretically is a matter best known to himself. Every out-and-out realist who provokes serious meditation may claim that he is a moralist for that, after all, is the most that the moralists can do for us" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 256). James goes on to explain Flaubert's theory of the novel which made him a moralist:

M. Flaubert's theory as a novelist, briefly expressed, is to begin on the outside. Human life, we may imagine him saying, is before all things a spectacle, an occupation and entertainment for the eyes. What our eyes show us is all that we are sure of, so with this we will, at any rate, begin. As this is infinitely curious and entertaining, if we know how to look at it, and as such looking consumes a great deal of time and space, it is very possible that with this also we may end. . . . We will "render" things — anything, everything, from a chimney-pot to the shoulders of a duchess — as painters render them. We believe there is a certain particular phrase, better than any other, for everything in the world, and the thoroughly accomplished writer ends by finding it. We care only for what is — we know nothing about what ought to be. Human life is interesting, because we are in it and of it; all kinds of curious things are taking place in it . . . ; we select as many of them as possible. Some of the most curious are the most disagreeable, but the chance for "rendering" in the disagreeable is as great as anywhere else . . . , and moreover the disagreeable is extremely characteristic. The real is the most satisfactory thing in the world, and if we once fairly advance on this line nothing shall frighten us back. (French Poets and Novelists, pp. 256-258)

It was this theory, James feels, which was applied so brilliantly in the composition of Madame Bovary. Madame Bovary herself, James believes, is a masterpiece; "she remains a living creature and as a living creature she interests us" (French Poets and Novelists, pp. 260-261). The reader is "dragged into the very current and tissue" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 262) of her story, and "at the end the intensity of illusion becomes horrible; overwhelmed with disgust and pity he closes the book" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 263). Thus "realism,"

James writes, "seems to us with 'Madame Bovary' to have said its last word. We doubt whether the same process will ever produce anything better."

And in "Flaubert's own hands," James is sure, "it has distinctly failed to do so" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 258). Although "to nothing that such a writer as Gustave Flaubert accomplishes — a writer so armed at all points, so informed, so ingenious, so serious, — can we be positively indifferent," the other works lack the "charm" of Madame Bovary. "'L'Education Sentimentale' is elaborately and massively dreary" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 267). "'Salammbô' is not easy reading, nor is the book in the least agreeable," although it does display "in the highest degree what is called the historical imagination." And furthermore, James concludes, the "'Tentation de Saint Antoine' is, to our sense, to 'Salammbô' what 'L'Education Sentimentale' is to 'Madame Bovary' — what the shadow is to the substance" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 268).

James's third essay on Flaubert — "Gustave Flaubert" — again studies the failure of these works as opposed to the success of Madame Bovary, but it studies them in light of the Correspondance de Gustave Flaubert, Quatrième Série, which had recently been published. The letters of the Correspondance, James explains, "help us to perceive what Flaubert missed almost more than what he gained. . . ."⁵ That is, they "show

⁵ James, "Gustave Flaubert" in Essays in London and Elsewhere (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1893), p. 125. Although this review of the Correspondance de Gustave Flaubert, Quatrième Série first appeared in Macmillan's Magazine, 67 (Mar. 1893), 332-343, citations from the review refer to the more accessible reprint in Essays in London and Elsewhere, and page numbers will appear parenthetically within the text.

us the artist not only disinterested, but absolutely dishumanized" (Essays in London, p. 125).

They show us the artist disinterested, the artist who, James explains, "'must be present in his work like God in creation, invisible and almighty, everywhere felt but nowhere seen'. . . ." "His constant refrain in his letters is the impersonality, as he calls it, of the artist, whose work should consist exclusively of his subject and his style, without an emotion, an idiosyncrasy that is not utterly transmuted. . . . 'Feelings' were necessarily crude, because they were inevitably unselected, and selection (for the picture's sake) was Flaubert's highest morality" (Essays in London, p. 122). Yet, ironically, although "his ideal of dignity, of honor and renown, was that nothing should be known of him but that he had been an impeccable writer," Madame Commanville's Correspondance "hands him over to the Philistines with every weakness exposed, every mystery dispelled, every secret betrayed" (Essays in London, p. 125). And it is rather disappointing, James feels, to find in the Correspondance not always the impersonal Flaubert, "the author of calm, firm masterpieces, of 'Madame Bovary,' of 'Salammbô,' of 'Saint-Julien l'Hospitalier,'" but often the personal Flaubert, "narrow and noisy" (Essays in London, p. 124).

In addition to handing over the artist disinterested, the letters hand over also the artist dishumanized. After reading the letters, James notes, "it will not be said of the writer that he himself (like Balzac) never once speaks of art; it will be said of him with a near approach to truth that he almost never once speaks of anything else"

(Essays in London, pp. 121-122). The letters "exhibit an extraordinary singleness of aim" (Essays in London, p. 125): "Literature and life were a single business to him, and the 'torment of style,' that might occasionally intermit in one place, was sufficiently sure to break out in another" (Essays in London, p. 130). Style was a torment to him, yet "no one in the world ever liked anything so much as Flaubert liked beauty of style" (Essays in London, p. 136). The "orgie de littérature" was his "sole form of excess" (Essays in London, p. 141), but, James explains, it was a fortunate excess: "It was the lifelong discomfort of this particular fanatic, but it is our own extreme advantage, that he was almost insanely excessive" (Essays in London, p. 125). For, because of his fanaticism, "he began 'Madame Bovary' from afar off, not as an amusement, or a profit or a clever novel or even a work of art or a morceau de vie, as his successors say today, not even, either, as the best thing he could make it; but as a premeditated classic, a masterpiece pure and simple, a thing of conscious perfection and a contribution of the first magnitude to the literature of his country" (Essays in London, p. 129).

Flaubert's fanaticism had a different result, however, in his other works, James believes. "'Salammbô,' in which we breathe the air of pure aesthetics, is as hard as stone; 'L'Education,' for the same reason, is as cold as death; 'Saint-Antoine' is a medley of wonderful, bristling metals and polished agates, and the drollery of 'Bouvard et Pécuchet' (a work as sad as something perverse and puerile done for a wager) about as contagious as the smile of a keeper showing you through the wards of

a madhouse" (Essays in London, pp. 138-139). Yet Flaubert's hardness, his coldness, James admits, "was only the act of holding his breath in his search for beauty; his universal renunciation, the long spasm of his too-fixed attention, was only one of the absurdest sincerities of art," like "a life laid down for grammar" (Essays in London, pp. 140-141).

James's fourth essay on Flaubert is a relatively minor review of Paul Bourget's lecture on Flaubert at Oxford, yet it is a significant expression of James's interest in the occasion: "For one auditor of whom I can speak at all events, the occasion had an intensity of interest transcending even that of Flaubert's strange personal story — which was part of M. Bourget's theme — and of the new and deep meaning that the lecturer read into it. Just the fact of the occasion itself struck me as having well-nigh most to say. . . ." ⁶ The occasion was striking, James explains, because "there was a degree of poetic justice, or at least of poetic generosity, in the introduction of Flaubert to a scene, to conditions of credit and honour, so little to have been by himself ever apprehended or estimated: it was impossible not to feel that no setting or stage for the crowning of his bust could less have appeared familiar to him, and that he wouldn't have failed to wonder into what strangely alien air his glory had strayed." ⁷ Flaubert's straying into the "alien air" of the academic world of Oxford represents

⁶ James, "London Notes," in Notes on Novelists, With Some Other Notes (1969; rpt. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), pp. 447-448. Although this essay first appeared as "London" in Harper's Weekly, 41 (21 Aug. 1897), 834, citations from the essay refer to the more accessible reprint in Notes on Novelists.

⁷ "London Notes," p. 449.

to James a kind of convergence of "contemporary letters" and "academic privilege."⁸ As a result of this convergence, "No novelist, in a word, worth his salt could fail of a consciousness, under the impression, of his becoming rather more of a novelist than before."⁹

In his fifth essay on Flaubert — also a rather minor one — James again examines the literary position of Flaubert as he acknowledges "a great particular debt"; "We have all owed so much to the France of the past fifty years, that we should fail of common good manners were we to neglect the right moment . . . for putting our gratitude on record."¹⁰ James acknowledges a debt not only to the significant creative writers but to the significant critics as well. He praises, for example, Emile Faguet's "extraordinarily able little study of Gustave Flaubert just contributed to the 'Grands Ecrivains': "I am reduced, however, I admit, in respect to this performance, almost to a single state of mind — that of absolutely grateful appreciation of the particular long chapter devoted to Flaubert's masterpiece." Despite the praise, however, James does object, anticipating a complaint he develops more fully in his final essay, to "the supreme place it assigns to 'Madame Bovary' as an exhibition of the perverse female creature": "Nothing will ever

⁸"London Notes," pp. 450-451.

⁹"London Notes," p. 449.

¹⁰James, "The Present Literary Situation in France," in French Writers and American Women, ed. Peter Buitenhuis (Branford, Connecticut: The Compass Publishing Co., 1960), p. 9. Although this essay first appeared in the North American Review, 79 (Oct. 1899), 488-500, citations from this essay refer to the more accessible reprint in French Writers and American Women.

prevent Flaubert's heroine from having been an extremely minor specimen, even of the possibilities of her own type, a two-penny lady, in truth, of an experience so limited that some of her chords, it is clear, can never have sounded at all. It is a mistake, in other words, to speak of any feminine nature as consummately exhibited, that is exhibited in so small a number of its possible relations. Give it three or four others, we feel moved to say — 'then we can talk.'¹¹

In the sixth and final essay, the 1902 introduction to an English translation of Madame Bovary, James returns to his praise of Faguet's study of Flaubert, "a study of such lucidity as may almost be taken to warn off a later critic," but James himself is not warned off, because "there are things — things perhaps especially of the province of the artist, the fellow-craftsman of Flaubert — that I am conscious of his not having said . . ." (Notes on Novelists, p. 65). Flaubert, James explains, "would be interesting to the race of novelists if only because, quite apart from the value of his work, he so personally gives us the example and the image, so presents the intellectual case. He was born a novelist, grew up, lived, died a novelist, breathing, feeling, thinking, speaking, performing every operation of life, only as that votary; and this though his production was to be small in amount and though it constituted all his diligence" (Notes on Novelists, p. 66); he was the "novelist's novelist" (Notes on Novelists, p. 108), and Madame Bovary remains "the flag of the guild" (Notes on Novelists, p. 90).

¹¹"The Present Literary Situation in France," p. 13.

As the fellow craftsman of Flaubert, James appreciates what the French novelist has done for all of the guild: "May it not in truth be said that we practice our industry, so many of us, at relatively little cost just because poor Flaubert, producing the most expensive fictions ever written, so handsomely paid for it?" (Notes on Novelists, p. 89) He paid for it by "the pursuit of a style" (Notes on Novelists, p. 90) — "by fasting and prayer or by patience of pursuit, the arts of the chase, long waits and watches, figuratively speaking, among the peaks or by the waters." But James explains that although Flaubert was "the devotee of the phrase," he was "never its victim. Fine as he inveterately desired it should be he still never lost sight of the question Fine for what?" (Notes on Novelists, p. 93)

James especially appreciates the fineness of Flaubert's style in his "romantic" works, works of which James never fully approves. Believing that "he was formed intellectually of two quite distinct compartments, a sense of the real and a sense of the romantic and that his production, for our present cognisance, thus neatly and vividly divides itself," James praises particularly the style of Salammbô and La Tentation de Saint Antoine. A great work, James writes, is like a beautiful crystal box which when viewed very closely is found "to contain innumerable compartments, springs and tricks." This crystal box, James continues, "figures the style of 'Salammbô' and Saint-Antoine' in a greater degree than that of 'Bovary,' because, as the two former express the writer's romantic side, he had in them while equally covering his tracks, still further to fare and still more to hunt" (Notes on

Novelists, p. 94). James recognizes that the "element of exactitude . . . in the romantic, was his merciless law; it was perhaps even in the romantic that — if there could indeed be degrees for him in such matters — he most despised the loose and the more-or-less" (Notes on Novelists, p. 99). The element of exactitude in style redeems not only these works; for James it redeems even that work from Flaubert's realistic "compartment," that "epic of the usual," L'Education Sentimentale (Notes on Novelists, p. 84). Because of its style, L'Education is redeemed for the guild:

Successes pure and simple disconnect and dismiss him; failures — though I admit they must be a bit qualified — keep him in touch and in relation. Thus it is that as the work of a "grand écrivain" "L'Education," large, laboured, immensely "written," with beautiful passages and a general emptiness, with a kind of leak in its stored sadness, moreover, by which its moral dignity escapes — thus it is that Flaubert's ill-starred novel is a curiosity for a literary museum. . . . If in short, as I have said, Flaubert is the novelist's novelist, this performance does more than any other toward making him so. (Notes on Novelists, p. 85)

Madame Bovary, of course, is not redeemed for the guild, because it "has a perfection that not only stamps it, but that makes it stand almost alone; it holds itself with such a supreme unapproachable assurance as both excites and defies judgment. The form is in itself as interesting, as active, as much of the essence as the idea, and yet so close is its fit and so unseparable its life that we catch it at no moment on any errand of its own. . . . The work is a classic because the thing, such as it is, is ideally done, and because it shows that in such doing eternal beauty may dwell (Notes on Novelists, p. 80).

But despite the fact that Madame Bovary "defies judgment," James does offer a criticism:

Our complaint is that Emma Bovary, in spite of the nature of her consciousness and in spite of her reflecting so much that of her creator, is really too small an affair. . . . She associates herself with Frédéric Moreau in "L'Education" to suggest for us a question that can be answered, I hold, only to Flaubert's detriment. Emma taken alone would not so directly press it, but in her company the hero of our author's second study of the "real" drives it home. Why did Flaubert choose, as special conduits of the life he proposed to depict, such inferior and in the case of Frédéric such abject human specimens? . . . He wished in each case to make a picture of experience — middling experience, it is true — and of the world close to him; but if he imagined nothing better for his purpose than such a heroine and such a hero, both such limited reflectors and registers, we are forced to believe it to have been a defect of his mind. (Notes on Novelists, pp. 81-82)

This criticism of Flaubert's "limited reflectors" is at once quite predictable and strangely surprising. It is predictable, first, because it is a criticism he had hinted at earlier in his essay "The Present Literary Situation in France" in which he objects to Faguet's praising Emma as the consummate exhibition of feminine nature and his failing to realize that she is too small, her experience too limited, for such an exhibition. It seems predictable also to the reader of James who has been impressed by the large intellectual capacity of such central Jamesian characters as Lambert Strether in The Ambassadors. But surely that same reader of James would have been impressed also by the deliberate limitation, the smallness, of, for instance, Daisy in Daisy Miller or Maisie in What Maisie Knew. Because of the smallness of these characters, James's criticism of the "limited reflectors" of Flaubert is in fact surprising. But to understand the discrepancy between what

James is willing to allow in his own characters and what he is unwilling to allow in those of Flaubert, the surprised reader might return to James's criticism of Faguet's praising Emma as the consummate exhibition of feminine nature. What James is unwilling to admit, it seems, is that a reader could interest himself in a mind so limited yet which appears to be so typical. A reader might pardon, James seems to feel, a lack of experience, but he will not be willing to believe that Emma and Frédéric are appropriate "conduits" even of the "middling experience" which Flaubert wished to depict (Notes on Novelists, pp. 81-82).

But despite this criticism of Emma and Frédéric as "limited reflectors and registers," despite this criticism of a possible "defect" of Flaubert's mind, James returns finally in his 1902 essay to praise of the "novelist's novelist." Concerning the "small field of the picture," the "small capacity . . . of the vessel" in some of Flaubert's works, James asks, "Where else shall we find in anything proportionately so small such an air of dignity of size?" (Notes on Novelists, p. 91) In this essay, each time that James mentions Les Trois Contes, for instance, he insists on their dignity, their perfection for their size. He has only praise for them, for they are "preponderantly of the deepest imaginative hue" (Notes on Novelists, p. 75); they are "superlative for the size" (Notes on Novelists, p. 97). He admits, "Flaubert made things big — it was his way, his ambition, and his necessity . . ." (Notes on Novelists, p. 91).

James thus concludes with strong praise for the writer he has studied in essays written over a period of many years — from 1874 to 1902.

Strong adverse criticism, without doubt, has been interspersed with this strong praise, encouraging writers such as Ford Madox Hueffer and Van Wyck Brooks in their beliefs that the American novelist hated his fellow-craftsman in France. What, in summary, is James's view of his fellow-craftsman, as revealed in the six essays on Flaubert?

Summarizing his view of four of the six essays on Flaubert, David Cook finds a development in James's criticism: "From first to last, these pieces manifest radical shifts in tone, perspective, and judgment; to approach all four as a monolithic body of authoritative opinion, or to commit the related fallacy of examining one as representative of the whole is to miss their significance as successive stages in the development of James's critical thought." Cook believes that the first essay, with its moralistic bent, is rather provincial and that "what James demands of Flaubert is not art but edification;" "It seems clear that in 'Flaubert's Temptation of St. Anthony,' at least, James intended by the term 'morality' nothing other than what the average middle-class reader would understand." The second essay, "Charles de Bernard and Gustave Flaubert," Cook writes, "registers no perceptible moderation of views and is, in part, more reactionary and complacent than its predecessor." Admitting that "it is wrong to demand of James a twentieth-century reading of the novel" Madame Bovary, Cook feels nevertheless that "surely he could have done better than this barely conceivable caricature of Flaubert as a pedestrian realist who is a moralist malgré lui." In these two early essays, Cook concludes, "James proves himself to be an intelligent and frequently subtle manipulator of expository prose

but not, as yet, a critic. His vision is still too restricted and narrow, his morality too conventionally prohibitive — conditions to be mitigated only by experience."¹²

Experience made James much more perceptive in the two later essays, according to Cook: "As his art matured and his popular success declined, James grew more sympathetic to the plight of the aging novelist who lavished infinite care upon the form of creations which went virtually ignored by all but a circle of intimates and a handful of connoisseurs, because that position was rapidly becoming his own." The Correspondance, Cook notes, increased James's sympathy with Flaubert; but in the third essay, the 1893 "Gustave Flaubert," James still displays "a rather serious want of understanding in regard to Flaubert's style. It remains for him only 'tremendously pictorial.'" But by the fourth essay, the 1902 "Gustave Flaubert," James's judgments, according to Cook, "are in the best spirit of objective criticism," and the essay "seems to have been consciously conceived by James as his final and definitive statement on Flaubert." In this final study of Flaubert, except for what he considers to be the unjust criticism of Emma as "an insufficient center of consciousness," Cook believes that James "makes just reparation for his own early omissions," showing finally that he "was fascinated by the consummate stylist and repelled by the cynical amoralist, charmed by the formal perfection of the works and dismayed at their chilling lack of human sympathy."¹³

¹²Cook, pp. 289, 290, 291, 293, 294, 296.

¹³Cook, pp. 296, 301, 302, 304, 306.

Surely Cook's analysis of what charmed and what dismayed James in this latest essay is accurate. But he underestimates the perceptive power of the early essays. Although the essays become increasingly perceptive, increasingly precise, James begins to express ideas in the early essays which are completely and clearly presented in the later ones.

It becomes clear, for example, that throughout the six essays, James offers only one major adverse criticism of Flaubert and his works, a criticism which is expressed most succinctly, perhaps, at the conclusion of his review of Flaubert's Correspondance: "He should at least have listened at the chamber of the soul" (Essays in London, p. 150). In "Flaubert's Temptation of St. Anthony," James objects that, in this work, as well as in Salammbô and L'Education Sentimentale, there is a "constant appeal to observation," but it is "without the underlying moral unity of what is called a 'purpose'. . . ." They are exterior, not interior; they lack "moral interest" (Literary Reviews, p. 147). James, in writing of "morality" surely intends something more than "what the average middle-class reader would understand."¹⁴ By "morality" he intends the completeness of the work, including especially the interior, the spiritual, that which can be heard by listening "at the chamber of the soul." Madame Bovary does not lack "moral interest." Rather, in it Flaubert "is a potent moralist"; he "provokes serious meditation" and "that, after all, is the most that the moralists can do

¹⁴Cook, p. 291.

for us" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 256). The only adverse criticism which James finally offers concerning Madame Bovary is that Emma is too limited a reflector or register (Notes on Novelists, p. 82). There is in Emma not enough interior; there is too limited a chamber at which to listen; she is "so limited that some of her chords, it is clear, can never have sounded at all."¹⁵

As James returns again and again — in various ways and in various essays — to this adverse criticism, so does he continually return to matters of style when he praises Flaubert, who, he believes, "in the first place never misses style and in the second never appears to have beaten about for it" (Notes on Novelists, p. 73). In fact, even when Flaubert might have "missed" his subject, works such as L'Education Sentimentale which, James thinks, are failures in other ways are redeemed by style, and thus, to him, "'Madame Bovary,' subject to whatever qualification is absolutely the most literary of novels, so literary that it covers us with its mantle" (Notes on Novelists, p. 89).

James's essays on Flaubert can be understood and appreciated simply as the insightful literary criticism by one "fellow-craftsman" of another (Notes on Novelists, p. 65). The critical works can be better understood and appreciated, however, in conjunction with the creative works. James's adverse criticism of the "limited reflectors and registers" (Notes on Novelists, p. 82) of Madame Bovary and L'Education Sentimentale as well as his praise of Flaubert's style is

¹⁵"The Present Literary Situation in France," p. 13.

best studied in conjunction with comparable novels by James, The Portrait of a Lady and The Princess Casamassima.

CHAPTER IV

THE CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP: MADAME BOVARY AND

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

When James wrote his 1876 essay "Charles de Bernard and Gustave Flaubert," he felt that "realism seems to us with 'Madame Bovary' to have said its last word" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 258). Surely James was sincere in that feeling. Madame Bovary had indeed covered James with its "mantle," as he admitted in his 1902 introduction to the novel (Notes on Novelists, p. 89), and James graciously accepted that mantle, appreciative of its beauty but aware of what he considered to be a flaw in its construction. Consequently, he was not content for realism "to have said its last word" in Madame Bovary. James's awareness of that supposed flaw in the mantle — Emma Bovary being too limited a reflector or register — surely stimulated his creation in 1881 of a novel very similar to Madame Bovary — The Portrait of a Lady.

The main character of Madame Bovary is like Isabel Archer in The Portrait of a Lady, but she is, of course, similar to several other nineteenth-century fictional heroines trapped in what Elizabeth Sabiston describes as "the prison of womanhood." Sabiston, for instance, shows her similarity not only to Emma Bovary but to Austen's Emma Woodhouse and, as several other critics do, to George Eliot's Dorothea

Brooke.¹ Moreover, Joseph Tribble shows her similarity to Cherbuliez's Isabel de Loanne,² while Sylvia Bowman shows her likeness to Turgenev's Ellen Nicholaevna.³

To suggest, then, that Isabel is especially similar to Emma Bovary is certainly not to imply that James was not aware of these other predecessors of Isabel. James himself hints, perhaps, in the preface to The Portrait of a Lady at a relationship between Isabel and Eliot's heroines.⁴ But it does seem clear that because of his reiterated interest in Emma Bovary, expressed in his essays on Flaubert, James may have created Isabel with her very much in mind. In his 1902 essay "Gustave Flaubert" James describes Emma Bovary as a character who is "absorbed in romantic intention and vision" (Notes on Novelists, p. 80); surely that description could characterize James's Isabel as well. Both Emma and Isabel confront the real world with such "romantic intention and vision." Emma seeks desperately to maintain her illusions of true happiness in convent life, in marriage, in adultery; Isabel seeks

¹Elizabeth Sabiston, "The Prison of Womanhood," Comparative Literature, 25 (Fall 1973), 336-351. See also George Levine, "Isabel, Gwendolen, and Dorothea," Journal of English Literary History, 80 (Sept. 1963), 244-257; Kelley, pp. 293-296; F. R. Leavis, The Great Tradition (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), p. 85.

²Joseph L. Tribble, "Cherbuliez's Le Roman d'une Honnête Femme: Another Source of James's The Portrait of a Lady," American Literature, 40 (1968), 279-293.

³Sylvia Bowman, "Les Héroïnes d' Henry James dans The Portrait of a Lady et d'Yvan Tourguéniev dans A la Veille," Etudes Anglaises, 11 (1958), 136-149.

⁴Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady, Vol. III of The Novels and Tales of Henry James, p. xiii. Subsequent citations from The Portrait of a Lady refer to this edition, and volume numbers and page numbers will appear parenthetically within the text.

desperately to maintain her illusions of true happiness at Albany, at Gardencourt, at the Palazzo Roccanera. Their desperation helps to maintain the illusions, but in the confrontation between the "romantic intention and vision" and the real world, the real world ultimately succeeds in destroying the romantic illusions, even the romantics themselves. Emma gives herself up to death; Isabel, to life "ground in the very mill of the conventional" (III, 415).

The illusions of Emma and Isabel are destroyed in part by their husbands, whom they claim not to blame. Emma's suicide note begins romantically, "Qu'on n'accuse personne. . . ,"⁵ and as she is speaking to Charles Bovary just before her death, "elle . . . [avoue] pour lui plus d'amour que jamais . . ." (p. 616), even though her boredom with her marriage to Charles has contributed significantly to her decision to commit suicide. Similarly, Isabel recognizes during her all-night vigil that she can accuse Gilbert Osmond of no crime: "She knew of no wrong he had done; he was not violent, he was not cruel . . ." (IV, 190). Nevertheless, he, through his deception, has been largely responsible for his wife's destruction.

In their effort to maintain their illusions, Emma and Isabel each have relationships with a pair of lovers — for Emma, adulterous relationships, for Isabel, more virtuous ones. Failing to find happiness with Charles, Emma seeks it in adulterous liaisons first with Rodolphe Boulanger and then with Léon Dupuis; of course, it eludes her.

⁵Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary, Vol. I of Oeuvres de Flaubert, ed. Albert Thibaudet et René Dumesnil (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1951), p. 615. Subsequent citations from Madame Bovary refer to this edition, and page numbers will appear parenthetically within the text.

Happiness eludes Isabel also in her relationships with the two suitors Caspar Goodwood and Lord Warburton, both of whom she refuses for the sake of her freedom which, ironically, she loses to Osmond.

As their husbands and their lovers contribute to the destruction of their illusions, so even do the children of Emma and Isabel. The daughter of Emma and the son of Isabel are of importance to the novels because of their unimportance to the mothers. Each represents merely another destroyed illusion. During her pregnancy Emma is disappointed because she cannot buy a beautiful layette; the disappointment persists until, just before Emma's death, the neglected Berthe becomes frightened of "de grands yeux" (p. 617) of her mother and is sent away. Similarly, the life and death of Isabel's son are summarized with a cruel concision: "She had lost her child; that was a sorrow, but it was a sorrow she scarcely spoke of. . . . It belonged to the past, moreover; it had occurred six months before and she had already laid aside the tokens of mourning" (IV, 142).

The children, by their very unimportance, are in part responsible for the destruction of the illusions of Emma and Isabel. The daughter and the son are not the children for whom Emma and Isabel might have hoped; nor are the lovers; nor are the husbands. All are disillusionments.

As Emma and Isabel are noticeably similar to each other in their disillusionment, suggesting a possible influence of Madame Bovary upon The Portrait of a Lady, the images expressing the conflict between illusion and reality are remarkably similar, strongly indicating the

likelihood of such an influence. These images are very significant in the two novels, and, in fact, "in The Portrait, as truly as in Madame Bovary, 'significance' can be measured by 'the amount of style and metaphor thrown up.'" ⁶ James's essays alone would make it clear that he "was immensely impressed by Flaubert's artistic conscience, by his intense care in the choice of words." But as W. C. D. Pacey indicates, the influence of Flaubert upon James goes beyond mere carefulness in the choice of words: "'This quest and multiplication of the image,' James wrote of Flaubert, 'was accordingly his high elegance.' Is it not also the high elegance of Henry James?" ⁷ And certainly there are remarkable similarities in the images the novelists use to convey the destruction of the romantics' illusions, of the romantics themselves.

One central image vividly expresses the futility of the illusions of both Emma and Isabel. As each character begins to see her illusions of happiness destroyed, as she begins to feel that she will never have the freedom to achieve true happiness, her view of life becomes terrifyingly narrowed; she feels trapped. After Emma fails to receive a second invitation to la Vaubyessard, it seems that, for her, "l'avenir était un corridor tout noir, et qui avait au fond sa porte bien fermée" (p. 382). Remarkably, the narrowness of Isabel's own life is expressed in precisely the same vivid language. After seeing Osmond in intimate communication with Madame Merle, after hearing his demand for her

⁶Anderson, p. 85.

⁷Pacey, p. 253.

assistance in obtaining Lord Warburton as a husband for his daughter Pansy, Isabel imagines, like Emma, the terrifying narrowness of her life, having "suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end" (IV, 189).

This image in The Portrait of a Lady is remarkable for two reasons — the great significance it suggests and the unmistakable similarity it bears to the image in Madame Bovary. Charles R. Anderson comments on the significance of the image, especially of the word "vista":

Remarkable as it may be for so much significance to be contained in one brief chapter, it is even more remarkable that the key revelation comes from a single image. This is achieved by an elaborate play on the ambivalent meaning of vista — from the Latin videre, "to see," the controlling word in the novel. At strategic points throughout the story of Isabel's education a vista, in the Italian sense of a panorama, has been used as symbolic of the opportunities her European experiences were spreading out before her for art and knowledge, for love and marriage. But in English the word vista is normally used in the very different sense of a long allée whose lines seem, by perspective, to converge on some object of beauty. Now in chapter forty-two, four years after marriage, the image is used in both opposed meanings simultaneously, with startling effect. As she takes stock of her life in this midnight meditation, aware at last of her husband's subtle villainy, she suddenly finds "the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow alley, with a dead wall at the end" — no statue or fountain there to take the eye with beauty. To follow the transformations of this image throughout the novel is to discover much of its meaning.⁸

The image is remarkable also because of the similarity between it and the image of the "corridor tout noir" in Madame Bovary. The idea and the images of this kind of entrapment may be found in the fiction of

⁸ Anderson, pp. 90-91.

other nineteenth-century novelists such as Eliot, but these images and the feelings they express in Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady are remarkably similar, so similar that they strongly indicate the likelihood of the influence of Flaubert's novel upon that of James. Yet these central images of the narrow lives in which Emma and Isabel are trapped are not the only similar images in the two novels. There are many others common to Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady.

In both novels, there are many images of entrapment, images which again emphasize the conflict between illusion and reality. In Madame Bovary, for example, Emma thinks of the day of her marriage, remembering that "elle était joyeuse . . . sans s'apercevoir de l'abîme où elle se précipitait . . ." (p. 531). After an affair begun when Emma was bored with her marriage, Rodolphe, in a letter intended to end their relationship, explains to her, "Savez-vous l'abîme où je vous entraînais, pauvre ange?" (p. 513). Nevertheless, after reading his letter, Emma contemplates suicide as "le rayon lumineux qui montait d'en bas directement tirait vers l'abîme le poids de son corps" (p. 513). Later, Emma begs another lover, Léon, for money, and, when refused, "elle se sentait perdue, roulant au hasard dans les abîmes indéfinissables . . ." (p. 597). And finally, when she feels all hope of help from Léon and Rodolphe lost, all illusions destroyed, "alors sa situation, telle qu'un abîme, se représenta"; "dans un transport d'héroïsme qui la rendait presque joyeuse," she runs towards Yonville, arriving decisively at the pharmacy, where she will obtain the arsenic (p. 612).

Similar images of abysses appear in The Portrait of a Lady. James uses the word "abyss" frequently and in a variety of ways. Strother B. Purdy points out the special meanings that in various contexts James assigns to it. These meanings are:

1. the nadir of vulgarity and/or inanity
2. hell; a place of horror
3. extremity of unhappiness
4. the lure of self-destruction
5. social difference
6. impossible to deal with and/or morally bad
7. infinite in amount or potentiality
8. irrevocably gone, far away
9. trap or pitfall.⁹

In The Portrait of a Lady, the word is used very powerfully to suggest Isabel's loss of freedom. Even before Isabel and Osmond are married, Madame Merle admits to Osmond, "I'm frightened at the abyss into which I shall have cast her" (III, 411). Of course, Madame Merle does cast her into an abyss, and Isabel finally recognizes her situation:

She had taken all the first steps in the purest confidence, and then she had suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end. Instead of leading to the high places of happiness, from which the world would seem to lie below one, so that one could look down with a sense of exaltation and adventure, and judge and choose and pity, it led rather downward and earthward, into the realms of restriction and depression where the sound of other lives, easier and freer, was heard as from above, and where it served to deepen the feeling of failure. (IV, 189)

Isabel is not only in an abyss. Ralph expresses his fear to her — "you're going to be put into a cage" (IV, 65) — and his fear is well founded. She is caged, although she consoles herself with the thought that "if she had been captured it had taken a firm hand to seize her" (IV, 194), and her cage, her prison, is terrifyingly small: "She

⁹Strother B. Purdy, "Henry James's Abysses: A Semantic Note," English Studies, 51 (1970), 424-433.

could live it over again, the incredulous terror with which she had taken the measure of her dwelling. Between those four walls she had lived ever since; they were to surround her for the rest of her life" (IV, 196).

There are also in The Portrait of a Lady other images of cages and prisons which critics have examined. Daniel J. Schneider shows that "poor Isabel is from beginning to end surrounded by prisons," from the time that she is "released from the bolted office of her childhood" until she returns to the prison of Osmond's home, "where she is destined to continue to beat her wings against the bars."¹⁰ John Rodenbeck focuses his attention especially on the image of the bolted door, believing that the novel is "epitomized" by this "recurrent image."¹¹

Clearly, the images of entrapment in Madame Bovary are very similar to those in The Portrait of a Lady, and so are certain complementary images. In both novels, images of darkness, coldness, and suffocation complement the images of entrapment.

In Madame Bovary, Emma comes to feel that she is trapped in "un corridor . . . qui avait au fond sa porte bien fermée"; that corridor is "tout noir" (p. 382). Her life is like "une nuit sombre," a night which is brightened by the thought of Rodolphe "comme un grand éclair" (pp. 606-607). The brightness, however, is only a brief illusion; after Rodolphe refuses to help her, Emma swallows the arsenic, and

¹⁰ Schneider, The Crystal Cage, pp. 121-122.

¹¹ John Rodenbeck, "The Bolted Door in James's Portrait of a Lady," Modern Fiction Studies, 10 (Winter 1964-65), p. 330.

"ses yeux, en roulant, pallissaient comme deux globes de lampe qui s'éteignent . . ." (pp. 622-623). The darkness is final for Emma. For Isabel, darkness has always been rather frightening; even as a young woman she had "a natural shrinking from raising curtains and looking into unlighted corners" (III, 284), yet, like Emma, she finally becomes surrounded by darkness. Osmond cleverly describes their marriage by saying, "We're as united, you know, as the candlestick and the snuffers" (IV, 309). And they are; Isabel realizes that, after a year of marriage, "the shadows had begun to gather; it was as if Osmond deliberately, almost malignantly, had put the lights out one by one. The dusk at first was vague and thin, and she could still see her way in it. But it steadily deepened, and if now and again it had occasionally lifted there were certain corners of her prospect that were impenetrably black. These shadows were not an emanation of her own mind. . . . They were a part, they were a kind of creation and consequence, of her husband's very presence" (IV, 190). Except for those moments when it is "illuminated by lurid flashes" (IV, 388) of stark truth concerning the duplicity of Madame Merle and Osmond, Isabel's life is desperately dark; she lives in "a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end" (IV, 189).

In addition to such images of darkness, images of coldness are evident in both novels. Complementing the images of entrapment in Madame Bovary, for instance, is the description of Emma's life as being "froide, comme un grenier dont la lucarne est au nord . . ." (p. 366). The coldness becomes a part of Emma herself, so that "l'on se sentait

près d'elle pris par un charme glacial, comme l'on frissonne dans les églises sous le parfum des fleurs mêlé au froid des marbres" (pp. 422-423). The coldness might be relieved, but only temporarily, as it is by the memory of Léon:

Dès lors, ce souvenir de Léon fut comme le centre de son ennui; il y pétillait plus fort que, dans une steppe de Russie, un feu de voyageurs abandonné sur la neige. Elle se précipitait vers lui, elle se blotissait contre, elle remuait délicatement ce foyer près de s'éteindre, elle allait cherchant tout autour d'elle ce qui pouvait l'aviver davantage; et les réminiscences les plus lointaines comme les plus immédiates occasions, ce qu'elle éprouvait avec ce qu'elle imaginait, ses envies de volupté qui se dispersaient, ses projets de bonheur qui craquaient au vent comme des branchages morts, sa vertu stérile, ses espérances tombées, la litière domestique, elle ramassait tout, prenait tout, et faisait servir tout à réchauffer sa tristesse.

Cependant les flammes s'apaisèrent, soit que la provision d'elle-même s'épuisât, ou que l'entassement fut trop considérable. L'amour peu à peu s'éteignit et cette lueur d'incendie qui empourprait son ciel pâle se couvrit de plus d'ombre et s'effaça par degrés. . . . Il fut de tous côtés nuit complète, et elle demeura perdue dans un froid qui la traversait. (p. 438)

As Emma's life, then, is completely cold, so is Isabel's. In Osmond's presence, being accused of trying to humiliate him by turning away Lord Warburton, Isabel "drew her cloak about her; she felt mortally cold" (IV, 273). Yet away from him, at Ralph Touchett's bedside, she feels just as cold. "Isabel thought of her husband as little as might be; but now that she was at a distance, beyond its spell, she thought with a kind of spiritual shudder of Rome. There was a penetrating chill in the image, and she drew back into the deepest shade of Gardencourt" (IV, 421).

The sense of coldness and the sense of darkness lead to a sense of suffocation in both Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady. Complementing the images of entrapment in both novels are images of suffocation. After Emma has been insulted by Maître Guillaumin's advances when she asked him for financial help, she is "pâle, frémissante, enragée, furetant d'un oeil en pleurs l'horizon vide, et comme se délectant à la haine qui l'étouffait" (p. 603). Later, as she leaves Rodolphe's home after another unsuccessful request for financial help, she experiences a sense of immersion, of burial, of suffocation. The ground beneath her feet seems "plus mou qu'une onde," and the furrows appear to be "immenses vagues brunes." Walls and a ceiling are threatening to crush Emma, and finally "les milles pièces d'un feu d'artifice" burst upwards "d'un seul bond" from her sunken spirits, and "des globules couleur de feu . . . comme des balles fulminantes" rain down, as if she is truly within "un abîme" (pp. 611-612). The threatening sense of suffocation soon becomes real; after swallowing the arsenic, Emma feels "comme si elle eut porté sur sa langue quelque chose de très lourd" (pp. 613-614). The sense of suffocation, although less physical, is as terrifying to Isabel as it is to Emma: "She could live it over again, the incredulous terror with which she had taken the measure of her dwelling. . . . It was the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation. Osmond's beautiful mind indeed seemed to peep down from a small high window and mock at her. Of course it had not been physical suffering; for physical suffering there might have been a remedy" (IV, 196). From Osmond,

Isabel learns that "there . . . [are] certain things they must do, a certain posture they must take, certain people they must know and not know." And when she learns this, "when she saw this rigid system close about her, draped though it was in pictured tapestries, that sense of darkness and suffocation . . . took possession of her; she seemed shut up with an odour of mould and decay" (IV, 199).

The images of suffocation, then, as well as those of coldness and darkness complement the images of entrapment in both Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady.¹² As these images of entrapment and the complementary images are similar in the two novels, so are the images of freedom, images which again emphasize the conflict between illusion and reality.

In both Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady, the sense of freedom is frequently conveyed by images of water and of ships on the water being blown by the wind. Water images of all sorts are evident throughout Madame Bovary. Not all of them are images of freedom, yet many of them express Emma's romantic notions of freedom. Emma feels, for example, that love should arrive with the violent freedom of an "ouragan des cieux qui tombe sur la vie, la bouleverse, arrache les volontés comme des feuilles . . ." (p. 416). Thoughts of her love for

¹² In his article "Patterns of Imagery in Chapter XLII of Henry James's The Portrait of a Lady," Arizona Quarterly, 25 (1969), 150-156, John T. Frederick studies the images of entrapment and points out one remarkable pattern of complementary images: "Of the subordinate groups of images which supplement and sustain the major patterns of freedom and confinement, light and dark, and heat and cold, perhaps the most interesting is the series applied to Osmond which connotes the diabolical and infernal, although no characterization of him in such terms appears in Isabel's abstract appraisal."

Rodolphe come to her "comme la rivière qui coulait" (p. 507); later, her memories of Léon carry her away "comme dans un torrent qui bouillonne" (p. 606). Water images are often associated in Madame Bovary with images of ships blown by the wind. Hoping for freedom from her monotonous life, for instance, Emma is like a drowning sailor seeking rescue: "Comme les matelots en détresse. . . . [Emma] promenait sur la solitude de sa vie des yeux désespérés, cherchant au loin quelque voile blanche dans les brumes de l'horizon. Elle ne savait pas quel serait ce hasard, le vent qui le pousserait jusqu'à elle, vers quel rivage il la mènerait, s'il était chaloupe ou vaisseau à trois ponts, chargé d'angoisses ou plein de félicités jusqu'aux sabords" (p. 382). The ship tossed by the sea might bring freedom to her, as might the ride with Léon in the carriage, "plus close qu'un tombeau et ballottée comme un navire" (p. 549). Isabel hopes for such freedom too, and in The Portrait of a Lady as well as in Madame Bovary, images of water and of ships on the water effectively convey the sense of freedom. Since Isabel has always envied "the happier lot of men, who are always free to plunge into the healing waters of action" (IV, 130), she is delighted when she too can plunge into the water, when Ralph is able "to put a little wind in her sails" (III, 260). Henrietta Stackpole fears that Isabel is "drifting away — right out to sea" (III, 170). Likewise, Mr. Touchett cautiously asks Ralph, "You say you want to put wind in her sails; but aren't you afraid of putting too much?" (III, 262) But Ralph is certain that he wishes "to see her going before the breeze!" His wishes are fulfilled. Isabel is set "far afloat on a sea of wonder

and pain" (IV, 376), and "the world, in truth, had never seemed so large; it seemed to open out, all round her, to take the form of a mighty sea, where she floated in fathomless waters" (IV, 435).

As water images and ship images effectively convey the sense of freedom in both novels, so also do images of heat and fire. Whereas the images of coldness complement the images of entrapment, the images of heat and fire convey the sense of freedom that both Emma and Isabel so desire. Emma longs to free herself from the monotony of her marriage to Charles; she is unsuccessful even though "elle eut ainsi un peu battu le briquet sur son coeur sans en faire jaillir une étincelle . . ." (p. 365). With Rodolphe, however, she can for a time feel the warmth she desires; "Ils s'étreignirent, et toute leur rancune se fondit comme une neige sous la chaleur de ce baiser" (p. 495). Even just before her suicide she sees "des globules couleur de feu . . . comme des balles fulminantes" fall down into the snow, and "alors sa situation, telle qu'un abîme, se représenta" (pp. 611-612). Like Emma, Isabel longs for freedom, but Mrs. Touchett is warned, "Don't inflame her imagination" (III, 397). Isabel's imagination is inflamed, of course, dangerously so, from Osmond's point of view: "That she should turn the hot light of her disdain upon his own conception of things — this was a danger he had not allowed for" (IV, 201). Osmond succeeds in putting out that hot light — "it was as if Osmond deliberately, almost malignantly, had put the lights out one by one" (IV, 190). But for only a brief moment with Caspar Goodwood — a moment of freedom such as the many Emma has with Rodolphe — the heat, the fire, returns:

He glared at her a moment through the dusk, and the next instant she felt his arms about her and his lips on her own lips. His kiss was like white lightning, a flash that spread, and spread again, and stayed; and it was extraordinarily as if, while she took it, she felt each thing in his hard manhood that had least pleased her, each aggressive fact of his face, his figure, his presence, justified of its intense identity and made one with this act of possession. So had she heard of those wrecked and under water following a train of images before they sink. . . . She had not known where to turn; but she knew now. There was a very straight path. (IV, 436)

It is a path to the coldness of the Palazzo Roccanera — the black rock. Isabel's illusions of freedom are destroyed as are Emma's. And the destruction of these illusions is evident in the images of the two novels, the images of suffocation, coldness, darkness, and entrapment, the images of "the dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end" and "un corridor tout noir . . . qui avait au fond sa porte bien fermée."

The two novels share this remarkable specific image, they share the general imagery of entrapment and its complementary imagery, and they share the romantic characters whose destruction is conveyed by the imagery. Despite these similarities, there are important differences between the two novels. These differences, however, reminiscent of James's concern with Flaubert's "limited reflectors and registers," only confirm the influence of Madame Bovary upon The Portrait of a Lady.

Aside from very obvious differences, for example, between the minor characters in Madame Bovary and those in The Portrait of a Lady, there are two significant differences between the novels. There is a difference between the capacities of the main characters as "reflectors and registers," and, concomitantly, there is a difference between the reactions of the main characters to the destruction of their illusions.

In Madame Bovary, as James himself asserts in his final essay on the novel, Emma "lives, socially and morally speaking, in a hole." "Ignorant, foolish, flimsy, unhappy," Emma, James summarizes, "takes a pair of lovers by whom she is successively deserted; in the midst of the bewilderment of which, giving up her husband and her child, letting everything go, she sinks deeper into duplicity, debt, despair, and arrives on the spot, on the small scene itself of her poor depravities, at a pitiful tragic end." Emma sinks lower and lower, James continues, "while remaining absorbed in romantic intention and vision, and she remains absorbed in romantic intention and vision while fairly rolling in the dust" (Notes on Novelists, p. 80). James's apt description of Emma as a character who is "rolling in the dust" suggests the first significant difference between Flaubert's main character and that of James. Like Emma, Isabel is trapped. And like Emma, she remains "absorbed in romantic intention and vision." Unlike Emma, however, she is writhing in misery, but she is certainly not "rolling in the dust." As the images of entrapment and the complementary images indicate, Isabel's illusions of freedom, of happiness, are thoroughly destroyed, no less than those of Emma. Yet Emma, James feels, "is really too small an affair"; his Isabel cannot be so small, he feels, if she is to serve as the main reflector or register in the novel. With what Quentin Anderson describes as her "internal contradictions,"¹³ Isabel must not simply be recklessly romantic like Emma. She is divided, as

¹³Quentin Anderson, The American Henry James (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1957), p. 198.

Daniel J. Schneider explains;¹⁴ she wants freedom, and yet she fears it. And when she loses it, she indulges in no duplicity, she incurs no debt, she only despairs.

Isabel's misery is expressed in an all-night vigil, but not in suicide; by quiet reflecting but not by "rolling in the dust." And this difference is the second significant one between Flaubert's main character and that of James: the reaction to the destruction of her illusions. In Madame Bovary, Emma attempts to flee from the "corridor tout noir . . . qui avait au fond sa porte bien fermée": "dans un transport d'héroïsme qui la rendait presque joyeuse, elle descendit la côte en courant, traversa la planche aux vaches, le sentier, l'allée, les halles, et arriva devant la boutique du pharmacien" (p. 612). In The Portrait of a Lady, on the other hand, Isabel contemplates her entrapment, her enclosure within "a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end" but acknowledges simply that "the miserable part of it was precisely that it was not a crime, for against a crime she might have found redress" (IV, 190). Unable, unwilling, to find redress through suicide, as Emma had done, Isabel acknowledges "a very straight path" (IV. 436), the path of renunciation.

These two differences — between the capacities of the main characters as "reflectors and registers" and, concomitantly, between the reactions of the main characters to the destruction of their illusions — are significant differences, yet they only confirm the influence of Madame

¹⁴ Daniel J. Schneider, Symbolism: The Manichean Vision: A Study in the Art of James, Conrad, Woolf, and Stevens (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), p. 63, pp. 76-91.

Bovary upon The Portrait of a Lady. These differences must be James's own reaction to the one flaw he sees in Madame Bovary, the one "complaint" he expresses briefly in his 1899 essay and more thoroughly in his 1902 introduction to the novel: that Emma is "too small an affair," too "limited" a reflector and register. Although James does not thoroughly express his complaint until 1902, it must surely have been developing over the years of his appreciation, his critical study, of the novel. It must surely have been in his mind when he created his Isabel, who, although certainly less limited than Emma, is nevertheless, like her, "absorbed in romantic intention and vision." And it must surely have been in his mind when, just as Flaubert placed his Emma in "un corridor tout noir . . . qui avait au fond sa porte bien fermée," he placed his Isabel in "a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end."

CHAPTER V

THE CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP: L'EDUCATION

SENTIMENTALE AND THE PRINCESS

CASAMASSIMA

"Why, why him?" James wonders about Flaubert's Frédéric Moreau in the 1902 essay in Notes on Novelists. Just as he believes that Emma Bovary is really too small an affair, so does he believe that Frédéric in L'Education Sentimentale is "positively too poor for his part, too scant for his charge." Emma, James writes, "associates herself with Frédéric Moreau in 'L'Education' to suggest for us a question that can be answered, I hold, only to Flaubert's detriment. Emma taken alone would possibly not so directly press it, but in her company the hero of our author's second study of the 'real' drives it home. Why did Flaubert choose, as special conduits of the life he proposed to depict, such inferior and in the case of Frédéric such abject human specimens?" (Notes on Novelists, p. 81).

James criticizes Flaubert for making both Emma and Frédéric "such limited reflectors and registers" (Notes on Novelists, p. 82), but he sees that weakness as being more serious in L'Education Sentimentale than in Madame Bovary. "The absence of the 'complicated character' confronts . . . [James] everywhere as the ugly and sometimes fatal defect in the works of Flaubert,"¹ and that absence is particularly

¹Roberts, p. 101.

evident in the novel whose central character is the very "limited"

Frédéric:

"L'Education Sentimentale" is a strange, an indescribable work, about which there would be many more things to say than I have space for, and all of them of the deepest interest. It is moreover, to simplify my statement, very much less satisfying a thing, less pleasing whether in its unity or its variety, than its specific predecessor. But take it as we will, for a success or a failure — M. Faguet indeed ranks it, by the measure of its quantity of intention, a failure, and I on the whole agree with him — the personage offered us as bearing the weight of the drama, and in whom we are invited to that extent to interest ourselves, leaves us mainly wondering what our entertainer could have been thinking of. He takes Frédéric Moreau on the threshold of life and conducts him to the extreme of maturity without suspecting for a moment either our wonder or our protest — "why, why him?" Frédéric is positively too poor for his part, too scant for his charge; and we feel with a kind of embarrassment, certainly with a kind of compassion, that it is somehow the business of a protagonist to prevent in his designer an excessive waste of faith. (Notes on Novelists, pp. 82-83)

Frédéric is so limited a central character, James continues, that his vision of the life around him produces only "a sort of epic of the usual," which "affects us as an epic without air, without wings to lift it; reminds us in fact more than anything else of a huge balloon, all of silk pieces strongly sewn together and patiently blown up, but that absolutely refuses to leave the ground" (Notes on Novelists, p. 84). Frédéric's limited vision even limits the one character of genuine interest — Madame Arnoux, "the main ornament of 'L'Education.'" Madame Arnoux, James explains, "is exactly the author's one marked attempt, here or elsewhere, to represent beauty otherwise than for the senses, beauty of character and life; and what becomes of the attempt is a matter highly significant" (Notes on Novelists, p. 85). Madame Arnoux,

shown through Frédéric's vision of her, seems to have almost no character at all, according to James:

Almost nothing that she says is repeated, almost nothing that she does is shown. She is an image none the less beautiful and vague, an image of passion cherished and abjured, renouncing all sustenance and yet persisting in life. Only she has for real distinction the extreme drawback that she is offered us quite preponderantly through Frédéric's vision of her, that we see her practically in no other light. Now Flaubert unfortunately has not been able not so to discredit Frédéric's vision in general, his vision of everyone and everything, and in particular of his own life, that it makes a medium good enough to convey adequately a noble impression. Madame Arnoux is of course ever so much the best thing in his life — which is saying little; but his life is made up of such queer material that we find ourselves displeased at her being "in" it on whatever terms; all the more that she seems scarcely to affect, improve, or determine it. Her creator in short never had a more awkward idea than this attempt to give us the benefit of such a conception in such a way. . . .

Frédéric's limitations are, James believes, "a mistake that gravely counts against" Flaubert not only in the presentation of Madame Arnoux but in the entire novel; in short, "it was a mistake . . . to propose to register in so mean a consciousness as that of such a hero so large and so mixed a quantity of life as 'L'Education' clearly intends . . ." (Notes on Novelists, pp. 86-87).

James's criticism of the limitations of Frédéric brings to mind, of course, first, his very similar criticism of Madame Bovary and, second, his own creation, influenced by Flaubert's novel, of the far less limited, the significantly superior, Isabel Archer. James's criticism of the limitations of Frédéric also brings to mind another character —

Hyacinth Robinson — and another novel — The Princess Casamassima — and another possibility of influence.

In the preface to the New York Edition of The Princess Casamassima, James writes as if he has in mind not only the superior Hyacinth but also, in contrast, the inferior Frédéric, whom he had criticized in the 1902 essay. Writing of Hyacinth and thinking, possibly, of Frédéric, James explains,

This in fact I have ever found rather terribly the point — that the figures in any picture, the agents in any drama, are interesting only in proportion as they feel their respective situations; since the consciousness, on their part, of the complication exhibited forms their link of connexion with it. But there are degrees of feeling — the muffled, the faint, the just sufficient, the barely intelligent, as we may say; and the acute, the intense, the complete, in a word — the power to be finely aware and richly responsible. It is those moved in this latter fashion who "get most" out of all that happens to them and who in so doing enable us, as readers of their record, as participators by a fond attention, also to "get most."²

Hyacinth, James implies, is one of those who "'get most' out of all that happens to them." In rereading The Princess Casamassima, he says, he was interested to recognize his "sense, sharp from far back, that clearness and concreteness constantly depend, for any pictorial whole, on some concentrated individual notation of them. That notation goes forward here in the mind of little Hyacinth, immensely quickened by the fact of its so mattering to his very life what he does

²Henry James, The Princess Casamassima, Vol. V of The Novels and Tales of Henry James, pp. vii-viii. Subsequent citations from The Princess Casamassima refer to this edition, and volume numbers and page numbers will appear parenthetically within the text.

make of things: which passion of intelligence is . . . precisely his highest value for our curiosity and our sympathy" (V, xiv).

Hyacinth's "passion of intelligence" does bring to mind Frédéric's limitations, which James criticizes in the 1902 essay, but such a contrast alone would certainly not suggest the possibility of the influence of L'Education Sentimentale upon The Princess Casamassima. The possibility of influence is suggested, however, by this contrast along with certain striking similarities between the two novels.

The most obvious similarity between L'Education Sentimentale and The Princess Casamassima is the setting. Both novels are set during times of political revolution, and both writers thus belong in the "line of the great social novelists."³ Although the French novel takes place in Paris and the English novel takes place in London, both are concerned not only with the contrast between the privileged and the deprived classes but also with the interrelationships of the social and the personal in times of revolution.

In their concern with the interrelationships of the social and the personal, the two novels present very similar main characters whose personal romantic dramas are played out against the background of their involvement in the social revolution. Their dramas, like those of their predecessors Emma Bovary and Isabel Archer, conclude with the thorough destruction of their romantic illusions.

³Grover, "Two Modes of Possessing," p. 760.

Both Frédéric and Hyacinth for a time feel impelled to involve themselves in the social revolution. They feel impelled to do so because of the excitement of the times of revolution, because of the involvement of the people around them. They also feel that they should do so because of a certain sense of personal injustice, of thwarted personal ambition. For a time, both Frédéric and Hyacinth feel entitled to personal distinction, to acceptance among those of the higher classes. But most of all they feel driven to involve themselves in the social revolution because the revolution is "not an independent event but rather a correlative for a crisis"⁴ in their lives. "Personal aspirations parallel political passions."⁵ That is, the revolution is a social dream, the correlative for all the personal dreams which direct their lives.

The personal dreams of Frédéric are like those of Hyacinth. They both want distinction; they both want to be above the ordinary. Each wants — and eventually inherits — the money which allows him to be accepted among people of the higher classes. Those dreams of each of them are thus, to some degree, fulfilled. But Frédéric and Hyacinth share another dream, one which is never fulfilled.

That dream is of love, love for the ideal woman. Each of the main characters has a woman or women whom he might be said to love. Frédéric

⁴Peter Cortland, The Sentimental Adventure: An Examination of Flaubert's Education Sentimentale (The Hague: Mouton and Co., Publishers, 1967), p. 42.

⁵Stratton Buck, Gustave Flaubert (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1966), p. 137.

has the sexually attractive Rosanette and the simple, loving Louise Roque; Hyacinth has Millicent Henning, at once simple and sexually attractive. Yet neither has his ideal woman.

The dream of that woman directs each man's life. Frédéric's life is directed by his dream of Madame Arnoux, the unattainable, beautiful, virtuous mother and wife. Hyacinth's life is directed by his dream of the Princess Casamassima, the unattainable, beautiful, "radiant angel" (VI, 160), Christina Light. Each life is directed by a worship of the ideal, a devotion to the dream, until the ultimate personal dream — like the correlative social dream — is destroyed.

For both Frédéric and Hyacinth, the social dream is destroyed gradually but thoroughly. The social, the political, dream of Frédéric fades as he perceives the duplicity and the triteness of the thoughts of those involved in the revolution. They fade as, for example, his own speech is rejected in favor of the incomprehensible speech of Sénécal's patriot from Barcelona, as he recognizes that the revolutionaries "are narrow, petty in their conceptions, envious, full of spleen, and denigrating, even of their friends."⁶ Hyacinth's social dream fades as he perceives "the ulcer of envy — the greed of a party hanging together only that it might despoil another to its advantage" (VI, 158), as he begins to understand, as Philip R. Grover suggests, that "the fabric of civilization that has been built, its grandeurs, splendours, treasures, and felicities, are a possession of the human

⁶Grover, "Two Modes of Possessing," p. 766.

race. . . , not merely the luxurious toys of a privileged and pampered few. . . . And they are not to be identified . . . as merely class acquisitions which can and should disappear with the classes which may, in the past, have encouraged and promoted their existence. They represent human possibilities and human achievements — and possibilities and achievements of the profoundest human value."⁷

As the social dream of each protagonist is ultimately destroyed, so is his ultimate personal dream, the dream of the ideal woman. After a lifetime spent helplessly pursuing his dream, Frédéric finally loses his desire to pursue: "Il fréquenta le monde, et il eut d'autres amours encore. Mais le souvenir continuel du premier les lui rendait insipides, et puis la véhémence du désir, la fleur même de la sensation était perdue. Ses ambitions d'esprit avaient également diminué. Des années passèrent; et il supportait le désœuvrement de son intelligence et l'inertie de son coeur."⁸ Even when Madame Arnoux returns to him after sixteen years of absence, he can pursue his dream only so far as his window: "Quand elle fut sortie, Frédéric ouvrit sa fenêtre. Mme Arnoux, sur le trottoir, fit signe d'avancer à un fiacre qui passait. Elle monta dedans. La voiture disparut. Et ce fut tout" (p. 453). Hyacinth's dream, likewise, disappears. Having returned from Europe with the awareness that his revolutionary inclinations have vanished,

⁷Grover, "Two Modes of Possessing," p. 767.

⁸Gustave Flaubert, L'Education Sentimentale, Vol. II of Oeuvres de Flaubert, pp. 448-449. Subsequent citations from L'Education Sentimentale refer to this edition, and page numbers will appear parenthetically within the text.

he and the Prince watch the Princess vanish with Paul Muniment behind the door of the house where the revolutionists meet. And to the Prince's anguished observation, "It will make three, four hours he has been with her," Hyacinth only laughs sardonically, "He may be with her fifty hours!" and "then, disengaging himself . . . [walks] straight away . . . " (VI, 324). But for Hyacinth, ce ne fut pas tout. Returning to him, the Princess finds Hyacinth lying "as if asleep, but there was a horrible thing, a mess of blood, on the counterpane, in his side, in his heart" (VI, 430).

Hyacinth's suicide is inevitable. It is inevitable for him because, even though he has lost his revolutionary desire to destroy "the accumulated treasures, the beauties and felicities, the precious things" of the higher classes, even though he has lost his revolutionary Princess, he retains a vow of terrorism, a vow which he can allow himself to escape only by suicide. It is inevitable for his creator too because James cannot allow Hyacinth to end his life the way Frédéric ends his — with only embarrassing memories, thinking of the most embarrassing, "C'est là ce que nous avons eu de meilleur!" (p. 457) James cannot feel for Hyacinth what he feels for Flaubert's Frédéric: "We feel with a kind of embarrassment, certainly with a kind of compassion, that it is somehow the business of a protagonist to prevent in his designer an excessive waste of faith" (Notes on Novelists, pp. 82-83).

James has seen to it that his faith in his protagonist is not wasted. Disappointed by Flaubert's creation of "such limited reflectors and registers" (Notes on Novelists, p. 82), "such abject human

specimens" (Notes on Novelists, p. 81) as Emma Bovary and Frédéric Moreau, James creates a character at once very similar to Frédéric and yet very different. Hyacinth is similar to Frédéric in his social and personal dreams — and in the destruction of those dreams. Yet he is different from Frédéric in "the power to be finely aware and richly responsible" (V, viii).

In describing how the character of Hyacinth came into being, James explains in the preface to the novel that from the streets of London came the image

of some individual sensitive nature or fine mind, some small obscure intelligent creature whose education should have been almost wholly derived from them, capable of profiting by all the civilisation, all the accumulations to which they testify, yet condemned to see these things only from outside — in mere quickened consideration, mere wistfulness and envy and despair. It seemed to me I had only to imagine such a spirit intent enough and troubled enough, and to place it in presence of the comings and goings, the great gregarious company of the more fortunate than himself — all on the scale on which London could show them — to get possession of an interesting theme. (V, vi)

When in the novel James does place Hyacinth on those very streets of London, he does show a "sensitive nature," a "fine mind"; in the penultimate scene of the novel, Hyacinth is steeping "himself yet once again in the great indifferent city he so knew and so loved and which had had so many of his smiles and tears and confidences" (VI, 419-420). He is sensitive to the end, his suicide the result of his sensitivity, of his position as "the disillusioned and repentant conspirator" (VI, xvii).

Like Hyacinth, Flaubert's Frédéric, too, is disillusioned, but he is helplessly, pitifully disillusioned, and consequently, according to James, the reader does not care: "We care, our curiosity and our sympathy care, comparatively little for what happens to the stupid, the coarse and the blind; care for it, and for the effects of it, at the most as helping to precipitate what happens to the more deeply wondering, to the really sentient" (V, viii).

Whether stupid or sentient, both Frédéric and Hyacinth do feel helpless at times. And the images expressing their helplessness and, more generally, the conflict between illusion and reality in L'Education Sentimentale and The Princess Casamassima, while not suggesting the likelihood of direct influence, do suggest the similarities — and the crucial difference — between Frédéric and Hyacinth. If, as Peter Cortland suggests, "The Education, more than Madame Bovary, presents the helplessness of mind lost in a formless world,"⁹ Flaubert's images contribute significantly to that presentation. In L'Education Sentimentale, Frédéric is once described, for example, as being like a stone rolling headlong: "Il descendit la rue de Breda comme une pierre qui déroule, furieux contre Arnoux, se faisant le serment de ne jamais plus le revoir, ni elle non plus, navré, désolé" (p. 216). He does, of course, see both Arnoux and his wife again; he is truly helpless. When Madame Arnoux later misses the rendezvous Frédéric has so carefully planned, he is again sure that he will never see her again; he is

⁹Cortland, p. 7.

helpless, for his love, he believes, has disappeared "comme un feuillage emporté par un ouragan . . ." (p. 314).

Hyacinth's similar helplessness is described in a long passage:

He had plunged into a sea of barbarism without having any civilising energy to put forth. He was aware the people were direfully wretched — more aware, it often seemed to him, than they themselves were; so frequently was he struck with their brutal insensibility, a grossness proof against the taste of better things and against any desire for them. . . . In these hours the poverty and ignorance of the multitude seemed so vast and preponderant, and so much the law of life, that those who had managed to escape from the black gulf were only the happy few, spirits of resource as well as children of luck: they inspired in some degree the interest and sympathy that one should feel for survivors and victors, those who have come safely out of a shipwreck or a battle. What was most in Hyacinth's mind was the idea, of which every pulsation of the general life of his time was a syllable, that the flood of democracy was rising over the world; that it would sweep all the traditions of the past before it; that, whatever it might fail to bring, it would at least carry in its bosom a magnificent energy; and that it might be trusted to look after its own. When this high healing uplifting tide should cover the world and float in the new era, it would be its own fault (whose else?) if want and suffering and crime should continue to be ingredients of the human lot. With his mixed, divided nature, his conflicting sympathies, his eternal habit of swinging from one view to another, he regarded the prospect in different moods with different intensities. In spite of the example Eustache Poupin gave him of the reconciliation of disparities, he was afraid the democracy wouldn't care for perfect binding or for the finer sorts of conversation. The Princess gave up these things in proportion as she advanced in the direction she had so audaciously chosen; and if the Princess could give them up it would take very transcendent natures to stick to them. At the same time there was joy and exultation in the thought of surrendering one's self to the wash of the wave, of being carried higher on the sun-touched crests of wild billows than one could ever be by a dry lonely effort of one's own. That vision could deepen to ecstasy; make it indifferent if one's ultimate fate, in such a heaving sea, were not almost certainly to be submerged in bottomless depths or dashed to pieces on immovable rocks. Hyacinth felt that, whether his personal sympathy should rest finally with the victors or the vanquished, the victorious force was potentially infinite and would require no testimony from the irresolute. (VI, 262-263)

Here, as with Frédéric, Hyacinth feels helplessly swept by this tide of revolution. Images suggesting, for example, that he will be caught up in the "flood of democracy" which "would sweep all the traditions of the past before it," that he will be overwhelmed by the "high healing uplifting tide" which will "float in the new era," and that he will surrender "to the wash of the wave. . . , carried higher on the sun-touched crests of the wild billows than one could ever be by a dry lonely effort of one's own" all show that he feels like Frédéric in his helplessness. But he is ultimately not helpless. Rather, unlike Frédéric, he is "richly responsible," his responsibility being manifested in his purposeful suicide.

Related to the images of helplessness in both L'Education Sentimentale and The Princess Casamassima is a group of images of gulfs, abysses, and traps, images which, like those of helplessness, emphasize the basic conflict between illusion and reality in the novels. Frédéric's mother in Flaubert's work fears, for instance, that her son will be trapped by his relations with women: Elle voyait son fils tourbillonnant vers le fond d'un gouffre vague . . ." (p. 430). Her fears are well-founded. Similarly, Hyacinth fears "the high human walls, the deep gulfs of tradition, the steep embankments of privilege and dense layers of stupidity" that can trap him in his lower class, that can fence "the 'likes' of him off from social recognition" (V, 170). But Hyacinth is not fenced off from social recognition. Nor is he swallowed up by the revolution, which he describes as "a wonderful, immeasurable trap, on the lid of which society performs its antics"

(VI, 49). Nor is he engulfed in "the abyss that opened before him when, after his separation from Mr. Vetch, he stood under the lamp in the paltry Westminster street" (VI, 396) and read the instructions from the terrorist Hoffendahl. Unlike Frédéric, Hyacinth escapes from the gulf, the abyss, the trap. He cannot escape his vow except in death, but he is not helpless; his responsibility is manifested in his suicide.

As James suggests in the preface to the New York Edition of The Princess Casamassima, Hyacinth does seem to be one of those "who 'get most' out of all that happens to them" (V, viii). Like Frédéric, Hyacinth experiences the destruction of his social and personal dreams, but unlike Frédéric, Hyacinth is "finely aware" of that destruction. Whereas Frédéric helplessly loses all feeling — "il supportait le désœuvrement de son intelligence et l'inertie de son coeur" (p. 449) — Hyacinth remains one of "the acute, the intense, the complete." "Finely aware and richly responsible" (V, viii), Hyacinth feels strongly enough to commit suicide.

Hyacinth thus seems to be James's answer to his own question about Frédéric in Notes on Novelists: "Why, why him?" (Notes on Novelists, p. 81). That is, James seems deliberately to have created in Hyacinth a character similar to Frédéric yet without his limitations, just as he created in Isabel a character similar to Emma yet without her limitations. James seems deliberately to have attempted to show to himself and to readers of his criticism and his novels that Flaubert, "the

novelist's novelist" (Notes on Novelists, p. 85), in fact need not have limited himself to "such inferior" and "such abject human specimens" as Emma Bovary and Frédéric Moreau.

CHAPTER VI

THE STYLISTIC RELATIONSHIP

"He lived, as he felt, in an age of mean production and cheap criticism, the practical upshot of which took on for him a name that was often on his lips. He called it the hatred of literature. . . ." And in the midst of this hatred of literature, James suggests, Flaubert, "the most literary of men, . . . found himself appointed to suffer" (Notes on Novelists, p. 99). He suffered, James explains in his six essays on Flaubert, because of his devotion to style. In those essays James studies especially the style to which Flaubert devoted himself, and, in the earliest to the latest, he offers no really adverse criticism of that style. In addition to Flaubert's devotion to style, James returns again and again to praise of the patience with which Flaubert worked with words, the centrality of style to his credo, and the appropriateness of style in his works.

Throughout the six essays, James offers high praise of Flaubert's devotion to style. Believing that "the orgie de littérature had been his sole form of excess" (Essays in London, p. 141), James insists nevertheless that "it was truly a wonderful success to be so the devotee of the phrase and yet never its victim" (Notes on Novelists, p. 93). James clarifies his praise for Flaubert's devotion to style through the analogy of the crystal box. The best writer, he says, is like a beautiful crystal box which, when opened, is seen "to contain innumerable compartments, springs, and tricks." James goes on to

explain, "One is ornamental either way, but one is in the second way precious too" (Notes on Novelists, p. 94).

Flaubert's devotion to style, as is well known, caused him to work very slowly, so slowly and meticulously that James seems to be at once horrified and awed. To him Flaubert's devotion to style was, in a sense, like the devotion of the monk, his study at Croisset being "virtually a monastic cell" (Notes on Novelists, p. 70). And just as the monk's devotion is difficult, Flaubert, "essentially anchoretic," according to James, denied that the beauties of style "ever do anything so obliging as to come of themselves." In fact, James believes that "they scarcely indeed for Flaubert 'came' at all; their arrival was determined only by fasting and prayer or by patience of pursuit, the arts of the chase, long waits and watches, figuratively speaking, among the peaks or by the waters" (Notes on Novelists, p. 93). Thus Flaubert's devotion to style was a "nightmare of toil" (Essays in London, p. 144); "he felt of his vocation almost nothing but the difficulty" (Notes on Novelists, p. 66). And this is apparently what horrified James — not the days of waiting and watching, but Flaubert's seeming lack of pleasure in the pursuit of style. James seems to be awed, on the other hand, by the slowness of the pursuit, "in illustration of which his letters often record that it has taken him three days to arrive at one right sentence, tested by the pitch of his ideal of the right for the suggestion aimed at" (Notes on Novelists, p. 93).

In his struggle, most often painful, to find the "one right sentence," Flaubert was fortunate to have confidants, James explains.

For Flaubert, he suggests, "mankind . . . was made up of the three or four persons, Ivan Turgénieff in the number, who perceived what he was trying for, and of the innumerable millions who didn't." Flaubert's friend Maxime du Camp was one of the millions who didn't, James believes, but in the mind of Louis Bouilhet, James is sure, Flaubert found "a love of literature sufficiently demonstrated to relieve the individual from the great and damning charge, the charge perpetually on Flaubert's lips in regard to his contemporaries, the accusation of malignantly hating it." Flaubert wrote for Bouilhet, in fact, according to James, and he cites the letter in which Flaubert confesses concerning Bouilhet, "I feel no longer the need to write, because I wrote especially for a being who is no more. There's no taste in it now — the impulse has gone" (Essays in London, pp. 135-136).

But if in his solitude or with the aid of a confidant, he really arrived at the one right sentence, the three days were well spent, James believes, because of the centrality of style in Flaubert's credo. James writes, "the question of 'art' for him was so intensely the question of form, and the question of form was so intensely the question of rhythm, that from the beginning to the end of the correspondence we scarcely ever encounter a mention of any beauty but verbal beauty" (Essays in London, p. 144). James emphasizes, in fact, that Flaubert "regarded the work of art as existing but by its expression, and defied us to name any other measure of its life that is not a stultification." To Flaubert, James adds, the work of art was as dependent on style as a letter is dependent on an addressed envelope (Notes on Novelists, p. 92).

Although central to Flaubert's credo, "style itself . . . never totally beguiles" him (Notes on Novelists, p. 100), James stresses, and he appreciates and admires the appropriateness of style in Flaubert's works. He summarizes, "Let the phrase, the form that the whole is at the given moment staked on, be beautiful and related, and the rest will take care of itself -- such is a rough indication of Flaubert's faith . . ." (Notes on Novelists, p. 103). In other words, James finds a perfect fusion of style and subject in Flaubert's works: "No feature of the whole business is more edifying than the fact that he in the first place never misses style and in the second never appears to have beaten about for it. . . . Fine as he inveterately desired it should be he still never lost sight of the question Fine for what? It is always so related and associated, so properly part of something else that is in turn part of something other, part of a reference, a tone, a passage, a page, that the simple may enjoy it for its least bearing and the initiated for its greatest" (Notes on Novelists, pp. 93-94). All of his works, according to James, "represent the pursuit of a style, of the ideally right one for its relations" (Notes on Novelists, p. 90), and in Madame Bovary especially, the fusion of style and subject produces perfection, conferring "on its sufficiently vulgar elements of exhibition a final unsurpassable form." The form, James believes, is in Madame Bovary as much a part of the subject as the idea, "and yet so close is its fit and so inseparable its life that we catch it at no moment on any errand of its own. . . . The work is a classic because

the thing, such as it is, is ideally done, and because it shows that in such doing eternal beauty may dwell" (Notes on Novelists, p. 80).

James's praise of Flaubert's devotion to style, of the time he spent on finding the right word, and of the centrality and the appropriateness of style is remarkable because it is the praise of one "fellow-craftsman" (Notes on Novelists, p. 65) for another. It is remarkable also because, as the praise of a "fellow-craftsman," Earnest Jackson shows, it promoted widespread attention to and appreciation of Flaubert's style, especially in the United States: "Henry James was one of the most influential in establishing Flaubert as a master stylist and confirming the importance of this aspect in novel writing. . . . James's appreciation of the high achievement that Flaubert had accomplished in style was soon taken over by other critics. It was not long before Flaubert's tedious efforts at perfection of form became a legend in American criticism."¹

Most importantly, however, James's praise of Flaubert's style is remarkable because, as Charles R. Anderson states, "those aspects of Flaubert's theory most admired by him were, quite naturally, the ones that most influenced him as a practicing novelist."² Anderson and several other critics study the influence of the style of Flaubert upon that of James, examining not only those general qualities of Flaubert's

¹Ernest Jackson, The Critical Reception of Gustave Flaubert in the United States 1860-1960 (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1966), pp. 56-57.

²Anderson, p. 85.

style that James repeatedly praises but other, more specific qualities as well.

In addition to gaining, according to Marie-Reine Garnier, "une rare sûreté de jugement littéraire"³ from his knowledge of French novelists, especially Flaubert, James gained a greater awareness of the mot juste. Attracted to "the principles of composition, the view of style that Flaubert pronounced and employed," James accepted Flaubert's theory of the mot juste, Strother Purdy explains, but modified it with his own "emphasis on what is not said, but hinted at, and an instillation of complex meaning into ordinary words, along with an emphasis on the associated meanings of words." With these "catch-all" words, such as the word "clever," Purdy adds, James "moved toward the autonomy of the word as he moved away from the right word, the mot juste; to linguistic individualism from linguistic conventionality. . . . He is therefore, like Milton and Shakespeare, a marked linguistic innovator."⁴

It is of course evident from his critical essays, W. C. D. Pacey writes, that James "was immensely impressed by Flaubert's artistic conscience, by his intense care in the choice of words and phrases and rhythms; everything which James ever wrote about Flaubert testifies to this." But, he insists, "the relationship is closer than mere general admiration"; that is, James was influenced by Flaubert's style in

³Garnier, p. 5.

⁴Purdy, pp. 163, 176, 183.

several ways. James's style, he explains, "is distinguished by three predominant qualities: its richness of imagery, its plethora of subordinate clauses and adverbs, and its long rhythms. It is in this sphere that the influence of Flaubert seems to have been operative." Of the influence of Flaubert's style upon James's imagery, Pacey writes, "Is not the clue to James's later style to be found in this 'quest and multiplication of the image' together with a restless search for the 'mot juste'? An examination of any one of James's later paragraphs will reveal this search, conducted so earnestly that the sentences seem often interminable." And of the other influences of Flaubert's style, he adds, "The styles of Flaubert and James have also in common their adverbial richness and their long rhythms. It may seem strange to assert that James, like Flaubert, was seeking in his prose to reproduce the rhythms of speech, but if his prose is read it will be found to echo the rhythms of cultured conversation. Often indeed James's sentences become intelligible only when read aloud, allowing the speaking voice to distribute the pauses and emphases."⁵

Like Pacey and Purdy, Tzvetan Todorov examines the influence of Flaubert's style upon that of James, but he emphasizes especially how James has gone beyond Flaubert in the use of certain stylistic techniques. Todorov believes that "for some time James followed in Flaubert's wake," especially in the "art of the detail." He shows how for James, as for Flaubert, "things" do not exist by themselves; they

⁵ All quotations in this paragraph are from Pacey, p. 253.

exist only as characters perceive them. The reader knows nothing about these "things," or objects, except in relation to the subjects, James's characters. And because objects exist only in relation to the subjects, Todorov explains, the reader sees, through James's style, the part replacing the whole, "according to the familiar rhetorical figure of synecdoche."

But James goes a step further than Flaubert does, Todorov believes. The "art of the detail" is not limited to the descriptions of objects in relation to subjects; rather, James "has become conscious of Flaubert's sensationalism (or antiessentialism), and instead of simply employing it as a means, he has made it the constructive principle of his oeuvre." And this constructive principle, Todorov is sure, is the figure in the carpet of James's work:

The Jamesian narrative is always based on the quest for an absolute and absent cause. There exists a cause: this word must here be taken in a very broad sense; it is often a character but sometimes, too, an event or an object. The effect of this cause is the narrative, the story we are told. It is absolute: for everything in this narrative ultimately owes its presence to this cause. But the cause is absent and must be sought: it is not only absent but for the most part unknown; what is suspected is its existence, not its nature. The quest proceeds; the tale consists of the search for, the pursuit of, this initial cause, this primal essence.

Because of this constructive principle, Todorov explains, there are two kinds of movement in James's works — horizontal, in which the reader searches to see what will happen, and vertical, in which the reader searches to see what is, to find the essential absence. This quest for the essential absence is clearly James's own principle, yet it is a

principle, Todorov believes, which James developed from an awareness of Flaubert's search for style.⁶

Philip Grover agrees that "James found hints in Flaubert's search for style that could be of use to him."⁷ Grover, however, studies two stylistic techniques not emphasized by most other critics,⁸ techniques which James developed "to achieve aims similar to those which Flaubert had proposed."

The first of these is the intermingling of description with analysis of the states of minds of the characters. Grover shows how, in Madame Bovary, for example, Flaubert "unites three functions in his descriptions: he tells the reader what there is to be seen and experienced; he tells him what Emma herself sees and how it affects her; and he provides us with material which allows us to judge Emma's interpretation of events without ever going beyond what Emma herself can observe." Grover goes on to describe what he sees as being Flaubert's "impersonality," explaining that "the point of view — Emma's — carefully

⁶Tzvetan Todorov, The Poetics of Prose, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 145-151. To suggest Flaubert's own interest in this figure in the carpet, Todorov notes a statement in a letter Flaubert wrote to Maupassant on August 15, 1878: "Have you ever believed in the existence of things? Isn't it all an illusion? Nothing is real but 'relations' — I mean, the way in which we perceive objects."

⁷Grover, Henry James and the French Novel, p. 74.

⁸In addition to Todorov, who studies the subject's perception of the object, Minter, pp. 58-59, touches on these techniques, including in her list of the "elements of Flaubert's craftsmanship which James observed, adopted and adapted and incorporated into his works" two techniques which she describes as "the description of things

controls the selection of details."⁹ He does not show, as does Percy Lubbock,¹⁰ that the point of view in the early sections describing Charles's life is different from the point of view in the later sections describing Emma's life. Nor does he show, unlike critics such as Wayne C. Booth,¹¹ George Levine,¹² or Lubbock, that Flaubert frequently intrudes his own opinions even when he is seemingly most objective. He believes, rather, that "all is controlled by what is relevant to . . . [Emma's] experience," but he admits that, for ironic effect, the presentation is not always "limited to the manner in which she would experience it."¹³ He goes on to say that in Madame Bovary Flaubert "does not tell us about the place or people in themselves, or give us his own feelings and reactions to them. They don't exist except in their relevance to his central character."¹⁴ Failing to acknowledge that James is at times even less objective about Isabel than Flaubert is about Emma, failing to see, unlike Ora Segal, that occasionally

intermingled as they present themselves to the eyes of the characters" and "the objective, impassive impersonality which results in restricted point of view."

⁹Grover, Henry James and the French Novel, pp. 75-76.

¹⁰Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (London: Jonathan Cape, 1921), pp. 90-91.

¹¹Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 75-76.

¹²George Levine, "Madame Bovary and the Disappearing Author," Modern Fiction Studies, 9 (Summer 1963), pp. 103-119.

¹³Grover, Henry James and the French Novel, p. 78.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 76.

"James dissociates his technique from the impassibilité advocated by Flaubert and the French naturalists,"¹⁵ Grover concludes that it is "this same reticence, and the means of controlling it" that "is developed by James first by centering everything in relation to one character -- as Isabel in The Portrait of a Lady -- or later by developing his centres of consciousness which exclude the author's direct participation."¹⁶

In addition to studying this intermingling of description with analysis of states of mind, Grover shows how James learned from Flaubert as both attempted "to create a unified language enabling different modes of perception and consciousness and different types of speech to be presented in the same prose medium without any loss in the aesthetic pleasure of a finely fashioned, harmonious and carefully cadenced prose." More specifically, he shows that James adapted le style indirect libre, with its imperfect tense, to his own purposes, creating with his own impersonality "a mode of narration, as had Flaubert before him, that is half-way between dialogue and normal impersonal narration." Thus James, Grover concludes, "like Flaubert, modulates from directly reported dialogue to reported speech (given in his own 'style indirect libre') to narrative." "Although the lesson, the example," he admits, "has been thoroughly absorbed, perhaps even forgotten," it is "none the less powerful and pervasive for its transubstantiation."¹⁷

¹⁵ Ora Segal, The Lucid Reflector: The Observer in Henry James's Fiction (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 40.

¹⁶ Grover, Henry James and the French Novel, pp. 76-77.

¹⁷ Grover, Henry James and the French Novel, pp. 83, 88, 91.

The stylistic lessons were indeed "powerful and pervasive," as Grover and other critics suggest. James studied Flaubert's style for many years and learned his lessons well. In addition to the general qualities of Flaubert's style which James praises in his six essays on Flaubert, there are four specific qualities which he praises again and again, and it is by examining these specific qualities, especially, that one can see how well James learned from the master Flaubert. If one examines James's praise of the impersonality, the selection of details, the imagery, and the rhythm of Flaubert's style, and then turns to comparable passages in comparable works of Flaubert and James, it is possible to see clearly the evidence of those stylistic lessons.

To examine such comparable passages, one might turn, first, to that scene in Madame Bovary in which Emma, completely disillusioned, hopelessly responds to Rodolphe's refusal to lend her the money she so desperately needs (pp. 611-612) and then, second, to that scene in The Portrait of a Lady in which Isabel, completely disillusioned, hopelessly contemplates her life with Osmond (IV, 189-190). One might turn also to the penultimate scenes in L'Education Sentimentale (pp. 448-453) and in The Princess Casamassima (V, 418-423), each of which tersely summarizes the conclusion of the main character's life.

With these in mind, the comparable passages from Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady and from L'Education Sentimentale and The Princess Casamassima, one might return to James's essays on Flaubert in which he comments on Flaubert's impersonality. James repeatedly praises Flaubert's rigorous impersonality. "His constant refrain in

his letters is the impersonality, as he calls it, of the artist, whose work should consist exclusively of his subject and his style, without an emotion, an idiosyncrasy, that is not utterly transmuted," for to Flaubert, "'feelings' were necessarily crude . . ." (Essays in London, p. 122). His impersonality produced hard yet beautiful works:

"'Salammbô, in which we breathe the air of pure aesthetics, is as hard as stone; 'L'Education,' for the same reason, is as cold as death; 'Saint-Antoine' is a medley of wonderful bristling metals and polished agates, and the drollery of 'Bouvard et Pécuchet' (a work as sad as something perverse and puerile done for a wager) about as contagious as the smile of a keeper showing you through the wards of a madhouse. In 'Madame Bovary' alone emotion is just sufficiently present to take off the chill" (Essays in London, pp. 138-139). Yet "Flaubert's hardness," James insists, was "only the act of holding his breath in the reverence of his search for beauty" (Essays in London, p. 140).

That impersonality which James praises is everywhere evident in the comparable passages from Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady. It is evident, for instance, in the very terse sentence describing the result of Emma Bovary's final meeting with Rodolphe — "Elle sortit" — or in the sentence which shows, without authorial comment, her decision to commit suicide — "Puis, dans un transport d'héroïsme qui la rendait presque joyeuse, elle descendit la côte en courant, traversa la planche aux vaches, le sentier, l'allée, les halles, et arriva devant la boutique du pharmacien." Similar impersonality is everywhere evident also in The Portrait of a Lady. Describing James's impersonality, Lyall

Powers writes, "Let him keep his hands off, James urges; let the created being stand alone and alive. And once again we can detect the aesthetic principles of Flaubert behind this attitude of James's — that familiar principle which demands that the artist be invisible and all-powerful in his work, like God in his creation. . . ."¹⁸ Typifying that impersonality in The Portrait of a Lady is the matter-of-fact description of Osmond's treatment of Isabel: ". . . she accused him of nothing — that is but of one thing, which was not a crime. She knew of no wrong he had done; he was not violent, he was not cruel; she simply believed he hated her."

In the comparable passages from L'Education Sentimentale and The Princess Casamassima, the impersonality is even more immediately evident. Without intrusion, almost without feeling, Flaubert begins to describe Frédéric's disillusioned life: "Il voyagea." One need go no farther to see why James pronounces L'Education Sentimentale "as cold as death" (Essays in London, p. 138). Yet James repeatedly praises Flaubert's impersonality, and the beginning of the passage from The Princess Casamassima is no less impersonal, summarizing without intrusion Hyacinth's hopelessness: "That she had done with him, done with him for ever, was to remain the most vivid impression Hyacinth had carried away from Madeira Crescent the night before." Even though they contain so much significance concerning the hopeless future lives of Frédéric and Hyacinth, the concluding sentences of the passages are similarly

¹⁸Powers, p. 51.

impersonal. After Mme Arnoux leaves Frédéric for the last time, Flaubert writes only, "Et ce fut tout." Likewise, when Hyacinth, hoping for some kind of help after having left the Princess for the last time, searches out Millicent Henning but finds her in conversation with Captain Sholto, James writes only, "Hyacinth gazed back at him for the same length of time -- what these two pairs of eyes said to each other requires perhaps no definite mention -- and then turned away." The next time we see Hyacinth he is lying "as if asleep," with "a horrible thing, a mess of blood, on the counterpane, in his side, in his heart."

In addition to impersonality, a second specific quality of Flaubert's style which James praises is his selection of details -- the significant, the precise details. James praises not only Flaubert's devotion to the selection of the specific detail but also the precision of his description. In his first essay on Flaubert, for instance, he writes, "He succeeds wonderfully well in making an image, in finding and combining just the words in which the look of his object resides" (Literary Reviews, p. 146). And in his third essay on Flaubert he insists, in fact, that "selection (for the picture's sake) was Flaubert's highest morality." Although he admires Flaubert's ability to select the significant detail, James admires also his ability to be exact in his description. In his first essay on Flaubert, James admires his talent for "the description -- minute, incisive, exhaustive -- of material objects, and it must be admitted that he has carried it very far" (Literary Reviews, p. 146). James particularly admires in La Tentation de Saint Antoine "the author's constant appeal to observation";

"it swarms with ingenious, audacious, and erudite detail, and leaves nothing to be desired in the way of completeness" (Literary Reviews, p. 147). Such detail is the result of Flaubert's theory of the novel, which James summarizes in his second essay: "If we propose to represent the pictorial side of life, of course we must do it thoroughly well — we must be complete. . . . We will 'render' things — anything, everything, from a chimney-pot to the shoulders of a duchess — as painters render them. We believe there is a certain particular phrase, better than any other, for everything in the world, and the thoroughly accomplished writer ends by finding it" (French Poets and Novelists, p. 257). He found it again and again in Madame Bovary, in which "the accumulation of detail is so immense, the vividness of portraiture of people, of places, of times and hours, is so poignant and convincing, that one is dragged into the very current and tissue of the story." James especially admires the fact that "in spite of the elaborate system of portraiture to which she is subjected, in spite of being minutely described in all her attitudes and all her moods, from the hem of her garment to the texture of her finger-nails, . . . [Emma] remains a living creature, and as a living creature she interests us" (French Poets and Novelists, pp. 260-261).

If one turns, now, from James's praise of Flaubert's selection of details to the comparable passages from Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady and from L'Education Sentimentale and The Princess Casamassima, it is possible to see ample evidence of the stylistic lessons James learned from Flaubert, especially that lesson which Todorov describes

as the "art of the detail, " the interest in "things," or objects, only in relation to subjects. Flaubert's selection of the significant detail, as when he notes, concerning Emma's haste to leave Rodolphe, that "elle se cassa les ongles contre la serrure," was adopted as well as admired by James, who, "in seeking for the precise word . . . was not looking so much for the word which was most precise in objective description as for the word most suggestive of discriminated quality."¹⁹ Such a word in the passage from The Portrait of a Lady is the word "darkness." "It was her deep distrust of her husband — this was what darkened her world," James writes. And as if to emphasize the "discriminated quality" of the word, he adds, "That is a sentiment easily indicated, but not so easily explained, and so composite in its character that much time and still more suffering had been needed to bring it to its actual perfection."

James especially admired Flaubert's painstaking choice of the precise word in his description, that choice which he ponders in sentences such as "puis, cent pas plus loin, essoufflée, près de tomber, elle s'arreta" or "Tout ce qu'il y avait dans sa tête de réminiscences, d'idées, s'échappait à la fois. . . , " or "La folie la prenait, elle eut peur, et parvint à se ressaisir, d'une manière confuse, il est vrai . . ." (*italics mine*). Not surprisingly, in The Portrait of a Lady, James searches for the precise word in much the same way, frequently offering alternative words. In describing Isabel's analysis of the destruction

¹⁹ Joseph Warren Beach, The Method of Henry James (Philadelphia: Albert Saifer, 1954), pp. xciv-xcv.

of her marriage, James writes, "It was not her fault — she had practised no deception; she had only admired and believed" (*italics mine*).

Similarly, in describing Isabel's suffering, he clarifies the feeling by offering a choice of words: "Suffering, with Isabel, was an active condition; it was not a chill, a stupor, a despair; it was a passion of thought, of speculation, of response to every pressure" (*italics mine*).

And to describe precisely the darkness which eventually overtakes Isabel, James offers several choices of words: "Then the shadows had begun to gather; it was as if Osmond deliberately, almost malignantly, had put the lights out one by one. . . . These shadows were not an emanation from her own mind; she was very sure of that; she had done her best to be just and temperate, to see only the truth. They were a part, they were a kind of creation and consequence, of her husband's very presence. They were not his misdeeds, his turpitudes . . ." (*italics mine*).

In a comparison of the two sets of parallel passages, it is possible to see how much James's careful selection of details is like the selection which in the essays he so highly praises as an important element in Flaubert's style. Rather than intruding his own comments, each novelist can be seen as choosing instead the significant detail which needs no commentary. To show the combined feelings of sorrow, horror, and relief that Frédéric experiences at seeing Mme Arnoux again — but for the last time — Flaubert chooses to describe, for instance, how "Elle défit son peigne; tous ses cheveux blancs tombèrent. Elle s'en coupa, brutalement, à la racine, une longue mèche." Similarly, to show Hyacinth's revulsion to committing murder in the name of

Revolution, James chooses to mention briefly Hyacinth's longing to "feel the firm roundness of [Millicent Henning's] arms about him." A small detail, the roundness of her arms, represents to Hyacinth everything he will lose within a short time. The selection so evident here — details at one matter-of-fact and suggestively significant — seems to be best analyzed by Flaubert himself, as he describes the "deux tendances de . . . [son] esprit":

Il y a en moi, littérairement parlant, deux bonshommes distincts; un qui est épris de gueulades, de lyrisme, de grands vols d'aigles, de toutes les sonorités de la phrase, et des sommets de l'idée, un autre qui fouille et creuse le vrai tant qu'il peut, qui aime à accuser le petit fait aussi puissamment que le grand, qui voudrait vous faire sentir presque matériellement les choses qu'il a reproduites; celui-là aime à rire et se plaît dans les animalités de l'homme, L'Education Sentimentale . . . a été, à mon insu, un effort de fusion entre ces deux tendances de mon esprit. . . .²⁰

Surely these "deux tendances" are equally evident in James's selection of details, a selection which, like that of Flaubert, is often bitterly ironic. And he shows his understanding of Flaubert's choice of the ironic detail in a passage from Notes on Novelists which is similar to Flaubert's own statement. In this passage James explains that Flaubert had "two refuges." The first was "the attitude of irony" so evident in Madame Bovary and The Princess Casamassima, and the second was "the getting away from the human, the congruously and measurably human altogether" in La Tentation de Saint Antoine and Salammbô, which are "inviting because queer, but a confession of supreme impatience with

²⁰ Gustave Flaubert, Oeuvres Complètes de Gustave Flaubert (Paris: Louis Conard, 1910), II, 344.

the actual and the near, often queer enough too, no doubt, but not consolingly, not transcendently" (Notes on Novelists, p. 96).

James's most frequent and most extravagant praise of Flaubert's style has to do with the search for the precise word, especially in L'Education Sentimentale, a work which, despite his general dislike of it, he pronounced "large, laboured, immensely 'written,' with beautiful passages" (Notes on Novelists, p. 85). And in both the French passage and the English passage the reader is able to follow the search, to sense the struggle for le mot juste. In L'Education Sentimentale, Flaubert frequently offers one descriptive word or phrase, then an alternative word or phrase, in an effort to describe precisely the emotions of Frédéric. Explaining that Frédéric had other affairs in a fruitless attempt to forget Mme Arnoux, Flaubert writes, for example, "Mais le souvenir continuel du premier les lui rendait insipides; et puis la véhémence du désir, la fleur même de la sensation était perdue" (italics mine). And in describing Frédéric's reaction to Mme Arnoux's implicit offer of herself upon her return, Flaubert uses the same technique. He writes of Frédéric, ". . . il était repris par une convoitise plus forte que jamais, furieuse, enragée. Cependant, il sentait quelque chose d'inexprimable, une répulsion, et comme l'effroi d'un inceste" (italics mine). Like Flaubert, James offers alternative words or phrases in his descriptions of Hyacinth's emotions. Explaining that Hyacinth had time to make his decision between suicide and murder, James repeatedly clarifies: ". . . he was grateful for that and saw a delicacy, a mercy, in their having given him a margin, not condemned

him to be pressed by the hours. He had another day, he had two days, he might take three, he might take several" (italics mine). Later, he clarifies Hyacinth's attitude toward Millicent, his need to believe that he had "liked her better almost than any one": "He tried to think he had, he wanted to think he had, and he seemed to see the look her eyes would have if he should swear to her he had" (italics mine). Such clarifications are evident throughout the passage — when Hyacinth finally went to Millicent's place of business, for instance, "he hovered a long time, undecided, embarrassed, half-ashamed" (italics mine) — and throughout the novel, as they are throughout L'Education Sentimentale.

In addition to impersonality and selection of details, a third specific quality of Flaubert's style which James especially admires is his use of images, the aptness and fecundity of which, James points out, are features of his peculiar talent. He does not point out, however, that these images were also Flaubert's peculiar torment. Even in his review of the Correspondance, he does not mention Flaubert's frequent complaints about his own tendency toward excessive use of images and metaphors, complaints such as "je suis gêné par le sens métaphorique . . . je suis dévoré de comparaisons"²¹ or "où il faudrait l'exposition la plus simple, il me surgit une comparaison"²² or "je me perdais continuellement dans les métaphores, au lieu de préciser les faits."²³

²¹ Flaubert, Oeuvres Complètes, III, 79.

²² Flaubert, Oeuvres Complètes, III, 104.

²³ Flaubert, Oeuvres Complètes, IV, 16.

Rather, James praises highly both the frequency and the quality of Flaubert's images: "Just as subjects were meant for style, so style was meant for images; therefore as his own were numerous and admirable he would have contended, coming back to the source, that he was one of the writers to whom the significance of a work had ever been most present. This significance was measured by the amount of style and the quantity of metaphor thrown up" (Essays in London, p. 147). The "quest and multiplication of the image, the image tested and warranted and consecrated for the occasion, was accordingly his high elegance . . ." (Notes on Novelists, p. 100).

If one turns from James's praise of Flaubert's imagery to the two sets of passages from the novels, one can find that imagery is indeed the "high elegance" of the passage from Madame Bovary and, in a similar way, of the passage from The Portrait of a Lady. Appropriately, the basic images of each passage are images of entrapment, images perfectly concordant with each character's recognition of the hopelessness of her situation. In the French passage, the central images of entrapment suggest a kind of immersion, a kind of burial: as Emma leaves Rodolphe, for instance, the ground beneath her feet seems "plus mou qu'une onde," the furrows appear to be "immenses vagues brunes," and, ultimately, "sa situation, telle qu'un abîme" (italics mine), becomes tragically evident. Similarly, in the English passage, the central image of entrapment — influenced surely by Flaubert's description of Emma early in Madame Bovary as being trapped in "un corridor tout noir, et qui avait au fond sa porte bien fermée" (p. 382) — suggests a hopeless kind of

enclosure. As Isabel contemplates her life with Osmond, she finds her "infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end."

As the central images of the two passages are quite similar, so likewise are their complementary images. Contributing to the impression of entrapment by burial in Madame Bovary, for instance, are, initially, images of walls and a ceiling threatening to fall upon Emma and, finally, images of "les milles pièces d'un feu d'artifice" which burst upwards, from her sunken spirits and of "des globules couleur de feu . . . comme des balles fulminantes" which fall down upon her, as if she is within "un abîme." Similarly, confirming the suggestion of entrapment by enclosure in The Portrait of a Lady are images of darkness -- of "shadows" which "had begun to gather . . . as if Osmond deliberately, almost malignantly, had put the lights out one by one," of a "dusk" which "at first was vague and thin" but which "steadily deepened" until "there were certain corners of her prospect that were impenetrably black."

As there are strong similarities between the images of Madame Bovary and those of The Portrait of a Lady, so are there between the images of L'Education Sentimentale and those of The Princess Casamassima. There are many images in the passage from L'Education Sentimentale, most of them unconnected and deliberately trite, the images of Frédéric mouthing "des tendresses" to Mme Arnoux "pour lui cacher cette déception." But one stands out -- stark, striking, significant. When Frédéric sees the whiteness of Mme Arnoux's hair, "ce fut comme un

heurt en pleine poitrine." He is wounded. Similar descriptions of wounds or injuries appear in The Princess Casamassima. As Hyacinth contemplates committing murder in the name of Revolution, the horror of the contemplated act is described in such images:

He had a sense that his mind, made up as he believed, would fall to pieces again; but that sense in turn lost itself in a shudder that was already familiar — the horror of the public reappearance, in his person, of the imbruéd hands of his mother. This loathing of the idea of a repetition [James's italics] had not been sharp, strangely enough, till he felt the great hard hand on his shoulder; in all his previous meditations the growth of his reluctance to act for the "party of action" had not been the fear of a personal stain, but the simple growth of yearning observation. Yet now the idea of the personal stain made him horribly sick; it seemed by itself to make service impossible. It passed before him, or rather it stayed, like a blow dealt back at his mother, already so hideously disfigured; to suffer it to start out in the life of her son was in a manner to place her own forgotten redeemed pollution again in the eye of the world (italics mine).

Finally a fourth specific quality of the style of the "novelist's novelist" which James praises repeatedly is rhythm. Concerning Flaubert's sense of rhythm, James writes, "His life was that of a pearl-diver, breathless in the thick element, and condemned to plunge again and again. He passed it in reconstructing sentences . . . [and] calculating and comparing cadences, harmonious chutes de phrase" (Essays in London, p. 143). He particularly admires Flaubert's refusal to allow repetition to disturb his rhythms: "It would take us far to glance even at his fewest discriminations; but rhythm and harmony were for example most menaced in his scheme by repetition — when repetition had not a positive grace" (Notes on Novelists, p. 106); such repetition Flaubert simply exterminated, in James's words.

Nor would Flaubert allow his rhythm and harmony to be disturbed by other awkward aspects of language, according to James. He passed his life, James writes, in "beating about the bush to deal death to the abominable assonance" (Essays in London, p. 143), and he was ever aware that his rhythm and harmony "were above all most at the mercy of the bristling particles of which our modern tongues are mainly composed and which make of the desired surface a texture pricked through, from beneath, even to destruction, as by innumerable thorns" (Notes on Novelists, p. 106). A most destructive kind of thorn which Flaubert avoided, James explains with great admiration, was the cliché: "The horror, in particular, that haunted all his years was the horror of the cliché, the stereotyped, the thing usually said and the way it was usually said, the current phrase that passed muster" (Essays in London, pp. 145-156). James's admiration here of Flaubert's ability to avoid the cliché is oddly incongruous with his criticism of Bouvard et Pécuchet, a work, he feels, whose humor is as contagious as the smile of a keeper of a madhouse (Essays in London, p. 139). Although James acknowledges the clichés of the Dictionnaire des Idées Reçues as the inspiration for "the encyclopaedic exactitude and the lugubrious humor of the novel" (Essays in London, p. 146), he insists nevertheless that Flaubert should never have begun the novel and, once he began it, should surely have known to give up on it (Notes on Novelists, p. 87). But James returns repeatedly to praise of Flaubert's avoidance of the cliché, of awkward particles and awkward assonance, of unnecessary repetition. He admires again and again the particular elegance of

Flaubert's rhythms. But after all, he admits, for example, ". . . I do not mean that 'Madame Bovary' is a classic because the 'thats,' the 'its' and the 'tos' are made to march as Orpheus and his lute made the beasts, but because the element of order and harmony works as a symbol of everything else that is preserved for us by the history of the book" (Notes on Novelists, p. 107).

In turning from James's praise of Flaubert's rhythm and harmony to the novels of the two writers, one can find, as might be expected, that the two sets of passages from the novels are unusually alike in their rhythm. In both the passage from Madame Bovary and that from The Portrait of a Lady, for instance, there is great variety in sentence structure and length. The first two sentences of the French passage describing Emma's departure from Rodolphe's home are typical of Flaubert's juxtaposition of very short sentences with very long sentences: "Elle sortit. Les murs tremblaient, le plafond l'écrasait; et elle repassa par la longue allée, en trébuchant contre les tas de feuilles mortes que le vent disperait." Similar juxtaposition occurs later in the passage in two clauses describing "des globules couleur de feu" in which appear "au milieu de chacun d'eux, la figure de Rodolphe": "Ils se multiplièrent, et ils se rapprochaient, la pénétraient; tout disparut." In the English passage there also are frequent contrasting rhythms. The contrast, however, is not formed by the juxtaposition of one very short sentence or clause with a very long one; rather it is formed by the juxtaposition of a clause at the beginning with one at the end of a sentence, clauses whose rhythms are not at all

alike. In a sentence describing Isabel's "vista," for instance, the first part is a grand crescendo; the second, just as grand a decrescendo. "Instead of leading to the high places of happiness, from which the world would seem to lie below one, so that one could look down with a sense of exaltation and advantage, and judge and choose and pity, it led rather downward and earthward, into realms of restriction and depression, where the sound of other lives, easier and freer, was heard as from above, where it served to deepen the feeling of failure." A similar contrast is evident in a sentence which describes Isabel's suffering: "It was not a chill, a stupor, a despair; it was a passion of thought, of speculation, of response to every pressure."

The beautiful, calculated rhythmical contrasts in both the French passage and the English passage are not, however, the only similarities between the rhythms of Flaubert and those of James. Another similarity is found in the beautiful appropriateness of the rhythms of each passage. In the French passage cited which shows Emma's final, hopeless departure from Rodolphe's home, for example, the very terse first sentence appropriately suggests her abrupt, decisive departure; the long second sentence, her indecisiveness, her confusion about what to do next. Likewise, in the English passage cited which portrays Isabel's "vista," the crescendo appropriately suggests her initial hopefulness; the decrescendo, her ultimate hopelessness.

James repeatedly praises Flaubert's sensitivity to rhythm, and, as in Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady, the passages from L'Education Sentimentale and The Princess Casamassima show not only

rhythmical similarities but also remarkable sensitivity to rhythm, especially to appropriate contrasts in rhythm. The first three sentences of the passage summarizing the hopeless conclusion of Frédéric's life provide perhaps the best example of such contrasts in L'Education Sentimentale. "Il voyagea. Il connut la mélancolie des paquebots, les froids réveils sous la tente, l'étourdissement des paysages et des ruines, l'amertume des sympathies interrompues. Il revint." Here the long second sentence describing Frédéric's extended travels in search of meaning for his life contrasts strikingly with the abrupt third sentence, with its hopeless tone. The last few sentences of the passage also show such appropriate contrast in the increasing abruptness and the final hopelessness especially of the last sentence: "Quand elle fut sortie, Frédéric ouvrit sa fenêtre. Mme Arnoux, sur le trottoir, fit signe d'avancer à un fiacre qui passait. Elle monta dedans. La voiture disparut. Et ce fut tout." Similar contrasts are evident also in the passage from The Princess Casamassima, especially in the first few lines, those which describe Hyacinth's reaction after seeing the Princess for the last time. As in the first few lines of the passage from L'Education Sentimentale, a sense of hopelessness emerges from the contrast of the long sentence describing Hyacinth's consoling sleep and the short, terse sentence describing his bleak awakening: "He went home and threw himself on his narrow bed, where the consolation of sleep again descended on him. But he woke up with the earliest dawn, and the beginning of a new day was a quick revival of pain. He was overpast, he had become vague, he was extinct."

These similarities in rhythm, as well as the similarities in imagery, selection of details, and impersonality of point of view, clearly seem to suggest that James profited by studying those aspects of Flaubert's style which he so frequently praised in his six essays on Flaubert. These stylistic similarities alone do not, of course, suggest that L'Education Sentimentale had a direct influence upon The Princess Casamassima. Nor do stylistic similarities alone suggest that Madame Bovary had a direct influence upon The Portrait of a Lady. But a study of the stylistic similarities evident in selected passages from the French novels and from the English novels, combined with a study of the similarities of subject and style in the complete novels, does suggest that, in his six essays on Flaubert, James was not just writing about another of the French realists in whose "wares"²⁴ he was only condescendingly interested. He was writing about the "novelist's novelist" by whose "wares" he was influenced, especially when, as in L'Education Sentimentale and Madame Bovary, he saw a flaw which he felt compelled to correct, the "flaw" in those novels, according to James, being the main characters who were too limited as reflectors and registers. He was writing about the "writer's writer" who is "much more interesting . . . on occasion by the given failure than by the given success," his "fellow-craftsman" whose "successes pure and simple disconnect and dismiss him" but whose "failures . . . keep him in touch and in relation" (Notes on Novelists, p. 85).

²⁴Henry James Letters, II, 52.

CHAPTER VII

JAMES, FLAUBERT, AND THE IDEAL ARTIST

Flaubert was the "novelist's novelist" (Notes on Novelists, p. 85). Because he bore "the flag of the guild" (Notes on Novelists, p. 90), he influenced his fellow-craftsmen. "May it not in truth be said that we practise our industry, so many of us, at relatively little cost just because poor Flaubert, producing the most expensive fictions ever written, so handsomely paid for it?" his fellow-craftsman James asks. James's question is of course purely rhetorical; he knew that "literary honour . . . is by . . . [Flaubert's] example effectively secure for the firm at large . . ." (Notes on Novelists, p. 89). He may also have known that not only the guild in general but he himself in particular practiced the industry under the influence of Flaubert.

That the "industry" of Flaubert had some influence upon the "industry" of James many critics, including, for example, Philip R. Grover, Lyall Powers, Charles R. Anderson, Strother Purdy, and W. C. D. Pacey, have noted. These and other critics have studied some similarities between the novels of Flaubert and those of James but have focused most of their attention on matters of style, on attitudes and techniques which James seems to have learned from Flaubert. The stylistic influence of Flaubert upon the "industry" of James is remarkable, so remarkable that some critics feel with Pacey that "Flaubert's influence

upon James was almost wholly a stylistic one."¹ A much less limited scope of influence, however, is quite possible.

It is possible because of the personal relationship between the two novelists. James knew and admired Flaubert, admired him, in fact, much more than he did the other writers of the Flaubert cénacle, with the exception, of course, of Turgenev.

It is possible, more importantly, because of the critical relationship. James's personal interest was manifested in six critical essays written from 1874 and 1902, essays which, despite some adverse criticism, offer extravagant praise of Flaubert's "industry."

It is possible, most importantly, because of the creative relationship. The possibility of influence is suggested by certain remarkable similarities between Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady and between L'Education Sentimentale and The Princess Casamassima. In Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady, the main characters are both caught up in their romantic illusions of happiness, certain that they can find happiness if only they can have the freedom to search for it. But neither Emma Bovary nor Isabel Archer has that freedom, and eventually the illusions of each are thoroughly destroyed. Each recognizes that she is trapped. Emma is trapped in "un corridor tout noir, et qui avait au fond sa porte bien fermée" (p. 382), and, with remarkable similarity, Isabel is trapped in "a dark, narrow alley with a dead wall at the end" (IV, 190). In L'Education Sentimentale and

¹Pacey, p. 253.

The Princess Casamassima, also, the illusions of the main characters are destroyed. Eventually, both Frédéric Moreau and Hyacinth Robinson give up their dreams of social revolution and, more importantly, their dreams of the ideal woman.

In their disillusionment these main characters of Flaubert and James reveal not only their similarities but also their differences which — with the similarities — confirm the possibility of influence. In Madame Bovary, as James explains, Emma in her increasing disillusionment sinks "socially and morally speaking into a hole. . . . She sinks deeper into duplicity, debt, despair, and arrives on the spot, on the small scene itself of her poor depravities, at a pitiful tragic end." While Emma, "fairly rolling in the dust" (Notes on Novelists, p. 80), ends her life in the pitiful tragedy of her suicide, Isabel ends her life in the dignity of renunciation. Like Emma she is trapped, but unlike Emma she retains her dignity and her consciousness, consciousness necessary if she is to be the less limited reflector that James recommends in his criticism of Madame Bovary.

Hyacinth, like Isabel, retains the feelings, the consciousness, necessary for him to be the less limited reflector that James recommends in his criticism of L'Education Sentimentale. Hyacinth suffers the destruction of his social and personal illusions just as Frédéric does. But whereas Frédéric loses all feeling — "il supportait le désœuvrement de son intelligence et l'inertie de son coeur" (p. 449) — Hyacinth retains, in James's words, "the power to be finely aware and richly responsible" (V, viii), demonstrating that awareness and responsibility through his renunciation, his purposeful suicide.

In addition to these significant similarities and differences — differences inevitable in view of James's criticism of the "limited reflectors and registers" (Notes on Novelists, p. 82) of Flaubert's novels — the possibility of influence is suggested by the stylistic relationship between James and Flaubert. In those aspects of Flaubert's style which James praises in his six essays on Flaubert, remarkable similarities are evident between selected passages from Madame Bovary and The Portrait of a Lady and from L'Education Sentimentale and The Princess Casamassima.

If, finally, further confirmation of the possibility of influence is needed, that confirmation is abundantly evident in the admiration James expresses for Flaubert through the figurative language he uses to describe him in the six essays. Often in these essays James refers figuratively to Flaubert's religion of art. Occasionally, his attitude toward that religion seems ambivalent, as when he writes, concerning Flaubert's style, "It was the lifelong discomfort of this particular fanatic, but it is our own extreme advantage, that he was almost insanelly excessive" (Essays in London, p. 125). And yet even Flaubert acknowledges his own fanaticism, aware that it is a necessary part of his religion of art: "On ne fait rien de grand sans le fanatisme. Le fanatisme est la religion . . . la foi, la foi même, la foi ardente, celle qui fait des oeuvres et agit. . . . Dans l'Art aussi, c'est le fanatisme de l'Art qui est le sentiment artistique."² Believing that

²Quoted in John R. Williams, "Flaubert and the Religion of Art," French Review, 41 (1967), 44.

people will find some "point d'appui" for their enthusiasm, Flaubert suggests that "les uns chercheront dans la chair, d'autres dans les vieilles religions, d'autres dans l'Art."³ Flaubert chooses the last of the three despite the demands it makes, demands which Maxime du Camp describes: "Il fut inflexible . . . ce qu'il nommait 'l'art' lui apparaissait comme un dieu jaloux auquel nul sacrifice ne doit être marchandé. Pendant toute sa vie, il fut un mystique littéraire, prêt au martyre pour confesser la divinité qu'il adorait."⁴ That Flaubert can accept these demands of the religion of art disturbs James, yet more often it fascinates him. And throughout his essays on Flaubert, he expresses his fascination, his admiration, in the same kind of figurative language which he uses to describe the greatest of his fictional writers — the writers most devoted to the religion of art;⁵ these fictional writers, furthermore, seem much like the Flaubert whom James describes in the essays.

James's figurative descriptions of Flaubert are very similar to those, for example, of his ideal writer defined in "The Lesson of the Master." The Master, Henry St. George, is not, of course, the ideal writer, but he has learned what it costs to worship "the idols of the

³Quoted in Williams, p. 39.

⁴Quoted in Williams, p. 43.

⁵Because of his figurative language of the religion of art, several critics, including, for example, Robert L. Gale in The Caught Image: Figurative Language in the Fiction of Henry James (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 165, have determined that, "indeed, the only religion to James seems to have been the adoration of art."

market — money and luxury and 'the world'; he is himself, in fact, "the depressing, the deplorable illustration of the worship of false gods."⁶ He has learned that the ideal writer cannot lead "the mercenary muse" to the "altar of literature"⁷ but must rather accept "the doctrine of renunciation."⁸ Like the ideal writer defined in "The Lesson of the Master," Flaubert accepts that doctrine. James is at once fascinated and disturbed that "Flaubert's hardness was only the act of holding his breath in the reverence of his search for beauty; his universal renunciation, the long spasm of his too-fixed attention, was only one of the absurdest sincerities of art" (Essays in London, p. 140), like "a life laid down for grammar" (Essays in London, p. 141). And yet, while James is fascinated by Flaubert's devotion to his religion — "he appears to have been made of the very stuff of a Benedictine" (Essays in London, p. 142) — he wonders if the religion of art can sufficiently reward the devotee: "When it is a religion, and therefore an authority, why should it not be, like other authorities, a guarantee?" (Essays in London, p. 126) As James questions here with a certain awe the "blessings" of the religion of art for Flaubert, one must surely think, as perhaps did James in creating the characters, of

⁶Henry James, "The Lesson of the Master," in The Complete Tales of Henry James, ed. Leon Edel (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1963), VII, 239.

⁷Ibid., p. 262.

⁸Ibid., p. 273.

the awestruck Paul Overt questioning the Master concerning the sacrifices and the rewards of writing.

The devotee, James seems to fear, may receive too little reward. In "The Next Time," for instance, Ray Limbert, helplessly devoted to the beauty of his writing, "belongs to the heights — he breathes there, he lives there. . . ." Although he desperately needs to achieve popular success, "it happens not to be given to Limbert to fall"⁹; that is why "the note he strained every chord to pitch for common ears . . . inevitably . . . insisted on addressing itself to the angels."¹⁰ He makes a valiant effort to sacrifice beauty to popular success, but he cannot. He helplessly sacrifices popular success: "wonderful tragic crimson . . . was the colour of his magnificent mistake."¹¹ Like Ray Limbert, Flaubert, in James's words, was "the devotee of the phrase" (Notes on Novelists, p. 70); James may well have modeled the fictional character upon Flaubert. Working in his monastic cell at Croisset, Flaubert sacrificed and struggled for his words: "They scarcely indeed for Flaubert 'came' at all; their arrival was determined only by fasting and prayer . . ." (Notes on Novelists, p. 66). "Breathing, feeling, thinking, speaking, performing every operation of life, only as . . . the votary of art, poor Flaubert, producing the most expensive fictions ever written, . . . handsomely paid for it" (Notes on Novelists, p. 89).

⁹Henry James, "The Next Time," in The Complete Tales of Henry James, IX, 220.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 213.

Flaubert "paid for it" just as the dying writer Dencombe in "The Middle Years" paid for his devotion to the religion of art; and again, Flaubert, with his lifelong struggle for stylistic perfection, may have been James's model for the fictional writer and for James himself, who surely felt that he too "paid" for his devotion. The pages of Dencombe's last novel, for which he "had struggled and suffered . . . , making sacrifices not to be counted,"¹² do have "the very odour of sanctity."¹³ But he recognizes with sorrow that only now, as he is dying, has he begun to achieve the beauty he has struggled for; this sorrow is "what he felt as a nail driven in. . . ."¹⁴ He is consoled for this sorrow only by "the servant of his altar," Dr. Hugh, who "had all the new learning in science and all the old reverence in faith."¹⁵

Fellow-servants of the altar can console or they can torment the ideal writer. In "The Death of the Lion," for instance, the writer Neil Paraday is tormented by those who invade his "literary sanctum."¹⁶ Even the narrator, with his admiration — his "little customary altar" and his "twinkling tapers"¹⁷ — had gone to see Paraday really to betray

¹²Henry James, "The Middle Years," in The Complete Tales of Henry James, IX, 56.

¹³Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁶Henry James, "The Death of the Lion," in The Complete Tales of Henry James, IX, 90.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 86.

him with his curiosity; he had "gone down to the country for a profane purpose," but had been "converted on the spot to holiness."¹⁸ Consequently, he remains to protect Paraday from his curious but ignorant admirers. Such protection, James seems to feel, could have helped Flaubert, of whom he may well have been thinking as he created the persecuted Paraday; for Madame Commanville's Correspondance, James writes, "hands . . . [Flaubert] over to the Philistines with every weakness exposed, every mystery dispelled, every secret betrayed" (Essays in London, p. 123). And so James wonders whether it is necessary that "a leading feature of our homage to a distinguished man be that we shall sacrifice him with sanguinary rites on the altar of our curiosity" (Essays in London, p. 124).

Just as he is disturbed by the sacrifice his ideal fictional writers must make, so is James disturbed by the sacrifices that Flaubert made for the religion of art. He is disturbed, of course, because these were the sacrifices of the writer whom he admired as the "novelist's novelist" (Notes on Novelists, p. 108), the writer who may have been a model in one way or another for Paraday, Dencombe, Limbert, and St. George. His admiration for, his fascination with, Flaubert, so evidently expressed in his figurative descriptions of him in the essays, clearly led him far in his criticism, in his style, and, especially, in his creation of two novels, The Portrait of a Lady and The Princess Casamassima. How far, James may have wondered, would it lead him in sacrifice for the religion of art?

¹⁸Ibid., p. 101.

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VITA

Jeanine Baker Varner was born in Temple, Texas on January 22, 1954. She attended elementary and secondary schools in Oklahoma, graduating in 1970. She entered Oklahoma Christian College in that year and graduated in December of 1973.

On December 27, 1973 she married Paul S. Varner, and with him began her graduate studies at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in January of 1974, where she was granted a Teaching Assistantship. She received her Master's degree in 1975 and in 1978 was awarded the Hilton Smith Alumni Fellowship.

In that year she and her husband accepted positions as English teachers at Michigan Christian College, and in that same year they also became parents of a son, Bart. They both received the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in English in August of 1981.