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# PLENITUDE RESTORED OR TROMPE L'OEIL: THE PROBLEMATIC OF FRAGMENTATION AND INTEGRATION IN THE PROSE WORKS OF PIERRE JEAN JOUVE AND MICHEL TOURNIER

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# ABSTRACT

Although Pierre Jean Jouve's first novel, *Paulina 1880*, was published in 1925 while Michel Tournier's first novel, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, did not appear until 1967, a painful sense of fragmentation and loss of original plenitude haunts the works of both authors. In this study we shall focus on the psychological fragmentation related to sexuality and sex roles within the prose of Michel Tournier and Pierre Jean Jouve. We shall explore this phenomenon vis-à-vis the Jouvian heterosexual female (chapter one); the Tournierian heterosexual female (chapter two); the Tournierian and Jouvian gay and bisexual female (chapter three); the Tournierian and Jouvian gay and bisexual male (chapter four); the Jouvian heterosexual male (chapter five); and the Tournierian heterosexual male (chapter six). As our chapter seven will point out, it is Tournier's and Jouve's androgynous figure who ostensibly corrects the painful fragmentation inflicted by the Fall. But our final chapter will take issue with the overwhelmingly positive reception generally accorded to this androgyne. In keeping with Julia Kristeva's *Histoires d'amour*, we shall question the elevation of the biologically male androgyne - an issue heretofore untreated by critics of Pierre Jean Jouve and Michel Tournier.

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# Introduction

As one contemplates the distinctive features of human life portrayed in twentieth-century French literature, fragmentation is clearly paramount. As Werner Jost notes, modern wo/man "se sent abandonné, ballotté, sans aucun répère ou appui spirituel: Dieu est mort ou, pour le moins, caché" ("Le Liban" 89). Due to its pervasive nature in modern life, fragmentation assumes myriad forms: political, social, spiritual, esthetic and psychological. In this study we shall focus primarily on an issue heretofore untreated: psychological fragmentation related to sexuality and sex roles within the prose of Michel Tournier and Pierre Jean Jouve. By psychological fragmentation, we shall refer to the disconnected or disjointed nature of the human psyche itself. When applicable, our discussion will include categories of fragmentation not related to gender issues, such as alienation (the feeling of estrangement from one's peers or from society) and fragmentation of narrative voice resulting from blurred chronology. We shall also address the opposing question of integration. Our overall purpose is to expose the contradictions both within critical works treating these texts and within the fabric of the texts themselves. Rather than attempting to formulate a definitive reinterpretation of Jouve's and Tournier's prose, we hope to explore new questions germane to these works and to the final, precarious decades of the twentieth century.

In our selection of Jouve and Tournier, we have obviously chosen authors from two different generations. While Jouve was born at the end of the nineteenth century (1887), Tournier's birth year was 1924. Thus our study will focus on fragmentation and integration during sixty-four years of French prose: from Jouve's *Paulina 1880* (1925) to Tournier's *Le Médianoche amoureux* (1989). In spite of their generation gap, Jouve and

Tournier have shared various characteristics which make a comparative study enticing. Their autobiographical essays (*En Miroir* and *Le vent Paraclet*) reveal parallels between the authors' personal and professional lives. Both Jouve and Tournier suffered from traumatic childhood illnesses and operations. In *En Miroir*, Jouve speaks of his "grave opération subie à l'entrée de l'adolescence" (19), while *Le vent Paraclet* affirms that Tournier has never forgotten "l'arrachage des amygdales" (20). Their appreciation for German literature led both authors to read as well as translate German texts. Werner Jost notes that in addition to his admiration for German authors Rilke, Heinrich Mann and Hölderlin, Jouve translated *Wozzeck* ("L'Ange" 48). Similarly, Tarcis Dey refers to Tournier as an "auteur, friand de littérature allemande" (91), while Pierre de Boisdeffre labels him "Un Allemand, en somme, égaré dans le jardin à la française de notre sage littérature" ("*La Goutte*" 715). The issue of a family *Le vent Paraclet* describes as "fidèle jusqu'à présent à . . . la 'germanistik'", Tournier became a translator of German literature when unsuccessful at the *agrégation* exam despite four years of study in Germany (11). Another link between Tournier and Jouve surfaces in their autobiographical essays: while neither author belongs to a specific literary school, both affirm that their writing style is traditional. In his journal, *En Miroir,* Jouve explains his "literary isolation" in the 1920's:

> On voit assez ce qui, à l'époque, m'opposait aux productions surréalistes. Je n'acceptais ni l'emploi du mécanisme de l'automatisme verbal pour lui-même, ni la fabrication de fantômes plus drolatiques que réels, ni l'exploitation publicitaire de l'inconscient. (42)

Jouve staunchly refused to utilize such surrealist techniques such as sleep séances and automatic writing. *En Miroir* expresses his desire to resist the influence of what he calls the artistic "tohu-bohu" of cubism, dadaism and surrealism: "je les refusais, par liberté et

désir de vraie profondeur. Ma naïveté naturelle me disait que le jeu était faux, que l'on trichait" (29). For Jouve, authentic artistic creation was incongruous with what he saw as an effort to exploit the creative resources of the unconscious. Just as Jouve rejected literary techniques in vogue during his lifetime, *Le vent Paraclet* explains Tournier's lack of interest in the avant-garde techniques of the post-nouveau roman. Tournier maintains that his style is very much in the vein of the traditional novel: "Mais bien entendu il ne pouvait être question pour moi que de romans traditionnels . . . Quand je commençais un roman, c'était toujours avec l'idée de réécrire *Le Comte Kostia* qui avait enchanté mon enfance" (194). He adds that the content of his works - not their form - is the site of his literary innovation. His intent "n'est pas d'innover dans la forme, mais de faire passer au contraire dans une forme aussi traditionnelle, préservée et rassurante que possible une matière ne possédant aucune de ces qualités" (VP 195). Critics have noted both Tournier's disdain for modern literary movements and the result of this attitude. Thus Colin Davis mentions Tournier's "polemic stance, as he sets himself up in opposition to literary modernism and more specifically to the *Nouveau Roman*" (4), while William Cloonan comments that Tournier's lack of affiliation with a literary school has resulted in his being relegated to "some sort of literary limbo" in American academic circles (*Michel Tournier* 101). In our selection of Jouve and Tournier, we have chosen two authors who avoided *avant-garde* techniques which would have brought ready-made possibilities for fragmentation to their prose. Nevertheless we shall see that fragmentation is an intrinsic element of the fabric of Tournier and Jouve's works - in spite of their traditional form.

The salient link between Jouve and Tournier is the fact that their prose is haunted by the fragmentation resulting from a form of original sin. This preoccupation has a tripartite manifestation in Jouve's and Tournier's works: recognizing the divided nature of wo/man; attributing this fragmentation to the Fall; and lamenting the loss of Edenic unity.

Kurt Schärer clarifies the Jouvian preoccupation with "rupture": "Dans l'optique jouvienne, l'aventure à la fois capitale et primordiale de la scission s'identifie avec l'expérience de la *faute* et de la *chute*" (145). Tournier 's prose likewise reveals a fixation with the Fall, which serves as focal point for "La Famille Adam" (*Le Coq de bruyère*) and constantly resurfaces, for example in Logre's sermon from "La Fugue du petit Poucet" (*Le Coq de bruyère*).

Many critical assessments of fragmentation in Jouve's prose are reminiscent of that within Tournier's. For example, Nelly Mane's description of Jouvian duality would fit neatly into an assessment of Tournier's ogre, Tiffauges: "l' être humain est double; beau et laid, bien et mal sont les deux faces d' une même existence" (53). Similarly, Martine Broda comments on the coexistence of good and evil in Jouve's prose - an essential component of Tournier's *Le Roi des aulnes* and *Gilles et Jeanne*: "meurtrière et victime sont solidaires: comme l'envers et l'endroit d'une carte à jouer" ("Le Trajet du roman" 83).

This preoccupation with the Fall and wo/man's divided nature is coupled with a companion theme which serves as another parallel between Jouve and Tournier: their nostalgia for lost Edenic unity. Sylvie Jaudeau comments that for Jouve, "le mythe du paradis perdu demeure vivant" (65), while Colin Davis explains that "Tournier's fiction describes and participates in the quest for lost unity and a state of totality " (193). As we shall see, it is the androgynous figure who ostensibly "corrects" the fragmentation inflicted by the Fall.

The division generated by the Fall and subsequent quest for unity are merely the tip of the spiritual iceberg within Jouve's and Tournier's prose. Due to its length, an in-depth comparison of Jouve's and Tournier's spiritual component - originally included in this introduction - has been put aside for future consideration. The focus of this dissertation is not on spirituality per se, but rather on the perceptions of sexuality and gender identification and the quest for integration which grow out of Jouve's and Tournier's

preoccupation with the Fall. Our major focus will be to establish that gender and sexuality issues are the foreground of Jouve's and Tournier's prose, while the antithetical notions of integration and fragmentation serve as their background. We shall examine all facets of gender in these works, including female heterosexuality (chapters one and two); female bisexuality and lesbianism (chapter three); male homosexuality and bisexuality (chapter four); male heterosexuality (chapters five and six); and the androgyne (chapter seven). Our conclusion shall provide an overview of the relationship between integration, fragmentation and sexuality in the prose of Jouve and Tournier.

In chapters one and two we shall explore the predominantly negative associations of femaleness within the prose of Jouve and Tournier, including links to fragmentation, sin, absence and death. Chapter one will examine the negative heterosexual female component of prose works including Jouve's *Paulina 1880*, *Le Monde désert*, "La Victime" and "Dans les Années profondes." Taking Jouve's *Paulina 1880* as a preliminary example, we shall now briefly introduce the negative connotations of the heterosexual female to be fully explored in chapters one and two.

In *Paulina 1880,* female heterosexuality is associated with death, murder, condemnation and the painful dichotomy of lust and spirituality . The title *Paulina 1880* is already an allusion to death, as 1880 was the year in which Paulina killed her lover, Count Michele. This murder was an unconscious attempt on Paulina's part to reconcile her painful fragmentation: the struggle between her ardent spirituality and keen carnal desire. Her agnostic lover - Michele - was therefore sacrificed, in imitation of the Holy Bridegroom. Daniel Leuwers states in *Jouve avant Jouve* that Paulina's mystical visions convinced her Michele's murder was a divine act - a deliverance from "'la fausse vie' dans laquelle elle gémit encore" (249). This act also reflected Paulina's spiritual/erotic obsession with Saint Catherine's suffering. Thus before killing the count, Paulina was "à genoux comme le condamné à mort de sainte Catherine" (217).

However as we shall see, Paulina's sacrifice of her lover does not harmoniously integrate her painful fragmentation. Paulina's actions essentially cancel out her dual factions, evoking this description by her final visitor: "[Elle est] pareille à une morte vivante" (245). Simonne Fischer adds that having failed to achieve "un amour absolu qui n'appartient pas à ce monde . . . Paulina . . . dit 'non' à tout" (61-62). Left a non-person with a new name, Paulina/Marietta mechanically lives out her days mirroring her surroundings: "reste déchu d'une belle villa" (240).

Martine Broda affirms that Jouvian females "finissent par tuer celui qu'elles aiment" ("Le Trajet du roman" 74). After noting that Paulina assassinates the count, Broda adds that Baladine "[apporte] à Luc Pascal une mort symbolique" in *Le Monde désert* ("Le Trajet du roman" 74). Even Jouve's esteemed Hélène ("Dans les Années profondes") loses a former lover to death: Pauliet. Similar to woman's negative association in Jouve's prose, chapter two will demonstrate that woman is also associated with absence, mutilation, condemnation, death and distance in Tournier's prose.

After exploring in depth the phenomenon of negative heterosexual female associations in *Paulina 1880*, chapter one will also treat this theme in Jouve's *Le Monde désert*, "La Victime" and "Dans les Années profondes" while chapter two will turn to Tournier's *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, *Le Roi des aulnes*, *Les Météores*, *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* and *La Goutte d'or*. Chapter three will explore the negative perception of lesbianism (Tournier's *Les Météores* and Jouve's *Paulina 1880*) and female bisexuality (Jouve's *Hécate* and *Vagadu*). Chapters one through three will also note the misogyny of male characters and third person narrators.

Chapters four through six will continue this questioning of sexuality and sex roles in Jouve's and Tournier's prose works, focusing on gay and bisexual males in chapter four and heterosexual males in chapters five (Jouve) and six (Tournier). To introduce this

topic, let us look briefly at how the heterosexual male is presented in Tournier's *Les Météores*.

At first glance it appears that Edouard Surin has managed to have his cake and eat it too. Not overly taxed in his professional life, Edouard enjoys a private life divided between his wife in Brittany and his mistress in Paris. But the reader soon realizes that Edouard's status is that of useless figurehead, both professionally and in his marriage to this woman "exclusivement préoccupée de ses petits" (22). With his mistress, Florence, he finds not the anticipated "seconde jeunesse" but a nostalgia for the emotionally secure environment provided by his wife, Maria-Barbara (24). His disappointment with life motivates Edouard to join the Resistance, but his meager participation is eclipsed by that of Maria-Barbara. Unsuccessful in his own attempt to die an early, heroic death and unaware of Maria-Barbara's involvement with the Resistance, Edouard is doubly frustrated when his wife's activities culminate in her deportation.

This brief introduction to the characterization of Edouard Surin is indicative of the unflattering portrayal of the heterosexual male in the prose works of both Tournier and Jouve. We shall see that both authors also frequently portray gay, bisexual (chapter four) and heterosexual males (chapters five and six) in a negative light while reserving positive male roles for androgynous figures (chapter seven). As previously established, both Jouve's and Tournier 's protagonists suffer fragmentation resulting from the Fall. The attraction of the androgyne is that this being restores the pre-Fall plenitude of the flesh via alchemy of the flesh. Chapter seven will question the elevation of the androgyne seeking answers to the following questions. Does the androgyne intentionally create sex role confusion to erase society's traditional delineation of male and female sexuality, as maintained by Tournierian critics, including Françoise Merllié (*Michel Tournier* 101) and William Cloonan (*Michel Tournier* 78)? Or is it actually a suppression of the

female? For purposes of this introduction, we shall examine only the androgynous role of Taddeo Buonvicini in Jouve's *Le Monde désert*.

Taddeo is presented to the reader from the vantage point of Baladine Nikolaïevna, Jacques de Todi's would-be mistress and financial backer. In keeping with the concept of androgyny as a perfect union of masculine and feminine traits, Baladine's descriptions of Taddeo stress both his female and his male components. He is "pâle, charmeur et aussi simple qu'une fleur des champs . . . [avec de] beaux traits . . . rougissant comme une fiancée . . . très énergique à la manière d'une jeune fille" (104-105). After his brief affair with Jacques has ended, Baladine explains that Taddeo continues platonic visits to his ex-lover's unhappy *ménage*. During these evening visits, Taddeo's femininity is again evident in his role as tea party hostess. It is Taddeo who prepares the tea, fills the teacups, and offers sugar, lemon and milk to Baladine and Jacques. Baladine states that Taddeo is "charmant" in this role, as if he were playing "la gracieuse fille de la maison" (109). In keeping with his androgynous nature, Taddeo has a male component as well. In juxtaposition to his charm in the role of gracious hostess, his physique is bulky and masculine. In chapter seven, we shall carefully scrutinize the qualities which make Taddeo a true forerunner of Tournier's androgyne: his fusion of stereotypically male and female characteristics, his preference for male company, his role as nurturer, and his angelic association with the heavens.

Our conclusion will provide a final overview of the juxtaposing concepts of fragmentation and integration underlying the prose of Jouve and Tournier. This conclusion will demonstrate that the movement toward integration or fragmentation within these prose works is generally related to the issues of gender and sex roles discussed in previous chapters. The first part of our conclusion will reexamine gender and sex role-based fragmentation in texts including Jouve's *Paulina 1880*, "La Victime," *Le Monde désert* and *Hécate* and Tournier's *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* and *La*

*Goutte d'or*. The latter part of the conclusion will focus upon works of ostensible integration - Tournier's *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique, Le Roi des aulnes*, *Les Météores* and Jouve's "Dans les Années profondes" and *Vagadu*.

Both Jouve and Tournier offer examples of the fragmenting role of human sexuality. In Jouve's *Paulina 1880* and "La Victime," the fragmenting force is heterosexual, carnal lust. As we have seen even from this introduction, Paulina's "sacrifice" of her lover is a tragic consequence of the conflict between her equally strong religious and sexual thirst. After her prison sentence, she lives out her life in limbo as the "morte vivante": Marietta (245). Jouve's tale, "La Victime," also reveals the workings of carnal desire, both in the male protagonist, Waldemar, and his paramour, Dorothée. But different from Paulina, Waldemar has no zealous religious faith to conflict with his sexual drive. In what unfolds as a gothic tale of unbridled lust, Waldemar enlists the aid of his sorcerer friend, Simonin, to lure Dorothée by playing his flute. Simonin consents to aid Waldemar on the condition that his friend avoid physical contact with the young woman. United with Dorothée, Waldemar ignores Simonin's pleas for abstinence, and his ensuing physical passion kills her. Simonin the sorcerer succeeds in bringing Dorothée to a trance-like state, but her odor reveals that she is actually dead. Simonin and Waldemar are both tortured and executed at the story's end, Waldemar for having killed Dorothée and Simonin for his necromancy.

Examining fragmentation within Tournier's prose, one finds examples in which fragmentation is directly related to sexuality and sex roles (i.e. "Tupik" from *Le Coq de bruyère*), examples in which fragmentation is both sexual and societal (that of Idriss in *La Goutte d'or* and of Gaspard in *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*) and examples in which fragmentation is either distantly related or unrelated to sexuality (that of Melchior and of Taor in *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*). Idriss (*La Goutte d'or*) is a Tournierian male protagonist suffering a fragmentation both sexual and societal. The catalyst of

Idriss's fragmentation is a blond, female tourist who photographs the boy at his native North African oasis. Since photography is viewed by his culture as a partial giving away of one's soul, Idriss requests that the photographer send him a copy of his photograph. When she does not fulfill her promise, Idriss embarks on a dual mission, both sexual (union with the female photographer) and non-sexual (restoration of his identity through union with his photograph). As we shall see, both the sexual and the non-sexual components of Idriss's odyssey to France end in failure. Unable to locate the blond photographer who has lured him into modern, occidental society, Idriss's subsequent relationships with French women are equally unfulfilling. He is forced to give his golden talisman - "la goutte d'or" - as payment for his first prostitute; an alluring peep show actress permanently eludes his grasp; etc. Coupled with his sexuality-based fragmentation, Idriss also experiences alienation as a Maghrebian immigrant in France. Even the novel's title evokes Idriss's social estrangement, for Françoise Merllié reminds the reader that the Parisian quarter of *La Goutte d'or* "depuis Zola rassemble les travailleurs les plus démunis" (*Michel Tournier* 203). While taking into account Idriss's societally induced fragmentation, we shall focus primarily upon his sexual fragmentation.

Turning to the discussion of integration in our conclusion, we shall first consider the three Tournierian novels interpreted by critics as culminating in a carefully prepared crescendo of integration: *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique, Le Roi des aulnes* and *Les Météores*. We shall question the gradual transformation of each novel's protagonist toward androgyny (Robinson, Abel and Paul), ostensibly culminating in a cosmic apotheosis. Françoise Merllié refers to this transformation as "le sentiment orgueilleux de se mettre au-dessus de la condition humaine" (*Michel Tournier* 39-40). These androgynous protagonists all purportedly achieve what David Bevan refers to as "une sexualité non-génitale . . . une sublimation, voire une sacralisation" (18). Bevan states that Robinson's sexuality undergoes a "ré-intégration primordiale," beginning with his

role as the fetus of his island (Speranza)'s womb/cave and ending with solar ecstasy (29). Robinson surpasses human sexuality in attaining the state of solar ecstasy, becoming youthful, incredibly strong and ostensibly attaining his tarot card prophesy: "le zénith de la perfection humaine" (V 11). In his final tableau, he emerges from Speranza's cave the tender but massive nurturer, destined to mother/father the stowaway cabin boy in what Hubert Nyssen calls "une véritable conquête de l' éternité" (90). *Le Roi des aulnes* amplifies this relationship of sturdy nurturer and frail charge, for Tiffauges is a gargantuan dry nurse and the Jewish orphan Ephraïm's emaciation is life-threatening. Nevertheless, both Robinson and Tiffauges purportedly lead their charges to safety, Robinson leading Jaan from the cave to begin his initiation to Speranza and Tiffauges leading Ephaïm away from the invasion of Kaltenborn. Paul Surin of *Les Météores* is a variation on this theme of the glorified androgyne. His odyssey to restore the bonds of twinship culminates in his disfigurement beneath the Berlin Wall - supposedly crushing Paul's psycho-sexual dependence upon his departed twin, Jean. In Paul's final state of "sublimation," he symbolically expands both to simulate the integration of his lost twin into his deformed body and to communicate with his cosmic Other (625).

Our discussion of the above scenes from Tournier's *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique, Le Roi des aulnes* and *Les Météores* will depart from the traditional interpretation of glorious apotheosis offered by critics such as Patrick Grainville (46). Our goal will be to explore the contradictions within these texts, thereby fully questioning both their final tableaux and the very projects proposed by the texts themselves.

Finally, our conclusion will turn to *Vagadu* and "Dans les Années profondes" - Jouvian works which appear to close with harmonious integration. In *Vagadu*, psychotherapy allows Jouve's Catherine Crachat to deal with the sexual neuroses resulting from her relationships with her father and other abusive males in her life. We shall examine this therapy à la Jouve to determine whether it questions or merely

reasserts the heterosexual matrix of desire. Similarly our discussion of Jouve's final prose work, "Dans les Années profondes," will explore this short story's endorsement of the heterosexual hegemony. "Dans les Années profondes" depicts the death of its heroine, Hélène, in a glorious fashion as the generous self-sacrifice which inspires the literary vocation of her young lover, Léonide. We shall determine whether the death of Jouve's final female protagonist, Hélène, implies that woman is an expendable commodity within a phallogocentric hierarchy.

The prose works of Pierre Jean Jouve and Michel Tournier are replete with fascinating patterns of integration and fragmentation. Due to Jouve's and Tournier's preoccupation with pre-Fall plenitude, integration and fragmentation in their prose are generally linked to sexuality and sex roles. This study intends to fully question the roles of sexuality and gender, highlighting the contradictions inherent within the texts themselves. We now begin our rereading of Jouve's and Tournier's prose with a treatment of the female gender: the heterosexual female as perceived by female and male characters and omniscient male narrators (chapters one and two) and the lesbian and bisexual female as perceived by female and male characters and omniscient male narrators (chapter three).

# Chapter I

## Introduction to Femaleness

A challenging undertaking at any point in time, a treatment of femaleness is most certainly a complex issue in the precarious decades of the late twentieth century. In spite of a conservative mindset which heralds "family values" while seeking to lock women within the narrow confines of traditional roles and compulsory heterosexuality, many women continue to shatter restrictive, sex role definitions. Thus while a woman may be a heterosexual mother within a two parent family unit, she may also follow myriad other life paths, be it as single, childless career woman, lesbian career mother, etc. It is this very flexibility which negates what Judith Butler would label the "illusion" or "regulatory fiction" of normative female behavior (*Gender Trouble* 136).

Rather than - as Toril Moi decries - "homogenize 'woman,'" our treatment will strive to take into account the richness of potential and multiplicity of femaleness (187). For as Judith Butler asserts, it is naively incorrect to assume "*women* denotes a common identity. Rather than a stable signifier that commands the assent of those whom it purports to describe and represent, *women*, even in the plural, has become a troublesome term, a site of contest, a cause for anxiety" (*Gender Trouble* 3). While utilizing the admittedly problematic term "women," it is our goal to avoid turning our discussion of femaleness into a reductive exercise forcing all women into what Butler labels a "seamless category" - a "reification" of traditional gender relations (*Gender Trouble* 4, 5). Instead of dismissing female diversity in the interest of gender coherence, we intend to adopt the technique of Alice Jardine: "to create problematics . . . to put texts into a dialogue with each other, not to catalogue and explicate them" (18). And finally our

rereading of Pierre Jean Jouve's and Michel Tournier's prose will allow us to determine their stance vis-à-vis the codification of stereotyped formulations of women and women's roles within the literary text.

## The Heterosexual Female in the Prose of Pierre Jean Jouve

We shall embark upon our treatment of femaleness in the prose works of Pierre Jean Jouve and Michel Tournier with an examination of the heterosexual female in Jouvian prose works, including *Paulina 1880*, *Le Monde désert*, "La Victime," and "Dans les Années profondes." We shall begin our analysis of Jouve's first female prose protagonist, Paulina Pandolfini of *Paulina 1880*, with a discussion of the portrait of her fellow female characters.

As she has neither sisters nor female friends, the reader can logically assume that Paulina's views toward female sexuality are greatly influenced by those of her own mother. Regarding her husband's love, the narrator indicates that Signora Pandolfini "ne tenait aucun rôle et n'en voulait tenir aucun . . . comme si son mariage n'avait été qu'une parenthèse et si elle retrouvait à quarante-cinq ans son premier destin qui avait été devenir nonne" (22-23). After this brief allusion to Signora Pandolfini's religiosity and repressed sexuality, the narrator mentions her only twice more in the novel. In chapter seven she is off traveling, thus unavailable to intercede on behalf of the young goat Paulina wishes to save from the slaughterhouse. And lastly, in chapter ten, Signora Pandolfini retires to her bedroom to spend the final six months of her life in prayer before her death. Deemed too sensitive to witness her mother's death, Paulina is sent to the family's country villa, where she learns secondhand of her mother's passing. Although she mourns her death, "en fait il n'existait entre sa mère et elle que des liens tout à fait ténus et la mort les coupait sans que Paulina éprouvât une vraie perte" (35). Similar to mothers we shall examine later (i.e. those of Tournier's Robinson Crusoé and Abel Tiffauges), Paulina's mother is a truly a figure of absence: absent both from her conjugal and maternal

relationships. As Paulina is ready to blossom into puberty, her primary female role model - her mother - continues channeling all of her sexual energy into an ardent religious fervor. Although Paulina's own sexual appetite is too keen to be sublimated into intense religiousness, her mother's behavior doubtlessly encourages her in this direction.

Signora Pandolfini's piousness and austerity are reflected in her daughter's second female role model, her chaperone and tutor, Mademoiselle Priscilla. While her devotion is deemed sufficient by the Pandolfinis to instruct Paulina in "l'Histoire Sainte," Mademoiselle Priscilla's prudishness is suggested both by her civil state of *vieille demoiselle* and by the narrator's description (58). She is described as a "personne absolument sûre . . . dont le regard était aussi méfiant que celui du signor Mario Pandolfini lui-même" (25-26). When Paulina's mother passes away, the "Pandolfini se décidèrent à prendre des mesures de surveillance exceptionnelles," in their concern lest the "fougueuse jeune personne" endanger the "honneur de leur famille morose" (36). Henceforth, Mademoiselle Priscilla essentially oversees the repression of Paulina's budding sexuality. At the family's summer villa in Torano, she is entrusted with locking Paulina's bedroom door and carrying the key in her pocket. While in Milan with her charge, Priscilla is instructed to take an extra precaution: "à déposer la clé entre les mains de Mario Giuseppe Pandolfini en personne" (36). Nelly Mane's analysis of the key in Jouve's *Hécate* is also applicable to this key in *Paulina 1880*: Mademoiselle Priscilla is to protect the key hole so that it may not "avale la clef/phallus et permet d'accéder à l'interdit désiré" (44). Entrusting the key to Priscilla, the Pandolfinis are entrusting her not only with Paulina's virginity but also with safeguarding their family honor. And with the presence of this *vieille demoiselle*, Paulina has before her an image of female chastity mirroring that of her deceased mother.

In spite of Signor Pandolfini's system of surveillance for his blossoming daughter, Paulina is enticed into an illicit romance at Torano with her father's favorite houseguest:

Count Michele. After Mademoiselle Priscilla has locked Paulina in and the Pandolfinis have retired for the night, the brazen young woman simply unlocks her father's door, admits her lover and indulges in these trysts in her very own bedroom. Reestablished in their respective homes in Milan, the count and his lover are no longer able to secretly spend each night together. However, Michele's now weekly visits to Signor Pandolfini conclude with a passionate night in Paulina's arms thanks to her new ally: the chaperone, Mademoiselle Priscilla. It is the *vieille demoiselle* herself who, "faisant le guet, qui par un escalier de service dont elle avait la clé, l'introduisait dans la chambre de Mademoiselle" (87). It is also Priscilla who safely conducts the count from the house at dawn. Thus - initially a role model for repressed female sexuality - she evolves into a willing accomplice who actually facilitates her charge's passionate sexual activity. In making this transformation, the narrator explains that Mademoiselle Priscilla "agissait le plus naturellement du monde, elle avait plaisir à s'entremettre" (88). Having so easily incorporated her chaste guardian into the role of facilitator for her trysts doubtlessly encourages Paulina to deem her love blameless.

Parallel to the "conversion" of Mademoiselle Priscilla from guardian of Paulina's virginity to supporter of her illicit romance is that of Monica Dadi. Prior to Paulina's secret romance, Signora Dadi was an esteemed family friend who also served as a sanctioned companion for the young girl. The narrator notes that it was Monica with whom Paulina was entrusted to leave the villa at Torano. After her father's death, Paulina is overcome both with guilt for having deceived him in his very midst and with distress for having lost the possibility to confess her affair to him. When Paulina desires an alternate trysting place due to her guilt-filled sorrow, Monica Dadi consents to the lovers' use of her "palazzino" (112). Since both her husband and she "avaient le goût de l'intrigue et le sens du secret," Monica even goes so far as to decorate the apartment in keeping with Paulina's taste (112). Thus just as in the case of Mademoiselle Priscilla, Monica

Dadi's initial role of pious, trusted chaperone evolves into that of knowing accomplice. The message that both Monica and Mademoiselle Priscilla convey vis-à-vis femaleness is that a woman may indulge in unsanctioned carnal delight, but she must all the while maintain a respectable facade and entourage.

When her guilt feelings brought on by the death of her father and exacerbated by the death of Michele's wife prove too difficult to bear, Paulina enters a convent. Renamed "Blandine," Paulina makes the acquaintance of a final female mentor: the Mother Superior Marie-Marguerite. With the Mother Superior, Paulina receives an image of femaleness which mirrors that provided by her deceased mother: female sexuality sublimated into intense religiousness. The narrator describes Mother Marie-Marguerite de Civezza as "vieillie dans la plus parfaite douceur . . . par vocation elle incarnait cette incroyable douceur, la très 'sainte égalité d'esprit'" (151). Just as Paulina's mother exhibits complete religious devotion, the Mother Superior "était un modèle de la vertu mystique comme l'aime la Sainte Église . . . Elle enracinait dans sa famille religieuse la dévotion solide" (152). Similarly, Signora Pandolfini's intense faith completely supplants her earthly concerns, and the Mother Superior's life is described as "une existence anéantie dans la contemplation de N.-S." (152).

In addition to their religiousness, Signora Pandolfini and Mother Marie-Marguerite also share a failure to penetrate the workings of Paulina's mind. Depicted as a figure of absence with tenuous ties to her daughter, Signora Pandolfini invests little energy into the mother/daughter relationship. On the other hand, the Mother Superior realizes that Paulina/Blandine's soul is in peril, and schedules three special meetings with her per week. In spite of these private sessions, Paulina/Blandine still maintains that Mother Marie-Marguerite is unable to understand her: "elle ne comprend pas ma foi" (156). Whereas Mother Marie-Marguerite sees only acts of pride and rebellion in Paulina/ Blandine's mortification of the flesh, the novice silently protests: "La Mère ne sait pas que

dans la souffrance du corps et particulièrement cette souffrance à Son image, je trouve le moyen, l'unique moyen de dominer mon être misérable, de vider mon âme" (156-57). Mother Marie-Marguerite also remains unaware of Paulina's later mystical discovery of the "nouvel Espace dans lequel Il se trouve" (178). Although this tremendous find allows Paulina to unite with God in his new space thus relocating herself "au-delà," Mother Superior "ne sait pas que je suis ailleurs par Sa grâce" (177-78). Finally realizing that her efforts to discipline Paulina's soul and heart are in vain, Mother Marie-Marguerite dismisses her charge from the convent.

After her dismissal from the convent, Paulina makes the acquaintance of another female whose behavior mirrors that of Mademoiselle Priscilla and Monica Dadi: a domestic/companion referred to as the *contadina* (203). While Mademoiselle Priscilla is selected as young Paulina's chaperone due to the correctness typically associated with a *vieille demoiselle*, the mature Paulina's *contadina* seems equally correct. A big woman resembling both a sheep and a horse, she speaks little and is rarely seen laughing. She respects the "heures de silence établies par Paulina" and when finding her mistress in prayer "[elle] s'agenouillait et les deux femmes priaient ensemble" (203). But although seemingly proper upon entering Paulina's life, the *contadina* undergoes a conversion reminiscent of that of Mademoiselle Priscilla and Monica Dadi: the conversion to ally in Paulina's illicit affair. Thus the *contadina* utters no words of censure as her pious and formerly chaste employer houses her live-in lover.

From the above female portraits in *Paulina 1880*, woman emerges as intensely religious and unable to truly communicate with Paulina (Signora Pandolfini and the Mother Superior) or pious yet easily converted as an ally to Paulina's passionate affair (Mademoiselle Priscilla, Monica Dadi and the *contadina*). As the text demonstrates, the character of Paulina Pandolfini herself is actually a composite of the images of

femaleness examined above. She displays simultaneously an intense religiousness and an inability to communicate (reminiscent of the Mother Superior and of Signora Pandolfini), and a willingness to accept an illicit affair in spite of her own pious nature (reminiscent of Mademoiselle Priscilla, Monica Dadi and the *contadina*).

The religious component is an obvious link between Paulina and the previously discussed female characters. As we have already noted, the mature Signora Pandolfini and the Mother Superior are thoroughly sincere devotees. Although Monica Dadi and the *contadina* do not channel all of their energies into ardent religious devotion, nevertheless the narrator describes Monica as "very Catholic" (112) while later noting the frequency of the *contadina*'s prayers with Paulina (203). As for Paulina herself, her religious preoccupation is already remarkable during her youth: "A treize ans elle avait sa vie intérieure. Pour prier Dieu elle s'agenouillait ou même elle se couchait entièrement" (25). Under the tutelage of her confessor, Father Bubbo, and her guardian, Mademoiselle Priscilla, she learned of the original sin and became versed in "l'Histoire Sainte" (25). Inspired by her biblical studies, she equated her favorite young goat with "l'Agneau Divin" and loved to admire frescoes of saints (27). Rather than remaining at the family home in Milan, she preferred to spend time at the villa at Torano, where "presque endormie comme [sainte] Catherine, on peut penser à Dieu" (31).

Reminiscent of the open acceptance of her passionate affair by the religious Mademoiselle Priscilla, Monica Dadi and the *contadina*, Paulina eagerly embarks upon her *liaison dangereuse* in spite of her ardent faith. When the agnostic Count Michele enters Paulina's bedroom for the first time, the sight of the religious trappings momentarily suspends his seductive thoughts: "Le comte regardait fixement non pas Paulina, mais un petit autel de piété blanc et or disposé dans la chambre près du lit. Autel, Notre-Seigneur en chromolithographie, il y a quatre chandeliers avec des bougies neuves" (64). Despite her clandestine lover' s agnosticism, Paulina does not neglect her

religiousness. She even equates the intensity of her faith with the intensity of her carnal love, believing that "la pureté du baiser qu'elle donnait était la pureté de la croyance qu'elle tournait vers Dieu" (71). Thus the proper Mademoiselle Priscilla is easily convinced to escort Michele to and from her young charge's bedroom in Milan, since Paulina is "pleine de vertus et très religieuse" (88). The equal devotion that Paulina displays both to God and to her earthly lover surprisingly gains another convert: Paulina's own confessor. As the liaison between Paulina and Michele continues, the priest is actually converted to seeing "de la vertu" and "courage" in this extramarital relationship (116). With her once secret love now sanctioned by her own priest, Paulina appears to have erased the firm distinction between divine love and sinful, illicit carnal love.

As previously mentioned, Paulina herself demonstrates an essential element of her female mentors: a failure to communicate. Communication was obviously nonexistent between Paulina and the mother with whom she had only "liens tout à fait ténus" (35). Similarly, we have noted the lack of communication in Paulina/Blandine's relationship with the Mother Superior. Understood neither by her biological mother nor by her Mother Superior, Paulina is also misinterpreted by the allies in her romance: Mademoiselle Priscilla, Monica Dadi, the *contadina* , her priest and even her lover himself. It is doubtlessly Paulina's exemplary Christian lifestyle which prompts Mademoiselle Priscilla, Monica Dadi and the *contadina* to serve as eager facilitators to the illicit affair - an affair eventually sanctioned by Paulina's own priest. However neither these allies nor Paulina's lover truly comprehend the spiritual and psychological devastation which they are helping to foster - a devastation which stems from Paulina's own lack of true self-comprehension.

At the core of this lack of self-comprehension is the question of Paulina's intrinsic makeup. Paulina herself states "j'ai peur de moi parce que je suis double" (176). Jouvian critics endorse Paulina's self-assessment, thereby maintaining that hers is a simple duality

- a painful fragmentation due to equally keen carnal and spiritual appetites. Thus Jouvian critic Louis Bolle speaks of Paulina's "dualisme (opposition d'Eros et de Psyché)" (36). However neither Paulina nor her critics realize that she is not a being neatly fragmented into the two equal components of sexuality and spirituality. Her innate character is rather an inextricable mesh of carnal desire and religious fervor - a mesh from which neither component can be purged without erasing Paulina herself. Although they have mentioned Paulina's divisive nature, critics such as Bolle have neglected to stress that the simultaneous interdependency of her spirituality and sexuality yields a painful mesh of antagonistic components.

This close intertwining of violent eroticism and spirituality is already evident in the descriptions of young Paulina at prayer: "elle se couchait entièrement, à demi nue . . . Le vent qui passait sur son jeune corps l'épouvantait et l'exaltait au plus haut point" (25). Similarly, while prostrate and nude she fantasizes offering to Christ, "des souffrances plus pures, plus belles, plus atroces, qu'il serait doux de lui offrir" (25). Her obsession with a young goat also reveals the intertwined nature of Paulina's intense sexuality and her mystical religiosity. Comparing the kid to "l'Agneau Divin," she loves to nervously embrace its muzzle and remain "une heure en extase devant ses yeux" (27). Her favorite activity is to carry the kid outside for moonlight "entretiens . . . pleins d'une poésie admirable et terrible, celle des choses qui vont affreusement finir" (27). Just as with the original Divine Lamb, Paulina's favorite lamb is destined for slaughter by his master. Learning that there will be no reprieve for her favorite kid, it is Paulina who insists upon carrying out the execution herself - prefiguring the sacrificial murder of her lover.

A similar blend of violent and erotic mysticism fosters Paulina's love for the agonizing portrayals of saints' lives. In the depiction of these scenes of torture, Paulina is voluptuously drawn to the "bruit de sanglots, égouttement de sang, agonie" (29), while her keen admiration for Saint Catherine of Siena's suffering has definitely sexual

overtones: "ces larges hanches, cette douce poitrine sous le voile, et ces épaules. Ce n'est pas moi qui ferai jamais une si belle épouse" (30). Contemplating Sodoma's painting of Saint Catherine's stigmata, Paulina has this rather orgasmic reaction: "La vision de Paulina se troublait, une étrange chaleur montait de son corps" (30).

Rather than altering as Paulina enters into her liaison with the count, her unique blend of intense sexuality and violent, erotic mysticism forms the substrata of this affair. As the affair begins, Paulina experiences a period of self-delusion, during which she equates her carnal love with only the most pious aspect of her religiosity. Thus she sees the liaison as not merely blameless but also a state of purification: floating in "un état qui était vraiment l'état de Dieu," "Il lui semblait qu'elle fût devenue pure comme auparavant elle ne pouvait pas l'être" (71, 73). During this period of self-delusion, Paulina ironically suppresses erotic terminology, thus describing the carnal act as a pinnacle of religious purity: "la pureté du baiser qu'elle donnait était la pureté de la croyance qu'elle tournait vers Dieu" (71). Whereas Paulina clearly confuses Eros (romantic love) and agape (divine love), Julia Kristeva differenciates between the two in *Histoires d'amour* : Eros "... [*monte*] vers l'objet désiré ... Agapê, au contraire, en tant qu'identifiée à Dieu, *descend*: elle est don, accueil et grâce" (137). Thus Paulina's lack of self-comprehension stems from her inability to realize that she is only capable of a dual sort of love: a love which combines Eros and agape.

Although initially perceiving her liaison as sheer mystical purity, Paulina soon recognizes its carnal nature. In keeping with her Catholic upbringing, admitting the carnal component of her love simultaneously introduces the enormous burden of guilt which nullifies her ostensible erasure of the distinction between illicit carnal and divine love. The now widowed Michele repeatedly asks her to marry him and her own confessor gives his tacit approval of her affair, but Paulina deems that one could never rectify this relationship "commencé par le mensonge" (221). She considers legitimation through

marriage forever impossible as the lovers' trysts permanently deceived both her unsuspecting father - Michele's host and longtime friend - and the count's own demented wife, Zina. Experiencing what Jouve refers to in *En Miroir* as "l'abyssale terreur" (55), Paulina has macabre, nocturnal visions of the deceased Zina: "Son ombre vient la nuit et me dit: on ne passe pas devant moi, on ne prend pas mon nom d'épouse!" (131)

As Margaret Callander explains, "a conventionally rational view of the situation might lead the reader to imagine that the successive deaths of Paulina's father and Michele's wife should leave the lovers free to marry. On the contrary, they help to precipitate her withdrawal and his murder" ("Pierre Jean Jouve" 182). The motivation behind Paulina's murder of her lover is the desire to expiate the guilt of her liaison and to achieve harmonious, spiritual reintegration. Thus Daniel Leuwers states that Paulina kills the count in an attempt to kill "son propre désir, pour une accession définitive à la grâce" ("Le Désir" 8). Erotically stimulated by the suffering of the saints and the slaughter of her favorite kid, Paulina opts to sacrifice Michele herself in imitation of the Holy Bridegroom. Thus even this scene of the lover's sacrifice is described by Paulina as a tableau from Saint Catherine's life: "Je suis à genoux comme le condamné à mort de sainte Catherine et c'est toi qui comme la Sainte tiens ma tête et vas la recevoir entre tes mains pour l'éternité" (217). In shooting the count, Paulina perceives that she is merely carrying out God's will, for it is He who had written the following commandment on her wall: "DANS QUELQUES HEURES TU LE TUERAS" (230). Insisting that it was God "qui m'a poussée, qui m'a forcée, qui a conduit mon bras, qui a appuyé sur la gâchette," Paulina interprets the murder as a divine act: "Je l'ai délivré" (231).

After ostensibly delivering the count from false, earthly life, Paulina turns the gun on herself. But her actions fall quite short of transforming carnal love into a glorious state of unified, spiritual apotheosis. In the first place, her lover dies without giving any indication of his forgiveness. Desperate for this sign, Paulina "épiait le signe, mais le

signe ne se produisait pas. Le signe ne se produisait pas" (231). Secondly, since Paulina does not succeed in her suicide attempt, she remains trapped within the earthly realm from which she has "delivered" her lover. Finally, a state of nothingness is the tragic outcome of this desperate attempt to purify erotic love by means of a violent, mystical action. Rather than cleansing her sexuality from its intrinsic mesh with her spirituality, the sacrifice of Michele erases the amazing conglomerate which is Paulina: keen sexual appetite and violent, erotic mysticism. In her place is a lifeless substitute, Marietta, described in the text as "une morte vivante" (245). Thus Paulina's lack of self-comprehension - her inability to discern that her spiritual and sexual components are interdependent - is a misunderstanding which results in her metaphorical death.

Yves Stalloni interprets Paulina's mystic fervor and erotic passion as outlets enabling the protagonist to escape the "captivité" imposed by her father (194). Thus Stalloni states that "ses embrasements érotiques et ses élans mystiques [sont des] . . . tentatives pour briser des chaînes, pour transgresser des frontières . . . s'ouvrir, s'affranchir, s'épanouir" (194). Paulina is in many respects an Eve within a repressive, paternal society. Similar to Eve, Paulina grew up in the idyllic setting of Torano. In keeping with Stalloni's theory, Paulina's sequestered lifestyle led to her desire for an albeit clandestine escape. Like Eve's fall from grace, Paulina's transgression forces her from the sumptuous paternal villa. But unable to truly shed the shackles of her repressive society, Paulina/Marietta finishes her days "pareille à une morte vivante" in the enclosed environment of her dilapidated villa (245). In "Jouve Architecte d'intérieur," Christiane Blot-Labarrère stresses that the failure of Paulina/Marietta's attempt to shed the shackles of parental and societal repression are evident even in the protagonist's final milieu, "dans le cadre rigide et mesuré de cette pièce aux fenêtres closes de grillage épais" (213). And Louis Bolle adds that changing her name to Marietta is a "signe de reniement du

passé, rupture définitive qui est aussi épuisement final et enfermement volontaire dans une solitude complète" (35).

As we have seen from this examination, the female portrait within *Paulina 1880* highlights religiousness and female sexuality. While the Mother Superior and Signora Pandolfini achieve sublimation of female sexuality through religiousness, Paulina's allies (Mademoiselle Priscilla, Monica Dadi and *la contadina*) indicate that female sexuality and piousness may go hand in hand provided that one maintains a respectable facade and entourage. Paulina's own sexual/religious orientation is an uncompromising version of all of the above. While maintaining her discretion, she aims to equally satisfy what Kurt Schärer names her "aspirations dualistes": strong carnal desire and elevated, spiritual dimension (144).

While uniting traits evident among the female characters of *Paulina 1880*, Paulina exhibits one additional component: woman as dangerous lure. As we shall later see, this is a theme which runs throughout the prose of both Pierre Jean Jouve and Michel Tournier. In keeping with the status of nonentity accorded to woman by a phallogocentric society, the narrator explains that Paulina is merely an appendage of her father: "un membre détaché de son père, une créature de lui, une Pandolfini, la belle héritière" (52). Coupled with Paulina's status as appendage of her father is the societal tradition which deems that family honor - a projection through the daughter's body onto the Name of the father - is dependent upon safeguarding the virginity of one's daughter. For the daughter's virginity determines what Luce Irigaray refers to as her "use-value for man [her] . . . exchange value among men" (31). Signor Pandolfini's system of locking up his virgin daughter to protect his family honor has this importance for our discussion of femaleness within *Paulina 1880*: it reveals that female sexuality is equated both with irresistible enticement and with the notion of woman as a commodity.

Paulina is clearly aware of having attracted the count, but at the convent she unconsciously serves as sexual lure to a fellow nun: Sister Perpetua. Although this relationship falls into the category of lesbian love which we shall treat fully in chapter three, for now we shall just briefly comment on Paulina's role as lure. Assigned as mentor to Paulina/Blandine, Sister Perpetua's concern for her charge's soul blossoms into an earthly, passionate love. However in spite of her unawareness of Sister Perpetua's affection, Paulina/Blandine nevertheless exercises a devastating influence on her mentor's exemplary behavior culminating in Paulina/ Blandine's dismissal from the convent and in Sister Perpetua's subsequent censure and desolation.

After her dismissal from the convent, a photograph of Paulina once again links femaleness and dangerous lure. As we have seen, young Paulina's beauty and proximity are the initial enticement which draw Count Michele into this liaison. Returning to lay life from the convent, Paulina has an even more active role in establishing the connection between femaleness and fatal attraction: she directly summons her former lover by sending him her childhood photograph. Michele answers by means of a personal visit, thus reintroducing himself into the midst of his lethal lover at whose hand he soon perishes.

Masako Taniguchi points out that it is the Jouvian female who awakens "une conscience du péché . . . qu'on pourrait appeler une sorte de péché originel" ("Éros" 66-67). As indicated in our introduction, it is his preoccupation with the Fall which leads Jouve to associate the female with fragmentation, sin, absence and death. A conglomerate of the other female characteristics within the novel, Paulina is also a conglomerate of these Fall-related components. The daughter of an absent mother, Paulina is fragmented by the struggle between her antagonistic yet interdependent spiritual and sexual components. Just as Eve served as irresistible lure to Adam, Paulina demonstrates that even jealously guarded, female sexuality can entice both males

(Michele) and females (Sister Perpetua) alike. In spite of a keen sense of guilt and pious entourage, females are eager candidates (Paulina) and allies (Mademoiselle Priscilla, Monica Dadi, and the *contadina* ) for sexual temptation facilitating a fall similar to Eve's. As Eve was banned from paradise due to partaking of forbidden fruits of knowledge, so Paulina/Marietta finishes her days as a pariah after having transgressed sexual and societal codes. Due to this transgression, female sexuality is equated with lethal lure (murder of Michele) in the novel. However the act of killing Michele fails to successfully unravel the mesh which is Paulina, thwarting her goal of achieving harmonious integration and grace. Her reward is rather non-existence, thus making Paulina/Marietta's metaphorical absence and death the final component of femaleness in *Paulina 1880*.

Paulina Pandolfini - the scandalous protagonist of *Paulina 1880* - resurfaces as an important feature of the female portrait in Jouve's second novel, *Le Monde désert* . In the latter novel, Paulina plays the role of the deceased great-aunt of the male protagonist, Jacques de Todi. Just as in *Paulina 1880* , Eros and Thanatos are interwoven into the intrinsic makeup of Great-aunt Paulina in *Le Monde désert*.

Obviously a deadly, erotic lure for Michele Cantarini in *Paulina 1880*, Great-aunt Paulina's role in *Le Monde désert* combines elements of the legends of both Narcissus and Lorelei. In *Histoires d'amour*, Julia Kristeva explains that in revenge for having been spurned by Narcissus, his lovers ask the goddess of Rhamnus "qu'il aime donc de même à son tour et de même ne puisse posséder l'objet de son amour" (101-102). Narcissus suffers this fate by subsequently falling in love with his own image in a pool. Upon realizing that he loves not a person but merely a mirage of himself, Narcissus succumbs to fatal despair. Like Narcissus, Jacques is obsessed not with a flesh and blood lover but with a mirage. Both Jacques and Narcissus experience vertigo as a result of contemplating a watery image - a vertigo where Eros is intertwined with Thanatos. For

Jacques and Narcissus, union with a loved image occurs in what Kristeva labels "la solitude tragique et mortifère," sending the protagonist on an amorous journey toward death (*Histoires d'amour* 115). Christiane Blot-Labarrère comments that Great-aunt Paulina literally imprisons Jacques "dans un jeu de reflets" ("*Le Monde désert*" 17). But while Jacques and Narcissus expire resulting from their bedazzlement with an illusory reflection, these reflections bear a fundamental difference. Jacques is bedazzled by a female other, Great-aunt Paulina, whereas Julia Kristeva reminds the reader that the source of Narcissus's specular enchantment "est le Moi lui-même" (*Histoires d'amour* 105).

Jacques's fatal desire for union with a watery female other highlights the importance of a second legend within *Le Monde désert*: the legendary Lorelei. The siren of a German legend, Lorelei is said to inhabit the Rhine and to lure sailors to their death by her beauty and her song. Although his great-aunt's watery image does not sing to Jacques, her beauty enchants like Lorelei's enticing a willing male victim to watery destruction. Escaping from his sad childhood via rich fantasy , young Jacques mentally combines the painting of an enchanted castle, a youthful photograph of his beautiful great-aunt, and the water of his neighboring lake. Contemplating the water "longuement, passionnément," Jacques fantasizes viewing a spellbinding, watery image of his great-aunt: "une figure extraordinaire . . . aussi veloutée que l'eau" (15-16). In spite of being dead, Paulina still serves as erotic lure, for the boy's imagination is stimulated by the "couronne d'affliction et d'amour" which haunts the photograph of "cette femme étonnante par le scandale qu'elle avait causé" (17). Transferring his tender obsession for his great-aunt to her imagined, watery image, Jacques believes that this vision has become an enhanced version of Paulina: "l'eau était cette Femme elle-même, l'essence magique de ce qu'elle avait été" (17). Elaborating upon this obsession, Jacques imagines that his watery Paulina is the "ange d'une autre religion, créature d'une autre terre . . .

[qu'il] aimait" (17). Thus, "bien plus inouïe encore que cette tante italienne que j'aime" is his imagined enhancement thereof: "O Toi que j'adore" (18). This watery enrichment of Great-aunt Paulina clearly evokes Eros due to the "amour passionné qu'un si beau visage éveille" (18). At the same time Paulina's component of Thanatos is stressed even years later when her shadow appears to attach itself to Jacques while he thinks of death. After being accused of sexually molesting young Charles Stoebli, Jacques flees social ostracism, abandons his friends, and decides that he is destined for death. When his nocturnal train ride takes him along Lake Leman, the shadow of Paulina appears and "se jetait sur lui . . . Celle de l'eau" (86-7). United with this sensual presence, Jacques's profound feelings of despair transform into a peaceful desire for death: "Jacques entrait dans ce sein merveilleusement doux . . . et par l'ombre de la tante italienne de son enfance, Jacques avait envie de la mort" (86).

While the novel's beginning already hints at Jacques's suicide by drowning, this premature death becomes more and more certain in the subsequent narrative segment of Jacques's would-be lover, Baladine. Destined for a watery grave, Jacques's thoughts turn to his deceased great-aunt and to death even during an enjoyable stroll alongside Lake Como: "il est au bord de l'eau et vers lui arrive la tante Paulina qui circule sous les cyprès noirs" (131). Since Jacques has long since formed a highly pleasurable, erotic association between Paulina, water and death, he reacts not in horror at this deathly vision on Lake Como but with "plaisir" (131). Although the novel does not indicate if Jacques speaks to his closest friends of his watery obsession with his deceased great-aunt, as he becomes more depressed he does confide that he's planning to drown himself. Therefore when Jacques first vanishes his friends desperately search the river banks "car on savait que son idée c'était l'eau" (159). And when his depression culminates in suicide, Jacques does indeed select a watery grave while thinking pleasurable thoughts of Great-aunt Paulina. Sliding into the icy water, Jacques joins the sensual presence who will accompany him in

death: "je la vois dans l'eau comme jadis quand j'étais gosse. Belle. Spirituelle. Lys du Ciel. Accompagne-moi" (158). Like the legendary Lorelei, Jacques's beautiful great-aunt erotically lures him to unite with her through drowning. Although she is deceased, Paulina Pandolfini is nonetheless an important element of the heterosexual female portrait of *Le Monde désert*. And with Great-aunt Paulina death has a triple female association within the novel, linking it to the maternal element of water as well as to Jacques's deceased great-aunt and her role as siren.

While Great-aunt Paulina is clearly the avatar of death in *Le Monde désert*, her deathly female role is counterbalanced by that of Jacques's would-be lover, the "ange de la vie": Baladine (63). Although Baladine does parlay an entry level banking position into an important career, the novel emphasizes not her professional prowess but her role as would-be lover to Jacques. The importance of Baladine's portrait within our study is three-fold: it portrays heterosexual, female love as both selfless and self-serving while presenting another example of a distant mother and of a Jouvian female destined for absence. As we shall see, Baladine enters into a relationship with Jacques for self-serving reasons not immediately divulged to the reader. But with two brief exceptions she remains unflinching in her devotion to him - a devotion which ultimately triumphs even after his death.

As their liaison begins, it first appears that Baladine's role is that of selfless cheerleader vis-à-vis Jacques. It is in this capacity that Baladine is first introduced, rushing to Jacques's side when she learns of his battle with pneumonia and the accompanying delirium brought on by skiing nude at dawn. Both tender and commanding, Baladine is deeply concerned for her "Pauvre cher . . . angoissé" while giving his friends strict orders not to contact the authoritative father whom he despises (41). Although it is Jacques's male friends - Luc Pascal and Manuel - who insist upon

nursing Jacques through this physical illness, it is Baladine who subsequently serves as nurse to Jacques's ailing psyche.

Baladine has her first opportunity to administer to Jacques's psychological wounds after a visit to his friend, the artist Siemens, leaves him in terrific distress. Sensing that Luc Pascal is masking his smug disapproval of Siemens's paintings, Jacques goes into a total emotional upheaval. Although Baladine did not accompany her friends on this visit to Siemens, she nonetheless appears from nowhere and provides the perfect antidote to Jacques's nervous attack. The narrator describes Baladine's calming effect on Jacques as "un miracle . . . La force des deux êtres dont l'un dompte, domine et rétablit l'autre" (61). His desire for inner peace prompts Jacques to give in to Baladine's dominant, healing strength. Thus it is Jacques "[qui] se mit à marcher sagement auprès de Baladine," whose strength radiates from her "forte tête nue . . . de panthère apprivoisée" (61). Due to her success in this attempt to mend his fragile emotional state, Jacques subsequently deems Baladine "[son] ange de la vie" - the angel capable of making him happy (63). Aware that this angel is very perspicacious ("A lui on ne pouvait rien déguiser"), Jacques desires to please her so as to continue benefiting from her healing powers ("Pour lui plaire, Jacques devait rester tranquille et réfléchir") (63).

Appearing totally selfless in her initial role of emotional nurse for Jacques, Baladine is the energetic mentor perceived by Jacques as "Baladine désintéressée [qui] n'avait qu' à désigner le chemin de la vie" (75). Baladine charts a very specific plan of action to mend her charge's fragile emotional state. She instructs him to leave aside his plans to pursue an academic career at the University of Bâle in favor of a career as a painter. She offers Jacques this frank assessment: "Tu n'as rien d'un professeur, tu ne seras pas Herr Privat-Docent. Tu dois faire de la peinture . . . Tu es un artiste" (65). Her plan is not limited to Jacques's choice of career, for it includes firm orders as to his family life as well: "Quitte ta famille, brouille-toi avec ta famille. Je le veux" (65). Jacques

submits totally to the desires of his mentor, abandons both his family and his philosophical career, and begins to paint. Happily embarked on his artistic career, Jacques suffers an emotional setback when charged with sexually molesting a young boy. Jacques comments that everyone immediately avoids him after this offense, "Tout le monde - sauf Baladine" (75). Ever his faithful, psychological nurse, Jacques notes during this new crisis that all aspects of his complex personality "avaient besoin de Baladine . . . cette femme énergique et séduisante" (75). Fittingly, she who charts Jacques's life course is also the bearer of good news concerning the resolution of Jacques' s charge of sexual molestation. It is Baladine who optimistically announces: "Tout est arrangé" (75).

After this incident of pederasty, Jacques and Baladine become housemates. Forever in the commanding role, Baladine locates an apartment and takes a bank position "pour gagner sa vie et la mienne" (90). Jacques meanwhile appears the timid child, staying "caché à l'Hôtel Simplon" while Baladine goes apartment hunting and then entering "comme un voleur" after she has selected their residence (90). Although theirs is not an active sexual relationship, Jacques makes a modest attempt to fulfill a househusband's domestic duties. But more the spoiled child than the conscientious househusband, Jacques is still "en pantoufles . . . Dans un pyjama" when Baladine departs for work each morning (91). Endlessly patient and generous, Baladine continues to meet his material needs even during his costly phase as a well-dressed dandy.

Based upon the above description, it would appear that Baladine is motivated uniquely by a selfless love for Jacques. But little by little the self-serving component of her love emerges, corroborating Julia Kristeva's assessment of Eros. Kristeva explains that "Nous aimerons donc ce que nous n'avons pas: l'objet (d'amour) est l'objet manquant" (*Histoires d'amour* 73). Thus Baladine - who admits to having no artistic knowledge - finally reveals that her incentive in directing Jacques's career derives from her own

ambition to shine through his creations. Baladine explains: "mon rêve était de le travailler si profondément que je ferais sortir de lui un grand peintre, quelque chose comme un Monet . . . Moi j'aime ce qui est grand" (91-2). Anticipating great vicarious pleasure via Jacques's artistic career, Baladine is extremely proud of what she deems her artistic creation: Jacques. She applauds her own production of this famous painter-to-be: "je me sentais fière le soir. Avant moi il n'avait rien produit, il n'était rien" (92). She also feels pride at having succeeded in imposing her will vis-à-vis Jacques's personal and professional life: "il avait lâché l'Université de Bâle et le reste. Il avait fait tout ce que j'attendais de lui" (92). Becoming Jacques's mentor and provider fulfills Baladine's lifelong desire for grandeur: "J'ai toujours voulu croire que j'étais capable de grandeur; il y en avait à me lier avec Jacques de Todi" (93). Baladine's previous statements echo those of Julia Kristeva who explains that in loving one loves another oneself, for "Le mobile de l'amour pour l'autre doit donc être ce bien que je suis pour moi" (*Histoires d'amour* 177).

Analyzing the human psyche, Kristeva notes that emptiness is at its root, hence narcissism reveals itself "comme un écran sur le *vide*" (*Histoires d'amour* 29). Corroborating this assessment, Baladine later reveals that her true motivation in charting Jacques's life course is not only the vicarious enjoyment of fame but also the fundamental desire to fill a void within herself. Hence she dreams that Jacques is endowed with a "grande force", which will whisk her away - "me retirera de la vie stérile que je mène" (97). She later expounds upon this theme of her internal void, explaining that it is "un état d'ennui qui se trouve comme endormi en dessous de tout ce que j'éprouve . . . ce vide . . . ce désert" (98). As Baladine's portrait unfolds before the reader, it becomes clear that the ostensibly selfless cheerleader leads Jacques's battle against his emotional demons in order to conquer the demon deep within herself - a feeling of inner emptiness. In "Pierre Jean Jouve: Meaning and Structure in *Le Monde désert*," Margaret Callander explains

that Baladine's "frightening hollowness" reveals a "psychological dualism": her division between professional success and psychological trouble (179).

Although it initially appears that Baladine will continue her successful role as slayer of Jacques's emotional demons, this is not the case. Jacques's incapability to accept his homosexuality leads to his suicide. Paralleling Jacques's own inability to come to terms with his sexuality is Baladine's incomprehension of the permanent nature of Jacques's homosexual orientation. Unfazed by his earlier pederastic escapade, Baladine - the emotional nurse - thinks that this is merely another aspect of Jacques which she will eventually heal. Thus when he begins to indulge in nocturnal, gay rendez-vous from which she is excluded, Baladine still considers Jacques "mon œuvre . . . [et] je devais en premier lieu laisser à sa tendance, pendant tout le temps qu'elle se manifesterait, son entière liberté" (94). This description of Jacques's gayness as a tendency to be temporarily manifested reveals that Baladine still considers this no more than a passing diversion from heterosexuality. Forever unable to utter the word "gay," Baladine states that she does not intend to discuss Jacques's sexual preference with him since "Je pouvais lutter avec mes armes" (94). This statement reinforces her naïve assumption that Jacques's homosexuality can be conquered by her female charms and her incredible patience. Like Julia Kristeva's notion of the distorted vision provided by sight through a lover's eyes (*Histoires d'amour* 327), Baladine admits that she was smitten with "une beauté idéale de . . . [Jacques] plutôt que de lui-même" (96). Unfortunately, Baladine is obviously attracted to a version of Jacques created by her fantasy: a heterosexual Jacques.

Achieving neither great artistic success nor self-acceptance of his homosexuality, Jacques plunges into suicidal depression. Baladine's reaction to his final decline reveals the intertwined nature of her unselfish and self-serving love. Generously providing for Jacques in spite of his homosexual infidelities, Baladine stoically endures both this passionless sham of a conjugal life and abuse from her banking colleagues. When her

boss learns of her extra-marital cohabitation, "[il] me faisait une vie de chien" (107). At the same time Baladine's quiet despair highlights the self-serving interests which lured her into this liaison. Attempting to secure Jacques's fame, Baladine finally realizes that "Je demandais à Jacques de m'enlever au mauvais moi-même," wanting to bask in the shadow of his illustriousness "tout en ayant l'orgueil de le conduire" (98). She who had aspired to be his muse and "celle qui réconcilie ta vie" (101) ultimately sees that "Je n'accomplirais pas mon grand dessein. Jacques ne serait rien de plus que Jacques . . . Je ne sauverais rien - ni de lui ni de moi. Et je ne serais pas même seulement sa femme" (111).

Intertwined thus far in *Le Monde désert*, Baladine's unselfish and self-serving components explode within her during and after the visit of Luc Pascal. Before Luc's arrival, Baladine remains faithful to Jacques all the while lamenting their lack of sexual interaction. After a couple of chaste years with Jacques, the presence of Luc Pascal - a heterosexual male sexually attracted to her - finally undermines Baladine's unselfish resolve. Thus Margaret Callander states "Luc's reappearance diverts Baladine from her nurturing role [arousing] her erotic energy" ("Pierre Jean Jouve" 176). Meanwhile, unaware of the sexual energy flowing between Baladine and Luc, Jacques's spirits are cheered both by Luc's presence and by the vacation setting of Lake Como. Soaring to the point that he even decides to marry Baladine, Jacques is subsequently crushed to discover her infidelity and his friend's betrayal. Self-serving in seeking sexual gratification, at this stage it seems that the formerly faithful Baladine is destined to join the ranks of other ignominious Jouvian females, including Dorothée ("La Victime"), Marie ("La Fiancée"), *et al*. But Baladine's adventure is more complex than that of Dorothée, Marie, *et al*. While she does succumb to Luc's advances, she is overcome with guilt after spending just one night in his arms. Thus returning to her previous role as Jacques's devoted companion, she works only part-time in order to tirelessly nurse him through an ensuing illness: "entièrement humiliée . . . j'ai l'espoir que je vais retrouver de l'innocence" (143).

Baladine's desperate efforts to make amends for her brief sexual indiscretion rekindle her love for Jacques. And playing the role of Jacques's nursemaid for a final time yields these surprising results: Baladine succeeds at silently coaxing Jacques into having sex with her, and their unique coupling produces a son born after his father's death. Commenting after making love with Jacques, Baladine states "Je crus avoir triomphé du mal" (144). Again it is clear that Baladine considers his dominant homosexual orientation something her diligence can overcome - an utterly unrealistic goal. His health restored, Jacques returns to his errant, ultimately fatal behavior never knowing that he has fathered a child.

Reminiscent of Paulina Pandolfini's refusal to marry the count after his wife dies in *Paulina 1880* , Baladine discourages Luc Pascal's efforts to see her after Jacques's suicide. However unlike Paulina's count, Luc eventually succeeds in marrying Baladine. But rather than breaking her pattern of unselfish devotion to Jacques, this marriage at first seems to provide an avenue for its continuation. Thus Luc initially convinces Baladine that their marriage is a way of making a pact with Jacques to rectify their earlier indiscretion, and also to "apaiser ce qui de lui pâtit toujours" (185). Baladine is swept away by this rationalization for their marriage-to-be, seeking what Christiane Blot-Labarrère refers to as the "illusion aveuglante de l'unité" (*"Le Monde désert"* 25). But the judgmental shadow of Jacques - described as literally touching "leurs mains unies avant de regagner le ciel" - proves to be more than Baladine can ignore (200). Having married Luc, she vanishes without a trace with her son the day after their wedding rather than vexing the invisible yet undeniable presence of Jacques. Regarding Baladine's disappearance, Sylvie Jaudeau maintains that Baladine must "se perdre pour se retrouver: tous les héros jouviens cheminent vers un désert intérieur, s'anéantissent eux-mêmes pour accéder à la vraie lumière" (72). Since Baladine permanently vanishes, the reader is left to wonder whether she does indeed find illumination during her pilgrimage through life's

*monde désert* or if she is still plagued by the feeling of internal emptiness from which she suffered even prior to her relationship with Jacques.

In her flight from the ill-destined marriage to Luc Pascal, Baladine is not alone but with her son Pierrot, which brings us to the topic of Baladine's seeming ambivalence toward her maternal role. In her relationship with Jacques, Louis Bolle describes Baladine as "[celle] qui incarne . . . la vitalité maternelle et protectrice" (38). However with Pierrot she seems to offer a mere shadow of the dynamic nurturing she lavished on the boy's father. Whereas Jacques was her "Pauvre cher," her attitude vis-à-vis Pierrot appears ambivalent (41). On the one hand, describing Baladine before her reunion with Luc Pascal, the narrator indicates that Pierrot provides her with a reason for living: "Cette Baladine qui marche sur la pierre sèche ayant soif . . . brûlée et cherchant l'ombre, cette Baladine . . . n'a véritablement plus qu'une seule raison de marcher: l'enfant de Jacques" (174). Similarly , in a subsequent conversation with Luc Pascal, Baladine asserts that "Pierrot, c'est ma vie" (180). On the other hand, a curious indifference runs throughout Baladine's other comments concerning her son. Providing an extreme contrast to the above depiction of Jacques as her "poor dear," her son is "ce petit inconnu que j'embrasse et que j'ai fait, ce méchant qui aime torturer les insectes" (174). Describing him to Luc Pascal for the first time, she says simply that Pierrot is a blue-eyed blond, "et après ça qu'est-ce que je sais de lui? rien du tout" (172). And when Luc requests to see a photograph of Pierrot, Baladine remarks that - although she displays a photograph of Jacques on her fireplace - she has no photograph of her son. It is again Baladine's maternal indifference that stands out in the rest of this conversation, for she adds that having given birth to Pierrot, "c'est mon objet . . . mais je suis une femme si drôle, je m'en fiche" (172). In response to the idea of another woman rearing him in the event of her death, she sounds truly distant once more: "Si je mourais, n'importe qui se chargerait de lui et l'élèverait, ce serait aussi bien. Je suis si peu sa mère" (173).

In relationship to Jacques, the female portrait within *Le Monde désert* has two distinct poles: the deathly pole of Great-aunt Paulina who entices Jacques to suicide and the vital pole of Baladine, "ange de la vie" (63). Wishing to transform Jacques into a famous artist is a three-fold desire for Baladine: to save him from his self-destructive tendencies; to vicariously achieve greatness through him; and to fill the void which she feels within herself. Although failing to achieve this three-fold goal, her efforts strike some positive notes for woman through her fidelity to Jacques; her courage to cope with traumatic upheaval and single parenthood; and her professional success. However Baladine's portrait is not exclusively positive. Due to her maternal indifference, Baladine adds to the negative depiction of motherhood in Jouve's prose, joining that of Paulina's preoccupied mother (*Paulina 1880*) and, as we shall see, Dorothée's absent mother ("La Victime" ). Meanwhile Baladine's flight from Luc has mixed implications. Viewed favorably, this action can be hailed as Baladine's final act of fidelity towards the deceased Jacques. Or, in keeping with the ideas of Luce Irigaray, Baladine's disappearance might be applauded as an active self-removal from the patriarchal culture's treatment of women as commodities to be exchanged among men. Irigaray maintains that "woman is traditionally a use-value for man, an exchange value among men; in other words, a commodity" (31). On the other hand, Baladine's flight may imply a lack of courage to deal with this awkward marriage. Her motivation notwithstanding, Baladine joins the roster of other Jouvian females destined for literal or metaphorical absence. Paulina/ Marietta ends her life as a non-person in *Paulina 1880*, while Baladine vanishes from *Le Monde désert* and, as we shall next see, Dorothée becomes a zombie in "La Victime."

Jouve's short story, "La Victime," contains many parallels to his novel *Paulina 1880*, with much overlapping of details and a similar portrait of femaleness. The two works have the same point of departure: the story of a wealthy young woman's tragic

demise due to an unsanctioned sexual relationship. Paulina's and Dorothée's lives also share many explicit details, for example the loss of their pious mothers to death. We have already noted that, although married, the convent would have been Signora Pandolfini's vocation of choice. Similarly, when combating her anxiety over a disturbing dream, Dorothée hears the voice of her devout, deceased mother urging her: "instruis-toi dans la lecture des Saintes Écritures" (101). Reminiscent of Paulina's mother's absence and inability to communicate with her daughter, "La Victime" relates Dorothée's attempts to communicate with her deceased mother - attempts which are logically fruitless. Thus as Dorothée questions her late mother concerning her recurring dream, "La mère ne répondait point du tout" (101).

The common link between Paulina and Dorothée's relationships with their fathers is the fact that the young women are genuinely fond of their stern fathers while both men are overly zealous in their ardor toward their daughters. Due to Signor Pandolfini's incestuous attraction to his daughter, Paulina is the focus of his erotic dreams. A similar relationship exists in "La Victime" for Dorothée's father - the *Conseiller Vénérable* - considers her "l'ornement, l'objet d'amour" of the family home, "son trésor" (132, 133). He manifests an incestuous jealousy vis-à-vis his daughter reminiscent of that of Signor Pandolfini. Considering Dorothée his very own "seconde épouse indicible," he displays "méfiance" when she speaks to him of her desire to marry (133).

The severity of Signor Pandolfini and of the *Conseiller Vénérable* is important to the presentation of femaleness in *Paulina 1880* and "La Victime," as it indicates that female sexuality is a dangerous lure which must be carefully repressed to preserve family honor and, in Irigarayan terms, woman's value as a commodity (*This Sex Which Is Not One* 31). Thus, both Signor Pandolfini and the *Conseiller Vénérable* suppress their warm, incestuous feelings towards their daughters so that their comportment remains appropriately authoritative for the policing of their daughters' sexuality. Instead of

affectionately greeting the daughter of whom he is genuinely fond, Dorothée's father - in keeping with his important position as "Conseiller Vénérable, juge à la Cour Suprême" (101) - maintains his "triste figure, accueillait son trésor sans manifester de sentiments extérieurs" (133).

The domiciles of Signor Pandolfini and the *Conseiller* are an extension of severe, paternal authority, thus occupying a role in the repression of the female protagonists' sexuality. The Pandolfini home in Milan is described as "funèbre" (22) while the *Conseiller* 's home is equally somber and enclosed: "une haute maison solennelle et de l'ancien temps avec ses . . . ferronneries, toute chargée d'honneur" (110). With the home as a reflection of the father, somber descriptions of the domicile encase Dorothée within these walls of paternal authority: "Le vestibule solennel du Père . . . était autour d'elle, muet, de marbre gris et noir" (111). Closed up with "ferronneries" in the mute and solemn gray and black home, Dorothée appears entombed for the protection of her virginity and, subsequently, for her family's honor and her value as a commodity (110).

Emphasizing even more the status of female sexuality as dangerous lure, Paulina's and Dorothée's fathers do not simply rely upon their grave, authoritative demeanor and their somber households to police their daughters' sexuality. Signor Pandolfini hires a governess and institutes a system for sequestering Paulina at nightfall. Similarly, Dorothée has a governess, and her father also "protégeait sa fille tant qu'il pouvait" (146). Although not under lock and key as is Paulina, Dorothée is nonetheless closely monitored, as evidenced by the fact that "[elle] se demandait comment l'on fait pour sortir seule" (112). Their isolation is another shared detail in Paulina and Dorothée's status as jealously guarded virgins. In addition to being sisterless, the two young women keep company only with older, paternally sanctioned female companions.

As for the plot of "La Victime," it too is centered upon the aspect of femaleness which dominates the above discussion of the short story: woman as dangerous

enticement. Reminiscent of Paulina's spiritual and sexual components, the female protagonist of "La Victime" manifests a duality between the super-ego (the proper Dorothée) and the id (the audacious Gravida). But although Paulina changes names upon entering the convent and again after becoming a non-person, she has no separate names for her divisive yet interdependent components. In the case of Dorothée/Gravida, the alternate use of these two different names emphasizes both the dichotomy and the interplay between the Freudian id and the super-ego. While the super-ego is that human element which fosters compliance with social mores and sanctions, Kurt Schärer states that Jouve equated the id with the unconscious: the element which obviously dominates during Dorothée/Gravida's dream and subsequent sorcerous spell (151).

*Paulina 1880* portrays female sexuality as dangerous lure, yet the male protagonist gives no misogynic diatribe within the novel. On the other hand, even as Dorothée's would-be lover, Waldemar, cries out that he must have her or die, his description establishes her negative duality. She is simultaneously called "belle fille de l'Hébron" and "ventre de putain"; "ange" and "cochonne" (90). While begging his sorcerer friend, Simonin, to help unite him with Dorothée, Waldemar's desperate speech is riddled with anti-feminist incriminations portraying woman as deadly lure: "Si la langue de la femme a, dans sa puissante odeur orgiaque, passé sur ton âme . . . je te plains . . . tu ne peux plus être sauvé. Sinon en possédant, en tuant cette femelle dans la femme" (91). Prefiguring the death of Dorothée, Waldemar stresses that violence is the only means available to combat man's fatal attraction to woman. Noting that the tongue is not the only part of the female anatomy able to lethally entrap man, he adds that man is also doomed if woman's "ouverture rose et mielleuse du péché [projette] . . . vers toi l'œil sombre" (92). Martine Broda explains that this image of the "œil" actually refers to three elements of the female anatomy, making it a composite eye-anus-clitoris: "œil-anus, sexe de femme vécu comme un anus" ("Le Trajet du roman" 79). Waldemar adds another

element to this list of potentially deadly female components. He states that just "une seule larme" of female vaginal secretion is sufficient to send man to the Dantean hell of the would-be, male lover - "la bolge au fond de laquelle je suis enfermé" (92). Just as Waldemar attributes a male lover's suffering to the female tongue, eye-anus-clitoris and vaginal secretions, Simonin links Waldemar's love sickness to a particular element of the female anatomy, deducing that his friend suffers from "la folie utérine" destined to lead to "l'aberration et le crime" (95).

Waldemar emerges as a misogynic but fully cognizant Adam - totally aware but powerless to resist following Gravida/Eve into the path of sin and damnation. All the while recognizing that Gravida/Eve is "mon *éclatant tombeau*," Waldemar explains to Simonin that "je suis sans résistance . . . Pour avoir la carnation de sa chair, je perds l'honneur et l'amour!" (107). The female portrait traced by Waldemar highlights the sinful nature of carnal love ("le plaisir de ce crime"), man's irresistible attraction to woman ("tu es prêt à vendre pour elle ta mère"), and female duality ("[la femme est] la créature de Dieu ou du Diable . . . envoyée à mon âme") (92; 92; 107).

The female protagonist's role throughout "La Victime" corroborates Waldemar's testimony, making Dorothée/Gravida/woman emerge as an erotic and fatal attraction. When Dorothée is first presented to the reader, she is "nue comme la main," and described as if the narrator were describing the surrounding terrain (99). Her breasts are "les collines de l'Hébron, parfumées . . . qui semblaient défier le soleil, dans la pureté de leur forme"; her nipples are "une double cime rose et granuleuse"; and her stomach "les plaines avec leurs soubresauts naturels" (99). Subsequent description of Dorothée's pubic area brings back the theme of woman as fatal enticement: "des lieux importants comme les temples des Indes chaudes entourés de miasmes mortels" (99; emphases mine). Underlying this initial presentation of Dorothée is a critical element of femaleness in "La Victime": woman as *topos* of deadly erotic and exotic pleasure. It is pleasure which this

female landscape promises, down in the "terres que l'on n'atteint que rarement" - a pleasure both exotic ("les temples des Indes chaudes") and fatal ("de miasmes mortels") (99).

Another important aspect of this initial presentation of Dorothée is its universal quality. The totally impersonal, geographic description of the female body gives this passage universality, linking not just Dorothée but generic woman to deadly erotic delight. This universal aspect is enhanced by the suggestion of timelessness in the mention of Dorothée's "très anciens souvenirs . . . Depuis qu'elle existait" (99).

This universal, timeless quality of Dorothée's introduction is highlighted in the description of her recurring dream as "une histoire idéale . . . aussi consistante que le marbre" (103). And as long lasting as marble, the story faithfully repeats itself at regulated intervals, "animée d'un mouvement d'horlogerie" (103). Timelessness is also a feature dealt with in the treatment of the dream's characters. Although Dorothée/Gravida's male partner in this dream shares various details with Waldemar, his outstanding aspect is not his resemblance to Waldemar, but his generic quality. Thus he is simply referred to as "le Jeune Homme" (102). Dorothée/Gravida's presence in the dream is constant, but her generic lover is periodically replaced by a young man from each successive generation. As each male partner dies, "un autre jeune homme paraissait se détacher de lui et prenait sa place, une sorte de fils du jeune homme refaisait la descente illustre" (102). Examining Dorothée/Gravida's dream, it is clear that her constant presence emphasizes her role as a perpetual Eve to be courted by Adam and all of his subsequent descendants.

The theme of Gravida as an eternal Eve resurfaces in other details of her recurring dream. The central image of the dream is "une sorte de ballon ovale rose" which contains pestilent blood (100). Although the exact nature of the noxious, blood-filled balloon is not spelled out per se in "La Victime," the short story does provide various clues as to its interpretation. As we have stated, the sorcerer Simonin refers to

Waldemar's love sickness as a "folie utérine" (95). Also, in this dream Gravida is generic woman - a timeless Eve whose lovers span all generations. Thus by ingesting the blood-filled balloon, one can deduce that Gravida is ingesting a prototypic uterus, thereby enhancing her status as prototypic woman: Eve. Another link exists between Eve and Gravida regarding the latter's consumption of the red balloon. Although Gravida's balloon is filled with a pestilent blood and Eve's apple was an appealing, edible substance, both women defiantly consume an unsanctioned object. While it was God who declared the apple off limits, it was public opinion of "les habitants de la ville" which forbade contact with the balloon (100).

In "*Le Monde désert, Hécate*," Christiane Blot-Labarrère explains the role of "La Victime" within the Jouvian opus: "d'évoquer une ultime fois les puissances diaboliques" (13). As we stated in our introduction, the plot of "La Victime" is a gothic tale of horror, in which the sorcerer Simonin casts two spells upon young Dorothée. Simonin first enchants the young girl to allow his friend Waldemar to seduce her. When Dorothée dies during their lovemaking, Simonin casts a second spell reanimating the girl's dead body to mask her death. In keeping with the genre of tale of horror, Dorothée/Gravida is a horrific version of Eve - the Jouvian Eve named "l'Eve maléfique" by Martine Broda ("Le Trajet du roman" 81). Thus although her fellow village inhabitants are terrified by the sight of the red balloon, Dorothée/Gravida remains undaunted. The villagers associate the blood-filled balloon with the imminence of the plague, yet Dorothée/ Gravida seizes the cord of the balloon, "puis elle portait le ballon à sa bouche et le mangeait" (100). The dream persona's name - Gravida - is very much in keeping with her contemptible nature as the eater of a pestilent, blood-filled balloon, for this name means "quelque chose de sale" (101). Thus this gothic tale transforms the biblical, inquisitive Eve into the "bizarre et détestable Gravida!" (101).

Other elements of the dream enhance Dorothée/Gravida's role as an Eve figure by referring back to "La Victime"'s central theme: woman as dangerous lure. One such element serves as a refrain in Dorothée's contemplation of her disturbing dream. While relating the action of her dream double - Gravida/Eve - Dorothée repeatedly states: "Quel abîme existe en chaque femme, Seigneur!" (102). This oneiric *femme/abîme* proves to be a *femme/leurre*, who locks herself in with her succession of young lovers, sadistically indulging in her pleasure with each one: "de l'animer si lentement qu'il ne paraissait plus vivre, ce dont elle jouissait beaucoup" (103). Different from the fate of the oneiric Dorothée/Gravida, it is the enchanted Dorothée/Gravida - not her lover Waldemar - who perishes during their intense night of lovemaking. Other than this detail, the experience of Dorothée/Gravida of the dream parallels that of Dorothée/Gravida of the actual seduction scene.

Since Gravida emerges both during Dorothée's dream and during her subsequent spell and seduction, "La Victime" obviously suppresses the super-ego (the proper Dorothée), thus giving free reign to the id (the audacious Gravida). The role of the super-ego is therefore apparent only when Dorothée relates the events of her disturbing dream in a state of bewilderment.

Decked out for her unsanctioned rendez-vous with Waldemar, Dorothée/Gravida is an erotic, exotic lure with a promise of violence. Erotically, "sa personne était merveilleusement apprêtée" and her "bras nu" in anticipation of this sexual encounter for which "la brillante séduction sortait de ses yeux" (112). Hers is an exotic beauty ("son odeur était celle des montagnes, des bêtes et du nard") with a potential for violence ("ses ongles beaux et peints . . . comme les griffes d'un oiseau") (112). There is another allusion to violence in Dorothée's defiance of paternal authority and determination to meet her would-be lover. Asking herself if "le bourreau lui couperait-il la tête à raison

d'un tel acte?", Dorothée rebelliously concludes "[qu'] elle se laisserait couper la tête" (112).

In the moonlit prelude to the fatal lovemaking scene, the narrator mentions "la tension d'une sorte de violence" which emanates from the two main characters (114). This sexual tension of foreplay results in the name change of both characters - a visual clue to the reader that the sequence of events will be determined primarily by the id (Gravida and *le Jeune Homme*) rather than the super-ego (Dorothée and Waldemar). This name change also harks back to the universal quality of Dorothée/Gravida's troubling dream. Thus instead of depicting a specific scene of seduction, the short story - almost a mirror image of Dorothée's dream of Gravida - now depicts the seduction of Everyman (*le Jeune Homme*) by a perpetual Eve figure (Gravida). As previously noted, the salient feature of the sex act in Dorothée/Gravida's dream is its timeless universality. The narrator's comments concerning Gravida and the *Jeune Homme*'s foreplay are similar, so that this erotic session now spans years ("Parfois l'un ou l'autre vieillissait subitement de beaucoup d'années"), becoming truly timeless ("Voilà des siècles qu'ils étaient ainsi et ils devaient demeurer ainsi pour des siècles . . . dans l'immensité du temps") (115-16).

A careful reading of the seduction scene reveals that - in keeping with her role as temptress - Gravida plays a very active part in initiating sex. Thus Waldemar/*Jeune Homme* indicates that he was not the first to propose engaging in sex, but rather "elle [qui] m'a dit: quittons l'escalier et soyons l'un à l'autre" (125). Similarly, in the couple's seductive conversation, the first lurid suggestions are those "propositions que la femme faisait . . . méprisant la pudeur" (115). Finally it is not the *Jeune Homme* but Gravida who first "projetait vers lui une éjaculation d'amour" (115).

Although Dorothée/Gravida dies following the scene of lovemaking, her seductive powers are still mentioned even after her death. Thus as the distraught Waldemar relates details of the fatal lovemaking scene to Simonin, he reveals that Dorothée/Gravida was

both aware of and counting upon her powers of sexual attraction: "l'odeur persuasive de son sillon de vierge me met dans la fureur qu'elle attend, qu'elle espère!" (124; emphasis mine). Waldemar explains that both Dorothée/Gravida and he eagerly indulged at this site of pleasure - the female body: "nous nous sommes accrochés sur son cher corps et nous y sommes morts, par bonheur" (124).

In "Mallarmé, Jouve, Bonnefoy: Une Filiation?", Daniel Leuwers notes Jouve's "assez fortes tendances nécrophiles" (70). These tendencies are apparent in Simonin's actions in "La Victime." When lovemaking with Waldemar results in Dorothée's death, Simonin attempts to save his friend by utilizing his necromancy to transform Dorothée's corpse into a zombie. In the numerical incantations which effect this transformation, Simonin explains that the number three "signifie l'homme, l'amour et la vie" (127). But while man is affiliated with love and life, woman "c'est l'homme plus la mort . . . La femme est la réunion de tout, de l'amour, de la mort, donc de la faute" (127-28). Rather than man's propitious tie to love and life, the sorcerer's doctrine saddles woman with inauspicious ties to death and sin - an element apparent in the short story's denouement. Dorothée's state as a zombie highlights the relationship between woman and death. She is described by an attending physician as "cette fausse vivante" (163) - simultaneously "vie en mort; mort en vie" (161).

As for woman's link to sin in "La Victime," it is both temporal (resulting from her fornication with Waldemar/*Jeune Homme*) and original (resulting from her role as Eve). Commenting upon the relationship between Dorothée's zombie state and her recent, sinful act, a participant at a formal inquest concludes: "elle . . . [a été] précipitée dans un état de culpa, de punition, enfin de crépuscule infini" (164). Similarly, Bruno Gelas notes the link between "l'accouplement humain" and "la perte du Paradis" in Jouve's opus (36). Since it is Dorothée/Gravida who entices Waldemar into the sex act, she is therefore responsible for their subsequent condemnation. Faithful to this idea, Dorothée/

Gravida/Eve's living corpse displays a feature which clearly harks back to the original sin: an odor of "la pomme sure" (147). The horrific Eve/Gravida does not consume a forbidden apple within the short story, but after her unsanctioned sexual act she is transformed into a zombie with a sour apple fragrance. In keeping with her state as a living corpse, Dorothée's odor overwhelms her maid to the extent that "celle-ci en éprouvait du vertige" (147). Dorothée's aroma worsens noticeably each afternoon, when it even "se répandait dans tout l'étage" (148). The moment when her unobservant father finally detects her odor is also when specialists are called in to examine the living corpse. After all attempts to communicate with her fail, the decision is made to exorcise her demon. Her exorcism results in Dorothée's "cadavérisation" - her final metamorphosis from zombie to cadaver (160). The sour apple odor of her zombie state is far surpassed by her final, cadaverous stench: "l'odeur de cadavre ancien, dont la corruption est commencée" (159). Her fumes cause the doctors and attending dignitaries to flee in horror, dragging Dorothée's devoted father along with them.

Similar to the image of femaleness presented by Jouve's *Paulina 1880*, that of his short story "La Victime" is negative indeed, with both works focusing upon the recurring Jouvian theme traced by Masako Taniguchi: "la Femme; l'Eros; le Péché; la Mort" ("Éros" 69). Just as in *Paulina 1880,* the maternal figure of "La Victime" is a figure of absence, while the father polices the daughter's sexuality for the protection of family honor and what Luce Irigaray refers to as the daughter's "exchange value among men" (31). But whereas Paulina's super-ego (religiousness) and id (keen sexual desire) are of equal force, Dorothée's super-ego is suppressed and her id (named Gravida) is highlighted via a recurrent dream and a sorcerer's spell. This dream and the spell firmly establish Gravida's role as the prototypic female temptress: Eve. For in the dream it is Gravida who serves as sexual partner to men of all generations. Similarly, it is the enchanted Gravida who tempts young Waldemar into the mortal lovemaking for which he is

executed along with his necromantic accomplice. Details from both the dream and the spell establish that Dorothée/Gravida is a horrific version of Eve. Clearly linking her to Eve, Dorothée/Gravida ingests a balloon or prototypic uterus in the dream, leads her lover into temptation, and smells of sour apples in her subsequent zombie state. But most noticeable is her horrific dimension: her oneiric consumption of the pestilent, blood-filled balloon; her pungent odor as a zombie; and her terrific stench as a cadaver. Thus the female configuration presented by "La Victime" is as grotesque as it is negative.

Highlighted in "La Victime," the relationship between woman and death is also essential to the Jouvian short story "Dans les Années profondes." In addition to tracing the drama of a woman destined for death, "Dans les Années profondes" is another Jouvian prose work which draws a parallel between fornication, woman and death. But whereas *Paulina 1880* and "La Victime" present these elements in a negative light, their role is positively enacted in "Dans les Années profondes" by a multi-faceted female protagonist: Hélène de Sannis.

Leaving the paradise of his "val aux formes fraîche et rêveuses," the male protagonist, Léonide, travels to the village of Sogno - an area he depicts as "une splendide terre des morts" complete with a tombless cemetery (170). We have noted that Dorothée is described as a "paysage/ femme" in "La Victime," where her body serves as *topos* of erotic pleasure. Similarly, Jouve himself indicates in *En Miroir* that Hélène emanates from the Italian Alpine scenery: "aucun visiteur de 'Sogno', par une après-midi de cristal translucide comme on en voit là-bas, ne peut ignorer qu'Hélène est dans l'atmosphère, prête à reparaître et revivre" (76). Thus when Léonide first perceives her, Hélène de Sannis is a "paysage/femme" which arises from this setting linked to death: "l'apparition . . . parut se dégager de la matière du paysage et l'habiter . . . La robe était

abondante comme un nuage" (172). Upon seeing her a second time at Torre, Léonide deems once again that "Elle semblait monter de la vallée" (180).

From the very beginning of their liaison, it is Hélène's hair - an element aligned with the theme of death/woman/*topos* - which serves as both mysterious lure and erotic focal point of their relationship. The importance of Hélène's tresses is stressed both by the consistent capitalization of the word "Chevelure," and by each of Léonide's constant references to it.[1] Endowed with a kaleidoscopic quality which allows the "Chevelure" to change from "ou argentée ou noire ou violette" (175), to "auburn" (179), and to "le casque d'or" (198)[2], these voluptuous, Baudelairian tresses are the very source of Hélène's "secret et de son être" (184). The importance of the "Chevelure" for our discussion here is that it ties together the themes of death and of femme/*topos*. Just after explaining that the "Chevelure" is capable of imparting "la volupté du plaisir de la mort," Léonide describes the head of hair as a geographical location: "Le lieu de la Chevelure était bien plus vaste que le pays de ces montagnes" (184). Thus the "Chevelure magnétique et sexuelle" is a *topos* with a double association to death: it both dispenses the pleasure of death and exceeds the physical dimensions of Sogno's landscape of death (200).

Although she is not a macabre figure, Hélène is associated with death throughout "Dans les Années profondes." When Léonide visits her for the first time, she is the "prisonnière d'une beauté morte" (187), who later teaches him her special expression for the word kiss: "la 'mort divine'" (201). Pondering the nature of their relationship evokes thoughts of death for Léonide: "Recevoir la mort. Est-ce la mort? Suis-je né pour mourir?

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[1]In "Mallarmé, Jouve, Bonnefoy: une Filiation?", Daniel Leuwers mentions "la chevelure fortement érotisée d'Hélène," pointing out that "Le symbole le plus évident de la poésie de Jouve est incontestablement celui de la chevelure" (67).

[2]This kaleidoscopic quality is also evident in Jacques's description of the hair of the watery enhancement of his deceased great-aunt in *Le Monde désert*. The image "changeait et rechangeait: un jour elle avait les cheveux noirs . . . un autre jour [elle était ] blonde . . . ou même . . . [elle avait] la chevelure soigneusement tirée . . . "(MD 16).

Ou suis-je né mort?" (206) The arrival of Pauliet, Monsieur de Sannis's nephew, underscores the relationship between death and Hélène. Learning that Pauliet is terminally ill and that he was formerly Hélène's lover, Léonide equates both Hélène and her nephew with "l'abîme, de la mort, du plaisir mélangé à la mort" (226). Consequently, Léonide asks himself if he is attracted to death, concluding "j'exécrais la mort!" (226) Although his official stance is an abhorrence of death, Léonide concedes "[qu'] il m'était impossible de ne pas faire exception" regarding the deathly "sensibilité d'Hélène" (226).

Hélène's relationship with death is further emphasized by the premature death of her youthful, former lover: Pauliet. When summoned to join Hélène at the chateau where Pauliet has just expired, Léonide is struck by her calm manner in this ambiance of death. After she has serenely shown him the divan where her former lover died, Léonide realizes that for Hélène "la mort, l'amour n'avaient plus le sens qu'ils ont généralement" (235). The denouement of this short story reveals that Hélène's sangfroid towards death remains intact - even at the moment of her very own death. Dying despite Léonide's desperate attempts to revive her, she gently admonishes him: "C'est facile... Facile ... C'est facile de mourir. Je t'assure. Ne t'inquiète pas ... Facile . . . sois heureux" (251). When Léonide summons his courage and attends his deceased lover's wake, he discovers that she radiates this same peace "avec le visage saisi d'une paix, d'une joie parfaite" (257). Thus her death actually serves to intensify Léonide's love: "depuis la première heure, je ne l'avais adorée comme la voyant morte" (257).

The predominant female image of "Dans les Années profondes" is that of a loving albeit barren and deathly maternal figure: Hélène de Sannis. Upon her second chance meeting with Léonide, it is she who takes the young stranger under her wing, announcing "Je vous trouve adorable. Voulez-vous être mon ami? Partons" (180). Similarly, it is she who literally offers to nourish her youthful admirer, with an invitation to join her for five o'clock tea and toast. Dazzled by his gracious hostess, Léonide acknowledges their

respective roles of mother and child: "c'était elle qui avec la maturité de sa raison paraissait reconnaissante à un enfant" (190). As Léonide's courage grows under Hélène's tutelage, he finally dares to plunge his lips into her magnetic, erotic tresses. While performing what constitutes for him a highly erotic act, Léonide notes "qu'elle était maternelle" (200). When Hélène's husband returns for a military furlough, the sides of Léonide's oedipal triangle of jealousy snap firmly into place. In a very belated moment of sexual maturation, Léonide finally realizes that his idol - Hélène - is "la femme, le brûlant sexe opposé, le sphinx" (205). At the same time, the boy becomes intensely jealous of the sexual relationship between his "oedipal parents": Monsieur and Madame de Sannis. To appease his jealousy, Léonide scorns "le lien conjugal" while simultaneously extolling his kissing of Hélène's exotic, erotic hair - kisses which "m'apparaissait tellement plus plein de dangers, que je n'avais que mépris pour les relations autorisées de mari et femme" (205). Focusing on Hélène instead of his oedipal rival, Monsieur de Sannis, Léonide remains distraught nevertheless at the thought that his idol actually enjoys the sexual aspect of her marriage. The oedipal son's contemplation of this conjugal activity brings to bear the importance of the title of this collection of short stories: La Scène capitale. Martine Broda offers this psychological résumé of what constitutes the "scène capitale": "la scène présente à l'enfant le rapport sexuel de ses parents, qu'il le fantasme ou l'observe réellement . . . mère, agressée a tergo par le père, tuée, dans le coït, par le pénis meurtrier du père" ("Le Trajet du roman" 78).

Simultaneous to his reflection on this "scène capitale" is Léonide's realization that the *mal mariée* of his dreams is Hélène - reinforcing his jealous opposition to her sexual relationship with her husband. The *mal mariée* or *femme noire* is Léonide's dream of Hélène's wedding: a dream peppered with elements of gothic horror. Hélène is the *mal mariée* - a bride inauspiciously embarking upon an unhappy marriage in "une robe toute noire" (195). As her bridegroom has already left her behind, Léonide dreams of trying to

forcibly stop the departure of this bride - destined not for a glorious honeymoon but "sa mort" (196). As Hélène appears to arise from Sogno's landscape of death, so her nightmarish double - the *femme noire* - seems to be swallowed up by a deathly landscape. Thus Léonide dreams that by joining her bridegroom, the bride will be martyred in a eerie scene which "s'effaçait dans la brume verte et noire" (196). While seemingly a victim of impending danger at the hand of her spouse, the *mal mariée* herself is also a menacing figure. In Léonide's initial dream, she is "plus onduleuse qu'un serpent" with "dents [qui] éclairaient la nuit" (196). And just before fading into the ghostly scenery, the *femme noire* bursts into a hideous laugh which echoes from the mountain tops. When Léonide contemplates his dream much later, the horrific quality of the *mal mariée* resurfaces rendering her "menaçante," "terrible" (246, 259).

Léonide's dream of the *femme noire* clearly suggests a potential for violence - a potential that is realized in the murder of Hélène's adulterous ancestress. Hélène shows Léonide a portrait of this adulterous woman later slain by her jealous spouse. Thus the rage of the cuckolded husband of Hélène's ancestress provides a sharp contrast to the open acceptance by Hélène's husband of her live-in admirer, Léonide.

Rather than permanently nullifying the harmonious relationship between woman and death in "Dans les Années profondes," the tale's two shocking female components - Hélène's adulterous relative and the *mal mariée* - highlight the dynamics underlying one of Hélène's principal facets: that of the oedipal mother. Léonide finally realizes that Hélène herself is this very "Femme Noire": "La Femme Noire que j'avais vue était la prévision d'Hélène: la mal mariée, celle qui va mourir" (259). Simultaneously Léonide perceives the oedipal component which underlies his love. Thus in conquering Hélène de Sannis - a woman twenty-six years his senior - Léonide is enacting an oedipal conquest of his own mother. Since Hélène figuratively gave birth to Léonide's manhood, he states that it was she who brought him into the world "ayant l'âge de la mère, de s' être livrée

comme au fils. Est-ce que cette femme noire n'était pas la terrible femme maternelle, qu'il me fallait prendre, que j'avais prise en triomphe?" (259) Hélène's adulterous ancestress and the *mal mariée* are thus links in the oedipal drama which forms the substrata of the short story. And Léonide's desperate attempt to prevent the marriage of the *mal mariée*/ Hélène highlights this rivalry with the oedipal father for the mother's love. When Léonide listens with horror to the tale of the murdered adulteress, he is actually fearing reprisal from his own "father" within the oedipal triangle: Monsieur de Sannis.

Throughout Léonide's crises of oedipal rage, Hélène emerges the perfect mother figure - always able to equally dispense attention and love both to her husband and to her symbolic son: Léonide. Meanwhile, she remains patient as the relationship with her youthful admirer slowly matures, from the beginning level of passionate kisses in the *Chevelure* to the more advanced stage of unusual, erotic gifts. When their exchange of flower petals molded to their genitals elicits an avowal of love from Hélène, it is still her maternal quality which Léonide feels: "je sentis toute sa force de nourricière érotique des hommes" (211). Thus Béatrice Bonhomme emphasizes that for Léonide, Hélène is "une nouvelle mère qui lui apporte la continuité manquante" (138).

Assuming that he is the first of Hélène's child prodigies of love, Léonide is distressed to learn that he has a predecessor: Monsieur de Sannis's terminally ill nephew, Pauliet. When Pauliet comes to spend his final weeks of life with his aunt and uncle, Léonide's jealousy of Pauliet is reminiscent of sibling rivalry: "Je l'enviais avec dégoût et je le jalousais . . . J'étais fasciné par lui" (224). Again, as the perfect maternal figure, even Léonide concludes that Madame de Sannis distributes her attentions in an appropriate manner, with concern for her nephew, "le visage brûlant et lisse pour moi, le visage soucieux pour son mari" (215). Léonide manages to put his sibling envy aside, recognizing that - similar to an older brother - Pauliet 's stories "m'aidaient, en favorisant pour moi l'invention de formes d'érotisme"; "Pauliet allait 'm'apprendre quelque chose'"

(219, 225). Realizing that Léonide is in love with his aunt, Pauliet strongly encourages him to pursue this love. The phrasing of his encouragement again stresses Hélène's nurturing, maternal quality: Hélène "c'est la nourrice des hommes jeunes. Vous réussirez, ce sera magnifique, je vous le promets! - 'un beau mariage'" (220). Pauliet is also the source of Léonide's discovery of Madame de Sannis's exact age: forty-three years. This discovery prompts the teenage lover to emphasize once more the oedipal nature of his romantic relationship with the loving but barren Hélène: "Devait-elle aimer les hommes nés bien des années après elle? Bien des années après elle, n'était-ce pas comme l'enfant qu'elle n'avait pas eu?" (222) Even Hélène's choice of sobriquet for him sounds like a nickname one would give to a child: "mon petit lion" (228).[3]

As Léonide's romance evolves into a sexual affair, his mistress remains the calm facilitator. Thus she soothes her boy/lover's anguish, upon his arrival at the chateau where Pauliet has just expired. Ever the tranquilizing influence, "elle me délivrait de l'angoisse. Près de cette femme extraordinaire, la mort, l'amour n'avaient plus le sens qu'ils ont généralement" (235). Due to the departure of the oedipal father, Monsieur de Sannis, Léonide is able to take his symbolic mother, Hélène, into his arms to "retrouver, dans mes bras, sa force . . . de nourricière" (236). Léonide's oedipal role as son is highlighted once again by his favorite choice among the chateau's bedroom chambres: the "would-have-been" nursery for the "enfants qu' Hélène n'avait pas eus!" (241)

It is his mistress who invites her young lover to begin his sexual initiation in her bedroom. From now until the story's end, her self-sacrifice is the most noticeable feature of Madame de Sannis's role. Léonide notes that in his lover "le don et le sacrifice étaient tellement plus riches que ne l'était mon agression!" (244) Exhausted after his initial lovemaking session, the boy/lover is astonished to awaken in his own bedroom with no

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[3]In "L'Esthétique alchimique dans l'œuvre de Pierre Jean Jouve," Béatrice Bonhomme accords an alchemistic importance to the sobriquet. She explains that "Petit Lion" indicates "la victoire du rouge . . . transformation en force de vie positive, en Eros vainqueur . . . en Soleil" (133).

recollection of having left Hélène's side. He later learns that - just like a sleeping child carried by its mother - "j'avais regagné ma chambre à demi porté par elle, entre la lucidité et le sommeil. Je ne me souvenais de rien" (245-46). As evidenced by her carrying the sleeping Léonide, Hélène constantly places his comfort ahead of her own pleasure and physical well-being. Preoccupied with his own "joie, véritablement pubère," Léonide is unaware of the enormous toll that his sexual initiation is exacting upon his mistress (243). After her death, he finally realizes that this initiation took place at the expense of Hélène's life. Thus he later regrets his preoccupation with "le courant de mon bonheur" which prevented him from heeding the warning signs of his lover's declining health (246).

As we have noted, the liaison between Léonide and Hélène contains the psychological subtext of rivalry both between the "siblings" (Léonide and Pauliet) and between the oedipal son (Léonide) and father (Monsieur de Sannis) for the attentions of the mother (Hélène). Since the death of Madame de Sannis occurs right on the heels of a passionate lovemaking scene with Léonide, the tale could have dramatized her death as culmination of the "scène capitale": the mother killed in the act of coitus by the stand-in for her mate, Léonide. But rather than presenting this death as a horrific murder from oedipal prehistory, the tale rather highlights what Jean-Michel Solente names Jouve's dream: "d'unir Eros et Thanatos" (48). Daniel Leuwers offers a similar assessment of the outcome in "Dans les Années profondes": "Eros tend le relais à Thanatos" ("Le Désir" 9).[4]

When Léonide becomes fully cognizant of his deceased mistress's self-sacrifice, the text showcases Hélène's final facet: that of muse for Léonide. Finally perceiving that "Hélène avait sacrifié sa vie," Léonide vows to utilize "en mémoire d'Hélène le trésor des forces que je sentais presque naître" (259). Experiencing a broad rush of sensations "de mélancolie, de joie, d'annonciation," etc., he decides that it is these emotional states "qui

[4] Jouve himself acknowledges in *En Miroir* that "Le mythe d'Hélène est l'union en un acte de l'éros passif et de la mort" (74).

me permettaient de communiquer avec Hélène désormais, de retrouver Hélène" (260). He will thus dedicate his young life to transcribing his varied emotional states, "les écrire sur du papier" (260). As Christiane Blot-Labarrère comments, "même morte [Hélène] met en mouvement et féconde la destinée de Léonide" ("*Le Monde désert*" 26). Hélène symbolically negates her own sterility by metaphorically giving birth to Léonide's manhood, subsequently engendering his literary inspiration and, consequently, her own renaissance.

Clearly, the unique female member within the cast of characters of "Dans les Années profondes" - Hélène - provides a multi-faceted image of femaleness: tranquil and deathly; maternal and erotic; self- sacrificing and inspirational. Karen Levy states that "Hélène represents Jouve's absolute woman . . . She leads . . . [Léonide] to recognize the importance of the sexual role of literary creation" (20). Positive in her rapport with death, through Hélène woman emerges as the nurturing, maternal figure whose sacrifices include that of her own life. When her death gives birth to her boy/lover's literary vocation, she posthumously attains the status of muse, transmitting to Léonide what Myriam Delmotte calls "le véritable érotisme, qui va au-delà des actes et des corps pour transcender le temps" (175).

Although Hélène's self-sacrifice has admittedly auspicious results for Léonide, critical discussion thereof has failed to consider its negative ramifications. First of all, the sacrifice of Hélène effects male maturation at the expense of female life thus perfecting a male by killing off a female. Secondly, with the death of Jouve's final female prose protagonist - Hélène - woman's fate is permanently sealed within his opus. As we have seen, this fate is one of literal or metaphorical absence, from Paulina/Marietta's non-existence (*Paulina 1880*) to Baladine's disappearance (*Le Monde désert*) to Dorothée's necromantic enchantment ("La Victime") and finally Hélène's death ("Dans les Années profondes").

Introducing her in-depth treatment of femininity in *The Other Woman : Feminism and Femininity in the Work of Marguerite Duras*, Trista Selous notes that "the masculinist culture in which we live recognises women only in certain roles: as objects of men's sexual desire - 'sex objects' - or as mothers" (2). The prose works of Pierre Jean Jouve are rather faithful to this restrictive pattern thus endorsing stereotyped formulations of women and women's roles within the literary text. Although the Jouvian heterosexual woman is occasionally depicted as indifferent mother (Baladine and Paulina's mother) or mother-linked-to-death (Hélène and the mothers of Paulina and Dorothée), her portrayal centers on woman as lover. Selous emphasizes that this traditional depiction of heterosexual female as lover relegates woman to the "position of object of (men's) desire . . . which often brings with it a certain passivity and dependence, the power of the catalyst, rather than that of the agent" (1). In *Paulina 1880* and "La Victime," this power of catalyst manifests itself through the *femme fatale*: Paulina and Dorothée's roles as deadly lure. Motivated by the divisive yet interdependent components of religiosity and carnal desire, Paulina sacrifices her lover in *Paulina 1880* while in "La Victime" the erotic charms of Dorothée/Gravida tempt the female protagonist, her would-be lover and his friend into damnation and death. Karen Levy also speaks of Great-aunt Paulina as catalyst vis-à-vis Jacques's demise in *Le Monde désert*, where as "catalyst . . . [Paulina] sets in motion the rebellious forces heretofore dormant in his personality" (21).

Although still focusing on woman as mother and lover, with Baladine of *Le Monde désert* and Hélène of "Dans les Années profondes," Jouve's prose does not restrict woman to what Judith Butler would view as the "seamless category" of *femme fatale* (*Gender Trouble* 4). With Baladine and Hélène the portrait of femaleness becomes more complex entailing both positive and negative ramifications. The unique career woman of Jouve's heterosexual female characters - Baladine - experiences great professional success

in her banking career despite the abuse to which she is subjected by her authoritative, male boss. The enterprising Baladine also plays an assertive role in her personal life, far surpassing that of Paulina, Dorothée and Hélène. Rather than serving as a passive lure like Paulina and Dorothée, Baladine locates an apartment to share with Jacques, provides the couple's sole financial support, and aggressively strives to mold Jacques into a famous artist.

When Jacques proves neither to have true artistic talent nor to be able to accept his homosexual orientation, Baladine's optimistic vitality is shaken. An aggressive nurturer towards Jacques, after his suicide Baladine's maternal role is rather ambivalent vis-à-vis her son. And rather than serving as nurturer to her would-be husband, Luc Pascal, Baladine vanishes with her son the day after their wedding. Whether deemed a cowardly act, a final act of fidelity to Jacques, or a defiant rejection of the patriarchal culture's treatment of women as commodities, Baladine's permanent departure erases yet another female from the Jouvian prose landscape - a fate also experienced by Paulina through final non-existence, Dorothée through necromantic enchantment and Hélène through death.

With Jouve's final female protagonist - Hélène - love has strong ties to death once again, but in "Dans les Années profondes" these ties are presented in an auspicious manner. Unlike the deaths of previous Jouvian characters such as Michele (*Paulina 1880)*, Jacques (*Le Monde désert*), Waldemar and Simonin ("La Victime"),with Hélène's death woman is no longer lethal temptress but voluntary, sacrificial victim. Hélène also adds a positive note to Jouve's cast of absent or indifferent mothers, leading Martine Broda to affirm that "[elle] restaure l'image de la mère absolument bonne" (81). In addition, her death provides the stimulus for these favorable results: Léonide's full maturation and discovery of a literary vocation.

Although Léonide clearly benefits from Hélène's self-sacrifice, her death implies that woman is an expendable commodity within a phallogocentric hierarchy. In addition, Hélène's death removes the final female protagonist from the Jouvian prose opus. Thus with the exception of Catherine Crachat (*Hécate* and *Vagadu*) whom we shall discuss in our chapter on female bisexuality, woman as entity disappears at the close of each of Jouve's novels. Through its erasure of the female from the prose landscape, stereotyped presentation of women's roles and the depiction of woman as dangerous lure or absent and/or indifferent mother, we shall now see that the Jouvian heterosexual female configuration closely parallels that within Tournier's prose.

# Chapter II

## The Heterosexual Female in the Novels of Michel Tournier

Our discussion of the heterosexual female in Michel Tournier's prose will be limited to his novels as they provide a faithful reflection of the portrait of heterosexual females throughout the Tournierian opus. And as we shall see, the heterosexual female portrait within Tournier's novels bears a striking resemblance to that within Jouve's prose.

A female protagonist has yet to arise from the Tournierian prose landscape, which accords few significant roles to women. This paucity of female characters is a trait already evident in Michel Tournier's first novel: *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* (1967). Since this novel essentially recreates the adventures of Daniel Defoe's solitary shipwreck victim, Robinson Crusoe, this scarcity of female characters is not a surprising feature. However, Tournier's reinterpretation of the myth of Robinson does contain a very sinister female role: that of deadly soothsayer. Accompanied by male members of her Indian tribe, a female prognosticator arrives twice on Robinson's deserted island to play a key part in a sacrificial ritual. As the well-hidden Robinson safely observes, the sorceress reels around a smoke-filled circle of forty Indians until she has selected and pointed out the victim-to-be. Said victim is then chopped into six pieces by a male member of the tribe and incinerated in their campfire.

Tournier's unique female character in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* thus continues the theme we have examined with Jouve's Paulina (*Paulina 1880*), Dorothée/Gravida ("La Victime"), *la mal mariée* ("Dans les Années profondes"), *et al.*: woman linked to violent death. Just as Jouve fills in this association between woman and death with horrific details such as Dorothée/Gravida's cadaverous stench, Tournier

highlights the repulsive qualities of his soothsayer, described as "décharnée," "échevelée" and "haillonneuse" (65). And while Dorothée/Gravida's lewd and ultimately fatal behavior is dictated by a spell, Tournier's sorceress is intoxicated by inhaling handfuls of white powder which she has thrown into the sacrificial fire. The sorceress then falls prostrate into a trance in which she "priait, dormait, vomissait ou pissait" while her unfortunate victim is quickly dispatched and incinerated (65).

When a different and larger group of Indians comes to enact a similar sacrificial scene, their sorceress embellishes the role described above. From his protected vantage point, Robinson sees that a victim has already been immolated and the soothsayer lies deeply entranced. In a scene reminiscent of a horror movie, the sorceress suddenly jumps up and lunges toward a second victim initiating an unexpected repeat of the sacrificial murder. After escaping from his fellow tribe members, this second intended victim settles in with Robinson and receives the name Vendredi. Other than these two brief appearances of a female soothsayer, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* has no flesh and blood female cast members. Thus the role of the novel's unique female character presents woman as ominous indeed: she is a deadly sorceress who slips into a narcotic trance to capriciously select sacrificial victims.

Although *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* contains only one minor female character, the sorceress, Robinson's reflections about his female family members expand the novel's portrait of femaleness. Distance is the common link in the relationships between Robinson, his wife, mother and sister - a distance not only geographical, but also emotional and tied to death. A distance both geographical and emotional is the salient feature of Robinson's relationship with his wife. Their great geographical distance is obvious for young Madame Crusoé remains in England while her husband's maritime adventure ends with shipwreck in the Pacific. And already in the novel's prologue, the captain of the ill-fated *Virginie* alludes to the emotional distance between Robinson and

his wife. Thus while predicting Robinson's future with Tarot cards, the captain states that the young sailor abandoned his wife and two small children in York to try his fortune in the New World. The captain then modifies his judgmental assessment of Robinson's leave-taking from "abandonné" to "laissé" (8). But Robinson's lack of reaction to this comment attests to the weakness of the emotional bond in his marriage - a weakness clearly demonstrated by the fact that his wife is not mentioned again until halfway through the novel. After his shipwreck, Robinson spends countless hours of pensive solitude with no thought whatsoever of his young wife. Finally his great fascination for insects' role in pollinating flowers leads him to think of her. He then imagines that a marvelous bird could be sent smeared with his semen "jusqu'à York féconder sa femme esseulée" (100). But this keen interest in the role of insects in floral pollination does not trigger nostalgic thoughts of the wife he left behind in England. Robinson is rather matter-of-fact, deciding that his spouse "depuis si longtemps sans nouvelles . . . avait dû entrer en veuvage - et peut-être même en était-elle sortie déjà et remariée" (100).

Robinson's final allusions to his wife are equally as unemotional as the above thoughts concerning her widowhood and possible remarriage. Thinking of her for the last time, he describes not warm feelings but rather his wife's habit of awakening him during his nightmares. In this same section of the novel, a link is established in the chain between young Madame Crusoé, Robinson and death. After arguing that God's existence is not verified merely by man's belief in God, Robinson adds that the belief by his wife, *et al.* in his death serves "non certes à me tuer - mais à me repousser aux confins de la vie, dans un lieu suspendu entre ciel et enfers, dans les limbes, en somme. Speranza ou les limbes du Pacifique" (108). Thus, what certainly appears to have been a marital bond of emotional distance is broken by permanent geographical distance. And his wife's logical assumption that her husband has perished brings him symbolic death: a suspension of life

in the limbo zone of an undiscovered, desert island beyond the margins of civilization and the constraints of time.

Aside from the sorceress and Robinson's wife, femaleness is associated with closed space (i.e. the boats the *Virginie* and the *Evasion*) or open space (i.e. the island and the ocean ) in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*. As Alice Jardine notes, this association of the female with space originates in Greek philosophy where *physis* or space connotes the female and *techne* or time the male (24-25). Embarking for the New World, Robinson leaves behind the phallogocentric, time-centered order of eighteenth-century England, entrusting his well-being to an enclosed female space: the *Virginie*. In keeping with the tradition which grants a ship a female name and feminine characteristics, Françoise Merllié states that the *Virginie* provides Robinson a "sorte d'abri maternel" (*Michel Tournier* 41). As this enclosed, female vessel moves through the open female space of the ocean, a terrific storm batters the ship. This tempest is described as a malefic, feminine force - that of "un sabbat de sorcières" which wrecks the ship onto the rocky shore of an uncharted island (9). Robinson's later assessment of the damaged ship highlights its female gender: the *Virginie* was impaled onto "son gros ventre" (18). Thus the "female" storm is the site of a violent interaction between closed female space (the *Virginie*) and open female space (the ocean). The outcome thereof is Robinson's abrupt detachment from phallocratic society whose dictates are washed away along with the *Virginie*'s crew by the stormy ocean's "muraille d'eau noire" (13).

Regaining consciousness on the uninhabited island, Robinson immediately christens this new space with a female name: Désolation. Robinson muses that "l'îlot devait se trouver hors de la route régulière des navires, puisqu'il était totalement inconnu" (18). Thus the status of the uncharted, female island resembles that of a woman within the social hierarchy of eighteenth-century England: an existence outside the margins of male-dominated social order. It is also noteworthy that Robinson - a male

product of phallocratic England - feels threatened within this unexplored, virgin female space: "cette terre lui demeurait étrangère . . . elle était pleine de maléfices" (30).

In order to leave this menacing, untamed female space, Robinson painstakingly constructs his own "female vessel" - the *Evasion*. Arlette Bouloumié indicates that the *Evasion* was to have been Robinson's "navire de salut" - the "arche de Noé" to transport him to safety from the island (17-18). Robinson's fears concerning the *Evasion* 's seaworthiness again highlight the deadly potential of the female matter, water. In Robinson's worst nightmares, he imagines that he has "le visage plongé dans l'eau" while seeing the *Evasion* "s'enfoncer en se dandinant dans des profondeurs glauques de plus en plus sombres" (31). But after spending months constructing his *Evasion*, she proves too heavy to transport to the water's edge. Subsequently, Robinson succumbs to despair in the *souille* - a wallowing-hole used by wild hogs on the island. Described by André Thiel as "cette chute dans l'animalité," Robinson's episode in the wallowing-hole has important female components (98). First the hole itself and the matter filling it are of the female gender: "la souille" and "la vase liquide" ( 33; emphases mine). Bouloumié refers to the "female" slime of the wallowing-hole as "la boue primordiale" in which Robinson makes "un voyage dans la mort" (30, 166). Submerged in this primeval female substance, Robinson seemingly undergoes a process of "reverse evolution": he walks on all fours, defecates in place, and consumes whatever matter floats his way. Eventually, Robinson slips into a death-like trance in the wallowing-hole. During one hallucination, he sees a Spanish galleon with a young girl aboard, in the sumptuous decor of an elegant ball. After desperately trying to signal the ship to rescue him, Robinson even swims out toward it. Only later does he realize that the galleon was a craft of another century and that the child of this vision was his young sister, "morte adolescente" (37). In summary, this introductory section of *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* contains the following negative female associations: sea and storm of violence and death; boat of destruction

(the *Virginie*); boat of false hope (the *Evasion* ); deadly hole ("la souille"); lethal substance ("la vase liquide"); and ghostly apparition (Lucy, the deceased sister).

Rather than successfully luring Robinson to join his dead sister, this vision of Lucy shocks him back into actively participating in life. And since it is ocean water which feeds into the *souille* , Robinson blames the malefic ocean for creating this wallowing-hole: "sa tentation, son piège, son opium" (37). In subsequent episodes of *Vendredi* , the *souille* truly plays the role of opium for Robinson: an alluring narcotic which temporarily erases the frustrations he experiences in trying to impose tight control over the small universe of the island. Robinson's deceased sister is the dominant image which reoccurs whenever temptation leads him back to the muddy pit. We have noted that his first stay in the wallowing-hole evokes a vision of Lucy at an elegant ball on a galleon. When frustration drives him back to the *souille* later on, a face drawn in the sky "était tout ce qu'il voyait" (43). Contemplating this face, Robinson realizes that "[c'était] le fin visage de Lucy" (43). Even after Robinson vows never to reenter the *souille* , his experiences there remain in the back of his mind. Françoise Merllié explains that the *souille* harks back "[au] chaos originel, à l'antique limon" which continues to tempt Robinson "de se perdre dans les miasmes du limon féminin" (*Michel Tournier* 68, 72). Throughout *Vendredi* , Robinson associates this female indentation - *la souille* - and her foul-smelling content with sinful and fatal abandon. In this respect, *la souille* is reminiscent of Jouve's Dorothée/Gravida ("La Victime"): another deadly female lure whose noxious fumes associate her with the Fall.

After Robinson takes charge of his life once again, he vows to ward off the temptation of the "female" *souille* by installing a rigid structure of order. In a prelude to his systematization of the island, Robinson ponders time and space in a manner which recalls Alice Jardine's discussion of the male/female dichotomy. As previously stated, Jardine explains that in Greek philosophy *physis*, or space, connotes the female and

*techne*, or time, the male (24-25). Similarly, Robinson says that - cut off from his fellow males by the female substance of water - his stay on the "female" island has taken place in a space outside the restrictions of phallogocentric time:

> [d'] une durée indéterminée, indéfinissable, pleine de ténèbres et de sanglots, de telle sorte que Robinson se trouvait coupé du calendrier des hommes comme il était séparé d'eux par les eaux, et réduit à vivre sur un îlot de temps, comme sur une île dans l'espace (39-40; emphases mine).

Robinson's subsequent reflections repeat that the female island drifts on the Pacific outside the constraints of time. Thinking back to his arrival, Robinson notes that he followed the rhythm of the island's existence "hors du temps" (52). But as the product of a society centered on an exact regulation of time, Robinson decides that he must install a calendar and clock on the island to retake "possession de moi-même" (52). Shipwrecked on a deserted island, Robinson has no access to the metals from which clocks are traditionally made. Ironically, the inner mechanism he chooses for his clock is water, allowing Robinson to establish phallogocentric, time-centered order with this "female" substance.

As Robinson sets out to impose order, he perceives that the island is not an abstract female space to be conquered, but rather "une *personne*, de nature indiscutablement féminine" (85). While casting himself in the role of dominant male, Robinson casts the island in the role of female sex object and servant. He changes her name from the negative "Désolation" to the optimistic "Speranza," associating the latter name both with hope and with "le très profane souvenir d'une ardente Italienne qu'il avait connue jadis quand il était étudiant à l'université d'York" (40). When Robinson draws a map of the island, her status abruptly changes from an uncharted, abstract female space to the catalogued female property of a new male master. Importantly, this map reveals that her

shape forms the profile of a female body, "une femme, oui, assise, les jambes repliées sous elle" (40). Françoise Merllié interprets Robinson's thoughts as "[tentatives de] faire de Speranza même le substitut d'une présence féminine disparue"; "l'île entière [devient] . . . leurre d'une femme absente" (*Michel Tournier* 46, 41). Robinson ponders the attitude implied by Speranza's seated position: "on n'aurait pu démêler ce qu'il y avait de soumission, de peur ou de simple abandon" (40). This choice of the nouns "soumission," "peur" and "abandon" clearly indicates Speranza's subservient role of female sex object destined to give in to her new male master.

A crucial element of Speranza as seated profile is the fact that hers is a female body "sans tête" (40). In keeping with Françoise Merllié's idea, Speranza as mutilated female shape is an appropriate emphasis of the lack of female Other on the island. Alice Jardine offers a different perspective on this lack of head. In *Gynesis*, Jardine speaks of the "genderization of the visage as male . . . and of the figure as female" (78). She adds that the salient feature in the literary representation of woman is her "lack of visage, of individual traits, of identity and humanity" (78). Jardine reacts enthusiastically to an exploration of the faceless, feminine figure. She maintains that "gynesis" is the most vital challenge of modernity: "exploring newly contoured fictional spaces, hypothetical and unmeasurable, spaces freely coded as feminine" (69).

Although Robinson's attitude toward Speranza's femaleness undergoes an important metamorphosis, at this early stage of his development his desire is not to embark upon a Jardinian exploration of this female object/island but to "maîtriser . . . apprivoiser" the "ordre naturel qui n'est que l'autre nom du désordre absolu" (V 41, 43). At this beginning stage, Robinson's perception of Speranza as "untamed, female space" closely parallels his assessment of the *souille*: female space as dangerous lure. He endorses a male/female dichotomy which equates the female (Speranza and the *souille*) with "le vice . . . le renoncement, l'abandon, la résignation" and the male (Robinson) with

"la vertu . . . le courage, la force, l'affirmation de moi-même, la domination sur les choses" (44). Convinced of this male/female dichotomy, Robinson rules the female island as her stern, passionless master. He feels pride upon discovering that his footprint has been permanently embedded into one of the island's rocks. Robinson remarks that Speranza bears his footprint as a seal or brand: "le sceau de son Seigneur et Maître . . . comme une de ces vaches à demi sauvages de la prairie argentine, marquées pourtant au fer rouge" (49).

In order to counteract Speranza's female force as *souille* or dangerous lure, Robinson creates a social structure based exactly on that of phallocratic England. Appointing himself Governor, Robinson pens a charter which spells out every aspect of communal, spiritual and private life for this one-member human society. In addition to instituting a rigid schedule for work and prayer, the charter also stipulates punishment for every conceivable infraction, including spending time in the *souille*, polluting the island, etc. Following the strict organizational guideline of the charter, Robinson accomplishes gargantuan projects on the island, from the cultivation of an impressive number of crops to the careful management of goats and even the construction of various edifices: "sa villa résidentielle et les bâtiments du Pavillon des Poids et Mesures, du Palais de Justice et du Temple," etc. (66). The obvious motive for Robinson's painstaking creation of a miniature phallocratic society is his desire to subjugate the femaleness of the island with the antidote of male order: "que cette île opaque, impénétrable, pleine de sourdes fermentations et de remous maléfiques . . . soit métamorphosée en une construction abstraite, transparente, intelligible jusqu'à l'os!" (57). In a determined effort to combat the narcotic, female attraction of the island/*souille*, Robinson vows to administer "Cette dose massive de rationalité . . . à Speranza" (57). However his superhuman efforts far surpass the rational, and he seeks to band each bird, mark each animal and label each plant on the island. These marks and labels attest to Robinson' s preoccupation with male

dominance, for every feature of the island bears his identifying marker. While highlighting Robinson's position as sovereign, this action of labeling clarifies, identifies and quantifies female space to ostensibly eliminate its threat.

Robinson's highly productive role as Governor of Speranza leaves him with ambivalent feelings. On the one hand, he is proud of his self-imposed regimentation and incredible productivity. But on the other hand, he feels unfulfilled in his extremely demanding role. While reflecting that the wonderful abundance of harvest time should have brought him great joy, in reality he notes "je n'ai rien retrouvé dans ce travail de l'allègre satisfaction que me donnait la fenaison à laquelle je participais jadis dans la belle campagne de *West-Riding*" (50). He feels emptiness instead of ecstasy in spite of the cornucopia produced by his superhuman labors. This careful regimentation fails to provide a permanent antidote for his lack of human Other and his suppressed desire to partake of the narcotic tranquillity dispensed by Speranza's timeless, female space.

Experiencing feelings of inner void, Robinson yearns for at least a temporary escape from the incredible demands of his self-imposed regimen. A return to the *souille* is out of the question, for the Governor aspires for a retreat away from the foul matter of the wallowing-hole. He discovers another area of the island's female space which lets him drift into timeless, carefree abandon away from the muck of the *souille*: Speranza's womb-like cave. Its very location "au point le plus élevé de l'île" already suggests that the cave has a privileged position within Speranza's universe (55). Privileged by geography, the cave receives Robinson's trust early on; it is here that he stores all the supplies, relics and treasure troves from the *Virginie*. As Robinson seeks solace from his woes as Speranza's Governor, he simultaneously elevates the cave from celebrated storehouse to beloved womb. To enter a narrow chamber of the cave, Robinson rubs his body with milk. He then fancies that he is the fetus of the female island, "suspendu dans une éternité heureuse" in her womb-like cave (89), an experience Michèle Duchet describes as "la

régression vers la Mère primordiale" (111) and Françoise Merllié deems a return to the "délices premiers de la vie matricielle" (*Michel Tournier* 65).

Just as Robinson's attitude towards the *souille* is a mixture of attraction and repulsion, the cave also occupies a dual role in his imagination: that of coffin as well as womb. Anointed with the maternal substance of milk, Robinson happily assumes the fetal position, "recroquevillé sur lui-même, les genoux remontés au menton, les mollets croisés, les mains posées sur les pieds" (89). However Robinson's reflections reveal that Speranza's cave is coffin as well as womb: "Elle réunit miraculeusement la paix des douces ténèbres matricielles et la paix sépulcrale, l'en deçà et l'au-delà de la vie" (94; emphases mine). Before entering the cave, Robinson always stops his water clock. Eternal and free of the constraints of time, this cave is part coffin, offering a state of "*inexistence*" in a black, profound space (89). For this reason, Robinson becomes wary of prolonged stays in the coffin/cave: "La vie et la mort étaient si proches l'une de l'autre dans ces lieux livides" (92). François Nourissier adds that in his decision to limit the duration of his visits to the coffin/cave, Robinson rejects death thereby choosing not to "[se] laisser glisser au sommeil premier et dernier à quoi son inconscient aspire" (2).

Robinson has an ambivalent perception of Speranza's most alluring female spaces: the *souille* (associated with his deceased sister) and the cave (associated with his mother). The wallowing-hole is both noxious and tempting while the cave is both womb and tomb. But although there are no indications in the text that Robinson has ambivalent feelings toward his sister "éphémère et tendre," this is the case in his relationship with his mother (93). When the limits of time and space are erased by Robinson's descent into Speranza's womb/tomb, he regresses to "le monde endormi de son enfance [où] il était hanté par sa mère" (90). On the one hand, her lack of maternal affection comes to mind: he never saw her embrace "une seule fois ses cinq frères et lui-même" (90). On the other

hand, during a fire she displayed extraordinary courage as a young mother, carrying "ses six enfants indemnes sur ses épaules, dans ses bras, sur son dos, pendus à son tablier" (91).[5] Thus Robinson concludes that his mother's affection for her children was simultaneously "impeccable et sèche" (91). Just as his own mother was cold and life-saving, Speranza is both coffin and womb to Robinson, harmonizing with Jean-Michel Maulpoix's description of Tournier's novels: "les charniers et les souilles, lieux contradictoires d'expériences multiples et paradoxales" (41).

In addition to sharing a role as lure for Robinson, the *souille* and the cave both trigger a regression in time - the *souille* toward reverse evolution and the cave toward infancy. But different from the *souille*, the cave is the first step in Robinson's process of sexual maturation effected with his female island Other. At the primitive stage of this process, Speranza's cave is the womb which nourishes the fetus: Robinson. Still acting as Governor of the island, Robinson periodically deviates from his rigidly organized schedule, suspends his water clock, and indulges in carefree moments of suspension in the womb/cave. Although Robinson relishes his role as Speranza's fetus, he becomes alarmed by what he interprets as the symptoms of her "pregnancy." Paralleling a female's cessation of menstrual cycle with pregnancy, the island experiences a drought which dries up her two fresh water streams along with the *souille*. Consequently, Robinson feels guilty for having acted as Speranza's fetus, a guilt which receives an added incestuous dimension when he accidentally ejaculates within her womb/cave.

Surpassing this initial phase of fetus of the island's cave/womb, Robinson progresses to the next stage of his sexual development - that of mature lover. Robinson muses that the lack of women on the island renders impossible the traditional version of compulsory heterosexuality "dans le lit préparé à l'avance par la société" (99). Although

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[5]Introduced here in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* (1967) is the Tournierian concept of *la phorie*: the euphoria experienced as one carries a child to safety. This concept of *la phorie* later attains the status of focal point in Tournier's *Le Roi des aulnes (1970).*

Robinson's island sexuality might at first appear a subversive disruption of traditional heterosexuality, a careful reading reveals that he transposes onto his female island Other what Judith Butler calls "coherent gender identities within a heterosexual frame" (*Gender Trouble* xii). In spite of being deprived of a flesh and blood female object, Robinson's desire remains faithful to the societal mold of compulsory heterosexuality. Thus Robinson seeks a female object to enact what Butler labels "hierarchical sexual codes" (*Gender Trouble* xii). Robinson's desire searches "comme à tâtons une voie, la bonne voie où elle se rassemblera et roulera unanime vers un objet" - an object which is a stand-in for a heterosexual female (V 99).

The first female love object which Robinson selects from the landscape of Speranza is a tree, Quillai. Description of this tree/lover highlights the maintenance of "coherent gender identities" referred to by Butler (*Gender Trouble* xii). Already personified by the capitalization of her name, she is portrayed in terms applicable to a female figure: her "skin" is "l'écorce . . . lisse et tiède," her "pubic area" is the fork of the tree "fourrée d'un lichen fin et soyeux" and her "buttocks" are her trunk divided by lightning into "deux énormes cuisses noires" (101). Robinson enjoys months of happy lovemaking, with his arms embracing his tree/lover's trunk and his penis "dans la petite cavité moussue qui s'ouvrait à la jonction des deux branches" (101). But their romantic relationship comes to an abrupt end when Robinson receives a painful sting upon entering Quillai. Even his interpretation of this misadventure indicates that their liaison was patterned after the heterosexual model. Rather than blaming the spider who inflicted him with the painful bite, Robinson deems that this accident bears "une signification morale indéniable . . . n'était-ce pas en vérité une maladie vénérienne qui l'avait frappé - semblable au mal des Français contre lequel ses maîtres n'avaient cessé de mettre en garde sa jeunesse estudiantine?" (102)

Abandoning Quillai, Robinson channels his sexual energies into a heightened effort to dominate the island. His painstaking labors culminate in the creation of a highly successful rice paddy which he equates with "la domestication définitive de la souille et une ultime victoire sur ce qu'il y avait de plus sauvage et de plus inquiétant en Speranza" (103-104). But this supreme achievement is marred by Robinson's overwhelming feeling of futility: "Chacun de ses gestes, chacun de ses travaux était un appel lancé vers quelqu'un et demeurait sans réponse" (104). Feeling empty and exhausted, Robinson falls asleep on the ground only to awaken on top of his new love object: the "combe rose" (106). His relationship with this red valley marks a new stage in his sexual maturation - that of spouse to his island/wife. Just as with Quillai, Robinson's intimacy with his island/wife is depicted in human terms. Lying on top of the red valley, "il était couché sur l'île, comme sur quelqu'un . . . il avait le corps de l'île sous lui" (105). This body underneath him is decidedly female, for she is alternately referred to as "l'île," "elle," "la terre" and "la combe" (105-106). As the island cradles him, Robinson is warmed and moved by "La présence presque charnelle de l'île contre lui" (105). Their physical contact is highly erotic, for the red valley "était nue, cette terre qui l'enveloppait. Il se mit nu lui-même" (105). Robinson stretches out like a cross to embrace his island/wife "de toutes ses forces," and to caress her with his breath (105). She returns his caress sending him "au visage une bouffée surchargée d'odeurs," and the marriage is consummated between the valley and "celui qui épousa la terre" (105, 106). As Robinson receives an ovation for his lovemaking prowess from three pines as well as the tropical forest, he realizes that "combe" rhymes with an essential part of the female anatomy: "Les lombes . . . où dorment les énergies secrètes de la détente et du spasme" (106).

Robinson finds confirmation of his role as Speranza's spouse in his biblical readings, for example in Isaiah 62:4: "on t'appellera Mon-plaisir-en-elle et ta terre l'Epousée. Car Yahweh mettra son plaisir en toi, et ta terre aura un époux" (112).

Speranza fulfills her role of obedient wife as dictated by the social code of the Old Testament. Thus appearing to Robinson bathed in "une splendeur nuptiale . . . Speranza était prosternée à ses pieds" (112). Robinson incorporates these biblical verses depicting woman as submissive earth or garden into the prelude to his lovemaking. While strolling toward Speranza's amorous red valley, "il proférait les versets de l'époux, puis se taisant, il écoutait chanter en lui les répons de l'épouse" (114).

After a year of happy marital relations with the red valley, she presents Robinson with female offspring - "de belles fleurs blanches" - which grow nowhere else on the island (114). His memory of the Song of Song's promise of mandrake flowers prompts Robinson to carefully dig up one of his flower children, whose root "figurait indiscutablement le corps d'une petite fille" (115). Having created this tiny replica of human life with Speranza, Robinson "avait humanisé celle qu'il pouvait bien désormais appeler son épouse d'une façon incomparablement plus profonde que toutes les entreprises du gouverneur" (115).

Although Robinson cherishes his husband/wife bond with Speranza far more than their bond of Governor/subject, the unexpected arrival of Vendredi temporarily gives new meaning to this latter relationship. As previously indicated, Vendredi escapes from his fellow tribe members who intended to sacrifice him on Speranza's shore. Before Vendredi's arrival, Robinson finds the cornucopia of the island's harvests superfluous for her population of one. But the addition of this human Other briefly gives meaning to Robinson's highly productive regimen. With his newfound servant, Robinson augments the exhausting list of daily chores, assigning to Vendredi such frivolous tasks as waxing the pebbles on the island. But Vendredi soon serves as a double catalyst, triggering the destruction of this rigidly organized island universe and leading Robinson to ostensibly transcend human sexuality.

The first major change which Vendredi effects is an undermining of the relationship between Robinson and his island/spouse. Robinson eagerly approaches his beloved spouse one night, ready to receive his lover in "sa robe soyeuse qu'un très léger souffle creusait parfois d'ondulations molles" (138). Excited by the valley's "haleine parfumée," Robinson swells with paternal pride while noting the abundance of his floral offspring (138). Preparing to make love with his valley/spouse, he presses a flower against his lips and suddenly spies a mandrake with striped flowers. The charm of this night of tropical passion suddenly turns into jealous suspicions that Vendredi has been lying with his valley/wife. Later on, Robinson returns to the sensuous valley seeking relief from his frustrations in dealing with Vendredi. Robinson is again keenly attracted to this "terre féminine," "avec ses plis accueillants et ses ondulations lascives" (144). Savoring his forthcoming physical pleasure, Robinson selects the precise spot in the valley where he will make love with his spouse. Just then the sight of "deux petites fesses noires" corroborates his suspicions that Vendredi is indeed sharing the affections of his valley/wife (145). Rather than exploding against his spouse, Robinson's anger initially falls upon Vendredi whom he nearly kills. But his subsequent biblical readings point the finger of blame at his valley/spouse. His assessment of guilt changed by verses of Hosea which condemn the wife as harlot and announce the dissolution of the marriage, Robinson "s'adresse à ses filles, les mandragores, et les prévient contre leur mère, la terre adultère" (146).

Robinson's condemnation of his valley/wife continues a misogynist pattern begun with the breaking off of his relationship with the tree Quillai. In both cases, the "female" is ultimately deemed the guilty party. Although he actually suffers a painful ant bite, in Robinson's imagination Quillai has transmitted a venereal disease to him. Similarly, it is Vendredi's imitation of Robinson's lovemaking with the red valley which produces the striped flower children. But in his final judgment, Robinson blames not the ant but

Quillai, not Vendredi but the red valley. Having evolved from the fetus of Speranza's womb/cave to the licentious lover of her tree to the spouse of her red valley and father of her white mandrake flowers, Robinson is now ready to surpass male heterosexuality.

When Vendredi's careless pipe smoking causes a tremendous explosion and fire, only minute traces are left of Robinson's formerly intricate civilization. This abrupt destruction of his phallogocentric, time-centered order triggers Robinson's transformation from stern, overly-structured heterosexual to carefree androgyne. And having abandoned Speranza as an unfaithful spouse, Robinson ascends from heterosexuality to asexual solarization under the tutelage of Vendredi. With Vendredi as his mentor, Robinson indulges not in conjugal relations with Speranza but in an asexual union with the sun: a "coît solaire," "une jubilation douce . . . aussi longtemps que le soleil-dieu me baigne de ses rayons" (185). One of the most striking features of Robinson's transformation is the fact that he is now in perfect harmony with Speranza's female space. Gone is the menace of the uncharted island which prompted Robinson to tirelessly clarify, identify and quantify her every feature. Robinson's new mind-set endorses his wholehearted participation in Speranza's timelessness without the guilt which previously accompanied his brief stays in the *souille* or the cave.

Although Speranza no longer serves as Robinson's lover or spouse, the novel's ending reprises her cave's contradictory role as tomb/womb. After Robinson has been on the island for nearly thirty years, an English ship lands on Speranza's shores. In spite of having dissolved his bonds of marriage to the island, Robinson is totally appalled by the rape of Speranza by the British sailors who burn her fields and slaughter her goats as sport. He therefore decides to remain upon the island with Vendredi rather than return to "civilization" with his fellow Englishmen. But seduced by the beauty of the English vessel, Vendredi steals away to join the crew of the *Whitebird* while the ship's mistreated cabin boy comes ashore to Speranza. When Robinson discovers Vendredi's absence, he

chooses to slip peacefully into death in the cave rather than people his hours of solitude with a reconstruction of his elaborate edifices, fort and farm. But as Robinson returns to die within Speranza's cave, the coffin/cave is once again womb/cave giving "birth" to the *Whitebird*'s abused cabin boy. Emerging from Speranza's womb, this stowaway, Jaan, is symbolically "reborn" as Robinson's son: "Quelques contorsions le libérèrent de l'étroit orifice" (203).

Pertinent to our discussion is not only the cave's status as coffin/womb but also the highlighting of Robinson's femaleness. Transformed as an androgyne, Robinson has both male and female components. On the one hand, he is a perfect masculine specimen, with his chest "comme un bouclier d'airain" and his legs "massives et inébranlables comme des colonnes" (205). At the same time, the stowaway cabin boy appeals to Robinson's femaleness. He invites Jaan to follow him, gently taking the child by the hand and rechristening him Jeudi. Since the boy's physical and emotional mistreatment tugs at Robinson's heart strings, it is obvious that he will serve as tender nurturer for his newfound son.

Chapter seven will carefully examine the questions raised by the Tournierian androgyne, including an issue we raised vis-à-vis Jouve's prose: the elimination of the female as separate entity. But the androgyne aside, the female portrait within *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* is predominately negative and reminiscent of that within Jouve's prose. Apart from the females of Robinson's memories, *Vendredi*'s only human female role is that of a deadly sorceress who visits the island twice, slips into a narcotic trance and capriciously selects sacrificial victims. As we have mentioned, this soothsayer is reminiscent of the link between death and such Jouvian characters as the bewitched Dorothée/Gravida of "La Victime." And similar to Jouve's portrayal of mothers as figures of absence (for example in *Paulina 1880*, "La Victime," etc.), *Vendredi* highlights the emotional distance not only between Robinson and his mother but also

between Robinson and his English wife. Mothers have ties to death in Jouve's prose, for example the mothers of Paulina, Dorothée and Léonide's symbolic mother, Hélène. This is also the case in Tournier's *Vendredi*, where Robinson is haunted by his mother in the island's coffin/cave. Another Jouvian theme - that of woman as noxious, fatal lure - is important in *Vendredi* as well. In "La Victime," Dorothée/Gravida tempts Waldemar and Simonin to death, and subsequently reeks first of sour apples then of a putrid cadaver. Similarly, the tantalizing vision of his deceased sister entices Robinson to fatal abandon in the *souille*, the foul-smelling wallowing-hole. And to the newly-arrived Robinson, Speranza herself is comparable to the *souille*: both are untamed female spaces equated with sinful vice. This negative aspect of Speranza takes on the attribute of infidelity when Robinson discovers her striped flower children. But although Speranza's lovemaking with Vendredi tarnishes her image, Robinson loses his fear of her timeless female space under the tutelage of his Indian companion. Yet the island retains a characteristic reminiscent of Jouve's Hélène from "Dans les Années profondes": that of woman as *topos*. But in her role as *topos*, Hélène is pristine and alpine whereas Speranza is the licentious, tropical "terre adultère" later raped by bawdy sailors (V 146). Victimized by men, Speranza endures agricultural and amorous exploitation by Robinson and Vendredi and violent brutalization by the *Whitebird*'s crew members.

Clearly, the female portrait is predominantly negative both in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* and in Jouve's prose. In addition, both Tournier's first novel and Jouve's prose remain faithful to the stereotypical portrayal of woman as wife, lover, mother or sister fostering what Judith Butler would refer to as the "illusion of coherent gender norms" (*Gender Trouble* 17). As we shall now see, Tournier's second novel, *Le Roi des aulnes* (1970), echoes the negative elements of the depiction of heterosexual females we have treated thus far.

Similar to *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, an absent and indifferent mother is an important element of the female portrait in *Le Roi des aulnes*. As we have stated, the adult Robinson is still bothered by the fact that his mother never once embraced him or his siblings. This physical and emotional distance is then magnified by Robinson's shipwreck, which permanently places an unbridgeable gap between Robinson and his mother, his wife, *et al*. But although Mme Crusoé remained a distant figure throughout his childhood, Robinson's siblings offered another avenue for the fulfillment of his emotional needs. This bonding with siblings is not available to the lonely protagonist of *Le Roi des aulnes* - Abel Tiffauges. As an only child, Abel has no siblings to counterbalance the emotional gulf which distances him from his inexplicably absent mother. And during his dismal childhood, Abel is lulled to sleep not by his mother but by "la vieille Marie" whose foolish rhyme "faisait se recroqueviller mon âme transie de chagrin au fond de sa grotte la plus sombre " (61). Already numb with unhappiness, Abel is depressed all the more by these lyrics sung by his substitute maternal figure:

> Quand j'y songe
> Mon coeur s'allonge
> Comme une éponge
> Que l'on plonge
> Dans un gouffre
> Plein de soufre
> Où l'on souffre des tourments si grands, si grands, si grands . . . (61)

Mirroring the maternal void young Abel felt at home, his boarding school, Saint-Christophe, is a milieu so somber and repressive that he describes its resident pupils as miserable "orphelins, mal chauffés, mal nourris, jamais lavés" (29). Although Tiffauges deems that the parents of Saint-Christophe's charges have forsaken their offspring by abandoning them within the school's inhospitable walls, his first person narration logically highlights his own feelings of neglect. Thrust into this environment totally

devoid of maternal affection, he is at the very bottom of the hierarchy of power at Saint-Christophe. Both "chétif et laid," he is forced to bear the brunt "[des] attaques même des plus lâches, [des] . . . coups même des plus faibles" (25).

The unexplained absence of Madame Tiffauges is most noticeable in the aftermath of her son's unjust implication in a fire set at the school. Fearing severe punishment for this fire in which he played no part, Abel escapes from Saint-Christophe and returns home by train. But rather than being met by a mother and father eager to hear their son's version of the story, he is met only by his father. Displaying his usual "inébranlable indifférence [et] . . . froideur," Abel's father coldly informs him that - had a train been available - he would have been forced to return immediately to Saint-Christophe (100). As this is not the case, he is allowed to spend that night in his own bed. Although her absence is not explained, Abel's mother is never mentioned regarding his brief stay at home. In this environment exuding not maternal warmth but paternal coldness, Tiffauges notes "je m'y sentis aussi étranger qu'à Saint-Christophe" (101). Although his journal entries make mention of his father, Tiffauges's mother remains conspicuously absent, leaving the reader to ponder whether her absence is due to death, divorce or abandonment. Tiffauges mentions her directly only once, concerning his coloring and self-assessment as a nomad. He explains that "Ce teint bistre et ces cheveux plats et noirs, c'est de ma mère que je les tiens, car elle ressemblait à une gitane" (56). Finally, the limited nature of Madame Tiffauges's role in her son's life is highlighted by his frequent references to himself as an orphan. Thus pondering the intimate family life of his young friend Martine, the adult Tiffauges muses "Moi qui n'ai jamais eu de famille, comme j'aimerais m'asseoir parmi eux, m'enfermer dans cette cellule close dont l'atmosphère doit être d'une qualité particulière et d'une densité admirable!" (184)

Whereas Tiffauges's journal makes only one concrete reference to his mother, his lover Rachel is accorded an important role. Rachel has various qualities which suggest at

first that she might strike a positive note for women within *Le Roi des aulnes*. She is a self-assured, traveling accountant whose clients entrust her with confidential documents. In addition to her professional success and independence, Rachel has various positive personality traits which emerge in her relationship with Tiffauges. In his journal he applauds "son sens de la drôlerie . . . une gaieté tonique qu'elle sait faire jaillir de la grisaille de la vie" (19). He explains that he benefits from Rachel's sense of humor and tonic merriment "[qui] avaient une influence bienfaisante sur mon naturel volontiers atrabilaire" (19). While providing Tiffauges with much needed comic relief, Rachel occupies a very important position in his life: "C'était ma femme. Non pas mon épouse devant Dieu et les hommes, mais la femme de ma vie . . . l'être féminin de mon univers personnel" (17). And importantly, next to Rachel's body "ample, accueillant, maternel" Tiffauges finally has access to the maternal component of which his life was totally devoid (32).

Tiffauges's enthusiasm for this relationship is unable to compensate for the lovers' sexual incompatibility. First Rachel equates her lover's hasty ejaculation to making love "comme un serin" (20). Although this derogatory assessment plagues Tiffauges for six months, Rachel's subsequent criticisms are destined to change the course of his life. Chiding her lover for his voracious rapidity in lovemaking, Rachel states "Tu me ravales au niveau du bifteck . . . Tu n'es pas un amant, tu es un ogre" (21-22). After labeling her lover's sexual ineptitude as ogreish, Rachel permanently breaks off their relationship. Emotionally abandoned by his mother at a very young age, the mature Tiffauges is also deeply wounded by his lover's departure which he carries "au fond de moi comme une blessure" (41).

Rachel's epithet and her departure close the chapter on Tiffauges's heterosexuality and serve as catalyst to his transformation into full-fledged ogre. Tiffauges himself mentions the role of Rachel's epithet in this metamorphosis: "En prononçant cette simple

phrase, Rachel a fait surgir le fantôme d'un enfant monstrueux, d'une précocité effrayante, d'une puérilité déconcertante dont le souvenir prend possession de moi avec une impérieuse souveraineté. Nestor" (22). By saying the word "ogre," Rachel sets off a powerful and ostensibly prophetic association of words within Tiffauges's brain. For him "ogre" is synonymous with Nestor, Saint-Christophe's most mysterious and privileged pupil who served both as Tiffauges's mentor and "le succédané d'une présence protectrice maternelle qui lui faisait terriblement défaut" (Bouloumié 101). Labeled an ogre by Rachel, Tiffauges literally takes on the characteristics of his deceased, ogreish classmate: voracious appetite, imposing physical stature, poor eyesight and fixation with carrying children. Thus uttering the word "ogre" is tantamount to turning a magical key which unlocks Tiffauges's childhood storehouse of Nestorian memories and initiates his transformation into an ogre.

We shall carefully examine Tiffauges's metamorphosis later, but for now we wish to highlight Rachel's importance to the topic of femaleness in *Le Roi des aulnes*. First of all, we have mentioned that her portrait contains positive elements for she is a witty, self-assured career woman. She also provides Tiffauges with the maternal component sorely lacking in his life. But her favorable influence is of very limited duration. By rejecting her lover, she takes away the novel's only positive maternal element and undermines Tiffauges's heterosexuality. Rachel does act as catalyst for her lover's ogreish transformation, but this role brings to mind a statement previously quoted from Trista Selous. Regarding the implications of woman's traditional role as catalyst in literature, Selous says that - endowed with "the power of the catalyst rather than of the agent . . . woman herself seems somehow to disappear as an independent entity" (1). Indeed, after serving as catalyst to Tiffauges's metamorphosis, Rachel disappears and woman is soon reduced to a decidedly minor feature of *Le Roi des aulnes*.

While Rachel sparks Tiffauges's metamorphosis, all females with whom he has subsequent relationships either gauge or shape this transformation. In his initial phase as ogre, Tiffauges seeks to satiate his gargantuan appetite with abundant quantities of steak tartar and finally with mounds of raw, unseasoned meat. The female character Mademoiselle Toupie serves as the first gauge of Tiffauges's transformation, for she reacts in horror at his love for "la franche nudité de la chair . . . ce carnage" (112). In addition to serving as vegetarian counterpoint to the ravenous meat-eater Tiffauges, Mademoiselle Toupie also acts as killjoy during his first moment of pedophilic bliss. In keeping with the pedophilic component of Nestor's ogreish legacy, Tiffauges is enveloped with rapture when carrying a young wounded mechanic after an accident at his garage. He explains that this *jouissance* is "phoric": the euphoria derived from carrying a child.[6] Having already cast aspersions on Tiffauges's carnivorous passion, Mademoiselle Toupie now cuts short his first precious, euphoric moment. In her authoritative insistence that the injured Jeannot be taken to the hospital immediately, Tiffauges explains that "Ce fut Mlle Toupie qui rompit le charme" (131).

After experiencing *jouissance* in carrying a child, Tiffauges yearns to figuratively supplement his carnivorous fare with children. Thinking back to the chorus of children's voices at Saint-Christophe, Tiffauges now spends his leisure hours recording the symphony of squeals of children at play. To enhance his role as ogre, he captures not only the voices but also images of his prey by means of photography. Indulging what David Bevan refers to as his "pédophilie croissante," Tiffauges hunts children with his camera and tape recorder (34). Intrigued with a young girl named Martine, Tiffauges stalks her from a safe distance until he deems it safe to introduce himself. He quickly gains her confidence, enabling him to drive her partway home and to learn intimate details of her

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[6]William Cloonan explains that "la phorie" is an example of non-genital sexuality but "it might well stand for any form of sexual expression that seeks emotional gratification but does not aim at reproduction" (*Michel Tournier* 52).

family life. Although his relationship with Martine is not sexual, it does initially offer the promise of happiness reminiscent of Tiffauges's liaison with Rachel: an acceptance of Tiffauges which fosters his own self-acceptance. However this relationship with Martine finishes in an even more devastating fashion than the liaison with Rachel. While Rachel rejects her lover and abandons him, Martine falsely accuses Tiffauges of having raped her. Martine's denunciation to the police has a dual result. In the first place it kindles a misogynic hatred within Tiffauges, changing his admiration of Martine's "étonnante beauté" to a disdain for not only "cette diablesse" but for all young girls as "petit[s] garçon[s] 'manqué[s]' " (163; 198; 204). Deeming that all girls are coquettish, Tiffauges concludes that in actuality "la petite fille proprement dite n'est nulle part . . . ce sont des femmes naines" (204). And, secondly, Martine's denunciation shapes Tiffauges's transformation, for it determines that the future love objects of the pedophilic ogre will be exclusively masculine. Since Tiffauges resolves that "J'adore toujours les enfants, mais à l'exception désormais des petites filles," the traitress Martine is the last flesh and blood female with whom he has a personal relationship (204).

Introduced during the period of Tiffauges's fixation with Martine, the small role of Madame Eugénie is the quintessence of a negative portrait of femaleness. A large woman of "paresse végétale" armed with false promises of a forthcoming inheritance, Mme Eugénie "s'incrusta inexpugnablement" forty years ago into the apartment of a helpful stranger (178). Although she never receives a cent of inheritance, Mme Eugénie remains "affalée sur une chaise, énorme, blanche, spongieuse" as her male companion busily "fait le ménage, les courses, la cuisine et la vaisselle outre ses heures d'atelier" (179). Chirping along in a voice prone to sudden changes of register, Mme Eugénie incessantly and maliciously slanders her landlord Tiffauges and all of her acquaintances.

Chattering like a glockenspiel, Mme Eugénie provides insight into Tiffauges's ogreish metamorphosis. She is aware that his voracious hunger for raw beef has

transformed into an appetite for young human flesh "tasted" through the lens of his camera. Thus Mme Eugénie describes Tiffauges's return from one of his "chasses photographiques" as if she were describing his earlier trips to the butcher shop: "Voilà M. Tiffauges qui revient du marché avec sa provision de chair fraîche. Il va maintenant s'enfermer dans le noir pour manger tout ça" (180).

But rather than remaining a harmless gossip, Mme Eugénie's role soon takes a sinister turn regarding the execution of condemned murderer Eugène Weidmann and the conviction of Tiffauges. Her keen and morbid curiosity about the Weidmann case is the grisly pinnacle of her negative portrait. Having devotedly followed this case, she begs Tiffauges to chauffeur her to the execution along with three female friends. Tiffauges is repulsed by this female group which eagerly approaches the beheading as if desiring to get their money's worth at a sporting event. Due to their "ignoble fébrilité," the ladies insist upon an extremely early departure "afin de s'assurer des places de premier choix" (185, 186). Although her entire band of female friends anxiously anticipates the fall of the guillotine's blade, Mme Eugénie is clearly the avatar of bloodthirsty enthusiasm. As the eager group walks in a line toward the execution site, the normally sedentary Mme Eugénie strides out to lead the way. When the ladies turn the beheading into a picnic by selecting a bistro as their vantage point, Mme Eugénie is in the forefront once again elbowing her way to select the group's table and chairs. Next this "cheftaine" literally becomes the pinnacle of the bloodthirsty tableau at the cafe by hoisting her chair onto the table (187). Armed with her opera glasses and coffee thermoses, Mme Eugénie "trône au-dessus de la mêlée, comme la divinité des Hautes Œuvres qui vont s'accomplir" (187).

For Tiffauges's future, Mme Eugénie does indeed act as the prognosticator of forthcoming condemnation. Just before the guillotine blade falls, she loudly proclaims Tiffauges's physical resemblance to the murderer foreshadowing her denunciation of Tiffauges to the police. Thus paralleling her enthusiasm at Weidmann's beheading, she

plays an active part in Tiffauges's criminal conviction for the rape of Martine. Transformed into a police informant, she eagerly describes both her landlord's collection of pedophilic photographs and the phoric ecstasy he experienced when lifting his young injured mechanic.

In spite of the damning testimony of Martine and Mme Eugénie, mobilization for the Second World War liberates Tiffauges from his twenty year prison sentence. Noteworthy for our topic of femaleness is the fact that the remaining three hundred and seventy-four pages of *Le Roi des aulnes* contain only three minor female characters whose role is to showcase Tiffauges's ogreish transformation. Tiffauges meets the first of these characters, Madame Unruh, while serving in a carrier pigeon unit of the French Army's communication division. Scouring the countryside to recruit pigeons for the army's loft, Tiffauges is struck by the exotic beauty of a silvery pigeon. Tracking this bird leads him to Mme Unruh's home, for he is told that she continues to care for her deceased husband's collection of rare and unusual pigeons. This visit turns up not only an extraordinary pair of russet twin pigeons but also the striking silver pigeon Mme Unruh had wished to keep hidden. Although she parts with the red pigeons with no difficulty, she turns ashen when Tiffauges discovers the silver pigeon. In a few moving sentences she begs Tiffauges not to take the latter pigeon for "Cet oiseau, mon mari avait voulu en faire la colombe symbolique de notre amour et de notre union. C'est beaucoup plus qu'un simple volatile . . ." (229) What resigns her to this loss is the realization that "toutes ses supplications se briseraient sur un impératif prédateur qui était ce qu'il y avait en lui de plus inflexible et de moins humain" ( 229, emphases mine). Her resolve to keep this symbol of her husband's love is melted by Tiffauges's inflexible bestiality, consequently highlighting his status as ogre.

Frau Dorn is another of the female cameo roles showcasing Tiffauges's metamorphosis as ogre in *Le Roi des aulnes*. When he meets Frau Dorn, Tiffauges has

already made the incredible transformation from lowly French prisoner of war to unofficial supervisor within the German napola of Kaltenborn. As William Cloonan explains, the napola was "a school that trains boys for eventual service in the S. S." (*Michel Tournier* 39). It is Tiffauges's intimate association with the *Jungmannen* of the napola which leads him to seek Frau Dorn's services. After a mass hair cutting session at Kaltenborn, Tiffauges hatches a truly ogreish plan for conserving his beloved boys' hair clippings: the weaving of the hair into a cape. He approaches an outsider to the napola - the carder Frau Dorn - in order to obtain this golden fleece. Initially tempted by Tiffauges's offer of a haunch of venison, Frau Dorn reacts with sheer horror when he explains the nature of his request: "Elle a été prise d'un tremblement soudain, et elle a fui à reculons, en répétant 'Non, non, non,' avec des gestes des mains pour repousser à la fois le cuissot, le sac de cheveux et moi-même" (511). Thus rather than achieving the status of a fully developed, female character, Frau Dorn's cameo merely spotlights Tiffauges's role as consummate ogre.

Whereas a napola outsider - Frau Dorn - reacts in terror to Tiffauges's proposal, a napola insider and sole female resident - Frau Netta - apparently complies with his new request that the hair clippings serve as stuffing for a mattress, quilt and pillow . While Tiffauges does not specifically state that it is Frau Netta who stitches up his hair-filled treasures, he implies this with the following statement about the hair: "Cette sotte de Frau Netta qui parlait de les lessiver auparavant!" (511) And since *Le Roi des aulnes* portrays Hitler as the avatar of ogreish behavior, it is fitting that a thoroughly indoctrinated member of his Kaltenborn napola be undisturbed by Tiffauges's ogreish request.[7] Living in the heart of the microcosmic Nazi society of Kaltenborn, she takes in stride this demand which horrifies the napola outsider, Frau Dorn. Similarly, Tiffauges's previous comments portray Frau Netta not as a warm, surrogate maternal figure to the napola's four

[7]**Arlette Bouloumié stresses that in addition to portraying Hitler as the ultimate ogre, *Le Roi des aulnes* also implies that "L'ogre, c'est la guerre, c'est le nazisme" (19-20).**

hundred *Jungmannen* but rather as an exemplary model of preferred party conduct. Thus, although she does not preach Nazi ideology, "toute sa conduite indiquait qu'elle lui appartenait corps et âme" (385). Even upon receiving a letter informing her that one of her sons has disappeared in battle, Frau Netta "ne manifesta aucune émotion" (385). Quickly surrounded by a group of her charges, "sans trahir sa douleur" she stoically fulfills her duties (386).

Against the backdrop of an absent mother and a depressing nursemaid, the five hundred and eighty-one pages of *Le Roi des aulnes* contain merely seven female roles: Rachel, Martine, Madame Eugénie, Mademoiselle Toupie, Madame Unruh, Frau Dorn and Frau Netta. Two of these females are crucial to Tiffauges's metamorphosis as ogre: Rachel acts as catalyst to this transformation while Martine's betrayal determines that the ogre's love objects will be exclusively male children. Both Rachel and Martine enact a damaging personal rejection of Tiffauges: Rachel abandons him due to his sexual ineptitude while Martine unjustly accuses him of rape - a false testimony corroborated by Mme Eugénie. Rather than playing an important role in their own right, the novel's four remaining female cameos are mere reactions to Tiffauges's deeds - barometers to gauge his metamorphosis as ogre. Mlle Toupie reacts to his gargantuan, carnivorous appetite and the phoric bliss he experiences carrying a child. Giving up the feathered symbol of her love for her deceased husband, Mme Unruh highlights Tiffauges's inflexible "impératif prédateur" (229). And finally - in keeping with their status as napola insider and outsider - Frau Netta and Frau Dorn provide two poles of reaction to Tiffauges's request to conserve his beloved boys' hair clippings.

In addition to the female characterizations discussed above, an important component of the female portrait within *Le Roi des aulnes* is that of female as *topos*. In a previous quotation from Alice Jardine, we cited the tradition established by Greek philosophy according to which "the *techne* and time have connoted the male; *physis* and

space the female" (24-25). We have already noted that the prose works of Michel Tournier and Pierre Jean Jouve contain examples of woman as *topos*, for example Jouve's Dorothée of "La Victime" and Hélène of "Dans les Années profondes" and Tournier's Speranza of *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*. According to Tiffauges, not all women are *topos* for there are two categories of women - "femme-paysage" and "femme-bibelot": "La femme-bibelot que l'on peut manier, manipuler, embrasser du regard, et qui est l'ornement d'une vie d'homme. Et la femme-paysage. Celle-là, on la visite, on s'y engage, on risque de s'y perdre" (32). Tiffauges adds that Rachel belongs to the category of *femme-paysage*. Admittedly, Rachel's classification as *femme-paysage* is not nearly as developed in her characterization as in that of Jouve's Hélène and Tournier's Speranza. Nevertheless, Tiffauges's assessment of his former lover is accurate in that he is if not lost at least permanently rerouted into an ogreish vocation as result of his involvement with this *femme-paysage*.

In our discussion of Speranza as female *topos* in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, we noted that this portrait of the island depicts female presence as incomplete. Although Robinson evolves to view the island as an exotic female to be courted (the tree Quillai) and then wed (the red valley), nevertheless Speranza's shape is truncated: "un corps féminin sans tête" (V 40). Tiffauges's geographical assessment of Rachel also depicts woman as a decapitated human being. Describing Rachel as *femme-paysage* equipped with "bassin méditerranéen," "promontoire," and "massifs," he deems that woman's "ventre décapité" is certainly inadequate to serve as her real sexual center (32-33; emphasis mine). He concludes that the role of "sexe de la femme" should have been accorded to a part of the female physique demonstrating plenitude: "la poitrine qui porte triomphalement ses deux cornes d'abondance" (33).

Tiffauges also uses the woman as *topos* analogy regarding his temporary love object - young Martine. As an only child who grew up in a Catholic boarding school for

boys, he adds that "l'enfant femelle [est] pour moi une *terra incognita* que je brûle d'explorer" (163). Rejected by Rachel and condemned by Martine, Tiffauges is permanently turned away from this exploration of the flesh and blood *femme-paysage*. Nevertheless his relationship with mother earth herself is an important final element of femaleness within *Le Roi des aulnes*.

Faithful to the ogre's image bequeathed to him by the deceased Nestor, "la grande affaire" of Tiffauges's life is "Les signes, le déchiffrement des signes" (40). But Tiffauges explains that France is a "terre océanique, noyée de brumes, et aux lignes gommées par d'infinis dégradés" (280). Rather than providing him with concrete and propitious signs, on the female earth of his homeland "tout se perdait en impressions, en gestes vagues, en totalités inachevées, dans des ciels brouillés" (280-81). Thus he lives in France "en homme éteint, en somnambule, rêvant sans cesse d'un éveil, d'une rupture qui me libérera et me permettra d'être enfin moi-même" (108).

Mobilization for the war provides Tiffauges with a *rupture*, freeing him both from prison and from the larval stage of his Nestorian transformation in France. Soon taken prisoner in Strasbourg and sent to East Prussia, Tiffauges's subsequent comments reveal his enthusiasm for his adopted Mother Prussia. In his mind Paris and France are "comme vêtements souillés" which fate has allowed him to strip off in exchange for "la lumière" and dazzling revelations of the east (249-50). While his fellow prisoners complain that he plunges into the construction of drainage fields with too much enthusiasm, he muses "qu'à fouiller ainsi la terre, il lui semblait hâter la délivrance d'un message à lui seul déstiné" (261).

In accordance with Tiffauges's conception of the universe, all is meaningful sign and the female earth is tantamount to a signboard upon which his destiny is inscribed in a Nestorian code. But whereas the signboard of France was gray and indistinct, Colin Davis explains that East Prussia is "a text waiting to be read" (40). Tiffauges describes

this highly legible *porte-signe* as "Un pays noir et blanc . . . Peu de gris, peu de couleurs, une page blanche couverte de signes noirs" (262). The features of Mother Prussia herself inspire this rendering of black and white. Her "page blanche" corresponds to her light sandy beaches, fields of white flax and snow-covered fields while her "signes noirs" represent her peat bogs, marshes, and dark shadows of pine and alder trees (262).[8]

Awaiting the revelation of signs of his superhuman destiny from the Prussian countryside, Tiffauges woos her in a manner reminiscent of Robinson and his island lover. But whereas Robinson impregnates Speranza with his semen, Tiffauges fertilizes his beloved Prussian soil with his excrement. Nevertheless the two characters describe their relationship with the female earth in strikingly similar terms. After Robinson has broken off his liaison with the tree Quillai, he then takes the red valley as his wife. Similarly, Tiffauges explains that his prison duty of constructing a system of ditches across Prussia's soil is only "des fiançailles en somme, et après, par une de ces inversions radicales qui articulaient sa vie, il en deviendrait le maître" (263). With his excrement, Tiffauges "consommait son union intime et féconde avec la terre prussienne" (RA 265), while with his semen Robinson becomes "celui qui épousa la terre" (V 106).

In Tiffauges's estimation, his adoptive motherland slowly accords him the great stature to which he is destined, labeled an "ascension rapide et spectaculaire" by Arlette Bouloumié (173). While still prisoner of war, Tiffauges is chosen to transport supplies to the camp by truck and is even permitted to carry out these duties alone. Enjoying tremendous freedom for a prison of war, Tiffauges is able to attend a presentation concerning the exhumed body of an ancient peat-bog man - named *le roi des aulnes* for the "Erl-King" of Goethe's ballad. Although he technically remains a prisoner, Tiffauges subsequently experiences a phenomenal rise in social stature from assistant

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[8]David Bevan mentions that the relationship between Tiffauges and the "page blanche" of the Prussian countryside harks back to "le lien entre . . . Tiffauges et une page blanche" established in writing sessions with his mentor Nestor (64).

forester of the Rominten Wildlife Reserve, to staff member, chief recruiter and, finally, unofficial supervisor of the Kaltenborn napola. Astride his imposing horse, Tiffauges scours the countryside to select perfect specimens for the napola. But it is finally the discovery of an imperfect specimen - the half-dead Jewish child Ephraïm - which allows Tiffauges to fully demonstrate his nurturing skills. Carefully hiding the child in an attic garret, Tiffauges slowly brings him back to life while his charge enlightens him concerning Nazi atrocities.

In keeping with Tiffauges's philosophy, his adoptive motherland holds in her hands "les clés du royaume pour lequel il était né" (429). But before his arrest by the Gestapo, the napola's Count Herbert von Kaltenborn reveals the metaphorical blindness of Tiffauges's glorious migration towards the hallowed motherland of Prussia. He states that Tiffauges resembles "le papillon qui tournoie dans la nuit [et qui] finit toujours par trouver la source de lumière qui l'enivre et le tue" (472-73). Thus, rather than serving as nurturing, welcoming mother, the count indicates that Mother Prussia is a dazzling light which blinds her moth/son, Tiffauges. To a reader unfamiliar with *Le Roi des aulnes*, the count's negative assessment may seem to clash with Tiffauges's awe of Mother Prussia. In actuality this ominous role of Tiffauges's adoptive land demonstrates an element of his legacy from the deceased Nestor: that of the "inversion maligne" (520). Tiffauges explains that the "inversion maligne" is related to "un certain tour de mon destin, toujours menaçant" which is capable of distorting even the most propitious prognostication of his future into an omen of doom (520). He adds that this evil transformation occurs in direct proportion to the degree of his favorable appraisal of the sign. Thus "Toutes les essences que j'ai dévoilées et portées à incandescence peuvent demain, ce soir même, *changer de signe* et brûler d'un feu d'autant plus infernal que je les aurai plus magnifiquement exaltées" ( 520). It is this very *inversion maligne* which takes place in the relationship between Tiffauges and Mother Prussia. Initially he perceives her role as that of an

auspicious, black and white signboard holding the keys to his predestined, glorious ascension. This is the nurturing mother earth upon whom Tiffauges defecates to consummate their union - the phoric mother whose soil lovingly "carries" her privileged child, Tiffauges. But paralleling the collapse of his beloved Nazi regime and the destruction of Kaltenborn, Tiffauges's mother earth ultimately undergoes an *inversion maligne*. As Russian troops invade the napola, Tiffauges flees with Ephraïm on his shoulders - a consummate phoric act of mother earth bearing man/steed bearing the little Jewish Star-Bearer. Tiffauges surmises that even if they are unable to reach safety, he will be eternally preserved in the moor in imitation of the recently exhumed peat-bog man, the *roi des aulnes*. In the end, Tiffauges and Ephraïm are engulfed in the swamp corroborating the count's dire prediction.

In keeping with her *inversion maligne*, Mother Prussia executes a sinister role which exceeds that of Goethe's Erl-King. In Goethe's ballad, a father rides off with his child protecting him from the dangers of the night. But in spite of the father's efforts, the invisible Erl-King snatches the life from the boy's body. Similarly, Tiffauges serves as guardian and steed for Ephraïm in an effort to deliver him to safety. His attempt is of no avail as the formerly phoric earth takes Ephraïm's life just as the Erl-King took that of the devoted father's son. But whereas the father of Goethe's ballad survives the imperceptible assault of the Erl-King, in *Le Roi des aulnes* the devouring mother earth swallows both the Child-Carrier and his diminutive Star-Bearer.

The ending of *Le Roi des aulnes* enhances the novel's negative female component while underlining Prussia's transformation from nurturing spouse/mother and auspicious signboard to bloodthirsty ogress. At the novel's end, Tiffauges and Ephraïm are consumed by a treacherous trap of female matter Françoise Merllié refers to as "le limon maternel" (*Michel Tournier* 33). The perilous features of this marshy terrain are all of the female gender: the mud itself ("la vase"), the muddy snowdrifts ("les congères boueuses,"

feminine plural), the treacherous heather ("la brande"), and the soggy fen ("la landèche") ( 580; emphases mine). Thus dangerous female substances are instrumental in thwarting Tiffauges's goal of becoming "le maître" of Mother Prussia and raising her "à une puissance supérieure, encore jamais atteinte" ( 263, 283). Her perilous, maternal slime is the arm of this bloodthirsty ogress who sucks Tiffauges to his death, just as she had previously devoured the *roi des aulnes* and his companion, the escaped French prisoner Bertet, and countless war dead.

The female cast of characters is both negative and decidedly limited within *Le Roi des aulnes*. Against the backdrop of an absent mother and a depressing nursemaid, Tiffauges is launched into his vocation as ogre by the mistress who abandons him - a vocation turned exclusively masculine by the false accusation of young Martine and concurring testimony by Madame Eugénie. The novel's remaining female characters - Mademoiselle Toupie, Madame Unruh, Frau Dorn and Frau Netta - have mere cameo roles. Rather than adding a significant female presence to the novel, they are reduced to barometers of Tiffauges's metamorphosis as ogre. And with her transformation from welcoming and nurturing spouse/mother to slimy ogress who devours her symbolic son, Prussia culminates the negative female portrait within *Le Roi des aulnes*.

Although *Les Météores* (1975) is another Tournierian novel which showcases male characters, this novel nonetheless contains more female roles than either *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* or *Le Roi des aulnes*. Yet with the exception of a few minor female cameos, *Les Météores* continues the pattern traced heretofore in the prose of both Jouve and Tournier: the linking of woman to absence and death.[9] In *Les Météores*,

[9] *Les Météores* contains four cameo roles of females who neither die nor abandon their lovers: Isabelle Daoudal , Denise Malacanthe, Selma Gunnarsdottir and Kumiko Sakamoto. The significance of Isabelle and Denise's roles is to illustrate the dissimilitude between the identical twins, Paul and Jean. Thus Paul prefers the artistocratic principal of the textile factory's warpers, Isabelle, whereas Jean fancies the spokesperson of the dusty, disgruntled mattress workers, the déclassée Denise. And later on, Selma and Kumiko are two of the many people Paul briefly encounters during his worldwide search for Jean. While

Edouard Surin - the patriarch of the Surin household - loses his wife and his two mistresses to death. Madame Maria-Barbara Surin meets certain death at Buchenwald due to her work with the Resistance. But since Maria-Barbara's involvement with the Resistance is not mentioned until her arrest, its true role is that of ironic counterpoint to her husband's dreams of heroic death. For the salient feature of Maria-Barbara's portrait is not her clandestine political activity but rather her role as WOMB-an. Consequently she is labeled "super-génitrix" by Jean-Didier Wolfromm (37), "une pondeuse" by Pierre de Boisdeffre ("*Les Météores*" 414) and "mère ultra-prolifique" by Jacqueline Van Baelen (206). Françoise Merllié adds that this indefatigable baby machine is "la maternité portée à son incandescence [qui] se livrait jusqu'à l'absurde" (*Michel Tournier* 85). In their treatment of Maria-Barbara, it is this role which surfaces throughout the narrations of both the novel's misogynist, omniscient male narrator and the narrative segments by male characters (Edouard Surin, his twin sons and his brother). In his initial presentation of Maria-Barbara, the omniscient narrator indicates that her pregnancies are not successive but rather "elles se fondent en une seule, elles deviennent un état normal, heureux, à peine coupé par de brèves et angoissantes vacances" (12). So keen is Maria-Barbara's desire to reproduce that this narrator states she belongs to a distinct, overly maternal race: "la race des femmes qui ne sont heureuses et équilibrées qu'enceintes ou allaitantes" (11). He adds that this prolific mother does not know exactly how many children she has. In her mind a precise head count of her brood ties in with her dread of sterilization.

Highlighted by the omniscient narrator, Maria-Barbara's exaggerated maternal vocation is also stressed in the narrations of the novel's male characters. Edouard Surin notes that his wife was pregnant immediately following their honeymoon, "et ne devait plus cesser de l'être pendant les onze années qui suivirent" (318). After making a similar statement concerning his fertile sister-in-law, Edouard's brother Alexandre affirms that

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**Selma the Icelandic tour guide lives happily with her French fiancé, Kumiko is deserted by Urs Kraus - the German artist whose talents she helped to shape.**

"Ses relevailles étaient si précipitamment suivies de recouchailles qu'on aurait dit qu'elle se faisait féconder par l'air du temps" (39). Alexandre adds that - enamored with pregnancy - his sister-in-law gives birth to twins "Comme si les délais de la gestation étaient encore trop longs pour elle" (39).[10]

Clearly, Maria-Barbara's covert political activity is merely an ironic postscript to her role as WOMB-an - the overly fertile mother incapable of recalling not only the exact number but also the names and ages of her plentiful offspring. Her absentmindedness notwithstanding, the deportation of this benevolent earth mother has serious consequences within the Surin household. Since it was Maria-Barbara who brought emotional security to Edouard's life, after her arrest "Edouard n'était plus que l'ombre de lui-même" (366). Wracked by disease and heartache, he tirelessly continues his fruitless search for his wife throughout Nazi detention camps at the war's end. Although the novel does not reveal the effect which Maria-Barbara's arrest has on her older children, it does stress its impact upon the twins. Their close geminate relationship was anchored in their mother who served as Jean and Paul's "commun port d'attache" ( 364). With the loss of this essential link, the twins are forced to rely exclusively upon each other - a situation which intensifies Jean's feelings of emotional claustrophobia and encourages him to permanently abandon Paul. Thus, although Maria-Barbara's role is primarily that of absent-minded WOMB-an, her deportation has a grave effect on three of the novel's privileged male characters: her husband and her twin sons. As Françoise Merllié explains "même si les personnages féminins sont rares et n'apparaissent que peu dans l'œuvre de Tournier, ils sont pourtant déterminants. Leur absence est active, destructrice" (*Michel Tournier* 41).

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[10]With the notable exception of her twins Paul and Jean, Maria-Barbara's abundant progeny remain numberless, faceless and offstage in *Les Météores*. Jean and Paul refer to their siblings individually and collectively as "Peter," a name which stresses the infinite proportions of the Surin brood while reserving the privilege of individual names for the twins (404).

Just as the war permanently erases the prolific Maria-Barbara from Edouard's life, so it consumes his two mistresses, Florence and Angelica. Whereas Maria-Barbara satisfies Edouard's need for tenderness throughout his adult years, his sexual appetite is satiated by his mistress, Florence. Florence's characterization contains an intellectual vibrancy lacking in that of the WOMB-an, Maria-Barbara. Edouard indicates that Florence is a keen observer endowed with abilities he lacks to "juger, moquer, sans rien renier pour autant, en maintenant intacte sa solidarité, son amour profond et intangible" (29). But although she is perspicacious in contrast to Maria-Barbara's vagueness, Florence's characterization is dominated by other aspects of her role as counterpoint to Mme Surin. Maria-Barbara is a tireless baby machine, yet Florence's long standing liaison with Edouard produces no offspring. Thus, in juxtaposition to Maria-Barbara's role as womb seeking not sexual pleasure but constant pregnancy, Florence offers rather the exciting lure of female genitalia disassociated from procreation. Allusions to Florence generally make mention of "sa caverne rouge, pleine de maléfices naïfs et douteux" (29). Although this *caverne rouge* ostensibly refers to her erotic abode, Edouard's use of this term suggests that it is a euphemism for his mistress' enticing vagina. It is this part of the female sexual anatomy which the provincial Edouard evokes when speaking of Florence's red Parisian lair, the sensual den "surchargée de tentures, encombrée de bibelots, faite pour vivre la nuit" (28). And, in addition, Florence's erotic cavern is equipped with red lights - an item typically associated with prostitution.

When the years have diminished Edouard's fascination with Florence and her salacious lair, the outbreak of war provides him with a dual antidote: both the freedom from his responsibilities as husband and lover and the opportunity to procure a new mistress. Having gleefully volunteered for military service, Edouard is sent to the Belgian frontier. It is here that he soon enjoys the favors of a new lover, Angelica, the employee of a bakery located several meters from his wartime inn. We have seen that

Edouard's wife is his WOMB-an and Florence his vagina/cave. In keeping with this objectification of the key females in his intimate life, in many ways Angelica is Edouard's *femme-pain*.[11] First she is his *femme-pain* due to her bakery job which dictates the "phase pâtissière" of Edouard's initial courtship behavior: the flirtatious, twice-daily purchase of Angelica's almond turnovers ( 310). Secondly she is a *femme-pain* in that "elle sentait bon la brioche et le *chausson amandinois*" while physically resembling an elongated baguette: "elle était très grande, très droite et très blonde" (310). And, finally, in lovemaking Angelica bears resemblance to an oversized baker's oven. Edouard reports that she requires "un allumage il est vrai assez lent" but his concerted efforts to light "ce grand corps vigoureux et gauche" give rise to "réactions puissantes et prolongées" (311).

Fearing a slow, painful death from diabetes and his other physical ills, Edouard volunteers for military service to end his life with a glorious, heroic death. Meanwhile he fantasizes that Maria-Barbara and Florence will remain out of danger while he enjoys "le cadeau d'adieu que lui faisait l'existence": Angelica's corporal, pastry-like delights ( 323). But Edouard's morbid premonitions prove to be only partially correct. Rather than providing him with a valorous end, death eliminates Angelica in a bomb blast, Florence in an arrest of Jews and Maria-Barbara in a seizure of Resistance collaborators. Having been deprived a narrative voice in this novel of multiple narrators, Maria-Barbara, Florence and Angelica are relegated to minor roles within *Les Météores*.[12] They are also objectified as womb, lair/vagina and *femme-pain* respectively before being swept from the narrative landscape by death.

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[11]Tournier's short story "Pierrot ou Les secrets de la nuit" from *Le Médianoche amoureux* concretizes this erotic relationship between woman and bread. Pierrot prepares a brioche rendition of Colombine which he voluptuously consumes with both Colombine and her errant lover, Arlequin.

[12]Although allusions to Maria-Barbara are sprinkled throughout *Les Météores*, François Chatelet notes that "[elle] reste un mystère . . . [un] personnage à peine esquissé"(5). He adds that her hyphenated name joins the Christian "*Maria*: le nom de la vierge des chrétiens" and the Greek *Barbara* "[qui] évoque, simultanément les Barbares . . . *et* la première figure du syllogisme nécessaire, la seule qui administre pleinement la preuve" (5).

Edouard's wife and mistresses are not the only females lost to death within *Les Météores*, as this is a fate also suffered by Frau Kraus, Deborah, and Madame Antoine Surin. When Paul Surin's worldwide search for his twin brother comes to a perilous close in Berlin, it is Frau Kraus who serves as his final hostess. Her *joie de vivre* greatly stimulated by the tension resulting from the construction of the Berlin Wall, Frau Kraus's rejuvenation manifests itself in her demeanor as well as her wardrobe. Exchanging her dressing gown and head scarf for black overalls and rubber running shoes, she instantly blossoms into "une nouvelle jeunesse" ( 589). She sparkles in her final scenes, launching into such zany projects as the secret, mid-summer decoration of a Christmas tree for Paul. Entering the escape tunnel under Berlin, the "jeune, vibrante" Frau Kraus declines the relatively safe position to which age entitles her in favor of a more dangerous and exciting position ( 601). It is an avalanche of mud within the escape tunnel which sweeps away Frau Kraus - the high-spirited, elder female cast member of *Les Météores*.

Unlike the deaths of the female characters examined above, the deaths of Deborah and Madame Antoine Surin are unrelated to political events. However the latter two deaths have female elements reminiscent of previously discussed works of both Jouve and Tournier: the *femme-paysage* (Deborah) and the mourned mother (Mme Antoine Surin). The extremely intelligent English wife of an American alcoholic, Deborah devotes most of the forty years of her marriage to transforming the barren sands of El-Kantara island into a lush, tropical paradise overflowing with lotus, asparagus ferns, mandarins, kumquats, exotic birds, etc. When not busily occupied with maintaining her oasis, she spends many hours reading. Since Ralph and Deborah are friends of his twin brother, Paul Surin visits their estate in hopes of locating Jean. Taking an impromptu inventory of Deborah's library during this stay, Paul notes that its holdings include ancient and classical masterpieces along with great contemporary works for "Deborah du fond de son désert n'ignorait rien, lisait tout, comprenait tout" (483). Arlette Bouloumié

explains that in Hebrew "deborah, abeille. . . signifie l'intelligence mais aussi l'âme reliée au divin" (43). However since her personal appearance in the novel is limited to her death scene, Deborah's gardening skill and intellectual pursuits are activities of the past tense. The Deborah of the present is an emaciated victim of cancer whose agonizing death parallels the destruction of her beloved, insular paradise. Ironically, while the storm wreaks total havoc in her oasis, the moribund woman perceives that her garden is still at its most glorious peak.

Pertinent to our discussion of femaleness is the aftermath of Deborah's death: her transformation into *femme-jardin*. Deborah's bereaved husband explains that she gave birth to her garden not with her hands but with her entire being: "Ses pieds sont devenus des racines, ses cheveux des feuilles, son corps un tronc . . . Deborah devenait un jardin, le plus beau jardin du monde. Et quand le jardin a été fini, Deborah, elle a disparu dans la terre" (479). Thus despite her intellectual acumen and extraordinary gardening talents, Deborah is objectified as *femme-jardin* joining Maria-Barbara the womb, Florence the vagina/lair and Angelica the *femme-pain*. And finally, Deborah's metamorphosis into a garden brings to mind previously treated examples of the *femme-paysage*: Jouve's Dorothée ("La Victime") and Hélène ("Dans les Années profondes") and Tournier's Speranza (*Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*) and Rachel ( *Le Roi des aulnes*). But different from Dorothée, Hélène, Speranza and Rachel, as *femme-paysage* Deborah's decaying body fertilizes a paradise violently destroyed.

The death of Madame Antoine Surin, the mother of Alexandre Surin, contains another recurring theme of femaleness in Jouve's and Tournier's prose: the missing mother. We have already noted that mothers are lost to absence or death in most of the works heretofore examined. In Jouve's "La Victime," Dorothée's questions to her deceased mother go unanswered while in Tournier's *Le Roi des aulnes* Abel suffers terribly from his mother's unexplained absence. Similarly, it is his mother's death which

serves as the emotional backdrop of Alexandre Surin's life. Even as an adult he fondly recollects his chaste, childhood moments of Proustian intimacy spent with his mother in the bathtub and in her bed. Françoise Merllié states that in the company of his mother, young Alexandre "a joui d'une intimité délicieuse" (*Michel Tournier* 40). After the death of her husband, Madame Surin becomes Alexandre's housemate thus restoring a certain physical proximity between mother and son. Even after her death permanently separates Alexandre from his mother, she remains his "petite chérie" (33). Arlette Bouloumié comments that Alexandre "porte une blessure secrète depuis la mort de sa mère" (197), for he frequently refers to her death as "mon petit chagrin" (M 200).

The heterosexual females discussed so far from *Les Météores* - Maria-Barbara, Florence, Angelica, Frau Kraus, Deborah and Madame Antoine Surin - are all erased from the novel by death. Similarly, Tournier's article on the German Romantic Novalis, "L'Ange ingénieur," is an indication that the name choice for Jean Surin's fiancée is probably an allusion to the beloved fiancée Novalis lost to premature death: "Sophie" (21). But rather than belonging to the group of heterosexual females destined for death in *Les Météores*, Sophie joins the group of Jouve's Baladine (*Le Monde désert*) and Tournier's Rachel (*Le Roi des aulnes*): the heterosexual female who deserts her lover. While Baladine's departure is the catalyst for Luc Pascal's transformation into a hallucinating recluse, Rachel's desertion is the catalyst for Tiffauges's ogreish metamorphosis. In *Les Météores*, Sophie's departure sparks an important change as well. Deserted by his fiancée, Jean Surin deserts his identical twin thus launching Paul's worldwide search for Jean.

Although Baladine, Rachel and Sophie all share the role of catalyst, there is one noticeable difference among the three. Both Baladine and Rachel are erased immediately following their abandonment of their lovers. On the other hand, Sophie's narration pertains to the time frame prior to and following her flight. But instead of fully

developing her characterization, the three brief sections which Sophie narrates merely enhance the novel's premise: the superiority of the geminate relationship and the non-twin's inability to fathom and to penetrate this extraordinary bond.

Sophie's first narrative section underlines the blurring of identity between Jean and Paul, beginning with Jean's statement that the youthful twins switched name bracelets and ending with her own confusion upon meeting her fiancé's twin for the first time. Sophie's second narration echoes this confusion and attests to the superiority of the geminate relationship. First, she begins to suspect that she herself has been unknowingly seduced by her fiancé's twin, thus highlighting Jean and Paul's physical indistinctness: "Je ne comprenais plus . . . lequel des deux était mon amant, lequel mon fiancé?" (411) Secondly, this narrative segment enhances the notion of the superiority of geminate sexual relations, for Sophie explains that Jean continues to have sex with his twin brother in spite of his engagement to her. Underlying this segment is the notion that a non-twin is able neither to fathom nor to compete with the incomparable carnal delights of geminate sexual relations. Her short, final narration indicates that it is not Sophie who effects her own ouster from the hallowed, geminate grounds but rather the Surins's protective housekeeper, Méline. Thus, although she is given a brief voice prior to and following her flight, Sophie's narrations highlight her befuddlement as a non-twin alongside the mysterious workings of the superior geminate cell. After Sophie abandons her fiancé and vanishes from *Les Météores*, she remains alive in the musings of Paul and Jean who partly attribute their estrangement to her. In one of the twins' subsequent references to Sophie, Paul refers to her sudden flight as "la faute de Sophie" which condemns Jean "à une perpétuelle errance" (440). Therefore, in spite of Sophie's momentary privilege of serving as female narrator, she is consistently referred to in keeping with the initial words of her self-introduction: "J'ai été lâche. J'ai fui" (394).

Sophie's role as temporary narrator and abandoning female is echoed by Hamida, an Arab woman Paul meets while searching for Jean in Venice. In addition to serving as narrators and abandoning their lovers, Hamida and Sophie both flee to escape a love triangle in which they are the outsiders. In Sophie's case, the triangle's other two lovers are locked into homosexuality presented by the novel as a natural result of their twinship. Reminiscent of Sophie's intrusion into this geminate cell, Hamida is the outsider in a *ménage à trois* with a couple so close as to appear "enfermé dans un œuf de marbre" (490; emphases mine). But whereas Jean maintains that he desperately counted upon Sophie to break his psycho-sexual dependence upon his twin, Hamida explains that her lover never intended to make her his exclusive sexual partner. In Hamida's awkward love triangle, she is the lover as well as the adopted daughter of the alcoholic American, Ralph. In spite of his sexual involvement with her, Hamida realizes that "Ralph est du type monogame. Il n'y aura jamais d'autre femme dans sa vie que [sa femme] Deborah" (490). *Les Météores* could easily be rewritten to stress that Sophie and Hamida act appropriately to free themselves from intolerable *ménages à trois*. However, even in their own narrative segments this logical aspect of their behavior is not truly stressed. Thus the novel makes use of Hamida and Sophie merely to showcase the impenetrability of the love cells encapsulating Ralph-Deborah and Jean-Paul. After Hamida and Sophie have served this purpose, they are eliminated from *Les Météores*.

While Sophie and Hamida experience metaphorical death through disappearance, Maria-Barbara, Florence, Angelica, Frau Kraus, Deborah and Madame Antoine Surin are all associated with death due to their personal confrontation with the Grim Reaper. However Méline - a character still surviving at the novel's end - is this novel's true female avatar of death. Méline's life appears as the macabre reflection to that of Maria-Barbara, the fertile, baby machine whose constant pregnancies culminate in the birth of her twins. For although Maria-Barbara produces only healthy newborns, none of Méline's eleven

babies survives infancy. Alongside the fertility goddess - Maria-Barbara - Méline is always dressed in mourning in memory of her most recently deceased child. Thus Arlette Bouloumié explains that "Méline incarne le deuil comme Maria-Barbara incarne la vie" (126). Bouloumié notes that "Méline et Maria-Barbara sont deux figures antithétiques et complémentaires de la mère . . . comme les déesses opposées: Artémis d'Ephèse, déesse de la fécondité, et Hécate, liée au monde des ombres" (127).[13] Bouloumié adds that "Méline" derives both from the Greek "*melas* : noir" and from "maline ‹*maligna:* méchante" (126).

In addition to her role as macabre counterpoint to Maria-Barbara's exaggerated fertility, Méline's ominous nature reveals itself in numerous ways within *Les Météores*. It is Méline who destroys the psychological safety net constructed by the neighboring idiot savant boy, Franz. The regularity of calendars, almanacs and proverbs are Franz's amulet against change and uncertainty which send him into acute nervous fits. But when Méline announces "Il n'y a plus de saison," she abolishes the boy's defense system plunging him into convulsive fits which are calmed only by an injection (73). Forever the ill-boding figure, Méline later accompanies Edouard Surin to the doctor to receive his "death sentence" of diabetes, foreshadowing her announcement of the arrival of Maria-Barbara's Gestapo executioners. Spotting the officers come to arrest Maria-Barbara for her work with the Resistance, Méline's eyes "flambaient d'un éclat où il y avait peut-être de l'horreur, peut-être de la joie" (358). Just as Méline is affiliated with Hécate and the world of shadows, her husband - described as merely "l'ombre d'Edouard Surin" - dies immediately after Edouard's death (407; emphasis mine). It is after Edouard's death as well when Jean brings his fiancée, Sophie, to meet his twin brother and Méline. Sophie's narration reveals that she is actually forced to depart by Méline, who surreptitiously packs her bag and drives her to the train station with no forewarning. Alongside the discussion

[13]Jouve entitled one of his novels *Hécate* referring to Catherine Crachat's harmful potential prior to her psychological reintegration in *Hécate*'s sequel, *Vagadu*.

of her coerced departure, Sophie examines the attitude of local citizens toward Méline. Since the old woman is regarded with "une aversion mêlée de crainte" by her neighbors, Sophie deduces that they hold Méline partially responsible for both the closing of the Surins's factory and the decimation of this family (408). Commenting that only the twins remain from a formerly thriving household and textile mill, Sophie ponders Méline's role in this "désastre . . . au Moyen Age on brûlait les sorcières pour moins que cela" (409). Since it is Méline who forces Sophie to depart, she also acts as catalyst in a chain reaction of events which culminate in Paul's being crushed beneath Berlin. For Méline coerces Sophie to leave Jean prompting Jean to desert Paul and triggering Paul's global search for his twin which ends perilously in Berlin. And finally it is Méline who stays on to nurse Paul at the family estate, after his accident in Germany. While Paul's amputation reflects the scattering of the numerous Surin siblings, Méline continues to thrive: "sans âge, éternelle, comme la mort elle-même" (407).

Paralleling the presentation of femaleness in previous Tournierian novels, death and desertion are the salient features of the female destiny in *Les Météores*. Death is the fate reserved for the novel's objectified, female characters: the womb (Maria-Barbara), the lair/vagina (Florence), the *femme-pain* (Angelica) and the *femme-jardin* (Deborah). Other female characters who are not reduced to objects suffer death as well including Frau Kraus and Madame Antoine Surin. Meanwhile the two abandoning females - Sophie and Hamida - experience metaphorical death via erasure from the novel. And the final female presence within *Les Météores* is that of Méline - the macabre sorceress as eternal as death itself. As we shall now see in our discussion of his two final novels - *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* and *La Goutte d'or* - Tournier has most recently condensed this dual portrait of femaleness. Instead of continuing to present woman as both abandoning and linked to death, his two latest novels elaborate upon the former theme.

Rather than remaining faithful to the biblical presentation of three wise men, Tournier recreates the legend in *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* (1980) adding a fourth Magus, Taor, and narrations by Hérode, a donkey and an ox. Although woman is accorded a very limited role in *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, she is depicted as both disloyal (in the narrations of Gaspard, Hérode and Taor) and absent (in the narrations of Balthazar, Melchior and Taor).

In *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, King Balthazar espouses the theory that Adam and Eve initially had black skin, but their skin turned white after the fall. In their presentation of the blond female as treacherous lure, Tournier's *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* and *La Goutte d'or* further showcase this supposed association between fair skin and sin. The first in this series of disloyal, blond females is Biltine of *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, the Phoenician slave of King Gaspard. Gaspard explains that his attitude toward Biltine undergoes a swift and disastrous evolution. When he first spies her with a fellow Phoenician at the slave market, he displays a detached, scientific interest in these blond physical specimens - "ces monstruosités" amidst the throngs of his exclusively black-skinned subjects (12). Although he explains he is "fort curieux des bizarreries de la nature," he quickly adds that his personal palate has no taste for these anemic fruits of the north (12). He purchases the two blondes nevertheless and quickly forgets them. But the sight of his blond male slave drawing water from a well kindles Gaspard's fascination with blondness. He reveals that "Les jours qui suivirent, je ne cessai de songer à mes esclaves clairs" (16). Yet maintaining that he still shares a bit of the xenophobia of the matron of his harem, Kallaha, he adds that "une certaine répulsion atavique se mêlait à ma curiosité à l'égard de Biltine" (19). It is not passion but this very inquisitiveness which serves as catalyst for Gaspard's inauspicious coupling with Biltine. In a conversation with Kallaha, Gaspard reveals his curiosity about the color of body hair of blondes. Exuding xenophobia, Kallaha haughtily offers to send for Biltine so that

Gaspard can conduct these "recherches" himself (20). Thus, according to the king, he sleeps with Biltine both to reprimand Kallaha and to satisfy his inquisitiveness. But as soon as Gaspard is united with Biltine, he realizes that this union has been a fatal attraction from the very outset. Thinking back to purchasing the blondes at the slave market, he notes that "la blondeur était entrée dans ma vie . . . comme une maladie . . . [au] marché aux esclaves " (20). The king adds that it was the incredible force of blondness which changed "ma curiosité à l'égard de cette race aux caractéristiques étranges" to "attachement . . . passion" (21). And in spite of his strength and stature as king, "La blondeur prenait possession de ma vie" (21). As evidence of the power of blondness, it is King Gaspard - not his slave Biltine - who asks the following question to break the ice during their initial moment of intimacy: "Que veux-tu de moi?" (21) By asking this question, Gaspard unknowingly facilitates his entrapment by the blond slave. Passing off her lover and fellow slave, Galeka, as her brother, Biltine asks to have him reside with her at the palace. Suddenly dazzled by Biltine, Gaspard grants this wish and innocently includes Galeka in his outdoor and indoor activities with his blond mistress. He even admits to the daily invention of "un prétexte pour les avoir à mes côtés" (21). Only later does the king learn that granting Biltine's wish enabled her to cuckold him within the palace's very walls.

This king whom David Bevan describes as "épris de la blondeur" (41) begins to judge himself as "grossier, bestial, incapable d'inspirer l'amitié, l'admiration, sans même oser parler d'amour" (GMB 22). He comes to realize that his bedazzlement by blondness has had two inauspicious consequences. In addition to awakening a shame of negritude within his breast, this captivation has led him to betray his black people "du fond du cœur" (22). Yet he is too firmly under the spell of his blond slave/mistress to shake free of her powers. He notes that his initial fascination tinged with repulsion for this unusual blond specimen has quickly given way to a "soif charnelle profonde" resembling "la faim

plaintive et torturante du drogué en état de manque" (22). Nor does his awareness thereof correct his shame of blackness. On the contrary he now finds that the black women of his harem blend into "ce sombre palais de basalte et d'ébène," while Biltine's paleness allows him to truly discover flesh for the very first time (22). But events such as the "fête de la Fécondation des palmiers-dattiers" reveal that Gaspard's shame of negritude overrides the joy he feels alongside his blond mistress (23). First the king fears that Biltine overindulges at the feast to be "ivre et abrutie pour endurer l'intimité d'un nègre" (25). Then when her nasty case of indigestion culminates in violent nausea, Gaspard is crushed by the thought that his black skin "avait fait vomir de dégoût la femme que j'aimais!" (26).

In spite of other scenes which only exacerbate Gaspard's complex of racial inferiority, his love for Biltine remains steadfast until Kallaha informs him of his beloved slave's betrayal. While his shame explodes into "une colère meurtrière," Kallaha leads the king to the bed shared by Biltine and her blond lover (30). Despite his fury, Gaspard is not able to expunge his shame. In his estimation, the clandestine lovers' union is based upon their awareness of white racial supremacy which has led them to reject "le noir dans les ténèbres" (31).

Rather than giving in to the temptation to have the blond Phoenicians executed, Gaspard gives first priority to the healing of his incredibly painful "chagrin" (31). Upon the advice of his astrologer, he follows a comet - the harbinger of his method of cure - which bears a striking resemblance to Biltine. For, in addition to being composed "pour l'essentiel d'une tête traînant derrière elle la masse flottante d'une chevelure," the comet's tresses are "cheveux d'or" (10, 32).[14]

After embarking in pursuit of the comet trailing her golden locks, Gaspard has the premonition that the meaning of this journey is "une exaltation de la négritude" (47).

[14]Arlette Bouloumié explains that this correspondence between a comet and a head of hair is corroborated by ancient mythology for in a comet "les anciens y voyaient une chevelure" (70).

Conversing with each other, the Magi later discover that a personal crisis leads them to pursue the comet which in turn leads them to the Christ Child: the Other tailor-made to resolve each king's dilemma. William Cloonan points out that the Savior restores Gaspard's "shattered self-respect" (*Michel Tournier* 89), harmoniously healing his shame of negritude by appearing to him "Un bébé tout noir aux cheveux crépus, avec un mignon petit nez épaté, bref un bébé tout pareil aux enfants africains" (GMB 214). When Gaspard smiles, the Christ Child returns his smile and extends his arm toward the African king. With these two reactions, the Savior teaches him that "un amour d'adoration est *toujours* partagé" (213). Gaspard realizes his adoration for his disloyal blond slave was flawed: his love was not returned by her "cœur froid, sec et calculateur" (213). When the Christ Child breaks the destructive spell which the unfaithful blonde has cast upon her lover's heart, Gaspard promises a double liberty for Biltine - liberty both from her role as his slave and from her role as his sex object.

The subsequent narrations by Balthazar and Melchior provide examples of absent females, while the narrations of Hérode and Taor reintroduce the theme of the disloyal female. Different from Gaspard, Balthazar's marital unhappiness is not brought about by infidelity. It stems rather from the fact that as consummate aesthete, Balthazar much prefers to contemplate his wife's portrait rather than endure her presence in the flesh. While browsing as a boy through a shop filled with bric-a-brac, Balthazar discovers the portrait of a beautiful girl painted upon a mirror. When his aging father later informs Balthazar that the time has come for him to choose a wife, his obsession with the portrait leads him to request this girl as his bride. Deeming that such a search will never locate the young woman, Balthazar eagerly anticipates a return to enjoying his portrait-mirror in solitude. Thus, when his father's search party actually finds Malvina - the young woman of the portrait - Balthazar feels not passion but rather "une ardente curiosité" to compare her resemblance to the portrait-mirror (70). Marital bliss is not the destiny of this true

iconophile for he loves not his young bride but her portrait. He explains that his love for Malvina remains secondary, "dans la mesure où je trouvais sur ses traits un reflet de l'œuvre adulée" (71). This secondary love diminishes, however, as the years erase the resemblance between Malvina and the portrait. Already disturbed by this ever increasing lack of resemblance, when his young daughter is unable to recognize her mother in the portrait, Balthazar refuses to continue sharing the marital bed with his wife. Although the king mentions the lack of resemblance between his daughter and her mother, he does not mention his own mother in reference to his beloved portrait-mirror. However Françoise Merllié notes that as the mother is a child's first mirror, the king's obsession with the portrait-mirror "sert de relais à la mère" (*Michel Tournier* 145).

This character sketch of Malvina reveals that her husband relegates her to a status of nonexistence. The iconophile denies Malvina presence by finding plenitude not in his flesh and blood wife but in her portrait. In an ironic twist of the usual role of a mirror, it is Malvina who must serve as reflection of her husband's portrait-mirror. But as Balthazar's object of pleasure, she is esteemed only in direct proportion to her resemblance to the portrait-mirror. When this resemblance is not recognized by Malvina's daughter, Balthazar discards his two playthings sending his wife from his bed and casting off her portrait to their daughter.

This theme of the dichotomy between image and resemblance resurfaces when Balthazar worships the Christ Child. Balthazar notes that image and resemblance are reconciled for him in the stable at Bethlehem: "j'y ai trouvé la réconciliation de l'image et de la ressemblance, la régénération de l'image grâce à la renaissance d'une ressemblance sous-jacente" (207). In spite of this harmonious, aesthetic resolution, there is no indication in the text that it will lead to the rebirth of an underlying resemblance between Balthazar's wife and her portrait.

Relegated to absence, Balthazar's wife Malvina has a peaceful life nonetheless. However, such is not the case concerning the "absent females" of Dauphin Melchior's life. While Balthazar banishes Malvina from his bedroom, Melchior's father repudiates his first wife, Euphorbie, thus banishing her from the environs of the palace. Her exile remains chaotic as the former queen is continually hounded by intrigants who wish to usurp the throne and place her back upon it. Meanwhile Euphorbie's replacement - Dauphin Melchior's own mother - is violently relegated to an absent status. After the assassination of her husband, she is kidnapped and told that Melchior will be killed unless she signs papers attesting to his illegitimacy. Melchior assumes that his flight will ensure safety for his mother and for himself. With the exception of a cameo appearance by the Virgin, the subsequent population of Melchior's narration is exclusively masculine. Since the banished former queen and the kidnapped current queen are mentioned only in Melchior's introduction, woman is truly absent in this section of the novel.

As the focus of the novel shifts from Melchior to Hérode, the presentation of femaleness moves from absence to falseness. Thus, in the initial presentation of Hérode, the narrator reveals that the king's second wife, Mariamme, is the antithesis of a loving, faithful wife. She never misses an occasion to point out her husband's "infériorité ineffaçable" resulting from his non-Jewish heritage (96). In spite of her scorn for his ancestry, Hérode maintains in his narrative segment that Mariamme is "L'être au monde que j'ai le plus aimé . . . la première, la seule, l'unique femme de ma vie" (126). But Hérode's great love is unable to spare Mariamme from a tragic fate - a fate which resounds with female perfidy. Preoccupied with his wife's safety before a journey, Hérode sends Mariamme and her mother to one fortress while his own sister and mother are confined to another. Hoping for "une réconciliation générale" between his wife, mother-in-law, mother and sister upon his return, Hérode is greeted with the news that Mariamme has handsomely paid his cup-bearer to present him with a suspicious beverage (129).

When the slave chosen by Hérode to test the potion falls dead, it appears that Mariamme truly intended to poison her husband. While his love for his wife could have tempted Hérode to accept her explanation that his sister Salomé had prepared the beverage, Mariamme's own mother suddenly points the finger of blame at her daughter. She adds that her daughter had also engaged in an adulterous affair with an intrigant who hoped to usurp the throne. In spite of this new damaging testimony, Hérode states that he still would have been tempted to spare his wife had the rumor of her perfidy not spread throughout the land. Since his subjects speak of nothing else, he is forced to convene a jury - an action which results in Mariamme's condemnation and execution. But after Mariamme's execution, her mother's machinations suggest that she condemned her own daughter for purely political reasons.

The depiction of female falseness continues to be showcased throughout the remainder of Hérode's narrative segment. It is his sister who plots a treacherous alliance with her unstable brother, while Hérode's first wife conspires with her son and daughter-in-law. Thus different from the male-generated political turmoil within the realm of Dauphin Melchior, in the bloody chaos of Hérode's realm, woman plays a significant role indeed.

The disloyalty of woman is also a feature of the narration by the wise man invented by Tournier: Taor. In typical Tournierian fashion, this final segment of ninety-two pages offers mere glimpses of women with the exception of Taor's mother and his female elephant, Yasmina. Testimony by both the omniscient narrator , the slave Siri and Taor reveal that Taor's mother - the Maharani Taor Mamoré - would fit nicely into the heartless female entourage of Hérode. The omniscient narrator explains that the Maharani's thirst for power has grown in direct proportion to the decline in her beauty. Although Taor is twenty years old as his tale unfolds, the narrator explains that his mother's principal concern is to "tenir le prince héritier à l'écart des affaires du royaume

dont elle entendait assumer seule la direction" (175). The ambitious Maharani has two allies in keeping her son at bay: Taor's extraordinary sweet tooth and the ambitious slave she assigns to accompany the prince.

The thoughts of Taor's slave/companion , Siri, attest to the Maharani's maternal coldness and avaricious appetite for power. Reprising the theme we have examined previously regarding the separation of Tournierian heroes from their mothers, Siri notes that an official audience is the only access which Taor has to his own mother. When the young heir decides to launch an expedition in search of the heavenly "rahat loukoum à la pistache," Siri muses that the Maharani enthusiastically agrees to finance this frivolous mission to "se débarrasser de son fils - quoi qu'il en coûtât" (180).[15] Françoise Merllié notes the essential role of sweets in the life of the prince whom David Bevan describes as "friand du sucre et fanatique de la pâtisserie" (Bevan 43). Merllié explains that underlying Taor's expedition in search of the confection which he tasted just once is the "souhait de retrouver cette douceur sucrée caractéristique de l'univers maternel" (*Michel Tournier* 153). Thus by indulging his refined sweet tooth, Taor is unconsciously compensating for his estrangement from his mother.

As Taor's initially frivolous search for the ultimate bonbon metamorphoses into a vital voyage of initiation and spiritual redemption, he too becomes aware of his mother's shortcomings. He realizes that the Maharani made a concerted effort to stunt his intellectual, spiritual and emotional growth by confining him to "l'insignifiance de la vie . . . entre ses jujubiers et ses pistachiers" (185). He also begins to clearly assess his mother's terrific political ambition. Thus he comments to Gaspard, Melchior and Balthazar that "je ne suis pas sûr que ma mère me laisse jamais régner" (209).

Françoise Merllié maintains that when Taor leaves his kingdom, he leaves behind "la sphère maternelle, il découvre . . . un monde masculin" (*Michel Tournier* 153).

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[15]William Cloonan explains that the "rahat loukoum à la pistache" is equivalent to the confection pistachio Turkish delight (*Michel Tournier* 91).

Although Merllié correctly stresses the downplaying of the feminine in Taor's voyage, she overlooks the important female character of Yasmina. With the characterization of the elephant Yasmina, Tournier reprises the initial misogynist theme of *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*: the disloyalty of the blond female. Although Yasmina is not a blond female of the human race, she is certainly the pachydermatous equivalent thereof. Taor's personal favorite among his collection of elephants, Yasmina is "blanche aux yeux bleus, douce, fragile et délicate" (181). Arlette Bouloumié asserts that "Yasmina est le double enfantin de Taor. De Taor enfant, Yasmina a la gourmandise, la frivolité, le goût du luxe facile" (134). But rather than a childish double, in many respects the young white elephant serves as a replacement girlfriend for Taor. The narrator explains that the prince "aimait Yasmina, et elle le lui rendait bien" (181). Like tender lovers, Taor 's gifts of cocoa cream treats are met with hugs from his elephant's trunk. And when she is too frightened to board her ship for their upcoming journey, it is Taor himself who is summoned. When Yasmina must be coaxed aboard like a temperamental star, Taor "lui parla longuement, doucement, en grattant de ses ongles son front excavé" (182). Then, like true sweethearts, they board the ship together with Yasmina's eyes gently blindfolded by the prince's silk scarf and her trunk resting upon his shoulder.

A common link between Gaspard's blond lover, Biltine, and Taor's cherished elephant, Yasmina, is that their whiteness is visually captivating. We have seen that it is the contemplation of his slave's fair skin and hair which puts Gaspard under her spell. Similarly, when landing with Taor's expedition on the island of Dioscoride, Yasmina notes that throngs of children are in awe of her white fur. While her fellow grey elephants elicit curiosity, Yasmina evokes "une curiosité plus respectueuse, plus spirituelle, éveillée par la blancheur neigeuse de son poil, attendrie par l'iris azuré de ses yeux . . . blanche, bleue et rouge, elle recueillait les hommages d'une clientèle d'élite" (193). As the visual

spell of Biltine's blondness was capable of entrapping a king, so Yasmina's blue eyes and white fur captivate an elite crowd of admirers.

Evoking this reaction among the young nobles of the island stimulates Yasmina's pride and prepares her abandonment of her loving prince. Awaking later on in a baobab forest, Taor's expedition suddenly becomes aware that Yasmina is no longer with them. Discovering that she has left a trail of her favorite food - rose petals - they finally locate her in the temple of the goddess Baobama, "vautrée sur une litière de roses, l'œil chaviré de volupté" (203). Taor and his party correctly surmise that Yasmina has permanently abandoned their group, for her gaze has "comme une nuance de défi et d'ironie" (203). And like a self-indulgent, disloyal lover, Yasmina leaves Taor when his formerly regal lifestyle gives way to difficulty and travail. Arlette Bouloumié explains that the timing is perfect between Yasmina's departure and Taor's shedding of royal opulence for "L'éléphant est associé . . . aux Indes au prestige de la fonction royale" (134).

As Yasmina is the final feminine presence in *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, her defection is significant. In addition to presenting its final female as disloyal, the novel also reprises the theme of the unfaithful blonde. Thus the structure of femaleness in *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* is circular: beginning with Gaspard's disloyal blonde, continuing with the absent females of Balthazar and Melchior and ending with Hérode's perfidious women and Taor's Machiavellian mother and disloyal blond elephant.

While the disloyal blond female opens and closes the portrait of femaleness in *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, she also serves as a central theme in Tournier's most recent novel, *La Goutte d'or* (1986). But rather than maintaining *Gaspard*'s circular, novelistic structure based upon the unfaithful blond female, *La Goutte d'or* reprises this theme in a structure of point and counterpoint. In this Bildungsroman of the young Algerian oasis dweller, Idriss, blondness is directly linked to both infidelity and to

Western society's obsession with the lure of visual imagery. Thus, the deceitful Occidental blond female serves as the novel's "point," while its "counterpoint" is the Arab female whose traditional fidelity to sign counteracts the blonde's nefarious imagery. Female characterization in *La Goutte d'or* remains faithful to this pattern of blond point/Arab counterpoint thereby juxtaposing what Mireille Rosello labels "un occident surpeuplé d'images" and "la sagesse arabe traditionnelle, qui privilégie le signe, bénéfique et révélateur" (75).

The avatar of the unfaithful blonde appears on the novel's fifth page: a scantily-clad, French woman with flowing blond hair, golden slippers and "une chemisette kaki très échancrée et un short outrageusement court" (16). She arrives at Idriss's Algerian oasis not by camel but by the preferred western mode of transportation: the automobile. Hers is a Land Rover "imposante . . . trapue et blanche . . . ce véhicule de grande croisière" (16). She is also outfitted with the standard apparatus of the modern tourist: the camera. Nicole Guichard explains that every element of the above introduction of the blonde in the Land Rover "est transgression des lois religieuses musulmanes" (262). Guichard adds that this blonde "est l'exacte antithèse du monde dont vient Idriss . . . La voiture, la couleur des cheveux, en liberté sur les épaules, la provocation du corps dévoilé . . . l'inadaptation totale au désert, l'exotisme symbolisé dans les fragiles ballerines" (262).

In the case of Idriss, the association which the text establishes between the blond female and the Occidental lure of visual imagery manifests itself in two ways. First, during his brief meeting with the French blonde and her male companion, the young Algerian is entranced by this alluring glimpse at Western civilization. But it is not only this fugacious vision of Western eroticism and technology which ultimately lures the boy to France. He is also enticed to seek fulfillment of the promise made to him by the blonde of the Land Rover: the promise to receive a copy of the photograph she has taken of him.

As the Land Rover disappears across the desert, the omniscient narrator explains the cultural and religious motivation underlying Idriss's desire to possess his photograph. He states that Idriss's uncle is the only resident of the oasis village who owns a photograph for "l'image est redoutée par ces berbères musulmans. Ils lui prêtent un pouvoir maléfique; ils pensent qu'elle matérialise en quelque sorte le mauvais œil" (17). And although Idriss's uncle does own a photograph, he remains convinced that separation from this image could result in his death as it did years ago for his two fellow soldiers.

Reading this information provided by the novel's narrator, one might suppose that the blond French tourist is innocently unaware of the Moslem prohibitions against photography. However such is not the case, for before she releases the shutter of the camera her male companion mentions this interdiction and suggests that she request Idriss's permission before taking his photograph. She reveals her insensitivity by photographing the young Arab without his approval and her unfaithfulness by not complying with her promise to mail him a copy of the photograph. Imbibed with Moslem principles, Idriss feels compelled to set out on a quixotic quest to France to unite with his image in order to subjugate its nefarious force. He also departs to satiate the desire kindled by the brief visit of the French tourists - the desire to gain access to the blond female and to the tantalizing treasures of Occidental civilization.

After the blonde of the Land Rover has introduced the theme of the association between the disloyal, Western woman and the visual image, Idriss's mother and female neighbor are then introduced as Moslem antidotes thereof. Consequently in their conversation with Idriss, his mother and female neighbor, Kuka, repeatedly discuss the fact that Idriss has been photographed and his image has departed. While he does not reveal to his mother and Kuka that his photographer was a woman, Idriss nevertheless reassures them that this photographer will send him the portrait. The women's somber reaction confirms Arlette Bouloumié's explanation of the traditional Moslem

photographic prohibition: the photograph is "comme une partie intrinsèque de l'individu sur laquelle on peut agir pour le maléficier" (145). Thus, Kuka pessimistically maintains that the photograph "n'arrivera jamais," while Idriss's mother glumly tells her son "C'est un peu de toi qui est parti . . . Si après ça tu es malade, comment te soigner?" (25) Kuka notes that - along with several inauspicious details from Idriss's childhood - the departure of his photograph "risque de le faire partir aussi" (26).

Whereas the blond female tourist provokes Idriss's uprooting from the oasis, his mother and Kuka are clearly the antitheses of such nomadic activity. Mireille Rosello explains that the blonde is the disruptive force which arrives from without while "la mère d'Idriss et Kuka, la voisine, voudraient protéger l'intégrité de la communauté fermée, immobile, sans image" (74). Rosello elaborates upon the Arab women's strong negative reaction to the photograph's having escaped Idriss's possession: "Pour elles, l'image annonce départ et malheur, départ vécu comme malheur"; "la photo introduit la différence, le désir, et que tout désir implique un ailleurs, annonce un voyage" (74, 104-105). Thus, the photograph is clearly a destructive, alien force in regard to Kuka and Idriss's mother's role as keepers of timeless tradition within the sedentary village of the oasis.

Before Idriss's departure from his village, he is exposed to three more examples of females free from the Occidental enslavement to the lure of visual imagery: the fiancée of Ali ben Mohammed, Zett Zobeida and Kerstine. Idriss's reaction to the fiancée reveals that neither she nor Zett Zobeida nor Kerstine will succeed at dispelling the charm cast upon him by the French blonde. Still dazzled by the blonde's provocative attire, he dismisses the charms of all young women of his village in his negative assessment of the fiancée: "cette grosse fille passive et molle était dépourvue à ses yeux de mystère et de prestige" (32). For Idriss the nuptials of this childhood girlfriend his own age reinforce his desire to flee both marriage and the oasis whose young women are clearly no match

for the audacious French photographer's golden locks and alluring wardrobe. Desiring to unite both with this provocative blonde and with his photograph, while the fiancée "s'enracinait solennellement à Tabelbala . . . Idriss se sentait des ailes lui pousser aux talons" (32-33).

Although Idriss has already rejected the notion of riveting himself to the sedentary lifestyle of the oasis through marriage, his friend's wedding exposes him to Zett Zobeida and Kerstine - two additional examples of women free from the dominance of the visual image. A talented black dancer invited to entertain the wedding guests, Zett is dressed in red veils and plentiful jewelry. While her abundant necklaces and bracelets jingle throughout her performance, Idriss is enthralled with the perfection of Zett's golden pendant, *la goutte d'or*: "Tout paraît exprimé dans le silence de cette bulle solitaire qui ne vient heurter aucun autre bijou dans ses brefs balancements . . . la bulle dorée ne veut rien dire qu'elle-même. C'est le signe pur, la forme absolue" (35).

Captivated by Zett's performance, Idriss replays it in his imagination until the novel's end. The narrator reveals that the young man begins to suspect Zett's importance already during this wedding performance: "Que Zett Zobeida et sa goutte d'or soient l'émanation d'un monde sans image, l'antithèse et peut-être l'antidote de la femme platinée à l'appareil de photo" (35). Elaborating upon Zett's role as antidote to the alluring image of the Occident, Mireille Rosello explains that within Moslem tradition "L'image est dangereuse parce qu'elle est le lieu d'un désir qu'aucune loi ne parvient à assagir et à contrôler" (105). Rosello adds that in its role as antidote to the uncontrollable image, "la danse rituelle de Zett fige au contraire l'espace en un cercle magique" (105). Thus, the narrator of *La Goutte d'or* says that Zett runs along the circle formed by the audience surrounding her "comme pour s'assurer de son domaine" (34). And within the well-defined ring of the crowd around her, Zett gathers up "comme une invisible moisson, toute la danse éparse autour d'elle" (34).

While discussing its role as antidote to nefarious visual image, critics such as Mireille Rosello have ignored an essential aspect of Zett Zobeida's tightly controlled, synthesizing dance: the fact that it evokes a total physical response. Unlike the purely visual response elicited by the blond tourist and her "kin" whom Idriss will meet on his quest, Zett's performance evokes a full physical participation from her audience. In the Western context, Zett would be reduced to an image to be passively "consumed" by her audience's eyes. But in addition to gazing at the bejeweled dancer in her red veils, the Moslem crowd sings and also joins in the dance. Critics have therefore neglected to stress this idea implied by the text: supplementing visual participation with the physical, aural and oral participation of dancing and singing prevents the reduction of performer to tantalizing image and sex object.

After Idriss experiences the stimulating performance of Zett Zobeida and her *goutte d'or*, the tale of the wedding party's storyteller exposes him to another woman whose artistic creations also evoke a total physical response: Kerstine. A Scandinavian weaver transplanted to Tunisia, Kerstine is called upon in desperation by Ahmed ben Salem whose efforts to paint the new sultan's portrait have been fruitless. Although the new sultan, Kheir ed Dîn, has requested an official portrait, he refuses to pose due to his shame of his red beard and hair. Since myth deems that red hair indicates a child was conceived during his mother's menstrual cycle, the sultan keeps both his head and his beard covered. Turning to Kerstine for help, Ahmed ben Salem shows her the charcoal sketch he has made in the sultan's absence. Taking the sketch as artistic foundation, Kerstine magically transforms it into a weaving which is both a portrait of the sultan and a rich tableau of autumn in her native Scandinavia. Seeing his shameful red hair and beard metamorphosed into a delicious fall palate, the sultan is finally able to accept his appearance with pride. And his response to the portrait/landscape points out its resemblance to the art of Zett Zobeida. For just as the dancer's performance evokes a total

physical response, so does Kerstine's three dimensional weaving. Thus this portrait/ landscape does not merely caress the sultan's eye, it elicits an active tactile and olfactory participation: "Kheir ed Dîn . . . passait ses deux mains sur la tapisserie . . . il y plongea son visage" (52-53).

In spite of the differences between their races, cultures and means of artistic expression, both the Scandinavian Kerstine and the African Zett Zobeida create interactive works of art which defy a reduction to the purely visual. In addition, both female artists play beneficial roles. Although Zett remains unaware of the important influence she has exerted in Idriss's life, such is not the case for Kerstine who witnesses firsthand the release from a lifetime of shame which her portrait/landscape provides for the sultan. With Kerstine, the Tournierian opus finally offers a positive example of a blond female - a unique example sharply contradicted by the novel's remaining blondes. One can surmise that her role as Tournier's sole, auspicious blonde is due to her status as transplant from the tantalizing Occident (Scandinavia) to Africa.

Albeit unknowingly, Zett Zobeida provides protection and nostalgic pleasure for Idriss. After her performance, Idriss finds the *goutte d'or* lost by the dancer - a talisman which he gladly takes along for protection during his journey of initiation into the dangerous Western realm of the image. In addition to the *goutte d'or*, Idriss is also accompanied by the memory of Zett's song and dance: a Proustian vehicle capable of mentally transporting him back to his homeland.

While crossing the Mediterranean to reach France, Idriss makes the acquaintance of an Arab gold and silversmith who enhances his appreciation of his treasured *goutte d'or*. After Idriss states that the pendant is his "gri-gri saharien," the jeweler explains that free Roman children wore such a "*bulla aurea*" until puberty, at which time they exchanged it for "la toge virile" (117-18). This historical information soon finds a direct parallel to Idriss's life. Upon arriving in Marseille, the young immigrant gives up his *bulla aurea* in

payment for sexual initiation with a blond prostitute. Thus Françoise Merllié emphasizes that for the free Roman child as well as for Idriss the abandon of the *bulla aurea* "signifiait la fin de l'enfance et l'entrée dans l'âge adulte" (*Michel Tournier* 203).

Although one might argue that the blonde is entitled to keep the pendant for payment of her services, the text casts her in a manipulative light nonetheless. It is she who spies the golden pendant and takes it from Idriss's neck in spite of his protests. Determined to keep the *goutte d'or*, she begins undressing Idriss right in the street, thus assuring her conquest of the young immigrant and his golden treasure. But the subsequent sight of her brown body hair reveals to Idriss that he has relinquished the pendant's real gold in exchange for the temporary enjoyment of the prostitute's false golden fleece.

After losing his photograph to the blond tourist and his treasured *goutte d'or* to the prostitute of Marseille, Idriss's fascination with golden haired females is seriously tarnished. Françoise Merllié says that in Idriss's estimation, the blonde has come to symbolize: "celle qui prend et ne rend pas" (*Michel Tournier* 88). Thus his warm enthusiasm for a friendly young Frenchman, Philippe, quickly chills when Philippe shows him a photograph of his blond fiancée: "Il avait reconnu le type de la femme blonde, celle de la Land Rover et celle de Marseille . . . Philippe appartenait à la race des blondes voleuses de photo et de goutte d'or" (133). For Idriss, golden hair is now such a strongly negative trait that it dissolves the charm of the conversation and snack he had shared with Philippe rendering him all the more alone and vulnerable within the "mer d'images" of Paris (134).

Launched into Paris's sea of images, Idriss's subsequent experience with a peep show performer enhances the association between female and deceptive image already established by the prostitute at Marseille. Although Idriss is disappointed to discover that the seductive blonde of Marseille is actually a brunette, the alluring visual image presented by the Parisian peep show is much more deceptive. The narrator's description

of the peep show "femme-lionne" does not divulge her hair color, but her body and "sa splendide crinière fauve" are bathed "dans une lumière jaune" while her loin cloth is "une fourrure dorée" (190; emphases mine). Observing the gyrations of the well-endowed *femme-lionne* on her mobile turntable, Idriss decides that he must meet her. Upon his return to the peep show, he discovers not the erotic *femme-lionne* but a grey haired cleaning lady with hard features and varicose veins. As she describes her efforts to clean the customers' semen-spattered stalls, the narrator reveals that "sa grande bouche dessina le rictus amer de la lionne fouettée" (192). Since the narrator does not disclose Idriss's thoughts regarding the cleaning lady, some critics have assumed that the young man does not realize that she is the unadorned version of the *femme-lionne*. However, the fact that his determination to meet the *femme-lionne* vanishes after this encounter with the cleaning lady suggests that he has realized that the two women are one and the same.

Immediately following the peep show episode is another incident which plays upon this notion of distortion of female identity. While make-up, wig, mirrors and glass panes concoct a deceptively enticing visual package of femaleness at the peep show, in the subsequent episode a comic book presents this visual package. Although experience has tarnished Idriss's view of blondes, the comic book's tantalizing female image is once again a blonde "[qui] ressemble à la femme blonde de la Land Rover et aussi à la putain de Marseille" (194). Different from previous scenes in *La Goutte d'or*, this comic strip scene utilizes narrative techniques associated with literature of the fantastic. First, as Idriss reads the comic strip in a cafe, he notes that the strip's dialogue presents word for word his own encounter in Africa with the blonde of the Land Rover and her companion. Secondly, upon noticing a blonde and her male companion beside him there at the cafe, Idriss deems that they are the French tourists he met at Tabelbala - the same couple depicted by the comic strip. The narrator explains that Idriss "n'est nullement surpris de voir accoudés au bar l'homme et la femme de la bande dessinée. Il les reconnaît, bien

qu'ils ne soient pas habillés comme dans la Land Rover" (197). This fusion and confusion of identity enhances that already experienced with the peep show performer. But whereas the peep show performer has the dual identity of *femme-lionne* and cleaning lady, in the fantastic scene at the cafe Idriss's imagination reduces three blondes to one. Thus he equates the blonde of the Land Rover with the blonde of the comic strip and the blonde of the cafe. But whereas Idriss's interaction with the blonde of the Land Rover is inauspicious, his interaction with the blonde of the cafe ends in violence. This latter blonde neither recognizes Idriss nor appreciates his intrusion into the private conversation she is having with her male companion. The text is obviously emphasizing the important role of framework within a visual society. Outside her enhanced framework of the peep show, the *femme-lionne* is ostensibly unrecognizable just as Idriss is unrecognizable to the cafe blonde outside his framework of the Algerian oasis. But most important for our discussion of femaleness in *La Goutte d'or* is the fact that this final encounter between Idriss and a blond female ends violently. Photographed against his wishes by the Land Rover blonde and separated from his precious *goutte d'or* by the bleached blond prostitute, Idriss's final encounter with a blond female sends him to jail after an attack by her companion and a cafe regular.

Although the blond females Idriss has encountered thus far at Tabelbala, Marseille and Paris are alluring but insensitive, he subsequently hears the story of a blonde whose nefarious spell is totally involuntary : "La Reine blonde." Feeling entrapped rather than stimulated by the tantalizing imagery of Occidental society, Idriss seeks solace in calligraphy lessons. Along with his fellow calligraphy students, he hears the legend of "La Reine blonde." Similar to the sultan, "Barberousse," "La Reine blonde" is ostracized due to a hair color indicative of inappropriate sexual activity. While the red hair of the former supposedly reveals that he was conceived during his mother's menstrual cycle, the blondness of the latter indicates that she was conceived at the moment when a ray of

daylight shone upon her black-haired parents.[16] But whereas "Barberousse" reveals that the sultan's shame causes him great anguish, "La Reine blonde" emphasizes not the queen's suffering but that of those tantalized by her blondness. After her beauty has lured her brother-in-law to kill her royal husband, "La Reine blonde" veils her head and face to "faire cesser les ravages qu'exerçait sa blonde beauté" (238). Nevertheless by disguising himself as one of her maids, a male artist succeeds at creating a portrait of the queen unveiled. "Telle la tête de Méduse qui changeait en pierre tous ceux qui croisaient son regard," the sight of this spellbinding portrait causes a long series of misfortunes (243).[17] After its portraitist hangs himself, two thieves kill each other attempting to steal it , a jealous wife becomes disfigured trying to destroy it, etc.

The legend of "La Reine blonde" has a two-fold importance for our discussion of femaleness in *La Goutte d'or*. First this legend provides an example of a woman innocently thrust into the role of blond lure. While the Land Rover blonde, the Marseille prostitute and the *femme-lionne* erotically exhibit their tresses and their bodies, "La Reine blonde" modestly covers her face as well as her head. As Françoise Merllié emphasizes, the blond queen "n'a, en effet, pas le moindre désir de séduire" ("La Reine blonde" 17). And rather than deceitfully packaging herself as sex object like the peep show's cleaning lady/*femme-lionne* and the bleached blonde of Marseille, "La Reine blonde" is deceitfully "packaged" by the artist who paints her on the sly. Secondly, the end of the legend reprises a theme from the performance of the dancer Zett Zobeida: total physical response as antidote to objectification as *femme-piège*. At the end of "La Reine blonde," Riad - the son of the portrait's current owner - learns that he can use calligraphy

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[16]Françoise Merllié explains that in having sex at daybreak, the parents of "La Reine blonde" violated "un interdit religieux, celui qui prescrit qu'aucune conception ne doit avoir lieu à la lumière du jour" ("La Reine blonde" 15).

[17]Françoise Merllié compares the visually captivating and devastating effect of the portrait of the blond queen to that of sirens such as Lorelei: "L'homme pris à leur sortilège, dévirilisé, incapable d'agir, n'a plus qu'à se laisser mourir" ("La Reine blonde" 18). As we mentioned in our discussion of Jouve's *Le Monde désert*, Jacques de Todi is lured to death by a Lorelei figure: a watery enhancement of his great-aunt.

to free his father from his obsessive contemplation of the painting. The boy traces the painting with his calligraphic reed by writing sayings which "translate" the queen's features. This activity evokes physical responses both tactile (Riad manipulates his reed), oral (Riad reads the calligraphic phrases for his father to repeat) and aural (the father and son hear each other reading the phrases). Engaging the senses as did Zett Zobeida in her dancing/singing performance, calligraphy liberates Riad's father from his enslavement to the queen's portrait.

While the calligraphic exercises of "La Reine Blonde" elicit participation from the senses in a manner reminiscent of Zett Zobeida's earlier performance, Zett herself is evoked in the novel's final scene. After a series of bizarre, dehumanizing jobs, Idriss joins a team of immigrants whose task is to create underground parking spaces for nine hundred cars at the *place Vendôme*. Wielding his gigantic jackhammer like a phallus, Idriss glances into an elegant jewelry store and sees the *goutte d'or* he had given to the prostitute at Marseille. For Idriss this glimpse of the golden pendant serves as catalyst launching a Proustian return to his native oasis: "Il revoyait Zett Zobeida dansant dans la nuit avec ses bijoux sonores, avec sa goutte d'or silencieuse" (256). Idriss incorporates his flashback into the present scene, mentally transforming Zett the dancer into his jackhammer. Françoise Merllié points out that with Zett Zobeida, "le nom et le prénom rappellent les désignations populaires du sexe masculin" (*Michel Tournier* 87; emphases mine). Merllié also mentions that the novel's final scene portrays Zett as androgynous: "cette femme est un être double, masculin et féminin" (*Michel Tournier* 87). Thus, she is both the female "danseuse" and the stand-in for his penis: "sa cavalière infernale, Zett Zobeida métamorphosée en robot enragé" (257). Zett's androgyny notwithstanding, Idriss experiences an erotic coupling with his dancer/jackhammer - an act of violence which shatters not only "La croûte de bitume" but also the showcase window containing the *goutte d'or* (257).

Although critics including Françoise Merllié have commented upon the androgyny of Tournier's final novelistic female character - Zett Zobeida - they have failed to make mention of an important element shared by Zett and by the calligraphic rendition of "La Reine blonde." During her performance as part of the wedding festivities at the oasis, the part of Zett's anatomy which most intrigues Idriss is her stomach. Translating Idriss's thoughts, the narrator describes this expressive stomach as "la bouche sans lèvres de tout ce corps, la partie parlante, souriante, grimaçante et chantante de tout ce corps" (35). And while Idriss's preferred vision of femaleness is that of a lipless stomach/mouth, Riad's calligraphic interpretation of the blond queen's portrait is mouthless. Thus after rendering the queen's eyes, nose, forehead, chin and hair, he deems that his calligraphic translation is complete. These two dissected interpretations of femaleness are especially noteworthy within *La Goutte d'or* as they are associated not with the novel's nefarious blondes but rather with the antidote thereof. By rendering ostensibly propitious femaleness into lipless stomach/mouth (Zett) and mouthlessness ("La Reine blonde"), Tournier satisfies a misogynist fantasy reminiscent of those within medieval fabliaux. With this removal of woman's lips (Zett) and mouth ("La Reine blonde") in *La Goutte d'or* and of woman's head (Speranza) in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique,* Tournier visually demonstrates Luce Irigaray's assertion that women are silenced within the "dominant discourse of the father" (70). Clearly the three female characters above are deprived of a role in discourse. The mouthless, calligraphic "Reine blonde" and the headless Speranza cannot speak and the audible "speech" of Zett's lipless stomach/mouth is the jingling of her jewelry.

The heterosexual women of *La Goutte d'or* fall into the category of "point" (the mostly blond, mesmerizing women of the Occident including the Land Rover blonde, the prostitute at Marseille, Philippe's fiancée, the *femme-lionne*, the comic strip and cafe blondes, *et al*.) and "counterpoint" (the African antidotes to the visual *femme-leurre*

including Idriss's mother, Kuka, Zett Zobeida, the calligraphic "Reine blonde," *et al.*). It is among the former, negative examples of femaleness in *La Goutte d'or* that one finds parallels to the portrait of female heterosexuality within Tournier's previous novels and to that within Pierre Jean Jouve's prose. Woman within these works frequently serves as catalyst to a nefarious series of events, as evident in Tournier's *La Goutte d'or, Le Roi des aulnes* and *Les Météores*. Just as Idriss's quixotic quest is launched by the Land Rover blonde's unauthorized photograph in *La Goutte d'or*, Tiffauges's ogreish metamorphosis is sparked by Rachel's epithet in *Le Roi des aulnes* and the separate departures of Sophie, Jean and Paul are triggered by Méline in *Les Météores*. Female carnal delights act as catalyst in Jouve's prose, giving rise to the obsessions which result in murder in *Paulina 1880* and death and execution in "La Victime." As we have previously quoted, Trista Selous explains the implications of woman's role as catalyst in literature: endowed with "the power of the catalyst rather than of the agent . . . woman herself seems somehow to disappear as an independent entity" (1).

While Selous notes that woman effectively disappears in her role as catalyst, this erasure of the female is facilitated by additional means in the prose of Tournier and Jouve. First, both authors generally banish their maternal figures to absence or death. Tournier depicts Tiffauges's mother as inexplicably absent in *Roi des aulnes*, while he reveals that Taor's mother distances herself as much as possible from her son in *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*. Meanwhile death is the cause for the absence of the mothers of Jouve's Paulina (*Paulina 1880*) and Dorothée ("La Victime") and those of Tournier's Alexandre, Jean and Paul Surin (*Les Météores*). Secondly, not only mothers but all of Jouve's and Tournier's female characters are prey to death and absence. Premature death claims the lives of Jouve's Hélène ("Dans les Années profondes") and Dorothée ("La Victime") and of Tournier's Florence, Angelica, Deborah and Frau Kraus (*Les Météores*). Moreover, absent females include women who abandon their significant other (Jouve's

Baladine in *Le Monde désert*; Tournier's Rachel in *Le Roi des aulnes* and Sophie in *Les Météores*; *et al.)* and women who are banished or kidnapped (Malvina and Melchior's mother in Tournier's *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* ).

While Tournier's and Jouve's prose works erase their heterosexual female characters through premature death and various means of abandonment, these women are also objectified in a misogynist fashion. Both Jouve and Tournier turn woman into a *femme-paysage* to be trod upon and utilized for male pleasure (Jouve's Hélène of "Dans les Années profondes" and Tournier's Speranza of *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* ). And in *Les Météores* , Tournier objectifies woman not only as *femme-paysage* (Deborah) but also as "WOMB-an" (Maria-Barbara), lair/vagina (Florence) and *femme-pain* (Angelica). Tournier's *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* and *La Goutte d'or* silence woman through metaphorical dissection, presenting Speranza as headless, Zett Zobeida as a lipless stomach/mouth and the calligraphic "Reine blonde" as mouthless. Tournier's two final novels add an additional pejorative objectification: the perfidious blond lure (Biltine from *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* and the bevy of detrimental blondes from *La Goutte d'or*).

Erased from the prose landscape by death, abandonment and banishment, Jouve's and Tournier's heterosexual females are clearly denied full presence. The presence which they are granted has the compromising aspect of objectification. Turning now to Jouve's and Tournier's bisexual women and lesbians, we shall see if their presence is as compromised as that of their heterosexual sisters.

# Chapter III

## The Lesbian and the Bisexual Female in the Prose of Michel Tournier and Pierre Jean Jouve

Our portrait of the lesbian and bisexual female will focus upon five characters in the prose of Michel Tournier and Pierre Jean Jouve: Fabienne de Ribeauvillé from Tournier's *Les Météores*, Sister Perpetua from Jouve's *Paulina 1880*, Fanny Felicitas and Elisabeth Hohenstein from Jouve's *Hécate* and Catherine Crachat from Jouve's *Hécate* and *Vagadu*. In this chapter we shall determine whether the negative depiction of Tournier's and Jouve's heterosexual female characters - objectification, association with premature death and abandonment, etc. - is equally employed by these two authors in the development of their lesbian and bisexual female characters.

The salient link between Fabienne de Ribeauvillé and Jouvian and Tournierian heterosexual females is the depiction of woman as dangerous lure. Chapter one established that for men, Jouvian heterosexual females (including Paulina of *Paulina 1880*, Dorothée of "La Victime," *et al*.) serve as an irresistible sexual lure. Chapter two explained that Tournier concretizes this notion of woman as lure presenting *femme-topos* as literal *femme-piège* in the case of the wallowing-hole which tempts Robinson (*Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*) and the marshy fen which engulfs Tiffauges and Ephraïm (*Le Roi des aulnes*). Just as Robinson's sister is evoked each time he mentions the noxious wallowing-hole, Fabienne de Ribeauvillé is also associated with a dangerous hole which beckons men not with the *souille*'s promise of narcotic tranquillity but with a "chant de sirène" (M 240). And like Speranza's wallowing-hole and Mother Prussia's water-logged fen, Fabienne's pit has a significant component of water. Alexandre Surin

explains that eight months out of twelve the bottom of this pit is "une mare saumâtre peuplée de joncs" (228). But different from Mother Prussia's treacherous marsh and Speranza's *souille*, Fabienne's trench also contains a deadly, manmade component: a forbidding accumulation of barbed wire tossed into the hole by a rich farmer after his acquisition of the surrounding farmlands. Thus the hole's siren song actually offers a triple threat for passersby: a painful fall into the "combe," a sucking into the "mare" and a skinning alive by "ce terrible roncier métallique dévoré et soudé par la rouille" (228-29).

Chapter two explained that Robinson associates the wallowing-hole with his deceased sister as it is a space whose narcotic tranquillity entices him to join Lucy in death. In Fabienne's case, her relationship to the pit of barbed wire is both literal and figurative. First, she is literally associated with the pit as it is here that she is first seen by the narrator, Alexandre Surin. Fabienne makes this initial appearance in order to retrieve her horse and its groom who have fallen into the treacherous cavity. Her groom escapes unharmed but her horse must be destroyed due to his extensive injuries. Since he is the official in charge of the regional refuse facility, Alexandre Surin promises to send a crew to clean the pit within the week - a promise countered by Fabienne's insistence that she personally take charge of this task. And having assumed responsibility for the cleanup of the dangerous chasm, Fabienne subsequently presides there.

Alexandre indicates that overseeing this project offers Fabienne the chance to retrieve a valuable object possibly lost at the moment of her own conception: her mother's Philippine pearl earrings. These were the earrings which Fabienne's mother, Adrienne, was wearing during her final night of adulterous passion with the notorious dog trainer, Crochemaure. Realizing that her beloved earrings were lost, Adrienne offered a reward which resulted both in the discovery of one earring and in a plan for blackmail which proved fatal to her lover. Having found one of the earrings in the garbage dump near Crochemaure's residence, the junk dealer Briffaut threatened to divulge the location of its

discovery to Adrienne's husband unless he was paid handsomely. Crochemaure located the second earring, although his decision to settle this score with Briffaut landed him dead at the bottom of the ominous pit. But before Briffaut was able to retrieve the second pearl from Crochemaure's corpse, the property's owner filled the hole with the barbed wire fencing he had removed from his newly acquired farmlands. Thus Fabienne's project to extract the deadly tangle of wire years later provides the perfect occasion for Briffaut to finally locate the second pearl earring. It is however Fabienne who beats him to Crochemaure's corpse, enabling her to retrieve the earring from the skeleton of he whom Alexandre Surin surmises is her father. When Briffaut appears to search for the second pearl in the pit, Fabienne not only refuses to relinquish it but also slices off his ear to obtain the one he had found two decades earlier.

Clearly Fabienne has a literal association with the chasm, as it is she who presides over its cleanup and consequently reaps the reward of ownership of her mother's missing pearl earrings. When Alexandre overcomes his dread of the pit and its wire maze, he finally goes in to inspect the progress of Fabienne's crew. This scene underscores the relationship between Fabienne and the treacherous labyrinth, for once inside Alexandre finds himself "nez à nez avec Fabienne [dont les mains] . . . étaient l'une et l'autre éclaboussées de sang" (244). But in addition to this literal relationship, there is also a figurative association between Fabienne and her labyrinthine hole: that between woman and her anatomical structure.[18] Thus along with the allusions to Florence's red lair which we mentioned in chapter two, references to Fabienne's pit as "cette dépression" are another euphemism for the female vagina in *Les Météores* (228). In his narrative segment, Alexandre Surin describes the cleanup of the barbed wire pit as the effort "d'y retrouver quelque chose qui y serait caché ou perdu" (238). Although the "trésors cachés"

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[18]Tournier's short story "Tupik" from *Le Coq de bruyère* also establishes a link between female genitalia and a labyrinth. In this story, it is "au centre du labyrinthe" that Tupik is allowed to peak at the female genitalia of the androgynous Dominique (CB 81).

of the pit are ostensibly the Philippine pearl earrings, this buried treasure also brings to mind Alexandre's *Roman de la rose*-like discussion of the female anatomy (238). Similar to Tiffauges who decries woman's "ventre décapité" (RA 33), Alexandre and his childhood friends deplored the female "ventre mutilé," "l'indigence" of the clitoris and woman's lack of "sexe apparent . . . cette navrante disgrâce" (M 233-34). Yet, different from Tiffauges who deems that woman's full breasts should be proclaimed the true "sexe de la femme" (RA 33), Alexandre and company dismissed the female breasts as "la caricature flasque et briochante" of male pectoral musculature (M 234). But just as the adult Alexandre is intrigued by the labyrinth of passageways in Fabienne's wire-filled pit, so the young Alexandre and his friends were intrigued by female fallopian tubes. Similar to the barbed wire tunnels, the boys learned that fallopian tubes are "trompes - bien propre à intriguer . . . mais enfouies, cachées, inaccessibles" (234). Another parallel between young Alexandre's fascination with the hidden network of female fallopian tubes and adult Alexandre's fascination with Fabienne and the buried passageways of her pit is that in both cases this interest is fleeting; for young Alexandre and his friends "le peuple féminin nous intriguait sans nous retenir bien longtemps" (234).

Pertinent to our discussion of femaleness in *Les Météores* is the fact that Alexandre's fleeting fascination with Fabienne arises from her gender confusion. Even before making her acquaintance, Alexandre learns from his blue collar associates that Fabienne's lifestyle has earned her "une mystérieuse considération parmi les grutiers" (228). He notes that "Il fallait bien que je la rencontrasse un jour ou l'autre" (228). When Alexandre first sees Fabienne and her female companion at the pit, he assumes that they are males due to their attire. Thus he refers to Fabienne as "Le cavalier" and to her companion as "Un jeune écuyer" (229). Fabienne's demeanor during this initial encounter belies the stereotypical depiction of behavior of a female. Rather than empathizing with her companion who has fallen into the wire-filled pit with her horse, Fabienne lashes her

face repeatedly with a whip. After revealing that he was "intéressé" by "l'agonie du cheval et cette horrible correction," Alexandre adds that "Je l'aurais été davantage si j'avais su la vérité: le cavalier était une femme, le petit écuyer en était une autre" (229). It is only upon speaking with Fabienne and her companion that Alexandre realizes that the young horsemen are actually horsewomen.

The sexual confusion Alexandre experiences vis-à-vis Fabienne is that of a trompe l'œil: a visual trick played upon him by the lesbian's attire and demeanor. Judith Butler would applaud this trompe l'œil effect which lends credence to the premise of her *Gender Trouble*: gender is not biological but rather a culturally constituted performance. Butler sees as essential the decentering of "such defining institutions: phallogocentrism and compulsory heterosexuality" (*Gender Trouble* xi). Initially, it appears that Fabienne's appearance and actions will serve to destabilize the rigid conception of gender decried by Butler. However Fabienne is only seen by the reader through the eyes of the misogynist narrator, Alexandre. And when Alexandre realizes that the commanding horseman is actually a horsewoman, his opinion of her changes radically reinforcing the stereotypical hierarchy of phallogocentrism. Although he states that he would have been more interested upon observing the horsemen had he known that they were horsewomen, when Alexandre realizes that Fabienne is a woman his attitude transforms from interest to defiance tinged with fear and repulsion. He is defiant for example when she signals to him from horseback, inviting him to join her at the pit. He explains that "Je fais non d'un air renfrogné car je n'aime pas ses manières de hobereaute" (233). But it is wounded macho pride which underlies Alexandre's refusal of Fabienne's invitation. He is uncomfortable being on foot while a female interlocutor addresses him in a commanding fashion astride her equestrian phallus. And later when Alexandre encounters Fabienne presiding over the cleanup of the pit, his fear and repulsion are evident. Once again Fabienne invites him to follow her into the network of tunnels, but Alexandre hesitates

explaining "Non, je ne la suivrai pas. Ces lieux m'inspirent plus qu'un malaise, une véritable répulsion" (239).[19] As previously stated, the subterraneous, wired-filled tunnels can be interpreted as symbolic of the female reproductive system. Thus upon rejecting Fabienne's invitation to descend into this network, Alexandre symbolically rejects woman herself. His own statements reveal that he objectifies heterosexual woman as WOMB-an: "hétérosexualité [féminine]: 1 + 0 = 10 (fécondité)" (237). But while he dismisses heterosexual woman as merely WOMB-an, he adds that "je ne puis vaincre mon immense scepticisme à l'endroit de l'homosexualité féminine" (236-37). In his mind lesbianism is merely the "chétive contrefaçon" of male homosexuality and the lesbian herself is a nonentity: "homosexualité féminine: 0 + 0 = 0 (néant)" (237). The cleaning out of Fabienne's pit is an appropriate reflection both of Alexandre's misogyny and of the parallel established between this pit and the female reproductive system. Alexandre deems that heterosexual woman is merely a baby machine who consequently utilizes her fallopian tubes and vagina for reproduction. In keeping with this narrow view of woman as slave to her biological/reproductive destiny, it therefore follows that a lesbian who has rejected motherhood should empty this labyrinthine pit symbolizing the female reproductive system. And in spite of his own homosexual orientation, Alexandre accords social non-existence to nonparous lesbians: the empty state he describes as "0 (néant)" (237).

Although Alexandre virtually discounts both heterosexual and homosexual women, his attraction toward society's marginal members leads him to support Fabienne in her final scene of ironic perversion of social convention.[20] Prior to this scene, Alexandre has seen Fabienne only in equestrian attire and never far from her similarly

[19]Alexandre Surin's attitude toward the wire labyrinth/vagina recalls that of Tupik. While the maze fills Surin with "répulsion" (M 239), the labyrinth of Tupik's square - "dans lequel on pouvait se glisser par une fente étroite . . . lui avait toujours inspiré de l'horreur" (CB 81).

[20]Critics including André Clavel have unanimously labeled Alexandre as a *marginal*. Clavel refers to Alexandre as "Ce marginal . . . à la recherche de l'informe, il aime les gadoues, 'terre de hors la loi'" (132).

attired, female companion. Assuming that both young women are lesbians, he is therefore quite stunned to receive an invitation to Fabienne's engagement party from none other than her fellow cavaliere. Alexandre learns at the soirée that Fabienne has chosen her fiancé in an ironic reflection of Honoré d'Urfé's *L'Astrée*. Similar to the heroine Astrée who falls for the favors of her lover disguised as a shepherdess, Fabienne selects a fiancé as effeminate as she is masculine. This marriage as a farce reminiscent of the masterpiece of *préciosité* stuns even the indecorous homosexual, Alexandre, the self-proclaimed "roi et dandy des gadoues": "[Fabienne] est plus forte que moi . . . elle me scandalise et par là m'enrichit" (94, 258). William Cloonan points out that Alexandre is amused and enlightened by Fabienne's social antics which mock in true Alexandrian fashion "the ethical and sexual norms of bourgeois society" (*Michel Tournier* 64). And in turn, Alexandre comes to Fabienne's aid when the orchestra prepares to play the soirée's opening piece. Just at this moment, the crowd parts as a tapeworm slithers down Fabienne's leg. Alexandre feels camaraderie with Fabienne both in her role as *marginale* and in her role as host to a tapeworm for he too has become infected with this parasite due to his position as head of France's municipal waste sites. Thus rather than slinking away alongside Fabienne's horrified fiancé and guests, the dandy of the dung-heaps scoops the worm onto the plate of a fellow partygoer, hands the plate to the fiancé and takes Fabienne's arm to begin the first dance.[21]

Alexandre's negative interpretation of the nonparous lesbian notwithstanding, Françoise Merllié interprets Fabienne's tapeworm as the indication that "[elle] n'a pas besoin d'homme et le ver qu' elle perd au bal indique que par l'homosexualité, elle a conquis la puissance virile que d'autres trouvent par leur enfant" (*Michel Tournier* 83). However there are no indications in the text to endorse this positive assessment of

[21]Due to his gallantry at Fabienne's soirée and other memorable antics, Alexandre is labeled "exaspérant" by Jean-Didier Wolfromm (37), "cet homosexuel flamboyant" by Christiane Baroche (1181), "naughty" by Barbara Bray (950) and "a cynical homosexual [with] . . . a visceral hatred of the heterosexual world" by William Cloonan (*Michel Tournier* 54).

Fabienne's tapeworm as an ersatz phallus. Rather than granting her phallic power, the untimely exit of the tapeworm is merely a shocking endorsement of Fabienne's role as a marginal member of society - a role reflected by the narrative makeup of *Les Météores*. For instead of being selected as one of the novel's multiple narrators, Fabienne appears to the reader only through Alexandre's eyes and in just one of his narrative segments. And after Alexandre receives Fabienne's gift of her mother's Philippine pearl earrings in thanks for his support at her engagement party, this young lesbian is forgotten in *Les Météores*.

Fabienne of *Les Météores* is the unique lesbian character of Michel Tournier's novels. And presented solely through the eyes of the misogynist Alexandre who describes female homosexuality as "néant," the lesbian fares poorly in the Tournierian opus (237). Pierre Jean Jouve's novels also offer examples of lesbianism (Perpetua of *Paulina 1880*) and female bisexuality (Fanny Felicitas and Elisabeth Hohenstein of *Hécate*) as a destructive lifestyle. Jouve's novelistic opus concludes with the example of Catherine Crachat, whose flirtation with female bisexuality in *Hécate* is a prelude to her psychological reintegration in *Vagadu*.

As we briefly mentioned in chapter one, Sister Perpetua's romantic attachment to Paulina develops quite innocently. When Paulina arrives at her convent emotionally and spiritually distraught, the Mother Superior renames her Blandine and selects the impeccable Perpetua to serve as her mentor. Perpetua takes the supervision of her charge very seriously. Realizing that Paulina/Blandine is desperately struggling for salvation, she selflessly desires to die "plus vite afin d'intercéder directement auprès du Très-Haut en faveur de sœur Blandine" (166). But since Perpetua has spent her formative years at the Maison de la Visitation, "Elle ignorait toute passion" (163). She is therefore unaware that her spiritual love for the novice transforms into a romantic attachment - a transformation

which also escapes the attention of the very preoccupied Paulina/ Blandine. A passionate love it is nonetheless for the innocent "Perpetua [qui] n'avait plus de sommeil . . . un souci continuel pour l'âme et la personne de sœur Blandine l'occupait entièrement" (169). As the narrator elaborates,

> L'affection trouble qu'elle éprouvait pour le visage de la novice . . . le désir d'être avec la novice . . . la déchirante passion qu'elle sentait en son cœur de garder la novice au couvent et près d'elle . . . tournait et retournait dans sa pauvre tête . . . l'emplissait de terreur et de tendresse (170).

Perpetua is not only willing to die in order to intercede on behalf of Paulina/ Blandine, she also fantasizes about her life with her charge as an intimate journey toward God and death: "que sœur Blandine et elle s'avançassent doucement ensemble vers la mort, la main dans la main" (172). Although Perpetua does not initially recognize the sexual nature of her attraction toward Paulina/Blandine, she does realize that her charge is unaware of this love. Thus the perfect fulfillment of her fantasy of intimately marching toward God and death with Paulina/Blandine would include a recognition of Perpetua's love so that "Peut-être un jour, sœur Blandine éclairée daignerait-elle poser les yeux sur Perpetua son humble servante, et comprendre" (172).

The aftermath of the forced dissolution of the relationship between Paulina/ Blandine and Perpetua bears witness to the novel's anti-lesbian premise of the destructive nature of female homosexuality. Upon discovering that Perpetua's attachment to her charge is "du caractère de passion exclusive et terrestre," the Mother Superior dismisses Paulina/ Blandine from her convent (188). This decision forces Paulina to return to the lay world thus inadvertently preparing her murder of Count Michele. Ever unaware of Perpetua's affection for her, Paulina leaves her mentor with no romantic regrets. On the other hand, realizing that the Mother Superior is censoring "son tendre amour," Perpetua is finally "saisie par la réalité; tout était vu et par cette voie elle comprenait elle-même"

(188). Stunned both by the condemnation of her love and by the departure of her cherished charge, for Perpetua "le couvent autour d'elle s'écroula"; "[elle] pouvait bien mourir seule de chagrin après le jugement qu'elle avait lu dans les yeux de la Mère Supérieure" (188, 190). Her suffering is clearly dual, both the "douleur aiguë" of knowing that "Aucun être de ce monde ne pouvait plus lui permettre de . . . voir" Paulina and the guilt associated with the unmasking of her lesbian passion by the Mother Superior (190). The innocence of this passion notwithstanding, it condemns the would-be lover to painful solitude while banishing the love object back to the lay world in which she will ultimately kill her male lover.

The liaison between Perpetua and Paulina/Blandine in Jouve's *Paulina 1880* (1925) establishes that lesbian love is a destructive passion. In Jouve's later novel, *Hécate* (1928), a multitude of dysfunctional relationships pervade as evidenced by those of Guido - a young man emasculated by his mother and sexually desired by his stepfather. Thus Christiane Blot-Labarrère labels the characters of *Hécate* "ces êtres anxieux, aveugles et naufragés" ("*Le Monde désert*" 20). The destructive relationships of the novel's female bisexuals - Elisabeth Hohenstein and Fanny Felicitas - and the sexually confused Catherine Crachat are a crucial part of the representation of the failure of human relationships within *Hécate*.

Since Elisabeth Hohenstein's death precedes her introduction in *Hécate*, she is presented only by her former lover, Fanny Felicitas. Fanny speaks of Elisabeth while relating her autobiography to Catherine Crachat - all the while hoping that Catherine will join the ranks of her multitudinous lovers. Thus it is her sexual desire for Catherine which prompts Fanny's narration and most certainly her depiction of the deceased Elisabeth and her other former lovers. Lacking another source of information regarding Elisabeth, the careful reader must cautiously accept that provided by Fanny.

This posthumous portrait by Fanny contains three components: Elisabeth's physical appearance, her social self and her private self. Regarding her deceased lover's physique, Fanny could have merely shown Catherine the two nude photographs which she possesses.[22] But Fanny prefaces the viewing of the photographs with a lengthy commentary regarding Elisabeth's physical appearance. She maintains that her face was "difficilement croyable . . . comme à travers un brouillard ou un songe. Elle avait réellement cette chair vaporeuse . . . Les yeux sont tout le mystère de cette personne; ils portent un voile; vagues, ils brillent d'une ardeur et d'une tristesse fascinantes" (79). Fanny depicts Elisabeth's beauty as that of a romantic heroine, with such traits as her seemingly fog or dream enshrouded face, her brilliant, veiled eyes and her neck "qui a les beaux mouvements de celui du cygne" (79). Highly sought after as "une des femmes les plus étrangement jolies de Vienne," Fanny states that the married Elisabeth turned a deaf ear to her would-be lovers (79). In her dress as well as her demeanor, "Elle était très vertueuse" (80). But rather than applauding Elisabeth's marital fidelity, the social circles of Vienna labeled her "trop sensuelle . . . fausse . . . froide . . . une nerveuse mélancolique" (80).

While Fanny's discussion of Elisabeth's appearance and social self are doubtlessly colored by her desire to seduce Catherine, this bias is patently evident in her presentation of Elisabeth's private self. Fanny boasts that Elisabeth's face "était un livre ouvert au sens hermétique . . . Moi seule ai lu dans ce livre" (80). In addition to emphasizing that she alone was capable of understanding Elisabeth, Fanny also maintains that theirs was the unique extramarital affair of this pure young woman. Prefacing this revelation with a

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[22]The nude photographs of Fanny and Elisabeth depict the two stages of their love affair. The first photograph captures an early, blissful moment of harmony during which lesbian love is displayed in pantheistic splendor. The second photograph of the female lovers foretells the dissolution of their relationship. Fanny reports that her rejection by Elisabeth is not personal, but rather a rejection of lesbianism. Thus the second photograph "est d'une laideur déplorable . . . la créature disgracieuse qui sourit derrière des cheveux poisseux, c'est Elisabeth, et elle tire par le doigt Felicitas dont on voit plutôt les parties postérieures" (81).

lengthy discussion of Elisabeth's mysterious beauty and her previous refusal of numerous lovers, Fanny could have depicted this affair as a monumental conquest on her part. But she goes a step beyond, maintaining instead that the pure Elisabeth and she were equally enamored; smitten by "une tendresse, un désir, un amour insurpassables, elles ne peuvent s'éloigner l'une de l'autre, se détacher pendant une minute, et au bout de huit jours elles dorment ensemble" (81). Thus, this segment of Fanny's autobiographical narration is clearly aimed at luring Catherine into her bed. For having portrayed Elisabeth as a beautiful and highly sought after love object, she then explains that she alone received the extramarital affections of this proper woman in a liaison of mutual sexual desire. And after carefully laying this groundwork, Fanny openly praises lesbian love: "Je trouve que l'amour entre deux femmes est *si gentil*. A côté de l'autre qui nous engage cruellement, il est si bon, de nous laisser notre liberté avec notre féminité . . . Il est discret . . . C'est la fleur sous l'herbe. Mais s'il est profond . . . l'amour des femmes ne sera-t-il pas tout autant . . ." (81)

In accordance with Fanny's account, her liaison with Elisabeth offered the promise of unending bliss. In this love of untarnished "pureté," Fanny explains that "Elisabeth ordonne et Felicitas obéit" (82). She adds that she resided with the Hohensteins in a happy *ménage à trois*, due to Elisabeth's husband's open acceptance of their love. Although all seemed to bode well, Elisabeth became depressed three years into their relationship. As Fanny relates the denouement of her affair, Catherine questions the veracity of these statements. While Fanny insists that she continued to adore Elisabeth, Catherine asks if she had not been rather "[la] méchante Fanny" (83). But although Catherine challenges her truthfulness, the reader has only Fanny 's version: the liaison collapsed with her lover's sudden realization that she loved only her husband. Although Fanny maintains that her lover's penchant toward lesbianism was more keen than her own, Elisabeth ultimately evicted Fanny from her home asserting "qu'elle n'a

d'attachement que pour Hohenstein" (83). If the reader accepts the details provided by Fanny, s/he can conclude that Elisabeth's rejection of her lover was a final effort to suppress her own bisexuality. But whether Fanny was indeed mean or Elisabeth simply decided to give heterosexuality a final try, the suppression of her bisexuality culminated in her suicide by drowning. Given Elisabeth's sudden rejection of Fanny, her suicide and various allusions to her previous crises of mental instability, she provides a negative example of female bisexuality within *Hécate*.

In addition to casting a negative light on female bisexuality, Elisabeth's suicide also illustrates the close relationship between Eros and Thanatos - a relationship we shall return to later regarding Fanny Felicitas. Julia Kristeva's summary of Eros and Thanatos provides insight into the suicides of both Elisabeth and Fanny. In *In the Beginning was Love, Psychoanalysis and Faith*, Kristeva points out that "Even the death instinct is a manifestation of sexuality when it subtends aggressive desires, desires to inflict pain on another person or on oneself (even to the point of death)" (47). Furthermore, Kristeva's explanation of Thanatos's predominance over Eros in *Histoires d'amour* is clearly applicable to Elisabeth and Fanny: "si Éros s'oppose à Thanatos, leur combat n'est pas à armes égales. Car Thanatos est pur, alors qu'Éros est depuis toujours irrigué de Thanatos, 'la plus pulsionnelle' étant la pulsion de mort" (36).

Due to her crises of mental stability and sexual identity, the siren song of Thanatos proves irresistible to Elisabeth. Thanatos ultimately prevails with Fanny Felicitas as well - the *femme fatale* at the center of a complex web of destructive interactions with both men and women. Her relationships with men all end in an unhealthy fashion. She cuckolds her first husband during their honeymoon by sleeping with a former boyfriend, Guido Amering, who has become her husband's secretary. Incapable of continuing this illicit affair, Guido begs Fanny to flee abroad with him and takes his own life upon receiving her letter of refusal. Rather than feeling elated that her husband never discovered this

affair, Fanny rushes to his side and confesses all. After her husband has had their marriage annulled, Fanny gives birth to a son, Guido, whom she regards as her property to be controlled as she sees fit. Following Elisabeth's suicide, Fanny marries her husband, Baron Hohenstein, and unknowingly provides another insalubrious influence for her son: a stepfather with sexual desire for Guido. Her liaison with Pierre Indemini is the final unhealthy relationship which the novel describes between Fanny and a male lover. When he makes her acquaintance, Pierre is already obsessed with "une très grande préoccupation du problème de la *mort*" (110). Although Fanny's remarkable sexual prowess temporarily consoles the sickly Pierre's fixation with mortality, we shall see in chapter five that Pierre finds true solace only in his own death. And after losing Pierre to death, Fanny loses both her second husband through legal separation and her son through his relocation to America.

While all of Fanny's close relationships with men end in death or abandonment, her romantic relationships with women fare no better. Although her open praise for lesbian love might lead one to deduce that her lesbian lovers were numerous, the text recounts only her intimate relationships with Elisabeth Hohenstein and Catherine Crachat. As we have seen, the initially idyllic relationship with Elisabeth is shattered when the latter rejects her female lover, renews her marital fidelity and ultimately commits suicide.

Seeking a respite from her hectic acting schedule, Catherine Crachat travels to Vienna and is innocently drawn into the web of Fanny's unhealthy relationships. Having learned that the French actress is resting in Vienna, Fanny introduces herself as one of Catherine's most ardent admirers. Upon accepting Fanny's invitation to stay at the Hohenstein estate, she quickly becomes the object of Guido's admiration and the object of desire of both the baron and Baroness Fanny herself. As we have noted, the baroness attempts to whet Catherine's lesbian appetite with a titillating, ostensibly autobiographical narrative. And complete with photographs, Fanny's account highlights "la beauté

naturelle" of the delights of lesbianism which she claims brought her true love for the very first time (80).

Reading Fanny's account of the liaison with Elisabeth and her subsequent suicide, it becomes clear that the baroness is grooming Catherine to take her lover's place. But in spite of her interest in Fanny's tale, Catherine does not acquiesce to her hostess's advances. While Catherine prolongs her professional hiatus month after month, Fanny continues plying her with successive installments of her life as a bisexual libertine. Catherine begins to relate her life's adventures as well, "mais Fanny beaucoup plus; l'aspect de son récit demeurait le même, moins une confidence qu'une exhibition" (89). Although she has not become Fanny's lover, Catherine reveals nevertheless that she has fallen under the baroness's spell. She is thus "attachée à Fanny par une force indéfinissable . . . immobilisée ici" (90). She seems mesmerized in subsequent scenes when the baroness describes sexual encounters at her trysting place, peppering her account with "beaucoup de détails érotiques" (92). At this stage of Catherine's psychological journey, Jean Starobinski notes that she manifests "froideur voyeuriste . . . passivité fascinée" (82) . On the one hand, this fascination with Fanny's narration leads Catherine to pass her waking hours almost exclusively in the company of her hostess. On the other hand, her fascination remains passive and coldly voyeuristic for her participation in this intimate friendship is largely aural (listening to Fanny) and visual (viewing the photographs of Fanny and Elisabeth).

When the titillating photographs and details of her life have still failed to lure Catherine into a sexual affair, Fanny utilizes other tactics. First, she reveals to Catherine that she is receiving a male lover at her secret flat. Secondly, she presents her with a key to her traveling bag upon which " elle a collé *Pour dames seules* " (98). The fact that the text highlights the ownership of a key - generally considered a phallic object - by the female character, Fanny, may be viewed as an indication that Fanny is Catherine's

perverse mother. Julia Kristeva explains in *Histoires d'amour* that the perverse mother is "un conglomérat de bonne mère et de père tout-puissant, télescopés dans un être monstrueux, adorable, comblant" (223). So as perverse mother, Fanny's yearlong showering of maternal nurturing upon her houseguest, Catherine, is therefore complemented by her possession of the phallus/key. Nelly Mane appropriately states that this key is "le signe de la complicité de Catherine avec le péché de Fanny" (44). However Mane maintains that Fanny's offer of the key to her traveling bag is tantamount to offering her heart to Catherine (43). A more appropriate assessment is that Fanny issues Catherine an invitation - in the form of the key - to unlock the delights of lesbian love symbolically contained within her bag. For this reason, the traveling bag bears the sign announcing "*Pour dames seules*" (98). The shape of the bag itself is also an appropriate symbol for lesbian love, as the bag-shaped uterus is an essential part of the female sexual anatomy. Nelly Mane notes that "La clef suppose une serrure [et] . . . celle-ci est tue, interdite" in *Hécate* (44). She adds that the lock is purposefully not mentioned in *Hécate* to reserve the theme of the "serrure castratrice, qui avale la clef/phallus" for *Hécate*'s sequel, *Vagadu* (44). The fact that the lock is not mentioned can also be interpreted as an indication that the love act in question deviates from the heterosexual norm traditionally represented by a phallic, "male" key and a "female" lock.[23] It may also be deemed an appropriate extension of Catherine's unwillingness to acquiesce to Fanny's sexual advances. Just as Catherine continues to suppress her lesbian desire, the traveling bag offers her no lock or opening to the lesbian delights symbolically contained therein.

Continuing to resist the baroness's stratagems, Catherine subtly returns her key. But while refusing her sexual overtures, Catherine's captivation with her hostess leads her to

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[23]The phallic "male" key and the "female" lock surface in other Jouvian novels. As we saw in Chapter one regarding *Paulina 1880*, the unlocking of the paternal bedroom door with the paternal key is the necessary prelude to the count's unlocking of the center of Paulina's sexual desire with his penis. And in the memories induced by Catherine's therapy in *Vagadu*, her illicit lover, Louis, serves as a stand-in for the phallic key (V 130).

spy upon Fanny in route to her thrice weekly trysts with her male lover. This fascination ultimately culminates in Catherine's visit to Fanny's love nest - a visit which reveals that the baroness's paramour is none other than Pierre Indemini: the lover who had jilted Catherine in Paris. Rather than displaying jealousy upon learning that Pierre is Catherine's former lover, Fanny incorporates this information into her courtship of her female houseguest. She announces that since Catherine preceded her in loving Pierre, "C'est donc toi que je cherchais à aimer en lui!" (117) Although she is unwilling to break up with Pierre, she adds that "je sens que j'aime Pierre dans la mesure où c'est lui qui obscurément me menait vers toi!" (117)

The text of *Hécate* includes extracts of letters which Catherine writes to her friend, Marguerite de Douxmaison. Christiane Blot-Labarrère maintains that the "seule existence [de ces lettres] témoigne d'une absence, d'un vide" ("*Le Monde désert*" 23). Important to our question of sexual identity is the fact that these letters reveal Catherine's confusion regarding her relationship with both Fanny and Pierre. On the one hand, she writes of her willingness to receive the plethora of gifts showered upon her daily by her hostess. She asks Marguerite desperately "pourquoi, encore une fois, est-ce que ça ne me dégoûte pas?" (120) On the other hand, she expresses concern that Fanny - who has caused the suicides of two previous lovers - "est à présent 'sur' moi . . . à fond" (120). This worry is coupled with a sadistic and masochistic desire: to "faire souffrir" Fanny and Pierre "et je voudrais qu'ils me fissent souffrir" (120). Catherine reveals that the baroness "voudrait m'amener à une combinaison, un trio," but subsequent letters reveal that she does not falter in her resolution to refuse the proposed *ménage à trois* (120). Nevertheless she remains at the baroness's estate determined to save Pierre from Fanny's deleterious love and perplexed by the question of whom she loves.

Surprisingly, it is the love of the seemingly weak Pierre which finally extricates Catherine from the baroness's insalubrious clutches. Pierre proposes that Catherine and he

renew their romantic relationship on a chaste, higher plane of "*renoncement* ": a mystical preparation for death (136). "[En étant] trop une bête sexuelle," Catherine accepts Pierre's proposal with great difficulty, returns to Paris and resumes her acting career - spurred on only by this celibate, epistolary romance (163). It is the epistolary nature of this love affair which prompts a final rendez-vous between Catherine and Fanny. According to Pierre, the love transmitted through his correspondence with Catherine purifies him in preparation for a perfect, mystical death. In order to achieve this state, he retires in solitude to a village in Italy - taking with him not Catherine's address but Fanny's. Although the novel provides no explanation for this action, the reader can assume that - since Pierre has elevated his relationship with Catherine to a spiritual plane - it is natural for his material possessions be mailed to the more earthly Fanny.

When the baroness receives Pierre's effects after his death, she discovers a packet of letters for Catherine. After Catherine has mourned Pierre's passing for two full years, Fanny finally informs her of the existence of the letters in hopes that time will have healed the wound of Pierre's death thereby encouraging Catherine to capitulate to her. The baroness therefore arranges a rendez-vous for the letter exchange at a solitary Bavarian hotel in hopes of fully initiating Catherine to the delights of lesbian love. Echoing a much earlier scene, Fanny again produces a youthful, nude photograph of herself. Nelly Mane points out that Fanny's abundant tresses "tout comme la lisière de la forêt représentent le sexe féminin et suggèrent le passage de la vision onirique à la relation réelle, charnelle" (54). Mane mentions that the photographic image freezes Fanny's beauty in time offering "ainsi à Catherine un désir statique" which - given the deaths of three of Fanny's lovers - "est un démon indestructible" (54).[24] Concerning

[24]This power of the photographic image to freeze a young woman's beauty in time is reminiscent of Michel Tournier's treatment of this same theme through the medium of oil painting. Our chapter two discusses two Tournierian examples of female beauty permanently encapsulated within a painting: "La Reine blonde" of *La Goutte d'or* and the treatment of the portrait/mirror of Balthazar's wife in *Gaspard, Melchior et*

Fanny's display of her youthful photograph, Catherine wonders "pourquoi me montrer cela dans la circonstance où nous sommes?" (168) Formerly spellbound by her hostess's erotic lesbian tales in Vienna, the more mature Catherine is merely stupefied by "La vulgarité de l'égoïsme" of the baroness (167).

Rather than a mutual fondness for Pierre, Catherine begins to suspect that Fanny's ongoing desire to seduce her has given birth to this reunion - suspicions which are fully confirmed several days later. Anxious to receive Pierre's letters, Catherine finally blurts out the demand that Fanny give them to her. This demand is transformed into a cruel game by the baroness, who insists that Pierre wrote the letters to her - not to Catherine. Realizing Catherine's attachment to Pierre's last letters, Fanny continues to withhold these final installments of the celibate, epistolary love. Finally, she has herself let into Catherine's hotel room unannounced for a dramatic presentation of the letters. Grateful to receive the letters at long last, Catherine extends her hand. Finding Catherine practically nude, Fanny stares at her "des pieds à la tête" seizing the occasion to kiss her arm "furieusement, goulûment. Son œil allumé" (170, 171). Catherine quickly jumps behind the bed and with sudden flashbacks to Fanny's sexual overtures in Vienna comes this revelation: *"je comprenais à quoi dans sa pensée devaient servir les lettres !"* (171)

Catherine's clear rejection of Fanny's sexual advances gives rise both to great tension between the women and to exacerbated sexual confusion on Catherine's part. Noting that their antagonism is closely allied to Fanny's unrequited desire for her, Catherine wonders "vais-je lui céder?" (171) She explains that emotionally the stage has been set for "une lutte mortelle" between Fanny and her - "Un duel; des coups; qui brisera l'autre" (171-72). The baroness's proposal that they make a four hour hike to the lake's end and back provides the perfect opportunity for an explosion of tension between the

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***Balthazar.*** **In each of these three examples, the frozen image serves as lure. Fanny utilizes her photograph in her attempt to entice Catherine into a liaison. Although Fanny's photograph does not produce the desired effect, the two Tournierian paintings are extremely potent captivators resulting in death or total absorption for those mesmerized by "La Reine blonde" and in fetish worship for Balthazar.**

two women. Catherine agrees to the outing all the while sensing that it will provide the anticipated moment of violent confrontation. Contemplating this isolated setting, her own cowardice, and Fanny's hostility and superior strength, Catherine fully expects a physical attack by the baroness. Since she asks "dois-je me défendre ou non?," it appears that she will follow in the footsteps of Guido Amering, Elisabeth Hohenstein and Pierre Indemini and perish as her relationship with Fanny is terminated (172). But rather than assaulting Catherine, Fanny wistfully relates the loss of "le rêve pur de sa vie": her son Guido who has recently settled in America (173). Although the anticipated attack by Fanny does not take place, Catherine is still overcome with dread - a feeling intensified as the women find themselves lost in the forest at nightfall. Nevertheless, the path they take and their very position on this path indicate a shift of the balance of power in this tumultuous relationship. As the hike begins, it is Fanny who leads the way and who presumably will take Catherine "au bout": to the end of the lake and to Catherine's full lesbian initiation and/or death (172). Next Fanny's aggression seems to melt as she speaks of the loss of her son Guido. With the sexual tension between them greatly reduced, the women smile at each other and Catherine protectively covers Fanny's shoulders with a wrap. Much less threatened as Fanny looks at her "sans essayer de prendre un plaisir indu," Catherine now assumes the more confident position of walking beside the baroness (172). In addition to changing their actual position on the trail, the women alter the course of their hike as well, since "On renonçait à passer par le col" (172). This modification anticipates the novel's denouement for it reveals that Fanny will not enact a Ganelonesque attack of Catherine in the mountain pass. When Fanny reveals that she is lost but unconcerned, the women make a final change of position on the trail. Catherine now leads the way noticing that "Fanny me suit comme une chienne" (174). Struggling to dominate her fear of the forest's arboreal phantoms and ominous, nocturnal noises, Catherine forges on. Suddenly the sound of water rekindles the sexual tension between the two women, sparking "une

étincelle furieuse" in Fanny's eyes which causes Catherine to lunge ahead to avoid physical contact with her companion (174). But as Catherine falls in her attempt to escape, she is lifted by an excited Fanny "[dont le] sein est soulevé beaucoup trop fort" (174). In this final, climactic moment, Catherine envisions three possible outcomes: "Me laisser tuer, l'aimer ou la tuer" (175). Concerning these three options, Christiane Blot-Labarrère says that Fanny realizes Catherine rejects them all, leaving suicide as the baroness's only option (*"Le Monde désert"* 29). Catherine issues a defiant challenge to Fanny - "Mais va donc!" - a challenge which is answered by the baroness's self-inflicted gunshot wound (175).

Unable to lure Catherine into a liaison, Fanny ultimately succumbs to the siren song of Thanatos. Her suicide is *Hécate*'s final example of concepts previously quoted from Julia Kristeva's *Histoires d'amour* and *In the Beginning was Love, Psychoanalysis and Faith*: the death instinct as a manifestation of sexuality (as well as aggression) and the sovereign power of Thanatos over Eros. In addition to this predominance of Thanatos over Eros, *Hécate* offers a symbolic clue as to the predominance of Catherine over Fanny. We noted earlier that Fanny presented the key to her secret flat to Catherine, indicating that Fanny - as perverse mother - has ownership of this phallus/key. But the text suggests a shift of phallic power to Catherine by emphasizing that she wields the key to the valise containing Pierre's last letters. And the text highlights the importance of Catherine's phallic key by making mention of it immediately before announcing that the "histoire [de Fanny et de Catherine] arrivait à un terme" (171). Significantly, preceding her final scene of confrontation with Fanny, Catherine announces "Je tenais la clef de cette valise, je la portais sur moi" (171). *Hécate* does not spell out the importance of the symbolic transference of phallic power which underlies the transfer of the key from Fanny to Catherine. But the text demonstrates that with the loss of this symbol of power - the key - Fanny has also lost her hold over Catherine. When Fanny has the phallus/key,

Catherine is the victim willingly caught up in her hostess's erotic verbal web. But after obtaining the phallus/key, Catherine's dominant position on the lakeside trail and her final defiant challenge to Fanny demonstrate that she who has the phallus/key is in control.

With the suicide of Fanny Felicitas, Jouve closes the cycle of the destructive lesbian and female bisexual begun with Perpetua of *Paulina 1880* (1925). As we have noted, Perpetua's amorous obsession results in her painful solitude and Paulina/Blandine's banishment from the convent. *Paulina 1880* indirectly establishes the connection between lesbian passion and death since Perpetua's love for Paulina/Blandine culminates in the latter's forced return to the perilous lay world in which she ultimately kills Count Michele. This indirect link between lesbian passion and death takes on an explicit form in Jouve's *Hécate* with Elisabeth Hohenstein and Fanny Felicitas. In spite of Baron Hohenstein's ready acceptance of a *ménage à trois* with Fanny, bisexuality provides only a temporary solace for Elisabeth's painful neuroses - a solace rejected by the neurotic woman herself prior to her suicide. Thus, with the characterization of Elisabeth, female bisexuality emerges as a self-destructive, neurotic manifestation rather than a healthy sexual orientation. Although Fanny Felicitas also proves to be self-destructive, the predominant aspect of her characterization is that of female bisexual as deadly, egotistical lure. Three of her lovers perish after having been drawn into her dangerous web, and her own son moves abroad in order to break free of his mother's insalubrious entrapment. But *Hécate* focuses upon Catherine Crachat - the actress Fanny entangles in her amorous web with titillating tales of her own sexual adventures. Spellbound and aroused by the lengthy confession of her hostess, Catherine seems destined for sexual conquest by the baroness. Ironically, the chaste, epistolary romance proposed to Catherine by her former and Fanny's current lover - Pierre Indemini - extricates Catherine from the clutches of the baroness. Catherine's refusal of Fanny's sexual advances remains firm even after Pierre's death. Thus, this *femme fatale* who had brought on the deaths of three former lovers and

the exile of her son takes her own life. And just as in the case of Elisabeth Hohenstein, with Fanny Felicitas female bisexuality is the antithesis of a salubrious sexual orientation.

*Hécate* and its sequel *Vagadu* can be interpreted as Catherine Crachat's psychological journey from sexual confusion and repression to final sexual enlightenment and reintegration. As we shall see, with Catherine, the penchant toward female bisexuality is just one aspect of the actress's painful evolution from fragmented to psychologically and sexually integrated being. Already in the very first pages of *Hécate*, Catherine's fragmentation is evident. While her polished exterior is that of a "très belle . . . actrice de cinéma," her interior is ravaged with a torment she does not yet understand (9). The novel's third sentence already alludes to her anguish by stating that "Crachat" is "Un nom qui ne peut être porté que par une créature de douleur" (9). Disgusted by her own name and convinced that she is "bonne à presque rien," Catherine's sexual activities in *Hécate* mask this loathing rather than analyzing it (12). Moving unfeelingly through an endless series of brief, heterosexual encounters, she labels herself "une aventurière . . . une grue" (12). Similarly, her liaison with Pierre Indemini begins in a voyeuristic, risqué fashion with Catherine spying upon Pierre's modeling session and Pierre seeing Catherine "dans mon lit et la gorge découverte" (18). But foreshadowing the chaste reprisal of their relationship at the novel's end, when Catherine first makes Pierre's acquaintance, neither presses to consummate the relationship. Given the purely sexual nature of her previous affairs, Catherine is elated: "Ma joie était profonde. Pierre Indemini m'aimait pour moi" (24). But Pierre's initial interest in Catherine is short-lived; after finally taking her as his sexual partner, Pierre abandons her with no explanation.

Inexplicably jilted by he who had brought Catherine "ce paradis" and "[le] bonheur . . . déjà total" and overcome with her previous loathing of self and life, Catherine seeks respite in Vienna (25, 26). Professionally and personally despondent, she soon becomes the focal point of Fanny Felicitas's bizarre sexual entourage. As we have pointed out,

Fanny utilizes an ongoing erotic narrative and nude photographs to initiate Catherine into the delights of lesbian lovemaking. But although she is entranced by her hostess's arousing presentation, Catherine's participation is mostly auditory and visual. Thus Martine Broda comments that "l'avidité érotique de l'indécente Felicitas est l'envers de la réserve de Catherine" ("Le Trajet du roman" 75). Catherine steadfastly refuses Fanny's sexual advances, including the gift of the key to her bag "*Pour dames seules*" and the proposal of a *ménage à trois* with Fanny and Pierre. Catherine's subsequent acceptance of a chaste, epistolary relationship with Pierre and her return to Paris are further indications that her flirtation with bisexuality is more a voyeuristic diversion than a true penchant. Furthermore, after Pierre's death, Catherine is unwilling to submit sexually to Fanny when lured to receive Pierre's final letters in a remote setting - even when the baroness catches her nude at the hotel and later presses against her voluptuously on a secluded, lakeside trail.

Ghislaine Deschaumes points out that seeing is not a neutral activity in the Jouvian universe. She explains that "Voir c'est vivre l'enfermement dans le tourment répétitif de l'érotisme . . . [Voir] implique la confusion à l'intérieur du moi, devant ses propres vouloirs et son aimantation vers l'expérience du Mal" (164). Significantly, Catherine often appears as voyeur in *Hécate*, including her first sighting of Pierre in Paris, her viewing of nude photographs of Fanny and Elisabeth, her spying upon Felicitas in route to her love nest, and her observation of Pierre and Fanny at the Redoutensaal.

Following Fanny's suicide, Catherine remarks : "J'étais délivrée"; this death brought Catherine not joy "mais la satisfaction d'une fin" (175). Regarding her loss of consciousness at the moment of the suicide, she adds "J'étais tombée une certaine femme, je me réveillais une autre . . . je me coupais en deux parties, en deux personnes" (176). Although the text offers no clarification as to this splitting up of Catherine, it might superficially appear to be a deliverance from lesbian temptation for *Hécate* and *Vagadu*

offer Catherine no subsequent lesbian lures. Martine Broda indicates that this splitting up of Catherine prefigures the process which takes place in *Vagadu*: the expunging of Fanny or "la femme noire" within Catherine herself ("Le Trajet du roman" 75). Broda clarifies that "Fanny est cette sœur infernale que Catherine ne pouvait pas ne pas rencontrer en rencontrant sa face d'ombre" ("Le Trajet du roman" 75). Thus Fanny's death prefigures that of Hécate - *la femme noire* within Catherine who is executed via psychotherapy in *Vagadu*.[25] The debauchee Fanny Felicitas can be viewed as Catherine's double, just as critics, including Myriam Delmotte, have interpreted Pauliet as the decadent "double" of Léonide in Jouve's "Dans les Années profondes" (173). And in the case of both Catherine and Léonide, the death of the double is necessary for the protagonist's harmonious psychological integration.

Although Martine Broda addresses the issue of Catherine's splitting up by equating it to the extraction of the Fanny within Catherine herself, she does not fully chart Catherine's psychological journey from painful fragmentation (*Hécate*) to albeit questionable integration (*Vagadu*). Despite her statement that Fanny's suicide divides her into two people, Catherine is actually fragmented throughout *Hécate*. Her dual components are that of beautiful, successful actress and troubled woman mired in self-loathing. The effect which Fanny's suicide has upon Catherine is not a splitting up but rather a suppression of her latter component by the former. Thus, following the deaths of Pierre and Fanny, she masks her psychological tension with a resumption of her professional career. Eschewing her prior life of heterosexual libertine, she opts rather for a quiet, celibate existence with a fellow performer, Flore Migett. The narrator stresses the ascetic quality of the housemates' surroundings for Flore and Catherine "sont deux ayant faim de la même privation après avoir fait l'expérience du même monde, et décidées à

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[25]Béatrice Bonhomme provides this identification of Hécate: "Hécate s'apparente à la déesse de l'enfer alchimique, de l'abîme, de la nuit et du gouffre, amenant à sa suite échec, mort et matière au noir" (118-19).

chercher en silence, en plein silence dans une grande maison claire et pauvre" (177). Having subdued her psychological anguish in the silence of the house she shares with Flore, as she approaches forty years of age Catherine resumes her film career. But the two final pages of *Hécate* intimate that Catherine is still suppressing unresolved tension. Thus, the narrator describes Catherine's bearing as "une majesté somnambule" just as her admirer notes her distant gaze "par-delà les objets, le fond de la nuit, quelque chose que nous autres nous ne saisissons pas" (183, 184). And when her admirer asks whether or not she is happy, Catherine replies "Non. Pourquoi le serais-je, mon ami?" adding that her life's intent is to "tourner, tourner. Tourner naturellement jusqu'à ce que je tombe" (185). Christiane Blot-Labarrère states this circular, "mouvement sans fin" traced by Catherine is indicative of "l'incertitude" (" *Le Monde désert*" 14). The choice of the verb *tourner* also supports our contention that Catherine masks her troubled psychological component with her successful professional component. For with Catherine working at the pace of a whirling dervish, her physical exhaustion temporarily numbs her psychological anguish.

The novel's final sentence reveals that Catherine does not indulge her ardent fan, but rather "Elle monta dans son auto, et regarda ailleurs" (185). Contrary to Catherine's revealing confessions in earlier segments of *Hécate*, the reader is left to interpret her state of mind at the novel's end. But Catherine's faraway gaze, preoccupation and sparse comments cited above indicate that her repressed psychological drama - symbolically placed *ailleurs* - is far from resolved. In actuality, her silence and somnambulistic demeanor are healthy manifestations of the Jouvian formula stated by Sylvie Jaudeau : "Se perdre pour se retrouver" (72). With Catherine's vibrancy temporarily erased, *Hécate* ends upon a suspended note - a note to be answered by the sequel, *Vagadu*.

As *Vagadu* begins, Catherine has her first session with her therapist, M. Leuven. Since Leuven is presented to the reader from the vantage point of his patient, Catherine,

her portrait of him varies in direct response to her psychological state. Ill at ease in this initial encounter, she presents both the psychiatrist and his office in a negative light. Noting that Dr. Leuven is a "juif" lacking "beauté" with ears "pointues comme celles des personnages mythologiques," Catherine comments that his office is decorated with "ce qu'il y avait de plus fait pour des Juifs exportateurs et marchands de diamants" (14-15). Silently mocking his stove-pipe legs, Catherine "sentit qu'elle le détesterait rapidement" (16). In spite of her distrust of Leuven, however, Catherine begins the slow and painful process of reintegration under his care.

Although Catherine realizes the necessity of evoking and examining her painful dreams and memories, she nonetheless resentfully associates her therapist with the distress his psychotherapy elicits. Julia Kristeva's explanations concerning the process of psychoanalysis are extremely helpful for understanding both the analytic discourse in *Vagadu* and Catherine's resentment of Dr. Leuven. In both *In the Beginning was Love, Psychoanalysis and Faith* and *Histoires d'amour*, Kristeva emphasizes that the vehicle of analysis is amorous discourse. Borrowing from Freud, she notes the essential role of "analysis love": "l'analyste attire sur lui sans le vouloir . . . les foudres de l'amour dit 'amour de transfert'" (*Histoires d'amour* 15). Kristeva defines the point of departure of the analysis: "The analytic subject, or analysand, in substance says the following: 'I am suffering from a primitive trauma, often sexual in nature, a deep narcissistic injury, which I relieve by displacing it onto the analyst. Here and now the omnipotent author of my being or malady (my father or mother) is the analyst '" (*In the Beginning* 2). Thus, Catherine's vexation with her deceased father is displaced onto Dr. Leuven, who then bears the brunt of her wrath. Although *Vagadu* does not air the feelings of Dr. Leuven when Catherine rails against him, Kristeva provides the following insight from her personal experience as analyst to "Paul": "Sometimes he forgets that I am only I and relives with me once-repressed feelings concerning his parents . . . . Our sessions are

stormy . . . in the form of fierce glances, cries, accusations that I am an evil, extraterrestrial power " (*In the Beginning* 16-17).

Keeping in mind the insight provided by Kristeva, Catherine's oscillation between resentment and gratitude toward Leuven is a natural response to psychotherapy. In chapter ten she calls Leuven a "diable," moaning that she would like to cut up and kill all those who abuse her, "et particulièrement [un] certain gros Juif assis derrière moi" (83-84). But chapters thirteen and fourteen reveal that Catherine - buoyed up by her passionate romance with Luc Pascal - abandons her sessions with Dr. Leuven for one month. Contrary to the intense anguish she felt prior to meeting Luc, with him by her side Catherine "s'était sentie tout à fait calme" (118). However as chapter fourteen concludes, Catherine has once again admitted Leuven's salutary role in her life. She realizes that romance with Luc is empty, as a balloon: ". . . des ballons! Elle avait aimé des ballons" (120). Julia Kristeva notes the essential role of therapy in dealing with emptiness, for analysis teaches "the patient to cope with the emptiness within self-understanding that is the original source of our anguish and moral pain" (*In the Beginning* 35). Thus, upon recognizing that romance with Luc is empty, Catherine returns to therapy.

In our chapters one and two, we mentioned that the maternal figure is often absent in the prose works of Jouve and Tournier: Jouve's Paulina (*Paulina 1880*) and Dorothée ("La Victime") lose their mothers to death, as does Tournier's Alexandre (*Les Météores*). Although Catherine Crachat also loses her mother to illness at an early age, *Vagadu* reveals that it is not this loss that she feels most acutely but rather that of the two deceased males in her life: her father and Pierre Indemini. As psychologists explain, a child who loses a parent to divorce or to death assumes the guilt for this loss. Similarly, Catherine states that her father's death was a direct result of her anger over his lack of attention to her: "Le Père était mort. C'était à cause de la colère" (137). Since she was responsible for the death of this father she loved, Vagadu arrived right after her father's

death. Serving as the novel's title and epigraph, Vagadu is defined by the narrator as "l'âme de l'amour avec la mort dedans" (135). Simonne Fischer notes the change of spelling between the title (*Vagadu*) and the epigraph ("Wagadu"), adding that "Vagadu" is a mysterious word choice "pouvant désigner vaguement la libido" (59).

But the reader is left to ponder the "death" of Catherine's father. Did he literally die when she was five, as her dreams indicate? Or was he symbolically "killed" by his daughter's developing libido? Simonne Fischer points out that "la frontière entre la réalité et les fantasmes est extrêmement floue [dans *Vagadu*] . . . Souvent on glisse dans le même paragraphe d'une situation réelle à une situation imaginée" (64-65). Fischer compares this distorting effect in Jouve's novels to the cinematographic technique of Federico Fellini in films including *Giulietta degli spiriti* and *8 1/2* (67-69). Fischer adds that in "Commentaire à *Vagadu*," Jouve himself advises the reader "[de] ne point essayer de comprendre avec l'intelligence" (69). It may be that the "death" of Catherine's father is merely a fantasy on her part. Julia Kristeva comments upon the role of fantasies in analysis: "The analyst never looks upon . . . fantasies as aberrations but instead sees them as truths of the speaking subject, even if to cool judgment they seem to be delusions. I take them seriously, then, but as references to the past" (*In the Beginning* 6-7). Kristeva adds that "Whether or not you have actually experienced what you tell me is of little importance if through your illusion, your lie, or your madness I am able to grasp the impact (for me) and the logic (for all of us) of your symptoms and fantasies" (*In the Beginning* 20). Regarding illusions, Kristeva wants "to stress the fact that the function of the psychoanalyst is to reawaken the imagination and to permit illusions to exist" (*In the Beginning* 18). And vis-à-vis the vehicle of analysis - analytic discourse - she notes that its structure is determined by free association, hence it "issues from the web of imagination" (*In the Beginning* 18).

Be it literal or symbolic, the "death" of Catherine's father purportedly divided her into two beings: the young girl and the externalized projection of her death-filled soul of love. Catherine's love for her father did not perish at the time of his death: "Celle qui vivait dans ses chagrins pensait toujours au père qu'elle avait eu" (137). Due to her reverence for him, he was glorified in her mind becoming "de la substance pure du ciel" (138). Convinced that he died for her sin of anger and achieved divine stature, Catherine consequently associates him with Christ: "son père était le Christ au tombeau" (138).

Catherine later explains that this association between Christ and her father expanded to include a third deceased male: her lover, Pierre Indemini. Pierre is first introduced in *Hécate*, where he is literally consumed by his affairs with Catherine and Fanny Felicitas. His fragility notwithstanding, Pierre is mentioned throughout *Vagadu* as the dear departed lover whose absence still weighs heavily upon Catherine. In chapter seventeen, she explains the parallel between Pierre, Christ and her father. Vagadu appeared to Catherine after her father's death, indicating "que je ne puis aimer qu'avec l'accompagnement de la mort, et si possible en tuant" (141). Catherine points out that Pierre was the avatar of the *Amant-Mort*: "C'était un être beau et faible, promis à la mort, et je l'aimais pour cela même" (141). Just as Catherine's anger eroded her father's love for her and caused his death, she reveals that she exhausted both Pierre's love for her and his very life. Mirroring her deification of her deceased father, after Pierre's death "l'amant que j'avais perdu prit un caractère divin. C'est la figure de l'Amant-Christ" (141). She believes that her love is truly powerful, capable of both killing and deifying her father and Pierre. And in spite of the fact that she met Pierre as an adult while her father ostensibly died when she was only five, the two deceased men come together in her mind reflecting Christ's self-sacrifice. In *Hécate*, the chaste prelude to Catherine and Pierre's carnal affair and its celibate, epistolary conclusion foretell Catherine's imagined alliance of deceased lover/deceased father/Christ in *Vagadu*. For unlike Catherine's other lustful lovers, we

noted that she states in the beginning of *Hécate* "Pierre Indemini m'aimait pour moi" (24). Nelly Mane comments that, as "un être asexué," Pierre's love for Catherine surpasses "désir dans sa matérialité (sa chair ) . . . pour atteindre le Moi profond" (52). Thus, in Catherine's eyes, Pierre's love for her was predominantly the asexual, selfless love one associates with Christ.

Antithetical to his role as Christ's image, Catherine's father also plays a psychologically damaging role in *Vagadu*: that of the incestuous father. In Jouve's *Paulina 1880*, Signor Pandolfini's incestuous affection for his daughter is limited to his dreams and his overly zealous yet ineffective protection of her virginity. However, the dreams and recollections which emerge from Catherine Crachat' s therapy insinuate that her father and she had an active sexual relationship. Thus, in the chapter entitled "Père interdit," her father is a guilty figure passing behind the hedge with his daughter, "avec un aspect coupable de transgresseur, avec un caractère douloureux d'interdit" (134). The theme of incestuous love between Catherine and her father runs throughout her troubled dreams. Several of these dreams unite Pierre, Catherine and her father, alluding to fornication, rather than to Christ. In one such dream, Catherine's parents are in twin beds, while Catherine is under her mother's bed and Pierre is under her father's bed. Thus, Catherine and Pierre have a carnal relationship which mirrors that of her parents. In addition, it is Pierre who symbolically takes the bed place of Catherine's deceased lover: her father.

Catherine's relationships with Pierre Indemini and her father are cut short by death, but they are replaced by two abusive male lovers: Louis Moutier and Luc Pascal. According to the chronology established by Catherine's dreams and recollections, her father died when she was five, so their alleged incestuous relationship took place when she was quite young. She explains that Louis was a farmhand who sexually abused her for the first time the year following her father's death. She therefore closely associates the

memory of Louis to her father, asking if when Louis "prend l'aspect criminel," is he not "tout simplement une partie du Père, et comme sa seconde face?" (140) Catherine adds that her father is seemingly split in two: his spiritual half has ascended to heaven while Louis reincarnates his carnal half. The abusive relationship with Louis Moutier haunts Catherine, via a recurring dream in which she is berated by an irate cart driver who covers her with a shovelful of manure. Since Louis is the reincarnation of Catherine's father, the reader then wonders if the father/daughter relationship was fraught with physical violence and verbal abuse, alongside its purported sexual abuse. Catherine states that her father's nickname for her was "souillon" - a word with several possible interpretations, one of which is "slut" (130). In any case, the mistreatment which Catherine supposedly received from Louis is repeated in her adult relationship with Luc Pascal.

When Catherine first meets Luc Pascal at a ball, the poet is "vêtu d'un costume fripé de Grand Mongol" (93). Catherine feels that they are destined to meet ("Il est venu ici pour moi"), a feeling confirmed by Luc ("Aussi ai-je attendu l'occasion pendant plusieurs années") (93). Unfortunately, this instantaneous, mutual attraction is that of victimizer and would-be-victim. Christiane Blot-Labarrère explains that for Catherine, Luc is "un instrument du démon, pour qui la beauté a un visage de mort" (" *Le Monde désert*" 17). Already in chapter twelve, Catherine has found herself "franchement séduite par son autorité mystérieuse. Elle se voyait attirée par la puissance du Mongol" (107). The fact that Catherine yearns to be victimized by the Mongol is revealed by her fascination with a macabre story he repeatedly tells her. In this story, a woman is brutally murdered by a cold-blooded executioner, who ignores her pleas for mercy, boasting: "C'est comme ça qu'il faut faire avec les femmes" (108). The victimizer - the Mongol - experiences great joy in retelling the gory tale, while Catherine - the would-be victim - "était très excitée par le danger qu'il fallait encourir pour approcher ce poète" (109). As the narration of this bloody story suggests, Catherine does indeed become the Mongol's

victim. First he begins to abuse her generosity, making use of her dwindling financial resources. Later, he sexually and verbally abuses her, harshly commanding that she get on her knees to have sex with him, then spitting on the floor and telling her to leave. Catherine quite willingly accepts this exploitation, executing Luc's orders for sex "avec ravissement" (155).

After months of traumatizing therapy with Dr. Leuven, Catherine - now psychologically integrated - has a final date with the Mongol. Equating her treatment with "une grave révolution," Catherine informs Luc that she is ready either to terminate or to totally restructure their relationship (205). When Luc's comments indicate that his mindset is too narrowly phallocratic to accept a restructuring of their liaison, Catherine bids him adieu. Simonne Fischer applauds the courage of the newly liberated, self-assured Catherine: "libérée de ses névroses, elle ne tombe pas dans les bras de l'homme providentiel enfin rencontré. Au contraire, elle rompt calmement, affectueusement même" (61). This separation which Catherine initiates with Luc Pascal at end of *Vagadu* is both parallel to and different from the separation between Fanny Felicitas and Catherine at the end of *Hécate*. The parting with Fanny ends violently with her suicide, yet Catherine gains freedom in her separation first from Fanny (*Hécate*) and then from Luc (*Vagadu*): freedom from a destructive, lesbian lure (Fanny) and freedom from a harmful, heterosexual lure (Luc). But different from her separation from Fanny, her adieu to Luc takes place following her analysis and subsequent psychological reintegration. In dismissing Luc, she is armed with these benefits of therapy as described by Julia Kristeva: "Knowledge of my desires . . . at once my freedom and my safety net" (*In the Beginning* 52).

Catherine's breakup with Luc Pascal is followed by another permanent parting at the conclusion of *Vagadu*: Catherine's adieu to "la Petite X" (214). *La Petite X* is an apparition which recurs throughout *Vagadu* - a perceptive and friendly phantom

produced by Catherine's unresolved childhood trauma. A clear manifestation of the division of Catherine's psyche, Simonne Fischer says that *la Petite X* is "Catherine enfant et pure" (64). Julia Kristeva mentions that "Termination of the analysis signals the dissolution of certain fantasies as well as of the analyst" (*In the Beginning* 9). Psychologically reintegrated at the conclusion of *Vagadu*, Catherine is able to bid a fond but permanent adieu to this external, physical manifestation of her fragmentation: *la Petite X*. Yet different from the adieu "de l'immobilité" which ends *Paulina 1880*, and the adieu "du mouvement sans fin" which ends *Hécate*, Christiane Blot-Labarrère explains Catherine's final adieu in *Vagadu*: "adieu d'adulte à l'enfant que Catherine a été dans un baiser qui les réconcilie" ("*Le Monde désert*" 15).

As we saw in *Hécate*, Catherine Crachat is aroused and fascinated by Fanny Felicitas's painstaking efforts to initiate her to lesbianism. Nevertheless this initiation falls short for Catherine is only willing to participate visually and aurally. Since *Hécate*'s sequel, *Vagadu*, reveals that her sexual orientation is clearly heterosexual, it follows that Catherine's flirtation with lesbianism in *Hécate* is a mere manifestation of the suppressed, sexual neuroses which her psychotherapy exposes and enables her to confront and deal with in *Vagadu*. But although Catherine's treatment does afford her psychological equilibrium, it is nevertheless an equilibrium based upon the very concept decried by Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble*: "a heterosexual matrix for conceptualizing gender and desire" (x). For while Butler wholeheartedly endorses a thorough questioning of the heterosexual hegemony, therapy à la Jouve merely reasserts it. Therapy allows Catherine to grapple with her psychological demons yet it never questions the sex roles and perceptions of gender of the heterosexual status quo. Since the patient, Catherine, falls back into the heterosexual mold, closure - rather than harmonious psychological integration - is perhaps a more accurate description of the Jouvian cure.

Judith Butler brilliantly argues that gender is "performatively constituted" and notions of gender are radically unstable while Jouve's and Tournier's treatment of lesbians and female bisexuals reveals a silent endorsement of homophobic identity categorization ("Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 21). For in both the Jouvian and the Tournierian universe, lesbianism and female bisexuality are not viable, salubrious sexual orientations. Lesbianism brings complete social ostracism to Tournier's unique lesbian, Fabienne (*Les Météores*) and total isolation to Jouve's Perpetua (*Paulina 1880*). With Elisabeth Hohenstein and Fanny Felicitas, Jouve portrays female bisexuality as both lethal and self-destructive (*Hécate*). Thus, three of Fanny's former lovers perish while both Fanny and Elisabeth take their own lives. Finally, with the example of Catherine Crachat, Jouve depicts female bisexuality as a voyeuristic diversion in *Hécate* - a mere outgrowth of the deep-seated neuroses treated in *Hécate*'s sequel, *Vagadu*. And rather than questioning the heterosexual matrix, Jouvian psychotherapy gives it a silent but full endorsement.

With their gay and bisexual male characters, Jouve and Tournier offer no further examples of psychotherapy for the reader to compare to that of Catherine Crachat. Thus our study of gay and bisexual males will focus on the Tournierian and Jouvian portrait of these sexual orientations to determine whether they are presented in the same unviable, insalubrious fashion as those of their female bisexuals and lesbians.

# Chapter IV

## Introduction to Maleness

As we noted in our introduction to chapter one, a treatment of femaleness is most certainly a complex issue in the precarious decades of the late twentieth century. While conservatives herald "family values," narrow definitions of traditional roles and compulsory heterosexuality, today's woman may be a heterosexual mother within a two parent family unit; a single, childless career woman; a lesbian career mother; etc. This shattering of restrictive sex role definitions obviously impacts men as well as women. Men may choose to remain single and childless focusing upon their careers or they may select the life path of househusband, etc. In many households, men no longer serve as the exclusive breadwinner for both partners are viable members of the work force. Employers have also responded to fathers' and mothers' desires for active parenting by permitting flexible schedules. The modern father may therefore arrange his workday so as to facilitate family interaction within a unit which sometimes includes a partner of the same sex.

Turning now to our discussion of Michel Tournier's and Pierre Jean Jouve's male characters, we shall see if these authors take into account this richness of potential of modern maleness. Just as Toril Moi decries the homogenization of women, we shall determine if Jouve and Tournier assign a common identity to man thereby dismissing male diversity in the interest of gender coherence.

# Homosexual and Bisexual Males in the Prose of Michel Tournier and Pierre Jean Jouve

As we have noted previously, the prose of both Pierre Jean Jouve and Michel Tournier portrays heterosexual, lesbian and bisexual women in an unfavorable light. Our chapter one has demonstrated that Jouve's works depict heterosexual woman as an irresistible sexual lure with ties to death (i.e. Paulina, *Paulina 1880*; Dorothée, "La Victime;" et al.). In our chapter two we have seen that while Tournier links heterosexual woman to death (i.e. Lucy, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*; Deborah, Méline, *et al.*, *Les Météores*), he also focuses upon her reproductive capacities (i.e. Maria-Barbara, *Les Météores)* while endowing her with a propensity to abandon her male partner (i.e. Rachel, *Le Roi des aulnes*; Sophie, *Les Météores*). Our chapter three has established that Jouve and Tournier link lesbian and bisexual woman to death, both directly (Jouve's Fanny Felicitas and Elisabeth Hohenstein, *Hécate*), indirectly (Jouve's Perpetua, *Paulina 1880*) and metaphorically (the social ostracism of Tournier's Fabienne, *Les Météores*). Turning now to Jouve's and Tournier's male characters, we shall determine if a) these authors present their gay and bisexual male characters in the same insalubrious fashion in which they depict their lesbian and bisexual female characters or b) Jouve and Tournier's works demonstrate a gender bias thereby countering their predominantly negative portrayal of females with a positive portrayal of males.

In this chapter on gay and bisexual males, we shall discuss the following characters: Tournier's Alexandre Surin, Eustache Lafille, Daniel, Thomas Koussek and Jean Surin from *Les Météores*; Tournier's Achille Mage from *La Goutte d'or* and Jouve's Jacques de Todi from *Le Monde désert.* We have already touched upon Alexandre Surin in previous

chapters, making mention of his Proustian maternal attachment in chapter two. During his childhood, Alexandre enjoyed chaste, intimate moments with his mother in her bathtub and bed and he continued to share a home with her during his adulthood. While his two brothers each inherited a business, Alexandre maintains that his inheritance was his mother's companionship: "ma petite chérie à laquelle je ressemble et qui n'a jamais été heureuse avec son Antoine de mari" (32). Her death brought him a "petit chagrin" which the passing of time only exacerbates (200). Years after her death, Alexandre relates the colorful details of an event-filled trip to Paris: his visit to the incineration facility at Issy-les-Moulineaux, his lovemaking with a zoo keeper, his subsequent arrest and visit with childhood friend, Thomas Koussek. Importantly, this narration begins and ends with the comment that Alexandre avoided the quarter where he lived with his mother until her death. In spite of having stayed away from their former neighborhood and home where the darkness of the window "me permettait de croire que la pauvre chérie dormait pendant que je courais le gueux," Alexandre suffers nevertheless (200). His exciting Parisian adventures are dulled "par une plainte enfantine et monotone, si profonde qu'elle ravale tout le reste au rang d'anecdotes futiles" (200). For "ce retour à Paris n'en a pas moins irrité mon petit chagrin, et il me submerge de souvenirs tendres et déchirants" (200).

Clearly, Mme Surin's death serves as the emotional backdrop of Alexandre Surin's adult life - a life also marked by its affinity for society's marginal elements. Alexandre's behavior at the ball of the lesbian, Fabienne, reveals his identification with the fringe elements of society. We noted in chapter three that when Fabienne's tapeworm makes an embarrassing exit at her soirée, Alexandre calmly disposes of it and subsequently offers the audacious lesbian his arm for the first dance. Although he generally disdains all women, Fabienne's marginality briefly kindles a feeling of camaraderie and complicity within his breast.

Alexandre reveals that it is his homosexual orientation which draws him toward the marginal members of society. Concerning his choice of lovers, he adds that he is not endogamous but rather exogamous for "il est clair que je vais toujours chercher mes proies *trop loin* . . . dans la zone interdite par l'endogamie" (334). His own exogamous, homosexual appetite attracts him to the opposite pole of his straight, social counterparts for "L'homme le plus vil, le plus ravalé de l'échelle sociale était pour moi dès ma plus tendre enfance secrètement environné de prestige, comme objet possible de désir, comme porteur de l'idole à trompe dans son sanctuaire de vêtements" (333). But instead of refusing him access to "les milieux huppés," he insists that gayness serves as a liberating, social passe-partout: "L'homosexuel n'est déplacé nulle part, tel est son privilège" (118).Yet, the fact that he is naturally endowed with a delicious, "délinquance charnelle" assures him a place at the echelon he values most highly: "parmi les marginaux" (118). Thus, as we shall later see, among Alexandre's love objects are two poor laborers, "Eustache et Daniel - ces fleurs de gadoue," carefully chosen from "la canaille qui est ma véritable famille" (117, 116).

While Alexandre's exogamous, homosexual desire causes him to cast lustful glances upon gay males at the lowest rungs of society, it is coupled with not only a disdain for all women but also a bitter scorn for the heterosexual population. Alexandre's narrative segments throughout *Les Météores* are sprinkled with diatribe against this group he frequently labels "la racaille hétéro" (224, 248, etc.). He indicates that the exclusively male population of his boarding school brought the heterosexual schoolboy "le juste apprentissage de ce que la vie lui prépare": "la grisaille de ses jours et de ses nuits . . . rejeté dans les ténèbres hétérosexuelles" (42). On the other hand, it offered the privileged homosexual, Alexandre, "les clés d'un royaume dont je n'ai pas fini à l'heure où j'écris d'explorer les richesses" (44). Since his homosexual initiation as a schoolboy, Alexandre has viewed gayness as an enticing, Broceliande forest while heterosexuality is merely "la terre grise et ingrate où . . . [l'on] est né" (43). Alexandre's later references to the straight

world often equate it with a desert : "un désert aride. La morne hétérosexualité étalant partout sa quincaillerie. Un monde inhospitalier, inhabitable" (106); "[le] désert hétérosexuel plein de puanteurs et de hargnes . . . " (143). In Alexandre's estimation, the aridity of the heterosexual "desert" stems greatly from the drying up of sexual desire within the heterosexual couple itself. Whereas desire remains very alive within the gay community, he presents the straight world as an affective desert: "c'est le sort commun des hétérosexuels - le désir s'éteint. Il ne reste que la tendresse. Une tendresse fondée sur l'habitude et la connaissance de l'autre. Parfois . . . la faculté de tendresse s'atrophie . . . " (106). In Alexandre's estimation, "la peur que le sexe inspire à la société" is to blame for the death of desire in the heterosexual population (128). Fearful of sex, society "lui met une muselière - l'hétérosexualité - et elle l'enferme dans une cage - le mariage" (128). Muzzled by marriage, the heterosexual lives on, "gris, morne, éteint" (370). Meanwhile the gay male carelessly indulges in sex acts far surpassing those of his heterosexual counterpart. For, whereas the heterosexual is an "*Animal triste post coïtum*," Alexandre claims that after sex he takes flight "environné de musique céleste" (131).

Throughout his narrative segments, Alexandre counters the heterosexual's disdain for gayness with the explanation that gay bashing is a mere cover for envy of gays. Therefore, when the straight person rails against the gay, he resembles the chained dog envious of "[le] loup libre et solitaire": the homosexual (146). Alexandre also reveals that his scorn for heterosexuality underlies his abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, "[ce] vice médiocre, consolation dérisoire des attelés au lourd tombereau de la propagation de l'espèce" (141). He adds that his sexual persuasion also prevents his gaining weight for "l'obésité [est] hétérosexuelle" (141). When his anti-heterosexual diatribe descends to the anal level, Alexandre boasts that "Ma bouse n'est-elle pas de l'or pur au regard de son abjection?" (141). He even proposes "Conchier [la face d'] un hétérosexuel" to remedy his chronic constipation, but rejects this suggestion to avoid "[de] lui faire encore trop

d'honneur" (141). Such caustic comments corroborate Camille Bourniquel's conclusion that "On ne peut aller plus loin dans les paradoxes blasphématoires de l'inverti militant" (333).

Alexandre even extends his utter disdain for heterosexuals to the Second World War, which he dismisses as a senseless "querelle d'hétérosexuels qui ne me concerne pas" (335). His heartfelt affiliation is with the gay community rather than his occupied homeland, for he callously hopes: "Qu'ils s'étripent donc entre eux, ces citoyens honorables et hétérosexuels" (307). When the exodus of 1940 leaves Paris a virtual ghost town, the stage is set for a chance meeting between the dandy of the dung heaps, Alexandre, and Hitler, whom the former deems the avatar of the homosexual-exterminating heterosexual.[26] Recognizing the Führer immediately, Alexandre issues the following silent, verbal attack in the shadow of the "pénis Eiffel" : "Je l'ai immédiatement reconnu, l'Hétérosexuel Majeur, le Chancelier du Reich Adolf Hétérosexuel, le diable brun qui a fait périr dans les camps d'horreur tous ceux de mes frères qui sont tombés sous sa griffe" (340-41).[27]

His role as a dandy is the final aspect of Alexandre's characterization which we have yet to explore - an aspect with ties to his position within the marginal, gay fringe of heterosexual society. As we have previously noted, the older Surin brothers inherited businesses while Madame Surin's companionship is the only inheritance of the youngest sibling. Alexandre lives the double life of doting son and gay Don Juan until the death of his oldest brother, Gustave. Following Gustave's death, the family deems that entrusting Alexandre with the Surin conglomerate of waste treatment facilities will provide the needed

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26Barbara Bray says that - different from Tournier's earlier novels - in *Les Météores* "The tone . . . is now that of a master, and M. Tournier no longer needs to force things" (950). But contrary to Bray's statement, the author's hand is at times very apparent in *Les Météores*, for example in the "chance" meeting between Hitler and Alexandre and in the timing of Daniel's violent death so that it coincides precisely with the outbreak of World War II.

27Nicole Guichard reveals that "huit cent mille homosexuels sont morts pendant la guerre, chiffre généralement ignoré et jamais mentionné sauf par les homosexuels eux-mêmes" (105).

curb for his hedonistic lifestyle. Initially revolted by the idea of sliding into "les pantoufles encore chaudes" of his overly proper, heterosexual brother and devoting his life to "la direction de cette entreprise ridicule et malodorante," Alexandre tramps around Paris "foudroyé de stupéfaction" (34). But upon his return, he spends the night reading a historical treatise on "la SEDOMU (Société d'enlèvement des ordures ménagères urbaines)" - a document which converts him to view the family business as an empire of his own ilk (35).

William Cloonan has noted that Tournier's early novels "attest to a need for order" (*Michel Tournier* 92). This ordering of one's personal universe is apparent with such Tournierian characters as Tiffauges of *Le Roi des aulnes* and Alexandre of *Les Météores*. We noted in chapter two that Tiffauges eagerly assimilates into the ordered system of Nazi hierarchy deeming that he is thereby attaining the wondrous apotheosis which destiny holds for him. Tiffauges's imagination unknowingly inverts the Nazi war machine from horrific to glorious, converting "une Cité infernale . . . à la Cité phorique dont il avait rêvé à Kaltenborn" (RA 560). Alexandre's imagination inverts not antithetical but mirror image worlds, transforming each garbage dump to "un monde parallèle à l'autre, un miroir reflétant ce qui fait l'essence même de la société, et une valeur variable, mais tout à fait positive" (93). But different from Tiffauges whose enlightenment arrives only with the apocalypse of his beloved regime, Alexandre is fully aware of the inverted nature of his empire. He reveals that early on during his night of mystical contemplation of the historical treatise on garbage disposal: "Peu à peu j'étais séduit par l'aspect négatif, je dirai presque *inverti*, de cette industrie. C'était un empire certes . . . mais il plongeait également dans l'intimité la plus secrète des êtres . . . Il s'agissait en somme d'une prise de possession totale de toute une population, et cela par-derrière, sur un mode retourné, inversé, nocturne" (36, emphases mine). In addition to the juxtaposition between Tiffauges's blindness and Alexandre's full cognizance vis-à-vis the "inverted" empire, Tiffauges works

his way up through a Nazi hierarchy already in place whereas Alexandre reshapes this realm he is given to direct *à rebours*: "à rebrousse-poil . . . je me suis construit un univers, fou peut-être, mais cohérent et surtout qui me ressemble" (40). Alexandre's reconstructed universe resembles him indeed, bringing together previously discussed aspects of his characterization. Susan Petit equates "the image of his sexuality" with the garbage dumps themselves and "the word he always uses for them . . . *gadoues*" ("Joachim de Fiore" 94). The inversion performed by Alexandre's imagination performs a dual rehabilitation upon that rejected literally (garbage) and figuratively (homosexuality) by mainstream heterosexual society. For just as his imagination changes the garbage-filled "terre de hors-la-loi" to a shrine of contemporary culture, so does his gay pride enthusiastically endorse his sexual persuasion (307). The fact that he revels in the idea of the garbage industry as a possession "par-derrière, sur un mode retourné, inversé, nocturne" harks back to our discussion of Alexandre's scorn for heterosexuals and his affinity with the fringe element of society (36). For while this possession which he describes may be viewed as a clear reference to the anal, gay sex act, the inverted, nocturnal world is also the milieu traditionally associated with the marginal members of society. And the empire of the self-proclaimed *roi des gadoues* is literally located on the fringe of civilization, for each of his refuse-processing businesses is placed in a zone far removed from the city it serves.

In reshaping his own universe "à rebrousse-poil," Alexandre continuously touts his own genius while playfully distorting the image of a dandy (40). Reminiscent of a traditional dandy, Alexandre carefully selects a wardrobe commensurate with the title of the second chapter of *Les Météores*: "Le sacre d'Alexandre" (31): "j'acquis une garde-robe assez tapageuse, notamment un complet de nankin ivoire et une collection de gilets de soie brodés. Ces gilets, je les fis pourvoir de six goussets, trois de chaque côté. Puis dans un atelier de joaillerie, je me fis ciseler six médaillons d'or portant chacun le nom d'une des six villes" (36-37). Alexandre then adds his own distortion to this polished visual image by

filling each of the six medallions with a sample of waste from its city's refuse facility. The waste is contained by its medallion and the medallion by its vest pocket so Alexandre's appearance remains socially acceptable while he alone enjoys this perversion of garbage controller turned "l'empereur des gadoues" - "métamorphosé en châsse ordurière, muni du sextuple sceau de son empire secret" (37). And all the while displaying his dandy's finery with mock seriousness, Alexandre does not totally lose sight of its true nature: "une surcompensation motivée par l'abjection de mon labeur quotidien" (116).

Alexandre's role as distorted dandy harks back to both his view of gayness and his marginal role in society. As previously quoted, he views homosexuality as a passe-partout which allows access to all social echelons. While his ivory suit and brocaded silk vests are the necessary trappings to consort with members of the upper class, his hidden, garbage-filled medallions attest to his affinity for the lower class. He adds that in spite of his habitual, polished exterior - "mes beaux vêtements et mon odeur de lavande" - his true brothers are his colleagues at the refuse facility: "des trimards, arabes, piémontais, catalans, français que les gendarmes viendront peut-être réclamer tout à l'heure" (100, 99). Thus, by discreetly packaging his refuse samples, he emerges the dandy of the dung heaps: the true social passe-partout whose secret realm lies in civilization's no man's land.

Julia Kristeva's treatment of the dandy in *Histoires d'amour* offers insights clearly applicable to this Tournierian dandy of the dung heaps. Kristeva explains that the dandy may well be tied to "un Narcisse précocement blessé [qui] ait besoin d'un témoin pour qu'il puisse fixer une image propre dans le regard de cet autre" (314). Alexandre identifies himself as a narcissistic figure several times in *Les Météores*. He maintains that "A la source de l'homosexualité il y a le narcissisme," stressing that his excellence as a gay lover is based upon his affinity for the narcissistic sexual practice of masturbation (333). Nicole Guichard highlights the narcissistic aspect of masturbation explaining that underlying masturbation is "[le] rêve orgueilleux de pouvoir se passer totalement d'autrui

. . . [le] rêve secret de former un couple avec soi-même" (32). Alexandre also presents himself in a narcissistic fashion regarding the death of his mother, whose passing is ever painful and present as "mon petit chagrin" (200). But he reveals that in mourning this loss, "c'est le deuil de son petit garçon, Alexandre, devenu orphelin, que j'ai porté" (329). Alexandre therefore wonders if the passion of pity kindled by his young lover, Daniel, is not actually "un avatar de mon petit chagrin . . . la compassion que m'inspire le petit garçon orphelin que maman a laissé derrière elle" (247). Having unmasked both his mourning for his mother and his passion of pity for Daniel as self-pity, Alexandre adds: "Narcisse se penche sur son image et pleure de pitié" (247).

Continuing her treatment of the dandy, Julia Kristeva states that "Le dandy provocant et exhibitionniste serait, en somme, au plus près de cette doublure du narcissisme blessé qui se manifeste dans les sentiments de *solitude* et de *vide*, ces *congélations* provisoires de la pulsion de mort" (*Histoires d'amour* 314).This is another comment which merits analysis in regard to the characterization of Alexandre. We have noted that with the exception of his garbage-filled medallions, Alexandre's choice of clothing is politically correct. Nevertheless scenes such as Fabienne's ball reveal that he has exhibitionistic tendencies indeed. Preening as he strolls among the guests, he notes "Comme je suis beau! Faisan doré au centre d'un troupeau de pintades couleur de cendre, ne suis-je pas le seul mâle de cette basse-cour?" (254) Another scene which bears witness to Alexandre's exhibitionism is his arrest for having jabbed at a police officer with his sword stick. Contrary to his usual concealment of his rubbish-filled medallions, Alexandre utilizes one of his pressed samples as snuff and explains its noxious origin to the attending police officer. Again, Kristeva's comments on the exhibitionistic dandy are applicable for understanding Alexandre's behavior:

> Se construire un aspect - une image - aussi artificielle que choquante, qui signifie, d'une part, l'absence de signification et, d'autre part, une

> farce violente, un défi enragé vis-à-vis de ceux qui, dévots naïfs de l'authenticité, se laissent épater par cette clownerie . . . Rien que des compositions provisoires et vides d'une identité indécidable, fluide, éphémère, comme dans les eaux mouvantes de la fontaine de Narcisse (*Histoires d'amour* 314).

Alexandre's use of the rubbish sample as snuff is this very sort of shocking antic performed as a furious challenge before the policeman - a designated enforcer of the mores of mainstream heterosexual culture.

As previously quoted, one aspect that Kristeva addresses vis-à-vis the dandy is that of his solitude and emptiness as "*congélations* provisoires de la pulsion de mort" (*Histoires d'amour* 314). Solitude and the death drive are both salient features of Alexandre's characterization. Throughout most of *Les Météores*, Alexandre depicts himself as a solitary hunter - constantly on the prowl for a new love object. Before inheriting the family conglomerate of refuse facilities, Alexandre explains that he used to spend his evenings setting out alone "d'aller herboriser sur les rives de la Vilaine . . . car on y cueille de beaux brins de garçons pas trop farouches" (33). He comments upon solitude at great length when he takes up residency at his first garbage facility at Roanne. Railing against daily contact with waiters, delivery people and the like, he notes "Je sentais le moment venu de me refaire une solitude" (85). Equating his preference for solitude to that of an anchorite in the desert, he adds that his sex drive is his only "briseur de solitude . . . Moi, sans sexe, je ne vois vraiment pas de qui j'aurais pu avoir besoin" (85).

Atypical of his usual habits, Alexandre acquires an admiring entourage during his stay at Roanne: a faithful dog, a friendship with Fabienne and a gay love triangle with Eustache and Daniel. But rather than reveling in his newfound camaraderie, Alexandre complains that "Eustache et Daniel, Sam et maintenant cette Fabienne - tous ont forcé l'entrée de ma vie . . . " (233). He wonders how he can take leave of Roanne solitarily "[pour] commencer nu et totalement disponible une nouvelle aventure" (233). He adds that

an emotional attachment to his little Roanne group would indicate a contamination by the heterosexual prohibition against traveling "sans traîner une suite avec [soi] . . ." (233). Thus in spite of his fondness for his young lover, Daniel, he leaves him behind as he moves on to the refuse site of Miramas, explaining that "La solitude est chez moi si invétérée que la seule idée de voyager avec un compagnon me déconcerte" (262). And rather than missing his entourage upon arriving at his new post, he comments that life at Roanne "avait fait voler en éclats" his "belle solitude . . . vierge et close comme un œuf" which is now "miraculeusement restaurée dans ce pays lunaire, blanc, ondulé . . . des gadoues de Miramas" (288).

Although Alexandre consistently portrays himself as a solitary traveler through life's enticing forest of potential gay lovers, he himself admits that the siren call of Thanatos grows louder after the death of young Daniel and the disappearance of his faithful dog. He explains that his affection for Dani succeeded in penetrating his formerly invulnerable self, "fait d'un alliage d'acier et d'hélium, absolument inaltérable, incassable, inoxydable" (297). He adds that "la mort de Dani et la perte de Sam m'ont vidé de ma substance" - significantly diminishing the telling indicator of his life force, his sex drive (369). Corroborating Julia Kristeva's explanation that a dandy's feelings of solitude and emptiness are "*congélations* provisoires de la pulsion de mort," Eros keeps Thanatos at bay during Alexandre's solitary period prior to the intrusion of the little entourage at Roanne (*Histoires d'amour* 314). Our discussion of Alexandre to this point has alluded to his strong component of Eros but not to his ever present component of Thanatos. Referring to Alexandre, Camille Bourniquel speaks of "Cette puissance, cette surabondance de vie" never mentioning that his narrative segments are sprinkled with allusions to his own death (333). Even as Alexandre enthusiastically speaks of his "joyeux appétit de vivre" and applauds the dandy construction of his inverted empire of garbage, he notes that "Je suis un condamné en sursis d'exécution" (41). He adds that the edifice of his life is fragile but that

he is endowed with the force to reinvent another should this one be destroyed, on the condition that he have the necessary time, strength, "Et surtout s'il m'en reste le goût" (41). Speaking later of the favorite of his sword sticks, Alexandre alludes to a violent conflict in an accurate premonition of his own death. Stating that his sword sticks are his daughters, he adds that they have not killed yet but "l'occasion se présentera . . . l'obligation s'imposera d'accomplir cet acte d'amour et de mort qui mêle une épée et deux hommes" (53). Thus as Eros draws him out to hunt potential lovers at night, he is always accompanied by a symbol of Eros intertwined with Thanatos: his favorite sword stick, Fleurette. One indication of the link between this sword stick and Eros is the fact that Alexandre has given this phallic object the name "Fleurette" - the pet name he received from the secret, gay association of his childhood. In addition, Alexandre has previously explained that he fancies sword sticks and fencing as a sporty enactment of the "dialogue viril" of certain sex acts between gay males: "Nos pénis bandés et recourbés comme des lames de sabre se croisent, se heurtent, s'aiguisent l'un à l'autre" (248). But in addition to this component of Eros, a sword stick's blade is naturally endowed with a deadly potential of which Alexandre is fully aware. He therefore senses that Fleurette will ultimately accompany him to death, accurately predicting their valiant but violent end. Alexandre notes that he will not succumb to death "sans qu'elle [Fleurette] ait jonché le pavé du corps de mes assassins" (53).

Alexandre's fate in *Les Météores* can be viewed as an expanded enactment of Julia Kristeva's explanation of the relationship between solitude, Thanatos and the dandy in *Histoires d'amour*. As we have noted, Eros keeps Thanatos at bay during Alexandre's years as a solitary hunter of gay lovers. This pattern is disturbed, however, when Dani, Sam and the entourage of Roanne bring a brief period of plenitude to Alexandre's life. For in spite of stating that he prefers his "belle solitude," we noted that the death of Dani and the disappearance of Sam drain Alexandre of his life force (288). As he moves on to

Casablanca, Kristeva would doubtlessly agree that Alexandre's solitude and emptiness no longer freeze his death drive. Thus throughout Alexandre's final chapter, "La Mort d'un chasseur," it is patently evident that the formerly solitary hunter is now a broken man consciously marching toward a valiant death.

As his earlier premonitions intimated, Alexandre's violent end is indeed "cet acte d'amour et de mort qui mêle une épée et deux hommes" (53). It literally involves an act of love, in that Alexandre meets death while in pursuit of a lusty young Arab love object. And as we have noted, the mere presence of Alexandre's sword stick indicates the intertwining of love and death. Alexandre highlights this sword stick's association with gay love both in his selection of her name and in his assertion that the phallic sword brings to mind sex acts between gay males. But while he has dueled only with his penis during years of hunting nubile prey, Alexandre fully intends to wield Fleurette in a fatal fashion at the docks of Casablanca thereby precipitating his own death. For this reason, he intentionally ignores the advice given to him by a stranger who admonishes him to avoid the dangerous docks at night or - if he must go there - to take enough money, no flashy jewelry, "et surtout pas d'arme" (376). Desiring to court danger, the well-dressed "oiseau de proie calciné" mentally replays the stranger's advice and counters it: he goes to the docks at night with no money, sporting the Philippine pearl earrings and Fleurette (353). Rather than relating Alexandre's version of his fatal duel, the novel relates the newspaper account as read by his nephew, Paul. While the critic Pierre de Boisdeffre contends that Alexandre "[va] périr misérablement sur un dock de Casablanca," the novel belies this assessment indicating that Alexandre experiences the valiant death of which he had dreamed ("*Les Météores*" 415). Attired in his carefully-selected ensemble and golden medallions, *le roi des gadoues* mortally wounds not one assailant - as improperly stated by Jean-Didier Wolfromm - but two (37). And Alexandre obviously displays excellent swordsmanship for he downs his

assailants with a single sword thrust through the heart while he is felled by seventeen knife thrusts.

Françoise Merllié asserts that the colorful Alexandre perishes intentionally in a "suicide déguisé," but his characterization nevertheless "impose un ton et une dynamique qui font dériver le livre loin du projet initial" (*Michel Tournier* 187-88). Although she is correct in labeling Alexandre's death a *suicide déguisé*, her explanation falls short in not mentioning the supposed relationship between an essential premise of *Les Météores* and this disguised suicide: the flawless plenitude of geminate love can never be equaled by non-twins. For ironically, it is the voyeuristic observation of his very own nephews - Jean and Paul Surin - which transforms Alexandre's death march into a rush toward death. Initially, Alexandre does not realize that his new love interest is not a single boy, but his own identical twin nephews, nicknamed "Jean-Paul" due to their perfect physical resemblance. First dismissing the blond boy as too young and too pale for his taste, he quickly becomes enchanted by "le phénomène de l'ubiquité:" the lad's apparent ability to transport himself instantaneously throughout Casablanca (381). After intently pursuing what he believes to be one delicious, ubiquitous boy, Alexandre is crushed to discover that he has fallen for twins. This discovery parallels Alexandre's position as persona non grata vis-à-vis straight society. Just as he is an outsider to the mainstream heterosexual culture, Alexandre deems twinship a "cellule close sur elle-même. Je suis dehors. Je suis à la porte. Ces enfants n'ont pas besoin de moi" (385). The sight of his nephews having sex on the beach triggers Alexandre's rush toward death by visually reinforcing his interpretation of twin love as complete, idyllic, and unobtainable for him as a non-twin. As Françoise Merllié states, Alexandre does indeed "[faire] dériver le livre loin du projet initial;" but with the dandy's "suicide déguisé," Tournier wrests control from the captivating dandy and attempts to validate his theory of the supremacy of geminate love (*Michel Tournier* 188, 187). And

having dispatched Alexandre, the novelist is then at liberty to devote the final third of *Les Météores* exclusively to the theme of twinship.

We shall discuss Tournier's theory of the supremacy of geminate love at the end of this chapter, but first we shall conclude our discussion of Tournier's gay male characters with Eustache Lafille, Daniel and Thomas Koussek of *Les Météores* and Achille Mage of *La Goutte d'or*. Achille Mage provides an interesting parallel to the characterization of Alexandre Surin, while Eustache, Daniel and Thomas are essentially unidimensional serving specifically as love objects of Alexandre Surin (Daniel and Eustache) and as spokesperson for Tournier's theory of the *Vent Paraclet* (Thomas Koussek). We shall see that the shallow presentations of Eustache and Daniel serve most especially to enhance the characterization of Alexandre himself. But whereas Daniel and Eustache are presented uniquely through the eyes of Alexandre, Thomas Koussek has a brief, first person narration. In the case of Achille Mage, his lovers, the narrator of *La Goutte d'or* and Mage himself all contribute to his characterization.

As we have already indicated, Daniel and Eustache are an essential part of the entourage at Roanne which allows the adult Alexandre to experience an albeit brief sensation of plenitude. Alexandre is first attracted to Eustache, an athletic gutter who breaks up bundles of garbage at the municipal garbage dump. After spying his silhouette, Alexandre is intrigued by his professional prowess, for "[il] s'acquittait de sa fonction d'éventreur avec une sorte d'entrain sportif qui m'a touché au cœur et même au-dessous du cœur" (104). He is especially aroused by the jerk of the hips and the backbend which accompany Eustache's gutting of the bundles of garbage. His sexual appetite whetted, Alexandre calls Eustache to his office at the end of the day, but the gutter flees fearing that this summons is punitive.

Alexandre deems that his attraction is strong enough to warrant the pursuit of Eustache throughout Roanne. He surmises that his prey's very name augurs well for this

pursuit, "Eustache et Surin signifiant mêmement en langue verte le couteau méchant" (103-104). He searches in vain throughout the town's taverns, bars, bistros and the like, but a subsequent stop at a local fair brings about even more than the desired end. It is here that Alexandre finds not just the desired young man but an enticing couple: Eustache with a young gay companion. This discovery makes the spirits of the dandy garbage man soar, for just as he had praised his refuse facility's offering of copies of copies he now stumbles onto "l'équivalent érotique . . . de la copie de la copie: la proie de la proie" (109). Alexandre carefully courts the couple so as to form a love triangle. He learns that Eustache's young friend is Daniel, the son of the landlady at Eustache's lodging house, the *Rendez-vous des Grutiers*. All the while keeping his room at the town's most exclusive hotel, Alexandre also takes a room at the *Grutiers* erotically sandwiched in between the floors which house Eustache and Daniel.

Not content merely with his physical proximity to Eustache and Daniel at the *Grutiers*, Alexandre manages to lure Eustache back to his job as garbage gutter while hiring Daniel as an apprentice gutter. One day the three gay men are hard at work when a discarded iron stove tumbles down nearly flattening Eustache and Daniel. As Eustache moves his young assistant to safety, Alexandre's fear for their safety transforms into sexual desire. Scanning this scene of near tragedy, he is suddenly dazzled by Eustache's well-developed arms: "Leur opulence musculeuse, la perfection de leur modelé, leur blancheur farineuse contrastaient violemment avec la misère environnante. Bientôt je ne vis plus qu'eux, j'en avais plein la vue, ils m'éblouissaient et m'inondaient de désir" (220). Eustache smiles in recognition of his boss's stab of sexual desire, and henceforth his "bras de boulanger" are the focal point of Alexandre's erotic fixation (220). After Eustache has become Alexandre's lover, the dandy of the dung heaps devotes an entire page in praise of these enticing arms. Alexandre explains that Eustache awaits him in bed nude with the door unlocked and the sheet pulled up to the level of his nipples. He adds that this is how he

prefers to find his lover so that the powerful concert of Eustache's body parts does not drown out "le duo gracieux, mais un peu grêle . . . des bras aussi durs" (241). Covering the rest of the body deliciously highlights the arms, which Alexandre longingly admires both down at his lover's sides ("deux grosses torsades de chair laiteuse") and rising into the air ("comme un rideau qui se lève") (240-41).

While Alexandre feels genuine affection for Daniel, his attraction to Eustache remains purely physical. Thus as the dandy reveals, "Eustache écrème à son profit le plus clair de mon désir" while "[c'est] la tendresse que m'inspire Daniel" (241). In addition to being a purely physical passion, Alexandre's attraction to Eustache also proves to be short-lived. Thus, when the dandy leaves the dumps of Roanne for Miramas, it is Daniel he makes plans to send for, not Eustache. And rather than reestablishing contact with Eustache after Daniel's death, Alexandre sets out in conquest of amorous and deadly prey in Casablanca.

Similar to Eustache, Daniel's characterization is unidimensional in *Les Météores*: that of love object presented uniquely through the eyes of his lover, Alexandre. In his role as love object, Daniel rounds out the sentiment within the love triangle by evoking feelings of affection from his gay boss. A relationship with just Alexandre's object of desire - Eustache - would not afford this plenitude to the dandy, who notes: "Amour = désir + tendresse, et sa force, sa santé est dans l'intimité de la fusion de ces deux éléments" (241). Although later on Alexandre is satiated by his affection for Daniel, at first the romantic alchemy of the love triangle necessitates the presence of Alexandre, Eustache and Daniel. In the scene where the iron stove threatens to flatten both Daniel and Eustache at the garbage dump, we have noted that Alexandre is suddenly dazzled by his sexual attraction to Eustache's well-developed arms. However, Alexandre senses an alchemical process that moves his focal point from Eustache's arms to Daniel's thin back: "Les bras d'Eustache ont agi comme une manière de philtre sur mon appréhension du dos de Daniel" (221). Alexandre clarifies that without the necessary ingredient of the sight of the arms, "j'aurais

eu probablement une tout autre vision de Daniel" (220-21). Viewing Daniel's meager frame with this overlay of sexual desire for Eustache, Alexandre experiences a new sentiment: "Une pitié impérieuse, violente qui m'arracha des larmes et me ploya vers le sol, un déchirement qui me navra le cœur" (220).

When observing Daniel, Alexandre experiences a compound sentiment of passion/ pity. First it appears that this feeling is merely an outgrowth of Alexandre's affinity for the poor, marginal members of society - an attraction toward one of the human "fleurs de gadoue," "[Daniel, ce] petit blême . . . [qui] a dix-huit ans, tout en en paraissant quatorze" (117, 109). Thus it is Daniel's poverty which radiates through Alexandre's very first description of him: "son air frileux, souffreteux, la blancheur de sa face maigre . . . m'avaient touché de pitié" (108). And later when Daniel has become his employee, Alexandre notes that "Il rayonnait du prestige empoisonné du petit crevé" (221). Just before Daniel's death, Alexandre emphasizes the extent to which the young man's pallor kindled his sexual desire: "Coloré par la santé . . . il faut convenir qu'il perdrait pour moi tout son charme empoisonné" (299). In his relationship with Eustache, the gutter's arms remain the focal point of Alexandre's sexual attraction. But Alexandre's passionate pity for Daniel responds to all elements of the boy's slender frame - including his clothing and his jewelry through which his poverty and his youthful innocence emanate. Thus, his sexual embarkation with Daniel includes the following physical and vestmental inventory: "sa nuque . . . le col de sa chemise . . . La fragilité enfantine de son cou . . . l'inévitable maillot de corps . . . une chaînette d'or . . . une médaille de la Sainte Vierge . . . sa cravate, un cordon gras et incolore" (242-43). His scene of adieu from Roanne provides a similar inventory of Daniel's miscellaneous body parts, clothing and jewelry which move Alexandre to an overwhelming sense of pity: "Ces épaules étroites . . . sa veste trop grande, cette nuque mince écrasée par une chevelure plate et noire , trop abondante . . . son cou mince et crasseux . . . la chaînette d'or avec la médaille de la Sainte Vierge . . ." (262).

In spite of Alexandre's comments in support of society's marginal members, the text reveals that his attraction toward the poor, fragile child is neither purely altruistic nor purely sexual. Nor is this relationship essentially a vehicle which allows Alexandre to assume the nurturing role of his deceased mother, as Arlette Bouloumié implies (194). For Julia Kristeva's treatment of the dandy reveals this vital component of Alexandre's passionate pity for Daniel: "un Narcisse précocement blessé" (*Histoires d'amour* 314). Thus, in loving Daniel, Alexandre does not love an Other but rather himself. We mentioned in reference to Alexandre as dandy the realization that his affection for Daniel is actually "la compassion que m'inspire le petit garçon orphelin que maman a laissé derrière elle" (247). And excited by his fixation with copies of copies, Alexandre decides that he will repackage Daniel to be "un dandy, comme moi . . . Ma copie conforme" (247). Mireille Rosello points out that Alexandre's predilection for copies of copies both at the refuse facility and in his bed is a "forme de reproduction qui remplace chez Tournier la procréation génétique [pour permettre] . . . donc d'imaginer une création sans père . . . une imitation du déjà créé" (140).Thus, when the idea of dressing Daniel as his mirror image leads Alexandre to thoughts of "Fraternité, paternité," rather than focusing on the latter relationship Alexandre focuses on the former (247). While stressing that theirs is a sexual relationship, he endows it with an additional component: that of twinship. To consummate their geminate relationship, Alexandre proposes not only to dress Daniel like himself ("fils-jumeau, moi-même trente ans plus tôt, naïf") but also to embark on a process of "debirth" (250). Alexandre explains that this process will take place in his bed/womb: "Car si le lit est le ventre maternel, l'homme qui vient, dénaissant, m'y rejoindre ne peut être que mon frère. Frère jumeau, s'entend" (248-49).

As we shall see in our discussion of the Surin twins, the theme of alterity is an important element of this presentation of twinship in *Les Météores*. A similar notion comes into play with Alexandre and Daniel in several ways. Studying the Surin twins, we shall

note that dressing in identical attire delights Paul - the twin preoccupied with preserving the geminate relationship. As we have mentioned, Alexandre first speaks of converting his beloved Daniel into his twin through dressing the boy as his mirror image. During sessions of nocturnal love making, Paul Surin feels that he restores a prenatal purity to his twin brother and to himself. Similarly, Alexandre explains that his nights with Daniel are a process of "debirthing" which will render them twin fetuses executing "mouvements du fœtus double . . . la vie douce et caressante du couple gémellaire" (249). But the geminate closeness proves claustrophobic for twin Jean Surin, who sets out to escape it by means of a globe-trotting, nomadic lifestyle. Although Daniel does not rebel from Alexandre's desire to make him a twin brother, the passages regarding this process between the dandy and his lover play with the notion of alterity in a manner predicting the outcome of Jean and Paul Surin. Jean goes from being Paul's twin brother and lover to fleeing his twinship and ostensibly being regenerated by his twin's imagination. And after announcing that Daniel will be "deborn" with him and thus become his "Frère jumeau," Alexandre then declares that "tu ne seras pas mon amant . . . tu ne seras même pas mon jeune frère, tu seras moi-même" (249). In subsequent passages regarding Daniel, the boy does indeed emerge not as Alexandre's twin but as Alexandre himself. Thus, while sleeping with Daniel ostensibly allows Alexandre to "unbirth," spending time with the lad allows him to reshape his own youth. Alexandre explains that he grew up alone, but since he deems that Daniel now lives Alexandre's childhood, the latter acts anachronistically as his very own mentor: "je serai auprès de lui, tandis qu'il y a trente ans, je n'avais personne, je m'avançais sans guide, sans protecteur . . . " (250).

This imaginary transformation of Daniel into Alexandre's twin and finally to Alexandre's very self provides an interesting postscript to the dandy's earlier statement regarding his exogamous taste in lovers. He asserts that he is consistently exogamous: "je vais toujours chercher mes proies *trop loin*, en C, dans la zone interdite par l'endogamie

. . . ramenant ensuite mes petits poissons sur mes rivages intimes" (334). But significantly, he transforms Daniel to his twin and finally to his very self. Alexandre's bringing Daniel to the *rivages intimes* of his own essence can therefore be viewed as a final ironic, endogamous twist on the dandy's exogamous appetite.

Even after Daniel's death, Alexandre continues to think of his young lover as himself. Contemplating his sorrow upon viewing Daniel's rat and bird-torn corpse, Alexandre wonders "Ce que j'ai identifié à Miramas comme le corps déchiqueté de Dani, n'était-ce pas en vérité mon propre cadavre rendu méconnaissable par les dents de la lune et les becs du soleil?" (329) Answering his own question, Alexandre concludes that he was symbolically if not literally in Daniel's shroud for "quand nous croyons pleurer sur un autre, c'est sur nous-mêmes que nous nous apitoyons" (329). Consequently he deduces that in mourning Daniel, "mon âme agenouillée a rendu un dernier et déchirant hommage à ma dépouille" (329).

Arlette Bouloumié states that in the Tournierian opus, "Chaque roman présente un enfant et cet enfant est un sauveur" (221). As we noted in our second chapter regarding *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, the stowaway cabin boy, Jaan, does save Robinson Crusoé from despair, while the latter will serve as the perfect androgynous nurturer to this younger, twin image of himself. We also mentioned that the half-dead Jewish boy, Ephraïm, enlightens his caregiver Tiffauges concerning the horrors of the Nazi regime, at the end of *Le Roi des aulnes*. The relationship between Daniel and Alexandre has parallels to both of those described above. Daniel's role resembles that of Jaan in that both Robinson and Alexandre discover a youthful, twin image of themselves in their charges. But rather than casting Daniel in the role of savior (221) and Alexandre in the role of androgyne (200) as has Arlette Bouloumié, the text highlights rather Alexandre's role of false savior. In this respect, Alexandre resembles Tiffauges who leads his charge not to a safe haven but to death in the marshy fields. Yet, Alexandre's role as false savior is more pronounced than

that of Tiffauges, for the dandy cultivates the love of finery which is the catalyst for Daniel's death.

Shortly after taking Daniel under his wing, Alexandre says "Il faudra que je le guérisse de cette fascination hébétée qu'exerce l'argent sur lui" (242). But rather than correcting this monetary fascination, Alexandre encourages it by taking on the role of "Sugar Daddy." First he introduces the boy to the posh side of Roanne, taking him to his room at the town's most luxurious hotel: the *Terminus*. He notes that Daniel is vastly impressed for the ceiling and the carpeting "[ont] achevé de l'éblouir" (242). Next, as we have noted, Alexandre furnishes his young lover with a new wardrobe of clothing to transform him into his twin brother/self. And finally Alexandre truly stimulates his lover's monetary appetite by offering him just one of the Philippine pearl earrings while adding that the united pair will offer a handsome retirement to suffice "jusqu'à la fin de tes jours" (262). Alexandre dangles this terribly tempting carrot, promising Daniel "en voici une, je garde l'autre. Tu l'auras aussi. Plus tard. Mais il faut d'abord que tu viennes me retrouver à Miramas" (262). Daniel does indeed set out to find Alexandre at Miramas and to claim the promised treasure of the pearl earring. But their nocturnal reunion is a scene of carnage, for the rats and the sea gulls of the Miramas garbage dump tear the unsuspecting Daniel to pieces. Admittedly, Daniel makes this deadly sojourn unbeknownst to Alexandre. Nevertheless, it is Alexandre who has stimulated the lad's love for material possessions - a love which serves as catalyst for his death. Thus whereas Bouloumié deems Daniel a savior (221) and Susan Petit states that he perishes for not having worn his protective medal of the Virgin ("Joachim de Fiore" 95), the text implies that he is led into death by the materialistic appetite whetted by his false savior: Alexandre.

Before examining the last of the gay characters from *Les Météores*, we shall briefly consider Achille Mage - a gay cast member of Tournier's *La Goutte d'or* who provides an

interesting parallel to Alexandre Surin. At first glance, one might be tempted to think that the dandy of the dung heaps bears little in common with the wealthy film producer, Mage. Descriptions of Mage constantly refer to his corpulence, whereas Alexandre - terrifically proud of his slender physique - proclaims that obesity is a heterosexual malady. In addition, the passages we have quoted regarding gay sex and fencing talents reveal that Alexandre endorses both a virile gayness and his own role as skillful hunter of potential love objects. Alongside his endorsement of this valorous, gay model is his vehement rejection of the weak, effeminate gay and his assertion that this *tante* (pansy) is in essence a stereotype viciously fabricated by mainstream heterosexuals (M 148). Mage, on the other hand, notes that he is viewed by his lovers as "une grosse tante sentimentale, bigleuse et bourrée d'argent" (168). Mage does occasionally cruise a local video game arcade in search of potential lovers, for it is here that he solicits Idriss - the newly-arrived Maghrebian immigrant we discussed in chapter two. But different from Alexandre, the film producer explains that he generally does not hunt his own lovers. Zob, the leader of the gang of boys at the arcade, usually functions as Mage's unofficial pimp sending him a well-regulated stream of young lovers. And finally an important difference between the couples Alexandre/Daniel and Mage/Idriss is the fact that the gay Daniel fully understands Alexandre's intentions whereas Nicole Guichard explains that Idriss is "totalement naïf et perdu dans cette ville qu'il ignore, seul et inconscient de ce que lui veut le cinéaste" (37).

In spite of the differences cited above, the characterization of Achille Mage provides many parallels to that of Alexandre Surin. Both men are middle-aged, wealthy, well established in their professions and alone. In a reflection of their sexual orientation, both Alexandre and Mage display a predilection for inversion which their respective novels apply to their professional and private lives. Regarding Alexandre's professional life, we have already noted that he takes over the family's empire of refuse facilities inspired by "le *devoir de transfiguration* qu'impose la dignité ordurière suprême" (36). The

cinematographic purist could argue that Mage as self-proclaimed "Eisenstein de la publicité . . . Orson Welles de la publicité" proposes a similar transformation of the lowly commercial (175). Rather than a mere vehicle to whet the consumer's appetite, Mage ostensibly takes filmed advertisement "[au] sommet du cinéma. A tous points de vue: technique, artistique, psychologique" (174). Reminiscent of Alexandre's praise of refuse facilities as shrines to contemporary culture, Mage's staff members affirm that commercials are the cinema's most brilliant offerings: "Tout le reste fait ringard en comparaison" (175). And finally Mage compares his film crew to a team of cathedral builders - a team of which he is the undisputed "cerveau" (175).

Similar to Alexandre, this taste for inversion is not limited to Mage's professional life for it extends to his private life as well. Returning again to the image of a cathedral, Mage quotes Péguy's glorification thereof, adding that his own "petit nid d'amour" takes the place of a cathedral in his personal life (161). This substitution is reminiscent of Alexandre, for Mage claims that he has replaced that hallowed edifice of Christendom - the cathedral - with the trysting place where he makes love with the greedy pinball players solicited for him by his unofficial pimp, Zob. Mage also highlights his affinity for inversion when commenting upon his address, that number generally considered unlucky: thirteen. He states that he has established his replacement cathedral - his love nest - "Au 13, mon chiffre porte-bonheur, parce que vois-tu avec moi tout est toujours à l'envers" (161; emphases mine).

In our section on Alexandre, we noted that his gayness allows him access to all social echelons. Thus, at one point he resides both at Roanne's most posh hotel, the *Terminus*, and at a blue-collar rooming house, the *Grutiers*. Rather than two separate locations, Mage's role as social passe-partout is underlined by means of a sort of fusion of two milieux into one: a residence with a poorly kept facade and an elegant interior. Borrowing from Baudelaire, he emphasizes that the building's external "aspect sordide [et

le] . . . porche noirci" provide a sharp contrast with the luxurious interior: "dehors tout n'est que crasse et puanteur, fange et souillure. On pousse ma porte: ici tout est luxe et beauté, calme et volupté" (161, 163). A possible interpretation of this striking juxtaposition of interior and exterior is that while his building's exterior (his social self) may be viewed by mainstream society as seedy and undesirable, the interior of his residence (his gay soul) is a delicious retreat from the insalubrious heterosexual world. And as in the case of Alexandre, this striking difference between the exterior and the interior of Mage's residence can be viewed as a reflection of his role as social passe-partout. This wealthy film producer is clearly welcome in chic social circles, leading him to boast that "Je connais tout Paris. Je tutoie Yves Montand, Jean Le Poulain et Mireille Mathieu. Je déjeune avec Marcel Bluwal et Bernard Pivot" (165). Meanwhile his sexual preference affords him the inverse access to the sordid world of his young lovers' arcade. Nicole Guichard explains that the above list of Mage's impressive acquaintances would in fact serve him well at the arcade, for these are famous names "[qui] servent surtout à éblouir les jeunes garçons qu'il veut séduire" (104). Reminiscent of Alexandre's lengthy explanation of his exogamous romantic appetite, Mage courts the Maghrebian immigrant, Idriss, in spite of his own wealth and social standing. Thus he states: "Moi je suis riche et puissant . . . Mais la vraie vérité, c'est que moi aussi je suis un pauvre clochard, et j'ai besoin de toi . . . " (165). Guichard adds that both Idriss and Mage are "clochards," "dans leur solitude et leur marginalité aux deux extrêmes de la société" (174). Thus both the film producer and the dandy of the dung heaps indicate that - like solitude - gayness knows no social boundaries.

The gayness of Alexandre Surin and Achille Mage has many points in common, but we shall examine only the roles of pederasty, money, and the slippage of identity between lover and self. Alexandre denies his pederastic tendencies in *Les Météores*, but his actions belie his words. Thus he is attracted to Daniel "[qui a] dix-huit ans, tout en en paraissant quatorze" (109). All the while insisting that he is "Homosexuel, oui, mais pas pédéraste,"

after Daniel's death Alexandre wonders if he is at fault for having taken this lover "à un âge beaucoup trop tendre" (377). Nevertheless, the middle-aged dandy is subsequently smitten with his twin nephews whom he first surmises to be between twelve and fifteen years of age. In spite of his statements to the contrary, Alexandre clearly has a pederastic taste in lovers. Mage has a similar preference, yet his only attempt to disguise it seems to be the discretion he prefers when meeting his young lovers in public. The text indicates that these lovers are all around Idriss's age of fifteen years. And by a visit to the popular arcade, Idriss himself walks innocently into the fold of Mage's youthful harem. As newly-arrived immigrant, Idriss exhibits a childlike innocence in France which enhances his youthful appearance and arouses Mage's sexual appetite.

Regarding the question of money, Alexandre inaugurates his relationship with Daniel by hiring him at his garbage facility. Later on the dandy supplies the boy with a wardrobe mirroring his own and dazzles him during a stay in the town's most elegant hotel. And finally he presents him with one Philippine earring along with the tantalizing promise of recouping its mate at a later date. Similarly, money is the key to Mage's intrusion into the life of his potential love object, Idriss. He enters the professional life of the young immigrant by offering him two hundred francs to play the role of street sweeper in a clown sequence. Next he enters the boy's personal life by offering to pay for him to play a video game. But whereas both Alexandre and Mage have the role of "Sugar Daddy" vis-à-vis their lovers, Alexandre ignores this fact while Mage seems to delight in it. Alexandre innocently stimulates Daniel's taste for material possessions, never pondering whether the boy's interest in him is purely financial. And although *Les Météores* does not divulge Daniel's thoughts regarding his relationship with Alexandre, we have already suggested that Daniel's impromptu visit to retrieve the pearl earring attests to the material nature of his attraction to his older lover. But while Alexandre is clearly out of touch with the motivation of his lover, Mage is totally realistic. The latter explains that his young lovers enter his

building unannounced, often arriving on motorbike. Mage has no illusions as to the incentive for these visits, which he attributes directly to "[le] besoin d'argent de poche" (162). He later reveals that paying for sex is a delicious act of sexual possession which affords him a certain amount of sexual gratification: "L'argent s'accorde merveilleusement avec le sexe. Donner de l'argent à un garçon, c'est s'en rendre propriétaire, c'est déjà faire l'amour avec lui. Ça peut même suffire dans certains cas" (168). Clearly, money plays a vital role in the relationship between Alexandre and Daniel and between Mage and his band of young lovers - a relationship ignored by the dandy and applauded by the film producer.

The question of the slippage of identity between lover and self provides an interesting parallel regarding the two couples, Alexandre/Daniel and Mage/Idriss. We have already noted that through the purchase of identical wardrobes, Alexandre ostensibly transforms Daniel into his twin. Subsequently, Alexandre takes this transformation a step further by affirming that Daniel has become the young Alexandre. Shaping Daniel's life allows Alexandre to relive his own youth and the mourning of Daniel's death is in actuality self-mourning: "mon âme agenouillée a rendu un dernier et déchirant hommage à ma dépouille" (329). Although *La Goutte d'or* does not fully develop this concept of young lover as both other and self to the older lover, the novel does allude to it briefly. Since Idriss was born at an oasis in the middle of the Sahara desert, his visit to Mage's apartment inspires the film producer to read excerpts from *Le Petit prince*. He reads one long passage of the thoughts of the stranded pilot, which obviously parallels his relationship with Idriss. For just as Saint-Exupéry's pilot is busily repairing his airplane when the little prince accosts him in the desert, Mage is directing the clown sequence when young Idriss appears on the set. And while the pilot of *Le Petit prince* is an earthling, the prince is from another planet. Similarly, Mage is totally at home in Paris while Idriss - having left his isolated African oasis for the dazzling, technological sea of Paris - experiences an alienation akin to that of a traveler from outer space. Mage takes on the role of pilot from *Le Petit prince*, for

in the middle of his affective desert he states: "j'ai vu arriver le Petit Prince des sables, toi Idriss" (164). Significantly, Mage also assumes the role of the little prince. Echoing the prince's request for a drawing of a sheep, Mage asks Idriss: "S'il vous plaît, dessine-moi un chameau" (163). Ironically, this "Mage" is no wise man for in Mireille Rosello's opinion, he sees Saint-Exupéry's little prince instead of Idriss himself to highlight "[que] Tous ces personnages [de *La Goutte d'or*] ne voient pas . . . ils ne voient que leurs propres phantasmes" (79). But Rosello misses an important point regarding the relationships between Idriss/the little prince and Mage/the pilot. Rosello does not explain that this scene between Idriss/the little prince and Mage/the pilot provides an albeit distilled form of slippage of identities between the adult and child. For just as we noted that Alexandre Surin is alternately older mentor, twin brother and self to Daniel, so Mage briefly plays the roles of both Saint-Exupéry's pilot (Mage) and his prince from outer space (Idriss) in this intimate scene with Idriss.

In our discussion of Alexandre Surin, we referred to Julia Kristeva's comments concerning the roles of Eros, Thanatos, narcissism and the dandy from *Histoires d'amour*. Since Achille Mage plays a limited role in *La Goutte d'or*, the text does not provide the necessary information to offer such a global overview of his life and death. For different from the characterization of Alexandre which spans two decades in *Les Météores*, that of Mage in *La Goutte d'or* depicts events only from a brief moment of the film producer's adult life. Although Tournier accords only a small role to Achille Mage, it is significant nevertheless. For as we shall see, Mage has the distinction of being the only one of Tournier's and Jouve's gay or bisexual male characters through whom gayness or male bisexuality is not linked to death or disappearance.

Thomas Koussek from *Les Météores* is the last of Tournier's minor gay characters whom we shall examine. Alexandre Surin first introduces Thomas during his description

of the antics of their boarding school's secret gay society. Alexandre's presentation of Thomas's schoolboy behavior highlights two elements: a homophone of his surname and his sexual fixation with the crucifixion. In Alexandre's mind "Koussek" brings to mind Thomas's preferred method of orgasm, the "coup sec:" "un orgasme mené à bonne fin sans aucun écoulement de sperme" (48). Concerning Thomas's sexual fixation with Christ, Alexandre explains that this mindset led the young Thomas to sleep entwined with a life-sized image of the crucifixion during his boarding school days. Reunited with Alexandre as an adult, Koussek explains that he dreamed night and day "de la joie ineffable qui m'illuminerait si je me couchais, nu moi-même, sur ce corps et m'abouchais avec lui comme Elisée avec le jeune garçon de la Sunamite. Oui, j'ai aimé Jésus comme un amant" (151). Regarding this sexual fixation with Jesus, Thomas is doubly reminiscent of Alexandre Surin. First, just as Alexandre imagines that Daniel is his twin, so young Thomas fantasized that he was Jesus' twin in imitation of his namesake, Thomas Didymus. Secondly, Koussek's expressions of gay pride parallel those of Alexandre, for the former proclaims that "L'homosexualité . . . attend de l'élu qu'il ait la force de supporter un destin d'exception" (148-49). But in spite of Thomas's high esteem for homosexuality, he realized during his stay at the monastery of the *Paraclet* that he had made a fundamental mistake in his sexual love for Jesus: "j'en suis resté au corps" (150). Finally recognizing that Jesus' earthly role was to prepare for the arrival of the Holy Spirit, Koussek also ostensibly surpasses his homosexuality converting from carnal lover of Christ to messenger of the Holy Spirit. This information highlights his true role in the novel: spokesperson for the Paraclete.

Tournier states in *Le vent Paraclet* that he had originally intended for *Les Météores* to develop an eolian theology: "l'identification du Saint-Esprit à un vent" (VP 260). This concept of "divine wind" is the key element imparted by Koussek in the novel. During his reunion with Alexandre, he gives his friend a complete reinterpretation of the Bible,

centered upon the importance of the wind of the Paraclete and the relationship between this holy wind and meteorological phenomena: "L'Esprit-Saint est vent, tempête, souffle, il a un corps météorologique. Les météores sont sacrés" (M 158). Just as Christ died so that the wind of the Paraclete could blow among men, Koussek notes that he himself was moved at the monastery of the *Paraclet* to surpass the corporeal Christ - the crucifixion - thereby surpassing homosexuality.[28] He adds that the occidental church clings to his former error, remaining tied to "un attachement trop exclusif à la personne, à l'enseignement, voire même au corps du Christ. Nous nous rendons coupables de christocentrisme, et même de christomonisme" (154).

*Les Météores* clearly highlights Koussek's role as asexual messenger for the Holy Spirit rather than his initial role of gay lover of Christ. Nevertheless, we have included him in our discussion of gay males from *Les Météores* as homosexuality is both the point of departure for his divine transformation and the sexual orientation he continues to describe as that of "l'élu" (149). But important to our discussion of the fragmenting nature of sexuality, Koussek was deeply troubled spiritually, psychologically and physically during his youthful days as gay lover of Christ. He reveals that his sexual addiction to Jesus lead him to desperately seek enlightenment at the monastery of the *Paraclet*. William Cloonan has pointed out that "Thomas's appreciation of the Holy Spirit has permitted him to live a happy life" (*Michel Tournier* 66). However, Cloonan's assessment does not address the negative implications for gayness which underlie Koussek's case. For since the recovery which restored Koussek's health and peace of mind involved the surpassing of homosexuality, his sexual orientation is therefore left behind with this disabling disease: his painful fixation upon the crucified Christ. Koussek reveals that since his spiritual and sexual transcendence, he views the crucifixion with Jesus "mutilé et désespéré" as "une

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[28]In *Michel Tournier*, David Bevan overstates the case concerning the surpassing of "une sexualité conventionnelle" in *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* while more accurately assessing this process in *Les Météores* (19). He adds that a similar transcendence is supposedly at work in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* and *Le Roi des aulnes* - a transcendence which we shall fully explore in chapter seven.

vision d'horreur" representing only "de la laideur morbide" (154). In spite of Koussek's positive comments as an adult regarding his former sexual persuasion, in his own case it is linked to his sickly passion for Jesus thereby associating gayness with the torture and death depicted by the crucifixion. *Les Météores* thus offers a dual, conflicting portrait of the gay male. On the one hand, the novel resonates with statements of gay pride but on the other hand, gayness meets with death both literally (with Alexandre Surin and Daniel) and metaphorically (with Eustache Lafille and Thomas Koussek). Alexandre Surin perishes in a thinly disguised suicide while his young lover is torn to bits by rats and sea gulls. Meanwhile, Eustache Lafille vanishes from the narrative landscape and young Thomas Koussek's gayness is linked to Christ's torture and death. As we shall now see, Tournier's Jean Surin and Jouve's Jacques de Todi reveal that male bisexuality is also associated with disappearance and death in the prose works of these authors.

Similar to young Koussek's obsessive fixation with a male love object - Christ - Paul Surin is totally obsessed with his identical twin, Jean. But since *Les Météores* ostensibly depicts Paul as a developing androgyne, we shall reserve our discussion of him until chapter seven. We shall conclude this current chapter with an analysis of Paul's twin, Jean Surin, and Jacques de Todi from Jouve's *Le Monde désert*. For while Jean Surin and Jacques de Todi each become sexually intimate with a female, their bisexuality ties into their painful fragmentation.

A very important thematic thread of *Les Météores* is its tribute to the superiority and plenitude of identical twinship. Even though Jean ultimately rebels from twinship, his narration indicates that as a young child he valued its delicious and exclusive intimacy. When Paul's sedentary propensity and Jean's nomadic propensity pulled the brothers "dans des directions différentes, opposées presque" already in their childhood, they were nevertheless lovingly reunited by a seminal ritual and a secret language (178). Their

nocturnal, seminal ritual of making love "tête-bêche" seemingly erased both the contamination of their day-long contact with non-twins and their otherness (179). Jean initially describes their lovemaking as an intimate, nocturnal dance during which the twin dancers - separated during the day - reforged their perfect union. Moving "d'un seul mouvement," their purity and plenitude were restored as each twin fell lovingly "dans son moule - qui est son frère-pareil" (179). But when Jean expands his portrait of geminate lovemaking in a subsequent chapter, his twin and he emerge not as dancers becoming one but as priest (Paul) and sacred love object (Jean). Thus Jean explains that Paul prepares him nightly before their ritualistic lovemaking: "[il veut] me laver, me désinfecter, m'enduire de notre commune odeur, et finalement échanger avec moi la communion séminale" (279).

Even during their daytime contact with the non-twin world, Paul and Jean were able to partially restore the cell of twinship through their use of cryptophasia - the language spoken only by the twins. Speaking their very own language obviously served to unite Paul and Jean for they were able to carry on secret conversations thereby linguistically creating an exclusive, geminate universe to which only they could gain entrance. Jean explains that the absolute understanding which underlies cryptophasia also comes to play in the superiority of geminate lovemaking: "[les] amours ovales . . . nouent le même au même et suscitent par entente cryptophasique une brûlure de volupté qui se multiplie par elle-même au lieu de se juxtaposer pauvrement comme dans les amours sans-pareil . . . " (278).

In spite of Jean and Paul's astonishingly perfect physical resemblance and early appreciation for their exclusive intimacy, their twinship sparks conflict between the boys as they mature. This division stems from a fundamental difference: Paul thrives on the unity afforded by the geminate cell whereas Jean feels stifled by it. Thus the suppression of alterity is at issue in Paul's like and Jean's growing dislike of twinship. Although the text provides numerous examples regarding the issue of alterity, we shall examine the

following: the photograph for the twins' identification cards, the selection of their wardrobes, and Jean's terrifying experience with a triple mirror.

Due to their perfect physical resemblance, Papa Surin suggests that just one twin pose for the photograph to appear on both boys' first identification cards. Jean reveals in other narrative segments that - as young boys - Paul and he had delighted in fooling non-twins concerning their identity. He later explains to his fiancée that his brother and he mischievously switched their identification bracelets several times so that "nous ne savons plus qui est Paul, qui est Jean. Vous-même, vous ne le saurez jamais" (396). But according to Jean, his playful participation in this confusion of identity ends abruptly around puberty with the drama of the identification cards. At this moment, he rejects the geminate complicity of identity for the first time realizing that "je n'en voulais plus" (280). Upon hearing his father's proposal that only one twin be photographed for both cards, Jean says that "j'avais violemment protesté contre le stratagème" (280). Papa Surin seeks to appease Jean by selecting him to serve as the unique photographic model. Jean then clarifies his violent rejection to having an image of one twin serve as the official identifying marker for both: "Il me semblait . . . qu'en collant la photo d'un seul de nous deux sur les deux cartes, on scellait officiellement - et donc peut-être pour toujours et de façon irrémédiable - une confusion entre nous" (280). The text adds an ironic conclusion to this saga of the identification cards. Papa Surin yields to Jean's demand for separate photographs, and then mixes both sets challenging Jean to select the photographs of himself. Terribly distraught upon realizing that his photographs are indistinguishable from Paul's, Jean attempts to mask his anguish and selects his photographs merely at random: a procedure which fools none of his amused family members.

Although Jean is not entirely consoled by this thought, he nevertheless deems that his inability to select his own photographic image stems from the fact that - offered to him from the non-twin eye of the camera - his photograph is therefore stripped of the "signes

imperceptibles" by which the twins distinguish themselves and their possessions (281). But with the two subsequent examples of wardrobe selection and the triple mirror, Jean's own senses fail in his attempt to establish his unique otherness. Roughly coinciding with Jean's refusal that one twin's image appear on both identification cards is his first rebellion against the family tradition of dressing the twins as perfect mirror images. When Jean protests against this practice in order to cultivate his own tastes and to distinguish himself "autant que possible de Paul," the boys are given permission to select their own wardrobes for school (281). But this shopping excursion proves to be "un cuisant échec" to Jean's concerted effort to achieve "la fracture de la cellule gémellaire": the twins select identical items of clothing even on their unprecedented, separate shopping trips to different department stores (282). Jean painfully realizes that unconsciously duplicating Paul's purchases does not shatter but fully reinforces the commonly held notion of shared identity between identical twins.[29]

Jean's experience with the identification card photographs and the shopping trip are clear indications as to his terrific thirst for a uniquely personal identity - a thirst painfully exacerbated by his experience with a triple mirror. During its introduction, the mirror scene seems to promise a temporary quaffing of Jean's thirst for individuality. He is out alone and finds this "une expérience toute nouvelle [qui] me plongeait . . . dans un curieux état d'exaltation et de vertige . . . agréable au total" (284). This scene contains elements of those just discussed, for again Jean is shopping and again he becomes distraught due to an external image of himself. But rather than paralleling the earlier shopping scene by selecting the same clothing as Paul, on this second shopping trip Jean is overcome by his reflection in the glass of a triple mirror. Different from the fused image of "Jean-Paul" produced previously by the photographs for identification cards, Jean now perceives an image

[29]In his study entitled *Le Paradoxe des jumeaux*, René Zazzo notes that for a century experts have wrongly assumed that perfect twins' physical resemblance finds its parallel in their perfect psychological resemblance: "on postule que . . . Un même corps donc une même âme . . . ils sont le même être en deux exemplaires" (48).

uniquely of Paul. Fully expecting to see his own reflection in the glass, Jean is horrified: "*Paul!* . . . c'était mon frère-pareil, venu là je ne savais comment, mais indiscutablement présent" (285). Unlike the identification card photographs, the mirror no longer blurs the twins' identities but seemingly replaces the passive twin (Jean) with the dominate twin (Paul). Feeling that his very essence has been erased, Jean is overwhelmed by a "vide effroyable [qui] se creusait en moi, une angoisse de mort [qui] me glaçait, car si Paul était présent et vivant dans le triptyque, moi-même, Jean, je n'étais plus nulle part, je n'existais plus" (285).

Although the text does not support Christiane Baroche's contention that Jean ultimately dies (1183), the mirror episode metaphorically implies that this putting to death has taken place. For rather than appearing as two identical copies of the same being as they had in the episodes of the identification photographs and the wardrobe selection, the mirror scene implies that Jean has been reduced to a mere carbon copy of the master copy: Paul. And Jean is so distressed by this visual symbol of the erasure of his identity that he never mentions this triple mirror experience or his subsequent loss of consciousness. But although he does not speak of this horrifying vision, he notes that it marks a significant turning point in his life for "depuis l'affaire du miroir triple, je ne lui [à Paul] appartenais plus, j'éprouvais le besoin impérieux d'exister" (279). And subsequently Jean accords a threefold importance to this "affaire du miroir triple": the rupture of the geminate cell; the end of his childhood; and the opening of his life to the external, non-twin world (279).

Another aspect of Jean's experience with the triple mirror is that it can be viewed in light of Lacanian theory, beginning with the "stade du miroir" (93). Raman Selden notes that in keeping with Lacan, "interior and exterior aspects of sense data are undifferentiated" until the child reaches the mirror phase between six and eighteen months of age (*Criticism and Objectivity* 145). Lacan explains the importance of this developmental stage: "Ce que j'ai appelé *le stade du miroir* a l'intérêt de manifester le dynamisme affectif par où le sujet

s'identifie primordialement à la *Gestalt* visuelle de son propre corps: elle est, par rapport à l'incoordination encore très profonde de sa propre motricité, unité idéale, *imago* salutaire" (113). Lacan labels this fictional projection of unity into the specular image the "*je-idéal*" (94). Both Lacan's concept and Jean's specular experience use the presence of a mirror to illustrate the perception of identity. Nevertheless, important differences exist between the Lacanian model and Jean's experience. While an actual mirror is not necessarily present during Lacan's mirror phase, a triple mirror is literally present during Jean's ordeal offering him a self-image in which he is thrice erased. Also, Lacan describes a phase involving the mythological union of subject and object at a moment prior to the child's ability to differentiate him/herself from others, whereas Jean Surin is struggling against a special sort of unified selfhood. This is not the selfhood to which Lacan refers (the mythological union of subject and object), but rather the struggle against the blurring of geminate identity. But instead of confirming Jean's individuality and granting him total presence, the reflection of the triple mirror erases him entirely and in triplicate.[30]

The anxiety of identity Jean experienced in front of the triple mirror brings to mind not only Lacan's mirror phase but also his theory regarding language acquisition. According to Lacan, entry into language involves a recognition of difference and separation. Before speaking, the child must first learn to differentiate him/herself from others in order to become a subject and thereby gain entry into the system of language: the symbolic order. In so doing, the child must submit to paternal authority and separate from the mother who subsequently becomes an object of sexual desire. Raman Selden explains that full entry into the Lacanian symbolic order engenders a sense of anxiety: " 'I' am never where I think; my positionality in the symbolic order is at the axis of the signifier and the

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[30]Although such an experience may appear hallucinatory to the non-twin, Michel Tournier affirms that similar experiences have been confirmed by adult twins. Just as Jean Surin carefully avoids triple mirrors after his terrifying experience with this apparatus, Tournier speaks of twins "[qui] n'aimaient pas se regarder dans un miroir à trois faces parce que se voyant sous un angle inhabituel, de profil ou de trois quarts, ils avaient brusquement le sentiment intolérable que ce n'était pas eux, mais leur frère" (*Le Paradoxe des jumeaux* 58).

signified" (*Criticism and Objectivity* 147). This crisis of one's positionality in language is reminiscent of Jean Surin's spatial crisis of identity. For just as the speaker of language in the Lacanian system is never where s/he thinks s/he is, so Jean is struggling with his spatial dislocation and apparent erasure by Paul.

We have noted that even after his twins reach puberty, Papa Surin still refuses to grant either son full presence by insisting upon relating to them as the conglomerate "Jean-Paul." Mireille Rosello comments upon Papa Surin's gleeful participation in this blurring of identity between his identical twins, noting that his complicity thwarts the paternal role in the maturation process as described by Lacan. Rather than using his phallic paternal power to demonstrate difference in regard to "Jean-Paul," Rosello says that Papa Surin as "La Loi lui impose l'indifférence, le force à partager un nom double et symétrique qui fait de son corps une entité incomplète . . . " (164). Instead of highlighting Jean and Paul's individuality, Papa Surin continues to relate to them globally, thereby prolonging - rather than severing - their maternal attachment long after their acquisition of language. Reinforcing their twinship even as they enter puberty, he unconsciously endorses the closure of the geminate cell and the fusion it affords as a simulation of Jean-Paul's embryonic sac. Ironically, by refusing to acknowledge the twins' individual autonomy, Papa Surin unknowingly helps to provoke the permanent separation of these sons he continues to see as one.

After reading the account of Jean's devastating experience with the boutique mirror, the reader might assume that the geminate cell of the Surin twins is irreparably shattered at this very moment. But although Jean is undone by this symbolic vision of his erasure, the pleasures of geminate loving are still strong enough to attract him a decade later during his engagement to a non-twin, Sophie. The visit of Sophie to the Surin family estate provides even more testimonials to geminate superiority by placing both Jean and his fiancée into the arms of the dominant twin, Paul. One night, Sophie notices that Jean's usual "chétives

étreintes" give way to ardent, skillful lovemaking (411). Seeking her newly confident lover the next morning, she realizes that he is not her fiancé but rather his twin. Although Sophie is ruffled by this switch of lovers in her bed, she is thoroughly shaken by the subsequent endorsement of the superiority of incestuous, geminate lovemaking. When Jean joins her in bed after ambling upon his family's estate one night, Sophie anticipates that he will bear the fragrance of the sea air. She is then overwhelmed to discover that he smells not of the sea, but of her recent, adept lover: Paul. Sophie's questions regarding this incestuous ménage à trois recall the theme of the blurring of identity so painful to Jean: "lequel des deux était mon amant, lequel mon fiancé?" (411)

In a later narrative segment, Paul confesses to having slept with Sophie to break off Jean's engagement thus expelling this non-twin intruder from the geminate cell. Although Paul's sexual relations with Jean and Sophie serve as catalyst to her departure, the family's jealous housekeeper, Méline, literally expels her from the estate by secretly packing her bag and putting her on a train with no forewarning. But rather than slipping back into the geminate cell once Paul and Méline have separately orchestrated his fiancée's departure, Jean finally carries out the separation forecast a decade earlier during the scene of the triple mirror. Realizing that Paul ever remains "[celui] qui mène la danse . . . le maître," Jean finally breaks free of "La prison, oui, l'esclavage" of twinship departing three days after Sophie (273).

Clearly, the departure of Jean in *Les Météores* could have been presented as a healthy release from the stifling intimacy of the geminate cell. Jean adds support to this interpretation by noting that "la cellule gémellaire, c'est le contraire de l'existence, c'est la négation du temps, de l'histoire, des histoires . . ." (274). He adds that on the contrary, life and lovemaking with a non-twin offer "l'impureté vivante [et] je choisis la vie" (274). Thus a rewriting of the novel could emphasize that Jean's departure is tantamount to an embrace of life. Nevertheless, the novel paints a different picture through such elements as Jean's

reaction to his homecoming visit with Sophie. First, he reveals that he is crushed by Sophie's departure for while she doubtlessly feels he betrayed her with Paul, a part of him remained ever faithful shouting "appels au secours" in her direction even as he deserted her bed for Paul's (413). He adds that these cries were his plea that she take the initiative and deliver him from the siren song of geminate lovemaking. Rather than delivering him, he later notes that both Sophie and he were like moths "brûlés à ce rayonnement" - the flame of love issuing from the preeminent Paul (417). Jean adds that he had counted upon Sophie's strength to keep Paul at bay. But "Sophie disparue, cette distance ne peut plus être créée et entretenue que par le voyage" (417). Thus, rather than admitting that his own incestuous, geminate appetite is stronger than his heterosexual appetite, Jean blames Sophie for his self-imposed exile.

Jean's reaction to Sophie's departure indicates that his ultimate shattering of the geminate cell is much more traumatic than his pubescent dream of attaining simple, glorious freedom. Early on, he yearned for liberation from twinship equating it to the freeing of "un oiseau migrateur prisonnier dans une volière" (277). Yet in actuality, his final breaking of the geminate cell years later parallels his final sentence in *Les Météores*. Just before vanishing from the narrative landscape, Jean mentions the smashed aviary of his friends Ralph and Deborah, where "Deux paradisiers avaient été tués par les éclats de verre, les autres oiseaux s'étaient enfuis" (472). Rather than his earlier dream of intoxicating emancipation from the aviary of the twin cell, Jean's situation mirrors that of both groups of Ralph and Deborah's birds. Thus novel intimates that Jean has flown to freedom at the expense of killing his privileged twinship - the bird of paradise within himself.

Reminiscent of Fabienne de Ribeauvillé, when Jean's engagement dissolves he departs for a solitary honeymoon to Venice. But the different from Fabienne's "honeymoon-for-one," Venice is only the first stop of Jean's globetrotting honeymoon inspired by his favorite book: *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours*. The worldwide

scope of Jean's travels from Venice to Djerba, Iceland, Alaska, Japan, Canada and Berlin can be interpreted as a desperate flight by the passive, "moth" twin, Jean, to distance himself from the dominant, "flame" twin, Paul. In addition, this voyage is both antidote and renunciation to Jean's desire for full presence. We noted that as Jean sought his reflection in the triple mirror, the glass presented the image of Paul thereby giving Jean the sensation of being nowhere. On the one hand, his extensive travels offer the antidote of ubiquitousness. Rather than being nowhere, Jean is now everywhere - prompting Paul's global search for traces of his twin's essence. When Paul's futile attempt to locate Jean takes him to Canada, he catches a glimpse of his twin with a crew of land surveyors. Assuming that Jean is working at least temporarily as a surveyor of the immense Canadian wilderness, Paul describes his brother's professional activity in terms which enhance his ubiquitous status: "Et *arpenter*, cela signifie . . . parcourir à grands pas" (573). But from the reader's vantage point, this vagabondage which permanently erases Jean from the narrative landscape can also be deemed a renunciation of his earlier crusade for full presence. Having failed to gain presence a decade earlier in the triple mirror, the adult Jean ultimately embraces absence, thereby exiling himself from both Paul and the reader.

After Jean embarks upon his globe-trotting lifestyle, his narrative segments end at Djerba - one hundred and fifty-three pages before the novel's conclusion. The reader receives no further firsthand information concerning his adjustment to life as a dispaired twin. S/he has only the comments of Paul - comments obviously slanted by his desperate desire to locate Jean in hopes of restoring the lost bonds of geminate intimacy. Never literally reunited with Jean, Paul maintains that Jean's honeymoon trip has turned to meaningless vagabondage, a condemnation to "un voyage de noces perpétuel," "une perpétuelle errance" (423, 440).

While Jean Surin selects a lifestyle of permanent vagabondage as antidote to his fragmented life, Jacques de Todi ends his with suicide in Jouve's *Le Monde Désert*. In our first chapter, we explained that Jacques is a troubled bisexual whose attraction toward the Lorelei figure of his great-aunt results in his suicide by drowning. But we have yet to explore two points: first, the similarity between Jacques's characterization and those of Jouve's Elisabeth Hohenstein and Fanny Felicitas and Tournier's Alexandre Surin and, secondly, the fragmentation resulting from Jacques's inability to accept his homosexuality.

Jacques explains that a specific setting is necessary to kindle his pederastic appetite - an element which brings to mind the lovemaking between Fanny Felicitas and Elisabeth Hohenstein in Jouve's *Hécate*. As we noted in chapter three, the idyllic photograph of Fanny and Elisabeth is a harmonious union of natural setting, atmospheric conditions and lesbianism. The lovers' bodies correspond perfectly to this "pré à la lisière d'un bois" where "Il n'y a pas une brume ni un nuage. C'est lisse comme le ciel du mois d'août" (H 80, 82). Nude under the trees, Fanny and Elisabeth perform "la danse classique devant le soleil et le ciel" (H 80). Similarly, Jacques explains to his friend Luc Pascal that the combination of perfect weather and natural setting whets his pederastic appetite. These elements are clearly present just before Jacques spies his lover-to-be, young Charles Stoebli. Jacques notes: "Il me suffit à moi d'une matinée d'été. Le ciel. La terre. Le vent. L'odeur. Le sol . . . Et alors quelles lumières! la résine, le foin, les églantines, et alors quels parfums! . . . Le ciel a mes couleurs" (66-67).

While gay lovemaking in an idyllic outdoor setting ties Jacques to Elisabeth Hohenstein and Fanny Felicitas, he shares many more characteristics with Alexandre Surin, including pederasty. We have already noted that Alexandre denies his pederastic predilection. Speaking with his friend, Luc Pascal, Jacques does not deny this tendency within himself but rather indicates that he is powerless to suppress it. When Luc urges him to seek only adult gay lovers, Jacques replies "Si j'étais libre . . . je le veux, Luc, je le

veux! . . . je n'accepte pas cette chose. Elle est en moi. . . C'est un autre que je connais bien, étranger à moi, et moi tout de même . . ." (81).[31] Another link between the pederastic tendencies of Alexandre and Jacques is their association with punishment. In spite of Alexandre's denial of his pederasty, he deems nevertheless that this affection for young Daniel was punished by the boy's violent death at Miramas. Although Jacques's unique sexual encounter with young Charles Stoebli does not bring about the boy's death, it does result in legal and social punishment. For after the boy tells his father of the intimate moments he spent with Jacques, Monsieur Stoebli files an official complaint. Jacques is forced to endure penalization both official (the payment of a fine to Monsieur Stoebli) and unofficial (social ostracism from the straight community).

Another characteristic shared by Jacques and Alexandre is their privileging of a certain love object - a twin in Alexandre's case and "l'Ami unique" in Jacques's case (MD 104). We have noted that Alexandre cherishes Daniel for he can vicariously relive his own youth by shaping the boy as his younger twin. To highlight this privileging of twinship in *Les Météores*, Alexandre's last love interest turns out to be not one delicious, ubiquitous boy, but rather the dandy's own incestuous twin nephews. According to the premise of *Les Météores*, Alexandre's gay odyssey is flawed for as non-twin he will never attain the amorous perfection afforded by an incestuous geminate relationship. In *Le Monde désert*, Jacques's housemate, Baladine, also reveals that Jacques's gay odyssey is doomed to failure. He is not searching for a twin but rather for "l'Ami unique, l'élu pour la part la meilleure de son cœur" (MD 104). As a non-twin, Alexandre's discovery of a biological twin is obviously impossible. On the other hand, Baladine indicates that Jacques's own lack of perception is to blame for the failure in his search for the perfect romantic partner. In Taddeo Buonvicini - the androgynous figure we shall discuss in chapter seven - Jacques had found "l'Ami unique . . . mais Jacques l'ignorait et continuait de courir" (105).

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[31]Sylvie Jaudeau notes that this conflict provoked by a stranger within oneself is an element which runs throughout the Jouvian opus: "une lutte du moi contre l'étranger en lui qu'il veut pourchasser" (64).

In addition to failing to locate the privileged love object of biological twin (Alexandre) and unique friend (Jacques), both Alexandre and Jacques are cast in the role of dandy. This trait is far more developed with Alexandre than with Jacques, but the latter is a dandy nevertheless. While Alexandre combines garbage-filled, golden medallions with silk vests, Jacques "devenait très élégant, mais avec un abandon que l'on était forcé d'admirer" (MD 145). Alexandre chooses a "complet de nankin ivoire" (M 37) and Jacques selects "[des] complets homespun de couleur très jolie, mauves ou gris, aux pantalons larges; et aussi . . . des chaussettes fines, une cravate rayée mal nouée en petit nœud autour de son col de soie" (MD 145). Even as they march toward certain death, Jacques wears golden cufflinks and Alexandre sports pearl earrings. In addition to their common desire to present a certain visual image, there is also a similar dichotomy between the men's carefully selected wardrobes and their destinations. While Alexandre's silk vests and golden medallions will accompany him daily to the underworld of his garbage dumps, Baladine explains that Jacques and his finery are headed "chez ces femmes où l'on trouvait tout ce que l'on peut désirer" (MD 146). Alexandre's seedy milieu conjures up lurid visions of rats, maggots, etc., and in spite of Jacques's studied appearance Baladine sees "d'horribles êtres dans ses mains, accrochés à lui, à son visage, dans sa voix . . ." (MD 146).

Julia Kristeva's discussion of the dandy to which we referred regarding Alexandre Surin is also enlightening vis-à-vis Jacques de Todi. In *Histoires d'amour,* Kristeva states that the dandy may well be tied to "un Narcisse précocement blessé [qui] ait besoin d'un témoin pour qu'il puisse fixer une image propre dans le regard de cet autre" (314). This comment is intriguing in Jacques's case, for Baladine notes that he is especially attentive to his appearance before going "chez ces femmes où l'on trouvait tout ce que l'on peut désirer" (MD 146). Since Jacques presents these *filles de joie* with his most studied appearance, the other for whom he is setting this specific image is female. Thus his dandyism involves a suppression of his gay tendencies and the projection of a heterosexual

image. As we shall see, Jacques's inability to accept his gayness is a major cause of his painful fragmentation.

Kristeva explains that the dandy's attire and demeanor point to "la faillite du 'propre', la mort de 'l'authentique' . . . Rien que des compositions provisoires et vides d'une identité indécidable, fluide, éphémère, comme dans les eaux mouvantes de la fontaine de Narcisse" (*Histoires d'amour* 314). This description suits Jacques perfectly, for his dandyism is just one manifestation of his "identité indécidable, fluide, éphémère" (*Histoires d'amour* 314). For different from Alexandre's confident efforts to shape his refuse empire *à rebours*, the timid Jacques entrusts Baladine to shape his ephemeral identity - both personally and professionally. In chapter one, we explained that Baladine takes Jacques as her charge, nursing the ailing psyche which sends him into total emotional upheaval. Jacques initially defers to Baladine's dominant, healing strength, deeming her "[son] ange de la vie" - the angel capable of making him happy (63). Jacques desires to please her so as to continue benefiting from the healing powers of this energetic mentor whom he trusts "à [lui] désigner le chemin de la vie" (75). Following the course of action charted for him by Baladine, Jacques abandons his academic career in favor of an artistic career and severs his family ties.

Baladine continues to shield Jacques emotionally especially after he is charged with sexually molesting a young boy. And in spite of this embarrassing incident of pederasty, Jacques and Baladine become housemates. While Baladine single-handedly locates an apartment and works to support both Jacques and herself, Jacques is less househusband than spoiled child. Nevertheless, Baladine enthusiastically encourages him in hopes of forming "un grand peintre, quelque chose comme un Monet" (91). But although his identity initially appears malleable to the artistic shape imposed by his housemate, it soon proves to be rather the fluid identity of which Kristeva speaks. Thus - like Jacques's dandy

attire - his artistic creations are "Rien que des compositions provisoires et vides d'une identité indécidable, fluide, éphémère" (*Histoires d'amour* 314).

Analyzing the question of Jacques's identity in *Le Monde désert*, the reader discovers that - similar to Alexandre - Jacques continues to harbor resentment against his father. But the loss of Alexandre's mother is the greatest chagrin of his life, whereas Jacques barely mentions his deceased mother. Clearly, the emotional backdrop of Jacques's life is the unshakable presence of his oppressive father. Ironically, the characterization of *le pasteur Isaac de Todi* combines presence and absence for he is an omnipresent shadow who remains offstage. And significantly, the novel's very first sentence introduces Jacques as "le fils du pasteur Isaac de Todi" (13). Thus, this opening sentence appropriately presents Jacques in this filial role from which he will never break free. In a confident moment at the beginning of the novel, Jacques declares that he is "en révolte et dans le scandale depuis ma dix-septième année. Libre . . . ayant l'esprit que je me suis fait moi-même" (23). He adds that his plan to teach philosophy at the University of Bâle will afford him great liberty from his family members: "je leur échappe pour de bon" (23). The rest of the novel belies Jacques's assertion of his liberty and his ostensibly self-made spirit. The postscript to his caustic remarks concerning the people of his native city reveals that he is still tied to the oppressive Protestant doctrine endorsed by *le pasteur de Todi*: "Quels gens sinistres [ceux de Genève], quels idiots, quels draps mouillés! Leur regard est plein de rêves creux, leur conscience est 'dans la bonne règle,' et tout ce qui leur arrive est toujours bien. Ah! leur théologie vous pince comme un casse-noisette entre la grâce et les vertus, rien à faire, vous êtes pris, c'est la vie dans la Bible" (23). Significantly, Jacques admits that "Toutes mes difficultés viennent de là. Tous les empêchements de vivre, les fausses démarches, les malaises" (23).

Although Baladine is naïve in her assessment of Jacques's gayness as a temporary fancy, she is very astute regarding the strong hold which *le pasteur de Todi* has over his

son. In her presence, Jacques bravely tells his father that Baladine and he will marry or not, adding defiantly "ça nous regarde. Je renonce d'avance à tout ce que vous pouviez me donner et dont vous pouvez me priver" (92). Nevertheless Baladine sees through Jacques's bravado: "Hélas! hélas! mon pauvre Jacques. On ne les quitte pas les Todi, on n'abandonne pas ce Christ, on ne se sépare pas d'un pareil père . . ." (92). Similarly, when Baladine compares Jacques's artistic talents to those of his friend, Taddeo, she realizes that Taddeo is truly gifted whereas Jacques remains merely "le fils du pasteur de Todi" (106). And finally the text highlights the permanence of this filial relationship, for even after his own death Jacques is referred to as "*Jacques de Todi* le fils du pasteur" (199).

Just as Jacques is tied to his filial role from the outset of *Le Monde désert*, so his father remains tied to his ecclesiastical position. Throughout the novel, he is almost exclusively referred to not as simply "le père de Jacques," but rather "le pasteur Isaac de Todi" or "le pasteur de Todi" (14, 16, 17, 18, etc.). The son is consistently linked to his father and his father to the church - an institution which sanctions only heterosexuality and denounces homosexuality not as a natural tendency but as a sin.

In addition to introducing the oppressive shadow of *le pasteur de Todi*, the initial chapter of *Le Monde désert* also presents the antidote thereof: the escapism afforded to young Jacques by the vision of his deceased great-aunt in the waters of the lake. As we noted in our first chapter, this watery vision recurs throughout Jacques's life as a mirage intertwining Eros with Thanatos. We also mentioned the association between Jacques and Narcissus; with both men, union with a loved image occurs in what Julia Kristeva labels "La solitude tragique et mortifère," sending the protagonist on an amorous journey toward death (*Histoires d'amour* 115).

Concerning the exhibitionistic dandy, Kristeva points out that the accompanying mindset is "plus près de cette doublure du narcissisme blessé qui se manifeste dans les sentiments de *solitude* et de *vide*, ces *congélations* provisoires de la pulsion de mort"

(*Histoires d'amour* 314). Different from Alexandre Surin, Jacques de Todi does not expound at great length upon his feelings of solitude and emptiness. Nevertheless, these are important components of his characterization - components which tie into his inability to accept his homosexuality. When Jacques falls seriously ill after skiing nude at dawn, his delirious state prompts him to speak freely of his homosexuality while ostensibly portraying a persona he names "le spectateur" (35).[32] Deeming that he is "condamné justement par ses instincts," Jacques adds that his solitude is imposed by these very instincts (37). Deliriously describing the estrangement of "le spectateur," Jacques describes his own alienation from the straight community: "inutile de l'approcher ou même d'essayer de s'en faire une idée ou de l'aimer ou de le soigner, inutile, inutile de l'approcher ou même d'essayer" (38). Similarly, after his lovemaking with young Charles Stoebli has become common knowledge, Jacques feels that he is a pariah: "Je suis dans le désert. Le monde se sépare de moi. A cause de mon péché" (49). Due to the fact that he continues to try and suppress his homosexuality and to surround himself with heterosexuals, he realizes that he is destined for solitude: "L'histoire recommence: je trouve des amis, des frères, tout est bien, je prends espoir, j'ai faim de travailler, je vais faire mes œuvres; un jour ils apprennent la chose et ils s'écartent" (49).[33]

When Baladine becomes Jacques's housemate and attempts to orchestrate his personal and professional lives, their intimate relationship leaves them both with feelings of solitude and emptiness. Baladine's tremendous desire to serve as "celle qui réconcilie" Jacques's life is thwarted by their mutual incapability to accept his sexual orientation (101). Contrary to Karen Levy's assertion that Baladine is "the only one who can fully accept the reality of Jacques as he is" (21), even Baladine senses that she is in love with an imaginary

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[32]Jacques's critical examination of his sexuality through a persona named *le spectateur* endorses Ghislaine Deschaumes's interpretation of seeing in the Jouvian opus: "Voir, c'est vivre l'enfermement dans le tourment répétitif de l'érotisme" (163-64).

[33]Jacques therefore fits into the following pattern of solitude of Jouvian protagonists as described by Sylvie Jaudeau: "En exil de Dieu, en exil à l'intérieur même de ma chair, j'apparais sous le signe de la malédiction et ne peux qu'exécrer cette terre, lieu de ma solitude" (66).

enhancement of her housemate: "J'étais éprise d'une beauté idéale de lui plutôt que de lui-même" (96). Nevertheless, she clings to her vision of Jacques as a greatly talented, heterosexual artist. But since Jacques's "identité indécidable, fluide, éphémère" can be molded neither into artistic greatness nor into heterosexuality, his life with Baladine quickly degenerates into moments of painful silence interspersed with domestic quarrels (*Histoires d'amour* 314). Having failed both in his role as artist and househusband, Jacques maintains his chaste relationship with Baladine while satiating his homosexual appetite during nocturnal meanderings.

Although he indulges in these gay liaisons, Jacques's inability to accept his sexual orientation dooms them to failure alongside his relationship with Baladine. Jacques's own statements reveal that he remains permanently fragmented by his sexuality. On the one hand, he feels that for his lover the homosexual act "c'est beau . . . Beau à la manière de l'Antiquité" (82). Thus, as he makes love with young Charles Stoebli, he deems that "L'amour qu'il donne au pâtre est bien en accord avec l'Univers . . . mais avec une plus extraordinaire douceur . . . " (70). However, these sentiments of the delicious purity of gay lovemaking are quickly obscured by the shadow of *le pasteur de Todi* - a shadow which constantly transmits paternal and ecclesiastical condemnation of gayness.

Throughout the novel, Jacques indicates that he will never be able to fully embrace his sexuality for he is thoroughly indoctrinated by the hegemonic condemnation thereof. At the other extreme of Alexandre Surin's militant endorsement of gay pride, Jacques feels that homosexuality "me marque comme un forçat" (48). Watching his heterosexual friends, Luc and Germaine, Jacques laments to himself "si je dois vivre dans mon amour j'y trouve aussi mon péché! . . . aucune délivrance possible. Et j'ai beau râler, m'insurger, me débattre ou me soumettre, *je ne peux pas accepter*" (49). Although he later serves to undermine Jacques's relationship with Baladine, Luc Pascal tries to help Jacques accept his sexual orientation during the early years of their friendship. Unlike his troubled friend, Luc

realizes that Jacques will attain inner peace only through self-acceptance. Luc therefore encourages Jacques to seek a relationship with an adult gay male: "Abandonne l'opposition qui t'épuise. Sépare-toi de la morale et de ta famille . . . Ton salut est à ce prix" (81). But Jacques replies "Impossible, mon bon, impossible . . . je n'accepte pas cette chose. Elle est en moi . . . c'est un péché" (81-82). Luc tries to dissuade Jacques from associating gayness with sin, but his friend's opinion is unshakable: "C'est un péché, je le vois comme un péché, il n'y a rien à faire" (82). Undaunted, Luc insists "Si tu as du courage, et si tu veux te sauver toi-même, tu établiras ton équilibre sur ta nature . . . Et puis qu'importe tout ça . . ." (82). But as the linking of homosexuality and sin are solidly ingrained in Jacques, Luc's advice falls on deaf ears.

Unable to boldly defy his father's biblical teachings and their prohibition of gayness, Jacques indulges his homosexual appetite while living as Baladine's dependent and subsequently slides into a painful decline. Baladine indicates that at times he remains listless, "affalé sur le sofa, impossible d'en tirer une parole" (107). The emotional desert of Jacques and Baladine's life together is briefly revitalized by a prolonged visit from Luc Pascal. But since Luc is heterosexual, his presence provides only a momentary distraction after which Jacques returns nightly to his gay friends. Luc provides another brief respite to the tension between Jacques and Baladine by inviting them to leave Geneva and join him at Ongero. The idyllic setting and glorious weather temporarily ease Jacques's painful fragmentation, and he even plans to ask Baladine to marry him. Realizing that gayness is his true sexual inclination, he deems that this marriage will necessitate a transfer of his erotic energy to a heightened spirituality: "Je vais transposer, délivrer le besoin érotique . . . Je transporte tout mon cœur dans la spiritualité" (130).

Jacques's plans to marry Baladine and to rechannel his sexual energy are shattered by the keen sexual attraction between Luc and Baladine. Having finally decided to ask his housemate to marry him, Jacques is crushed by his friends' liaison which cruelly highlights

his own inability to serve as Baladine's lover. After the unhappy trio returns to Geneva, Jacques's disappointment in his friends and himself transforms into serious illness. Luc soon departs for Paris upon realizing that the contrite Baladine is insistent upon nursing Jacques.

Baladine reveals that no sooner has Jacques recovered from his illness than his behavior becomes increasingly erratic and self-destructive. Having failed to achieve artistic greatness in his professional life, his personal life is in shambles as well for "Jacques ne réalisait ni homosexualité ni mariage" (120). Baladine explains that her troubled housemate indulges in a curious mixture of "actes étranges, contradictoires" (146). He pays great attention to his wardrobe and extends the hours of his nocturnal rendez-vous. At the same time, he returns to church, writes a letter of apology to his father and is reaccepted into the family fold. Baladine feels that these actions stem not from true religious conviction on Jacques's part, but from his desire to make peace with his family. Although *le pasteur de Todi* embraces Jacques as "L'Enfant Prodigue," Baladine realizes that this return to the familial and ecclesiastical bosom stems from Jacques's unhealthy renunciation "à faire la paix dans son cœur" (147). Jacques's peacemaking proves unhealthy indeed, as it is the prelude to his suicide. After he speaks to his gay male friends of his intent to commit suicide, they form a group to monitor his behavior. Although Taddeo Buonvicini and cohorts prevent one suicide attempt, Jacques eludes them later on and plunges into a watery grave.

Thanatos is a constant lure in the lives of both Jacques de Todi and Alexandre Surin.[34] While Alexandre fantasizes for years of dueling to death with his favorite sword stick, Jacques is mesmerized since childhood by the watery vision of his deceased great-

[34]Martine Broda maintains that Jacques "porte sa mort dans son nom" - the German "Tod" ("Le Trajet du roman" 74). Karen Levy adds that although this interpretation is definitely possible, "through his name and through his desire for wholeness . . . [Jacques may also be linked] to another destiny, the historical, literary, and spiritual destiny of the thirteenth-century Italian poet and mystic Jacopone from the Umbrian village of Todi" (21-22).

aunt who beckons for him to join her. Yet while Alexandre consistently praises gayness as a privileged state, for Jacques it remains tarnished by paternal and ecclesiastical condemnation. Alexandre marches toward a thinly disguised suicide when he deems that his life force - his sex drive - has diminished. Ever living in the shadow of *le pasteur de Todi*, Jacques plunges to his death when he can no longer tolerate the painful fragmentation fostered by his religious upbringing and his inability to accept his gayness. Endowed with this sexuality which he can neither accept nor rechannel, Jacques jumps into the Rhône begging God's forgiveness, "la loi étant transgressée" (156). Among the letters which he leaves for his survivors is a message for *le pasteur de Todi* explaining that his "vie monstrueuse" necessitates his suicide (162). Ironically, Jacques dies never knowing that Baladine is carrying his son - the fruit of their unique coupling.

At the beginning of this chapter, we stated that our intent was to determine whether Michel Tournier and Pierre Jean Jouve demonstrate a gender bias, thereby portraying their gay and bisexual female characters in an unfavorable light while reserving the opposite treatment for their gay and bisexual male characters. As chapters three and four have indicated, this gender bias does not underlie the characterizations of Jouve's and Tournier's gays and bisexuals. For with the exception of Tournier's brief portrait of Achille Mage of *La Goutte d'or*, we have seen that male and female gay and bisexual characters of these two authors are consistently linked to death. Suicide is the fate of Jouvian bisexuals Elisabeth Hohenstein and Fanny Felicitas of *Hécate* and Jacques de Todi of *Le Monde désert*, while the Tournierian homosexual Alexandre Surin perishes in a thinly disguised suicide following the violent death of his lover, Daniel, in *Les Météores*. Other gays and bisexuals experience a metaphorical death through disappearance, be it erasure from the prose landscape (Fabienne de Ribeauvillé and Eustache Lafille, *Les Météores*) or exile

either involuntary (Perpetua, Jouve's *Paulina 1880*) or voluntary (Jean Surin, *Les Météores*) from the love object.

Catherine Crachat (Jouve's *Hécate* and *Vagadu*) and Thomas Koussek (Tournier's *Les Météores*) do not die, yet their integration intimates that gayness (for Koussek) and bisexuality (for Catherine) are mere manifestations of neuroses. In Koussek's case, this integration involves the surpassing of his homosexuality in favor of an asexual love for the Holy Spirit. Koussek's integration is significant for our discussion of homosexuality, for in order to achieve harmonious asexuality he leaves his gayness behind in his troubled days as sexual lover of Christ. Jouve's *Hécate* and *Vagadu* follow Catherine Crachat through her painful fragmentation and eventual psychological integration. But Catherine's cure intimates that her bisexuality is merely a manifestation of her neuroses and never questions the heterosexual matrix of desire. Her psychological "integration" is therefore a process of closure which maintains the status quo rather than open-mindedly exploring sexual orientation and sex roles.

Turning now to our discussion of Pierre Jean Jouve's and Michel Tournier's heterosexual male characters, we shall see if heterosexuality - like bisexuality and gayness - is also associated with literal and metaphorical death and psychological neuroses.

# Chapter V

## The Heterosexual Male in the Prose of Pierre Jean Jouve

Thus far in this dissertation, we have examined Michel Tournier's and Pierre Jean Jouve's portrayal of the heterosexual female (chapters one and two); the lesbian and bisexual female (chapter three); and the gay and bisexual male (chapter four). The common thread running throughout these portraits is their negativeness. For we have seen that both Jouve and Tournier link the aforementioned sexual persuasions with premature death, abandonment and deadly lure. Heterosexual females including Jouve's Hélène ("Dans les Années profondes") and Tournier's Deborah (*Les Météores*) die prematurely while suicide or a thinly disguised version thereof claims the lives of female and male bisexuals and gays including Jouve's Elisabeth Hohenstein and Fanny Felicitas (*Hécate*) and Jacques de Todi (*Le Monde désert*) and Tournier's Alexandre Surin (*Les Météores*). Tournierian and Jouvian heterosexual females demonstrate a propensity to abandon their lovers as indicated by Jouve's Baladine (*Le Monde désert*) and Tournier's Rachel (*Le Roi des aulnes*) and Sophie (*Les Météores*). In addition, the examples of Jouve's Paulina of *Paulina 1880* and the bevy of detrimental blondes from Tournier's *La Goutte d'or* reveal that both Tournier and Jouve depict the heterosexual female as a dangerous lure.

Turning now to the final conventional category of sexuality, we shall see if the Tournierian and Jouvian heterosexual male portrait counters or affirms the negativeness which runs throughout the depiction of other sexual orientations by these authors. We shall include the following Jouvian heterosexual males in our discussion: Signor Pandolfini and son and Michele Cantarini (*Paulina 1880*); Dorothée's father and Waldemar ("La Victime"); Isaac de Todi (*Le Monde désert*); Luc Pascal (*Le Monde désert* and *Vagadu*); Pierre

Indemini (*Hécate* and *Vagadu*); Catherine Crachat's father and Louis Moutier (*Vagadu*) and Count de Sannis, Pauliet and Léonide ("Dans les Années profondes").

The sexuality of Paulina Pandolfini is the center of attention of the heterosexual males in *Paulina 1880.* But rather than uniting these males, this preoccupation divides them into two groups: those who attempt to protect Paulina's virginity (her father and brothers) and he who takes charge of her sexual initiation (Michele Cantarini). As we stated in chapter one, the Pandolfini family endorses the societal notion which deems that family honor hinges upon the protection of one's daughter's virginity. When Paulina blossoms into womanhood, paternal sternness is one arm to restrain this "fougueuse jeune personne" (36). Somberness clearly permeates the portrait of Signor Pandolfini, who is endowed "d'une nature lourde et concentrée" while his entourage and he are "des personnages tristes et muets" (22, 21). Reminiscent of the fathers of Jouve's Dorothée ("La Victime") and Jacques de Todi (*Le Monde désert*) and of Tournier's Abel (*Le Roi des aulnes*), paternal severity emanates from the Pandolfini residence as well as from Signor Pandolfini himself. The "funèbre maison Pandolfini" is as lugubrious as its master with "hautes pièces entièrement noires derrière leurs volets de bois plein" (31). The narrator adds that Paulina is "enfermée" within this tomb of paternal authority, "[où] elle repoussait ces choses tristes" (31).[35]

Since his sons are disagreeable characters and his wife's religious devotion has long since supplanted her marital relationship, Paulina is the focal point of Signor Pandolfini's affection. But similar to the love of Dorothée's father for his only daughter in "La Victime," Signor Pandolfini's affection for his daughter and his protection of her virginity have an incestuous component. Thus he keeps watch over his daughter "avec une jalousie vindicative . . . [car] de sa fille il était probablement épris comme un jeune homme" (52). He stands erect when thinking of the beautiful Paulina during the day, and at night he

[35]Yves Stalloni stresses that "dans le monde clos de sa famille milanaise, dans les rites figés d'une religion de parade, [Paulina] est un être brimé, réprimé, enfermé" (204).

dreams of embarking upon a brilliant career with her as his lover. Since he himself is aroused by "Cette fille trop belle et surtout trop vivante," Signor Pandolfini deems that the arm of paternal sternness does not suffice to protect her virginity and the family honor (36). In addition to hiring Mademoiselle Priscilla as guardian for his daughter, he also enlists the aid of his son, Cirillo. Since Signor Pandolfini is often preoccupied with business dealings, Cirillo is his stand-in for "L'étroite surveillance" of Paulina (45). But whereas Signor Pandolfini's incestuous attraction to Paulina underlies his policing of her behavior, the preservation of family honor is the only interest of the ill-tempered Cirillo. Paulina is genuinely fond of her father, but she has nothing but contempt for Cirillo and his surveillance. Regarding the ball at the Lancianis' in Milan, Paulina complains that Cirillo "m'a espionnée pendant une partie de la nuit" (42). Once the family has moved to their villa at Torano for the summer, Paulina again grumbles that "Cirillo avait disposé partout, dans toutes les parties de la villa, son regard de surveillance, afin que rien de ce qui pouvait se passer n'échappât à sa vue" (50). In addition to keeping his eyes on his sister throughout the day during their stay at Torano, Cirillo's bedroom is adjacent to the one of Paulina's guardian so that he may continue to "épier les bruits" during the night (58).

In chapter one we noted Mademoiselle Priscilla's role in the surveillance system instituted by Signor Pandolfini. Before retiring for the night at the villa in Torano, it is her responsibility to lock Paulina's bedroom door and to return the key to her employer. But female ingenuity triumphs over paternal repression, and Paulina's guardian becomes her accomplice allowing the young woman to take a lover in her father's very midst. After Signor Pandolfini receives Paulina's key nightly from Mademoiselle Priscilla, Paulina retrieves this key and leads the family houseguest, Michele Cantarini, to her bedroom by way of her father's chambers. In addition to failing in his efforts to protect his daughter's virginity, Signor Pandolfini dies never knowing that her liaison has flourished for years within his household. During their stay at Torano, Signor Pandolfini actually applauds

himself for having attracted "[cet] homme remarquable, remarquable en tous points" never realizing that Paulina has become his friend's mistress (75). Paulina assumes that Cirillo remains equally unaware of her relationship until he meets Michele in her company several times following their father's death. And when Paulina orders Cirillo to keep his distance after Signor Pandolfini's death, the former watchdog permanently retreats like a wounded cur. These two heterosexual males in *Paulina 1880* are not only motivated by incestuous love (Signor Pandolfini) and preoccupation with family honor (Signor Pandolfini and Cirillo), they are also insensitive to Paulina's feelings.

At first glance, it appears that Count Michele Cantarini is a dashing, worldly figure, sent to provide a delicious antidote both to the insensitivity of Cirillo and his father and to the policing of Paulina's sexuality. Both Paulina and her father have highest regards for Michele whom Signor Pandolfini labels "Un brillant causeur et une intelligence éminente, enfin un homme très fort" (75). Yet, Michele leaves his demented wife off alone in Pavie, while he takes advantage of his status as houseguest to seduce the daughter of his unsuspecting host. The narrator therefore refutes Signor Pandolfini's glowing portrait of Michele, devoting an entire chapter to the unmasking of this man "en somme très vaniteux . . . C'était un homme de paille, mais de belle qualité: prompt à brûler avec beaucoup d'étincelles" (98). Countering Signor Pandolfini's earlier affirmation that the brilliant author, Michele, ought to be named senator, the narrator attributes neither literary nor political genius to this count who lacks "Le ressort central . . . [son] intelligence n'avait pas une once de la folie nécessaire" (98). Finally, the narrator adds that Paulina herself had taken Michele "plus loin qu'il ne pouvait aller" (98-99).

Regarding his relationship with Paulina, Michele states that his ultimate goal is to legitimize their liaison through marriage after the death of his wife. But in addition to falling short of realizing this goal, the supposedly erudite Michele fails to perceive the deadly nature of his lover's fragmentation and her inability to seek official sanction for this

liaison which deceived her deceased father. Trusting that he will eventually coax her into marriage, Michele reenters Paulina's life after her dismissal from a convent. But when the struggle between her carnal and her religious components is no longer bearable, Paulina murders her lover. Even as Paulina plans his assassination, the count attributes her nervousness to his having insisted once again that she marry him. Thus, in spite of his lengthy relationship with his young lover, Michele is nearly as poor a judge of her true feelings as are her brother and father. For Paulina's father, brother, and lover do not realize that she is a conglomerate of keen sexual appetite and violent, erotic mysticism.

Similar to *Paulina 1880*, "La Victime" also divides heterosexual male characters into the two opposing camps of the protector of the daughter's virginity (Dorothée's father, *le Conseiller Vénérable*) and the stealthy seducer (Waldemar). Like Paulina, Dorothée also has a governess who ostensibly serves as part of the paternal surveillance team. Different from *Paulina 1880*, "La Victime" does not reveal if Dorothée's father has instituted a system for the governess to lock up his only child at night. Yet Dorothée's comings and goings are closely monitored for upon leaving the house for her rendez-vous with Waldemar, "Dorothée se demandait comment l'on fait pour sortir seule" (112).

Unlike Paulina's seduction, that of Dorothée takes place outside of the paternal walls. But similar to the Pandolfini residence, paternal sternness radiates throughout the domicile of the *Conseiller Vénérable*. The would-be seducer, Waldemar, complains bitterly of the "murailles épaisses" which separate him from Dorothée (93). And as Waldemar approaches immediately before his clandestine rendez-vous, this dwelling "solennelle et de l'ancien temps . . . toute chargée d'honneur" exudes parental severity (110, emphases mine). Both "haute" and with imposing "ornements de pierre et ses ferronneries," the house is an endorsement of the conservative mores which resonate from "le sévère mais somptueux vestibule" (110-11). Reminiscent of Paulina's beauty which blossoms within

the somber, paternal milieu, Dorothée provides a visual contrast to her paternal surroundings. "Vêtue de sa plus belle robe . . . de son soulier le plus fin," Dorothée is enclosed in "Le vestibule solennel du Père et de la famille . . . autour d'elle" (111). Paulina's familial domicile is described as "funèbre" (P 31) and Dorothée's enclosure is "muet, de marbre gris et noir" ("La Victime" 111). The paternal door plays a capital role in the sexual awakening of both Paulina and Dorothée for their defiant opening of this door is the necessary prelude to their sexual initiation. Yves Stalloni explains that the door in *Paulina 1880* "est l'obstacle au bonheur, à l'union amoureuse . . . Elle établit des distances. Elle scelle une captivité. Elle proclame la réclusion" (193). Significantly, the paragraph which introduces Dorothée's unprecedented solo exit from her father's home begins and ends with mention of the massive oak door. Dorothée is first seen in this chapter "derrière la porte de chêne" (111). As the paragraph ends, she contemplates her defiant departure and "[elle] ne voyait plus du vestibule que la porte, la porte lourde et capitale" (111). As symbol of the paternal sanction against illicit sexual activity, the door is quite heavy but Dorothée is "heureusement assez forte pour l'ouvrir seule" (111).

Sharing an ineffectiveness as protectors of filial virginity, the widowed fathers of Paulina and Dorothée also share an incestuous attraction to their daughters which their sternness belies. While Signor Pandolfini is so smitten with Paulina that he dreams of her erotically night and day, the *Conseiller Vénérable* considers Dorothée "l'ornement, l'objet d'amour [de sa maison] . . . [et sa] seconde épouse indicible" (132-33). Yet, when Paulina's beauty gives Signor Pandolfini wildly amorous and ambitious thoughts "pour qu'elle ne vît rien de son trouble, il lui faisait une observation morose sur sa toilette" (P 53). Similarly, upon joining his beloved Dorothée for breakfast "le Conseiller, à la triste figure, accueillait son trésor sans manifester de sentiments extérieurs" (133). Reveling in the contemplation of "la femme épanouie dans sa fille," the *Conseiller* "jouissait de sentir ce qu'il ressentait sans être obligé de jamais le dire" (133).

When Dorothée's father is first mentioned in "La Victime," he is referred to as "Le Conseiller Vénérable, juge à la Cour Suprême (affaires criminelles), son père" (101). The text emphasizes his role as official authority figure by consistently referring to him as "le Conseiller " or "le Conseiller Vénérable" (101, 132, 133, 134, 135, etc.). The narrator reveals the *Conseiller*'s surname, Horus, only in the conclusion of "La Victime." Thus, reminiscent of *le pasteur Isaac de Todi* from *Le Monde desert*, this use of Dorothée's father's title constantly links him to an official body (the judicial system) which endorses sexual activity only between married heterosexual partners.

As stern but ineffective protectors of their beloved daughters' virginity, Signor Pandolfini and the *Conseiller Vénérable* never suspect that the young women's sexual initiation has taken place. Just as Signor Pandolfini dies never knowing that Paulina has become his friend's mistress right in the Pandolfini home, the *Conseiller* ignores all the indications of Dorothée's necromantic enchantment. As we explained in chapter one, the spell cast by the sorcerer Simonin attracts Dorothée to Waldemar like a magnet. But when their coupling proves fatal to Dorothée, her death is masked by another of Simonin's magical spells. While Paulina Pandolfini's seduction may be impossible for her father to detect, Dorothée's fatal lovemaking gives rise to a host of symptoms: feigned eating, muteness, a fixed expression, paleness, cold skin and an odor of sour apples. But when Dorothée first appears as a zombie in her father's midst, he is remarkably unobservant. "Loin de pouvoir soupçonner qu'il y eût ce matin-là quelque chose de nouveau dans le comportement de sa fille," the *Conseiller* notices neither Dorothée's fixed expression nor her coldness nor her pallor as he kisses her cheek (133). Ironically, her silence soothes his incestuous jealousy for he fears, "presque à chaque heure du jour, qu'elle lui exprimât le désir de se marier" (133). And in spite of the physical proximity between father and daughter, the *Conseiller* does not sense her strong odor of sour apples which "précédait Dorothée d'assez loin quand elle marchait" giving her maid "du vertige" (147).

Discussing Michele Cantarini, we noted his inability to fathom the divided nature of Paulina. Although he attempts to subdue her ardent spirituality, he does so primarily due to his desire to have Paulina as his wife. Waldemar is even more self-centered regarding Dorothée, for he views her merely as a sex object which he is desperate to possess. Waldemar bitterly complains to Simonin that he is terribly frustrated by Dorothée's family and friends who "nous séparent avec fureur . . . Ils nous lisent à travers les murs" (94). For two years he has burned with sexual desire for Dorothée, "assoiffé de la voir, de la regarder et de la voir, même si je l'obtiens dans une manière infâme " (107). While Michele Cantarini admittedly breaks the bonds of friendship by seducing the daughter of his host and friend in his very midst, with Waldemar the heterosexual male is more devious and even necrophilic. Since he has no bonds of friendship to gain entry into the *Conseiller*'s imposing domicile, Waldemar accomplishes his seduction via magical enchantment. Like Michele's seduction of Paulina, Waldemar's lovemaking with Dorothée involves a blatant breach of trust. For Waldemar's friend, Simonin, agrees to cast a spell upon Dorothée only on the condition that he promise not to touch her. In spite of his promise, Waldemar engages in passionate lovemaking with Dorothée as soon as Simonin has fallen asleep. When this lovemaking proves fatal to Dorothée, Waldemar adds this necrophilic note to the betrayal of his oath to Simonin: he furiously kisses his lover's corpse from head to toe, begging the sorcerer to restore her life so that he may make love with her one last time "et ensuite qu'elle soit morte" (152).

The portrait of the heterosexual male in "La Victime" is therefore a negative extension of that within *Paulina 1880*. In spite of their incestuous filial attraction and milieu which reflects paternal sternness, the heterosexual fathers in both of these works prove incapable of protecting their daughter's virginity. But whereas Paulina's seduction changes her mentally in ways her father cannot detect, Dorothée's father is insensitive to the aural, visual, tactile and olfactory indications of his daughter's transformation into a zombie.

Alongside the stern and ineffective heterosexual father, *Paulina 1880* and "La Victime" present the heterosexual male lover as deceptive and totally self-centered. Although both male lovers break the vows of friendship to seduce their love objects, Paulina opens the paternal bedroom door to Michele of her own free will while Dorothée exits the paternal front door under the influence of a sorcerer's spell. We noted that the narrator of *Paulina 1880* unmasks the inherent weakness of the worldly Michele. The narrator of "La Victime" does not do the same, yet Waldemar is totally powerless without his sorcerer friend. It is Simonin's magical talent which procures Dorothée for him and later revives her to mask her death.[36] And finally, Waldemar's yearning for Dorothée is a necrophilic extension of Michele's desire for Paulina. Michele longs for the living Paulina whereas Dorothée's corpse still evokes Waldemar's lust. Premature death is the fate of the heterosexual male lover in both *Paulina 1880* and "La Victime." Michele is murdered by Paulina in her attempt to purify her carnal love and Waldemar is condemned and executed by the *Francs-Juges* for the rape and murder of Dorothée.

The aforementioned qualities of heterosexual fathers and male lovers are also evident in their portrait within *Le Monde désert*. More intense than the sternness of the fathers of Paulina Pandolfini (*Paulina 1880*) and Dorothée ("La Victime"), we indicated in chapter four that the austerity of Isaac de Todi is the emotional backdrop of his son's troubled life. Although his father is an unshakable presence for Jacques, this omnipresent paternal figure remains offstage throughout the novel. Nevertheless from the novel's initial sentence until after his own death, Jacques is frequently referred to as "le fils du pasteur Isaac de Todi" (13, 106, etc.). Just as Jacques is tied to his filial role from the outset of *Le Monde désert* so his father remains tied to his ecclesiastical position. Reminiscent of Dorothée's father,

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[36]This intertwining of love and death brings to mind Julia Kristeva's summary of the relationship between Thanatos and Eros: "Even the death instinct is a manifestation of sexuality when it subtends aggressive desires . . . to inflict pain on another person or on oneself (even to the point of death)" (*In the Beginning* 47).

*Le Conseiller Vénérable* from "La Victime," Isaac de Todi is almost exclusively referred to as "le pasteur Isaac de Todi" or "le pasteur de Todi" (MD 14, 16, 17, 18, etc.). *Le Monde désert* consistently links son to father and father to the church - an institution which denounces Jacques's predominant sexual orientation, homosexuality, not as a natural tendency but as a sin.

In addition to linking the father to an official body which regulates conduct (the judicial system of the *Conseiller Vénérable* and the church of Isaac de Todi), both "La Victime" and *Le Monde désert* highlight paternal authority through an oppressive familial milieu - a feature we also noted regarding *Paulina 1880*. Since each of these three works presents a protagonist whose father polices his/her sexuality, Paulina, Dorothée and Jacques are all initially presented to the reader within the oppressive, paternal setting. The reader is introduced to Jacques de Todi as he is leaving the "triste vestibule solennel . . . laissant de côté la 'salle des marronniers' qui respirait la tristesse" (13). Jacques's stern father clearly plays the role of killjoy in his son's life for the boy's personal domain - the familial port - "aurait pu contenir un bateau si le pasteur de Todi avait été moins sévère" (14). The narrator reveals that with a boat young Jacques "serait parti au loin sur les vagues," doubtlessly to escape paternal oppression (14). Just as the port has no boat, the familial pigeon house has no pigeons. Although Jacques's colorful imagination transforms this empty pigeon house into "un Château Enchanté devant la mer," the repressive religion of *le pasteur* curbs even these innocent but marvelous childhood dreams (14). Thus, the château is enveloped in "un silence terrible, un ordre de Dieu, [qui] enferme le château, la mer, les arbres sous une même malédiction" - a malediction also directed at Jacques himself (14).

Alongside this resemblance between the authoritative heterosexual father and his imposing milieu, *Le Monde désert*, "La Victime" and *Paulina 1880* also present the heterosexual male lover in a similar fashion. In all three works the latter emerges as

devious, self-centered, inconsiderate both of friends and lovers, and destined for literal or metaphorical death. Unlike *Paulina 1880* and "La Victime," the heterosexual male lover of *Le Monde désert* - Luc Pascal - does not deceptively seduce a jealously guarded, young virgin. His love object is rather Baladine Nikolaïevna Sergounine, a divorced Russian national living in Geneva with her housemate, Jacques de Todi. But although Luc is not present for the sexual initiation of the young Baladine, we shall see that he twice plays the role of deceptive seducer to the adult Baladine.

Realizing that Jacques de Todi's sexual orientation is more gay than heterosexual, Luc Pascal seems determined from the outset to undermine Jacques and Baladine's relationship in order to have the latter for himself. Thus, when Jacques falls ill after skiing nude at dawn as the novel unfolds, Luc cannot accept Baladine's desire to nurse him. Asking himself whether he is jealous of Baladine's affection for Jacques, Luc replies "Il est assez répugnant de ma part de jouer à éprouver du désir pour elle" (42). But this twinge of conscience proves fleeting, giving way to the intertwined themes of sexual desire for Baladine and jealousy for Jacques which underlie Luc's relationship with this couple throughout the novel. Luc's romantic interest in Baladine is piqued by two facts: first "Jacques est insensible aux femmes, aime les hommes" and secondly Baladine (informed of Jacques's gay tendency before Luc) loves Jacques nevertheless (43). While unmasking his own sexual interest in his friend's companion as "répugnant," Luc cannot bear that the attractive Baladine gives her love to a man whose predominant sexual orientation is gay (42).

Regarding the issue of Jacques's gay tendency, Luc offers sound advice to his troubled friend in chapter twelve. He points out that since gayness is an inherent component of Jacques's nature, rather than suppressing it he ought to seek a relationship "avec un homme ayant comme toi l'amour 'du même'" (81). He urges Jacques to turn a deaf ear to familial and ecclesiastical condemnation of gayness, adding that this sexual

orientation should not be viewed as sinful. Finally he adds that Jacques's very equilibrium and salvation are riding on his full and healthy acceptance of his own sexual orientation. Taken out of context, Luc's advice appears to be that of a friend genuinely trying to help another achieve self-acceptance. But since Luc's sexual attraction to Jacques's housemate has never diminished, this endorsement of gayness can be viewed as a mere vehicle intended to facilitate his conquest of Baladine.

In spite of Luc's speech, Jacques and Baladine remain in their mutually unsatisfactory pretense of a heterosexual relationship. While the unhappy couple stays in Geneva, Luc returns to his Parisian apartment. But reminiscent of Michele Cantarini's ill-fated return to Paulina in *Paulina 1880*, Luc returns to shatter Baladine's life in *Le Monde désert*. Luc's unrequited desire for Baladine is the catalyst for this return, highlighting the self-centeredness we noted previously with the Jouvian heterosexual males Michele Cantarini (*Paulina 1880*) and Waldemar ("La Victime").

Luc's eventual seduction of Baladine seems all the more vile given the fact that his return initially reaffirms the friendship of the trio, sending the depressed Jacques "au soleil du bonheur" (113). "Sincèrement joyeux de le revoir," Jacques and Baladine explain to Luc the difficulties of their lives in Geneva adding that the truly bright note is his "amitié fidèle et persévérante" for which they offer genuine thanks (112, 113). Renewed by his contact with Luc, Jacques "reprend de la sûreté [car il] . . . n'a jamais eu qu'un ami": Luc (115). And buoyed by Luc's "influence salutaire," Jacques offers him a copy of Dostoevski's *L'Idiot* inscribed to this dear friend whom he affectionately calls "Animateur de Jacques de Todi" (115, 116).

When Jacques resumes his nocturnal rendez-vous with gay lovers, his outings give Luc the opportunity to lay the groundwork for his eventual seduction of Baladine. In a frank assessment of his actions, Luc also predicts their outcome: "Je suis un sale type. Ce sera très grave. Qu'est-ce que je fais? J'introduis le désordre" (122). But while the text

only hints at the nefarious nature of Luc's intrusion into his friends' lives in Geneva, this negativeness becomes patently obvious during the trio's vacation at Ongero. Echoing the previous chain of events, the rapport between Jacques, Baladine and Luc is idyllic as they first settle into the picturesque setting of Ongero. His spirits soaring due to the area's natural beauty, Jacques embarks upon solitary strolls silently vowing to marry Baladine and to rechannel his sexuality into a higher spiritual plane. But Jacques's lofty goal is thwarted by the sexual appetite of his supposedly devoted friend, Luc. For while his solitary promenades allow Jacques to dream of achieving a balance in his life, his absence facilitates the prelude for Luc's seduction of Baladine. Crushed upon realizing that sexual tension is aflame between his friends, Jacques never mentions his desire to marry Baladine. But Jacques's awareness of Luc's sexual attraction to Baladine does not cool Luc's ardor. When the trio's jealousy and sexual tension become unbearable at Ongero, they depart for Geneva. Their separate sleeping accommodations during this return trip allow Luc to finally consummate his relentless pursuit of Baladine.

Although Luc congratulates himself for not having taken Baladine by force, he displays a shortsightedness which surpasses that of Michele Cantarini in the latter's return to Paulina Pandolfini. For selfishly intent upon possessing their love objects, neither Luc nor Michele takes his partner's feelings into account. Just as Paulina is unable to banish God from her love so is Baladine unable to banish Jacques. But whereas God is Michele's rival in Paulina's heart, Luc's rival is a very vulnerable, flesh and blood male shattered by his friends' betrayal. Thus the profoundly egotistical Luc achieves his goal of seducing Baladine disregarding the devastation he brings to her life as well as to that of her depressed housemate. When Luc realizes that a *ménage à trois* is his only option for a relationship with Baladine, he deserts his friends in Geneva and returns to Paris.

Distraught over his friends' liaison and unable to accept his own sexual orientation, Jacques ultimately commits suicide. In spite of her heartfelt sorrow, the widowed Baladine

carves a meaningful life for herself and for the child fathered unknowingly by Jacques. But the ever persistent Luc returns yet again to shatter the stability Baladine has worked so hard to achieve. Busily involved in her successful banking career and single motherhood, Baladine is very reluctant to readmit Luc into her life. When he appears at her office, she curtly states that she has no time to speak with him and bids him "Adieu" (169).

Despite Baladine's resolve, Luc manages to convince her to invite him to her home. Having let Luc into her residence, the successful businesswoman is powerless in the company of her former lover. The narrator reveals that Baladine is greatly offended by Luc's intrusive questions for she finds each one "injurieuse et eut envie de lui jeter une insolence quelconque pour le faire partir" (180). In spite of her silent vows not to answer another of his highly personal questions, throughout the entire evening "elle continuait de céder" (181).

Six years earlier, Luc made use of the bonds of friendship to gain entrance into Jacques and Baladine's household in order to seduce Baladine. Similarly, it is his moving verbal tribute to this friendship which allows him intimate access to the widowed Baladine. Never revealing the contempt and jealousy he felt toward Jacques, Luc tells Baladine that he has been unable to accept his death. He states that having contributed to Jacques's suicide, he feels compelled to appease the troubled spirit of this dead friend which haunts him. The pact he claims to have made with Jacques stipulates that Luc is to find Baladine in order for the two of them to "apaiser ce qui de lui pâtit toujours" (185). And with this moving speech, Luc selfishly paves the way for seducing Baladine again.

Different from their earlier liaison, with Jacques dead, Luc is able to coax Baladine into marriage. Ironically, the marriage between the widowed Baladine and Luc is nevertheless the uncomfortable *ménage à trois* which Luc had refused a decade earlier. For alongside Luc and Baladine is the undeniable presence of the deceased Jacques both in spirit and reincarnated as Jacques' son, Pierrot. Seeking his mother's undivided attention,

Pierrot wants nothing to do with this intrusive stranger, Luc. Margaret Callander asks: "What identity does Jacques's son Pierrot have for them both?" - a question clearly addressed by the text itself ("Pierre Jean Jouve" 176). The boy plays a vital role for his hostility reinstates the jealous triangle of a decade earlier: "l'ancienne constellation se reformait: un Jacques armé de tous les droits repoussait Luc et Luc redevenait méchant" (188).[37] In addition to this reincarnated version, the spirit of Jacques himself is present when the friends who had betrayed him previously are joined in marriage. His presence is described as "une ombre bien-aimée (une ombre haïe)" which touches the joined hands of Baladine and Luc during their wedding ceremony (200).[38] Just like his previous seduction of the beautiful Russian, Luc never contemplates the effect that this liaison and subsequent marriage will have on her. Unable to remain married to he who cuckolded her deceased housemate, Baladine vanishes with Pierrot soon after her wedding - a disappearance illuminated by the novel's final chapters.

After Baladine disappears in Paris, Luc searches for her throughout the city and also hires a private investigator to locate her. Unsuccessful in this attempt, Luc retreats permanently to his apartment where his imagination reconstructs Baladine in the recurring vision named "Face de Baladine" (215). Luc's final period as a hallucinating recluse is pertinent to our discussion of heterosexual maleness for it further unmasks the deceptive Luc. "Face de Baladine" accuses Luc of having seduced the widowed Baladine with an oath he did not keep: the "serment de l'aimer en retrouvant Jacques dans son cœur" (221). Rather than keeping this promise, "Face de Baladine" states that Luc gave in to his diabolical self which did not lovingly foster but rather "*piétinât* ce que Jacques avait justement laissé en elle [Baladine] de pureté et de douceur" (220). "Face de Baladine"

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[37]The divisiveness fostered by the jealousy within the trio is a confirmation of the following Jouvian pattern traced by Christiane Blot-Labarrère: "La crise née dans le sentiment de la division se consommera inéluctablement dans la rupture" ("*Le Monde désert*" 27).

[38]Ironically the jealous trio of Baladine, Jacques and Luc is formed once again after Baladine's disappearance. The vision named "Face de Baladine" appears to Luc within the confines of his dilapidated apartment while Jacques is "L'Autre [qui] l'attend dehors, sur le trottoir" (215, 223).

charges that Luc's explanation to Pierrot that the boy's father had committed suicide is the crowning blow of his abusive relationship with Baladine and her son.

Noting that Baladine's flight from Luc is "never explained fully by the narrator," Margaret Callander asserts that this disappearance is "One of the most mysterious developments of the action" in *Le Monde désert* ("Pierre Jean Jouve" 178). Callander intimates that it is guilt which prompts Baladine to flee her new husband - the guilt arising from the association between her earlier infidelity and Jacques's suicide ("Pierre Jean Jouve" 176). But these final chapters of *Le Monde désert* indicate that Baladine's flight must have been greatly motivated by her desire to escape the abuse and humiliation to which Luc subjected her. And while her flight gives her metaphorical death by erasure from the novel, it grants a similar fate to her husband. Thus, whereas the heterosexual male lovers of *Paulina 1880* and "La Victime" are literally executed, Luc Pascal experiences death metaphorically. Reminiscent of Paulina/Marietta's state of "morte vivante" (P 245) and Dorothée's condition of "Vie en mort; mort en vie" ("La Victime" 161), the hallucinating recluse Luc Pascal also ends his days in a state of suspended animation. But different from Paulina and Dorothée, Luc's own "caractère diabolique" is greatly responsible for this state (MD 220).

Luc Pascal's characterization paints a dark portrait of male heterosexuality in *Le Monde désert*, highlighting deviousness, self-centeredness and inconsiderateness for friends and lover. But although Luc occasionally has twinges of conscience regarding his actions early on in *Le Monde désert* (1927), such is not the case when he resurfaces in *Vagadu* (1931) as the abusive lover of the actress Catherine Crachat. Margaret Callander explains that Jouve added the allusion to Luc's affair with Catherine in his 1960 revision of *Le Monde désert* ("Pierre Jean Jouve" 175). Thus *Le Monde désert* and *Vagadu* are connected by the fact that Luc's relationship with Catherine in the latter novel occurs toward the end of the sequence of events within the former novel - after the departure of

Baladine and before Luc permanently closes himself off from the world with the vision of *Face de Baladine*.

In chapter three we noted that *Vagadu* relates the odyssey of Catherine Crachat from emotional devastation to restoration of psychological equilibrium. Significant to our discussion of Luc Pascal and heterosexual maleness is the fact that - similar to his role in Baladine's life - Luc plays a nefarious role in Catherine Crachat's life. But whereas with Luc's intrusion Baladine aspires to form a harmonious *ménage à trois* with Jacques, Catherine holds no such false hopes regarding her liaison with Luc. During one of her most intense states of depression, Catherine attends a masquerade ball where she senses that she will make the acquaintance of a dangerous person she has managed to avoid previously. All the while realizing that "elle courait un danger," she has descended to such a profound level of psychological torment that "elle n'avait plus le courage de repousser" this ominous, predestined meeting (90). Disguised as "ce sombre domino noir mystérieux et maladif," Catherine dreams of destroying the masquerade party in a violent bloodbath (92). When the tension of the scene soars to a terrifying crescendo, Catherine is presented to a gentleman disguised as a "Grand Mongol": Luc Pascal (93). Both Catherine and Luc have long anticipated this meeting, for the former muses "Il est venu ici pour moi" while the latter comments and repeats "Aussi ai-je attendu l'occasion pendant plusieurs années" (93).

In the form of a gruesome tale and photograph, Catherine and Luc each bring to this relationship telling indicators of its masochistic nature. For Catherine this component of masochism is the photograph of the head of a Chinese martyr which both attracts and repulses her. Horrified while imagining the martyr's excruciating pain, Catherine notes that "une horreur . . . mélangée de plaisir, sortît de la photo du Chinois" - a Chinese male whom she associates with Luc (99). Paralleling her fascination with the photograph of the martyr, Catherine is riveted by the masochistic element which Luc brings to their

relationship: the gruesome tale of Zeppe. Claiming that he himself was an eager eyewitness, Luc explains that Zeppe was an elderly Italian who murdered an innocent woman for no apparent reason. Casually ordering a drink after this murder, Zeppe boasted that "C'est comme ça qu'il faut faire avec les femmes" (108).

Luc's abusive relationship with Catherine is clearly the logical outgrowth of her premonitions of his danger and her fascination with the Chinese martyr and the murderous Zeppe. The narrator notes that Catherine easily falls prey to the Mongol's power and his "autorité complète" (106). Catherine muses that she is repulsed by Luc's physique yet her self-loathing counts upon his pernicious strength to torture her for "il y a en vous une force terrible, anormale, une force anéantissante . . . une habitude de souffrir avec joie . . . vous torturez selon les principes, et vous allez me torturer" (114). Having found a willing victim, Luc takes advantage of his lover financially while simultaneously abusing her physically, sexually and verbally.

Finally realizing that her relationship with this perverted "démon de la destruction . . . ange de la mort" is as empty as it is dangerous, Catherine does not see Luc for six months (156). Her confidence restored through therapy, she meets him for a final rendez-vous - a meeting which highlights Luc's baseness. Stating that he finds Catherine totally changed, he bemoans her newfound liberty and tranquillity as well as the loss of a "certaine honte, belle et déchirante, qui se trouvait au fond et jusqu'au bord" of his lover (205). He adds that this shame erased by Catherine's therapy was an "Indispensable" element of his attraction to her (205). Unable to accept "d'une femme une liberté aussi grande," Luc also finds his lover's newfound tranquillity "insupportable" (206). Realizing that the brutally chauvinistic Luc is unwilling to change, Catherine bids him a permanent adieu at the very site where she had first made his acquaintance.

Luc plays a decidedly negative role in the lives of both Baladine (*Le Monde*

*désert*) and Catherine (*Vagadu*). After destroying the relationship between Baladine and Jacques and sending the latter careening toward suicide, Luc's abusive relationship with the widowed Baladine leads to her self-exile.[39] Next he preys upon the vulnerable Catherine in the darkest moments of her depression. Echoing the negative chord he struck for heterosexual maleness in *Le Monde désert*, Luc's cruelty, self-centeredness and total lack of consideration for his partner are the salient features of his portrait in *Vagadu*. Deserted by the flesh and blood Baladine and dismissed by Catherine, Luc's only subsequent female companion is the hallucinatory vision of "Face de Baladine" (215).

We explained in chapter three that Jouve devotes two novels to Catherine Crachat's psychological journey from sexual confusion and repression to final enlightenment and reintegration: both *Hécate* and its sequel, *Vagadu*. Within these two novels, all sexual orientations - including that of the male heterosexual - are presented from the vantage point of the troubled Catherine. Since *Hécate* focuses upon Catherine's penchant toward female bisexuality, the male heterosexual is not a salient component of this novel. And significantly, the scarce male characters of *Hécate* experience a confusion of sexuality and/or direction of life path which mirrors that of Catherine herself. Catherine's intimate friendship with the bisexual Fanny Felicitas brings her into contact with Fanny's son, Guido, and her second husband, Baron Hohenstein. Although Guido clearly has a crush on Catherine, he is both attracted to and repulsed by his overbearing mother prompting his eventual relocation to America. Alongside Guido's bisexual mother, his stepfather also has strong leanings toward bisexuality. For, in addition to his extramarital liaisons with females, Baron Hohenstein is sexually attracted to his stepson.

Pierre Indemini - the lover who plays a significant role in Catherine's life in both *Hécate* and *Vagadu* - also experiences a confusion in the direction of his life path. In

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[39]**Christiane Blot-Labarrère describes Luc's role within the Jouvian opus noting that "il assure le cheminement du thème de la destruction, de la douleur et de la mort" ("*Le Monde désert*" 18).**

*Hécate*, Catherine's profound self-loathing causes her to lead the life of unfeeling, sexual libertine until she makes Pierre's acquaintance. With Pierre, Catherine initially finds the antidote to her previous lifestyle for in this chaste new relationship she notes "Pierre Indemini m'aimait pour moi" (24). Stressing Pierre's "délicatesse" and "douceur," Nelly Mane affirms that "[il] se conduit comme un 'saint'" as his friendship with Catherine blossoms (50). Bringing her "ce paradis" and "[le] bonheur . . . déjà total," Pierre finally takes Catherine as his sexual partner (25, 26). However, when he abandons her with no explanation, the reader can only assume that Pierre has joined the ranks of Jouve's earlier negative male heterosexuals echoing the callous self-centeredness of Waldemar ("La Victime"), Luc Pascal (*Le Monde désert*), *et al.*

In what initially appears to be a negative enhancement of the male heterosexual portrait, Pierre is the extramarital lover of the bisexual Fanny Felicitas when Catherine encounters him later in Geneva. But after Pierre and Catherine are reunited in Switzerland, he takes on a positive role once again reprising his initial chaste relationship with the actress. This second nonsexual friendship between Pierre and Catherine has important ramifications for both partners. First, it reveals to the reader that Pierre - like Catherine - is struggling with the direction of his life. He explains to Catherine that he deserted her in Paris years earlier during a state of confusion. Emotionally he was a vagabond "qui ne sait pas ce qu'il est, ni ce qu'il aime" (112). His emotional vagabondage then became literal when he sold his familial property and embarked upon an odyssey throughout America, England and Germany. Upon his arrival in Vienna, his spirit experienced a crisis "caractérisée par une très grande préoccupation du problème de la *mort*" (110). He therefore became the lover of the earthly Fanny for her enticing body suppresses his preoccupation with death. Due to this sexual relationship with Fanny and his earlier liaison with Catherine, the text refutes Nelly Mane's assertion that Pierre is "un être asexué" (52).

For a brief period of time, Pierre continues his physical relationship with Fanny along with his chaste friendship with Catherine. Pierre and Catherine prove to be such soul mates that Pierre feels "qu'en profonde réalité ils ne s'étaient jamais quittés" (121).This celibate friendship with Pierre has a salubrious effect on Catherine for it extricates her from her yearlong entrapment inside Fanny's deadly and amorous web. Pierre also extricates himself from the baroness's dangerous clutches upon realizing that Fanny's love can no longer provide the antidote to his fixation with death. In accordance with his decision to divert his erotic energy to the spiritual level, Pierre leaves Vienna to lead an isolated, ascetic life in Italy accompanied only by his epistolary relationship with Catherine. Denying himself the distraction lovemaking provides, Pierre transforms his life into a preparation for the death he ultimately experiences during his self-imposed exile at a solitary Italian retreat.

Departing from the callous self-centeredness of earlier Jouvian male heterosexuals, the characterization of Pierre Indemini adds the trait of vagueness - a trait which also runs throughout the portrait of male heterosexuals in *Hécate*'s sequel, *Vagadu*. Martine Broda explains that "Pierre est Indemini, comme indéfini" ("Le Trajet du roman" 74). Pierre is first introduced in *Hécate* as an artist's model of angelic splendor with "ses cheveux clairs, sa haute stature avec des épaules larges, mais douces" (19-20). But when Pierre and Catherine become reacquainted in Vienna, the formerly angelic model presents himself as a brilliant scholar whose area of expertise is not only mathematical philosophy but also problems "situés entre la logique et la biologie" (110). Fanny Felicitas questions Pierre's supposed brilliance asserting "dans tout ce que j'ai vu de lui je n'ai pas trouvé le génie" (123). She concludes that there are in fact two Pierres: the first is her present and Catherine's former lover and the second is "L'autre . . . un jeune savant à l'intelligence 'géniale'" (123). Fanny's uncertainty regarding Pierre's ostensible brilliance is evident as well in her comments vis-à-vis his physical state. She first describes him as "tellement faible et sensuel" but later adds that he is "vigoureux et se porte à merveille" (123). Nelly

Mane refers to the vagueness of Pierre's characterization and "la difficulté de saisir les contours de son être" (52). Catherine also alludes to Pierre's uncertain nature labeling him "Pierre inconnu. Pierre insaisissable" (127).

The vagueness of Pierre Indemini's characterization in *Hécate* is important in that it prepares the reader for the vagueness of characters in *Hécate*'s sequel, *Vagadu*. Since *Vagadu* flows out of the musings, dreams and psychiatric sessions of the disturbed Catherine Crachat, its characters frequently exhibit a lack of definition which exceeds that of Pierre Indemini within *Hécate*. And reminiscent of the Jouvian pattern established previously in *Paulina 1880*, "La Victime," etc., the sexuality of the female protagonist, Catherine, is the focal point of male heterosexuals in *Vagadu* - including men from her childhood (her father and Louis Moutier) and her adulthood (Pierre and Luc Pascal). But unlike *Paulina 1880* and "La Victime" which divide male heterosexuals into the opposing camps of paternal protector of daughter's virginity and seducer, Catherine's narration implies that she had a childhood sexual relationship with her father and Louis prior to her adult liaisons with Pierre and Luc. We pointed out in chapter three that Catherine's father supposedly died when she was five, leading the reader to ponder whether this death was literal or a symbolic "murder" by Catherine's developing libido. But rather than erasing Catherine's love for her father, his death deified him in her mind: "son père était le Christ au tombeau" (138). Catherine contends that first she exhausted her father's love for her and caused his death and that later she consumed both Pierre Indemini's love for her and his very life. In her estimation, death transforms Pierre into "l'Amant-Christ" deifying her deceased lover alongside her father in imitation of Jesus (141).

Contradicting his Christlike role as asexual, selfless lover of Catherine, Monsieur Crachat also plays the psychologically damaging role of incestuous father. Although "dans ses moments très purs" her father is "de la substance pure du ciel," he appears "avec un

aspect coupable de transgresseur, avec un caractère douloureux d'interdit" in the chapter entitled "Père interdit" (138, 134). Significantly, several of Catherine's frequent dreams of incestuous love unite her with her father and Pierre implying that the latter has taken on Monsieur Crachat's role of filial seducer.

The portraits of Monsieur Crachat and Pierre Indemini clearly intertwine the themes of incestuous seducer and Christ figure. But after their deaths, two extremely abusive lovers assume their places in Catherine's life: Louis Moutier and Luc Pascal. Catherine's dreams and recollections charge that Louis - the furious cart driver who covers her with a shovelful of manure - first abused her sexually the year following her father's death. Since he ostensibly takes the bed place of the deceased Monsieur Crachat, she wonders if he is not "tout simplement une partie du Père": a stand-in for her father's penis (140). While the reader might question the veracity of Catherine's dreams which charge Louis Moutier with her childhood physical, sexual and verbal abuse, there is no doubt that Luc Pascal takes on this role vis-à-vis the adult Catherine.

Aside from the occasional deification of Monsieur Crachat and Pierre Indemini, the portrait of the male heterosexual is decidedly negative within *Vagadu*. Through her dreams, musing and psychiatric sessions, Catherine alleges she was sexually initiated by her father at age five and raped a year later by the violent Louis Moutier. And with her final lover, Luc Pascal, Catherine experiences the quintessence of an abusive relationship at the hands of the cruel Mongol. Moving now to "Dans les Années profondes," we shall see if this work redeems or reiterates the negative portrait of male heterosexuality within the Jouvian universe.

Our discussion of "Dans les Années profondes" will focus upon its central heterosexual male figures: Monsieur de Sannis, Pauliet and Léonide. As the short story unfolds, it might appear that the characterization of de Sannis will echo that of the Jouvian

heterosexual father examined thus far. We saw that *Le Monde désert* highlights paternal repression by linking an absent yet omnipresent father, *le pasteur Isaac de Todi*, to an ecclesiastical body which sanctions only heterosexuality. Similar to the physical absence of *le pasteur de Todi*, the count de Sannis's rare appearances in "Dans les Années profondes" are counterbalanced by frequent references to his stellar reputation as a devoted Catholic. De Sannis's association with the church is established from the very beginning of "Dans les Années profondes" for it is here that three priests introduce the count to the reader in a conversation overheard by the protagonist, Léonide. The priests explain that the de Sannises have prevailed over their honorable rivals "depuis une bonne demi-douzaine de siècles" not only by virtue of their "richesses et . . . vertus" but also due to their "puissance très chrétienne" (176). This link between the count de Sannis and the church is further emphasized by the fact that he is part of a religious procession when Léonide sees him for the very first time. This procession - "[qui] avait une immense importance dans tout le pays" - includes images of the crucifixion and the Madonna followed by priests and finally the count with "Les seigneurs du pays" (202-203). As Léonide catches sight of de Sannis, he is "frappé par l'étalage de sa foi catholique" (203). Thus, Léonide's first aural and visual impressions of the count have a strong religious component.

After making the count's acquaintance, Léonide refers to him as "cet homme du moyen âge" (207). The characterization of the latter is indeed medieval for like heroes such as Roland, de Sannis is not only deeply religious, but also an esteemed nobleman (a count), a valiant warrior (a colonel) and a skillful hunter. And as in the cases of the fathers of Dorothée ("La Victime") and Paulina (*Paulina 1880*), de Sannis is endowed with a sternness reflected by his imposing domiciles. When Léonide first catches sight of the count in the procession, he muses that "on n'avait pas exagéré en me disant . . . [qu'il] était de prime abord rébarbatif" (203). Different from Paulina and Dorothée's fathers, de Sannis has tremendous physical bulk to enhance his severity. Described as "fort grand, fort rude"

(197), the count is also referred to repeatedly as "l'homme-donjon" (197, 203, 208, etc.). In the conversation he overhears between the priests, Léonide learns that the count's familial holdings include the impressive Château de Ponte - "le lieu originaire de tous les Sannis" - and la Cas'alta which dominates the village (176). Similar to the imposing domiciles of the fathers of Paulina and Dorothée, de Sannis's residences mirror his personal sternness. In our discussion of Signor Pandolfini, we mentioned that his home is described as "funèbre" (P 31) while "Le vestibule solennel" of the *Conseiller Vénérable* is "muet, de marbre gris et noir" ("La Victime" 111). Similarly, when Léonide first enters Cas'alta, he notices "il faisait froid et même que ce froid était sépulcral" (186). Penetrating further into the domicile, he sees "d'épaisses parois, portes encadrées d'une triple moulure . . . les ferrures des portes étaient énormes et compliquées comme des cuirasses anciennes" (187). Léonide adds that Hélène appears to him at this very moment, "prisonnière même de la porte" (187). Initially appearing as obstacles to Léonide's sexual conquest of Hélène, these massive doors resemble those within the residences of Signor Pandolfini and the *Conseiller Vénérable*. We noted that the doors of the two latter gentlemen are presented as symbols of paternal prohibition against extramarital copulation.

Reminiscent of the somber Signor Pandolfini and the *Conseiller Vénérable*, de Sannis's sternness radiates from his person as well as from his numerous residences. The latter's rank within the military and the nobility also enhances his imposing stature. But different from Signor Pandolfini and the *Conseiller Vénérable*, the affective focal point of the childless count is not a jealously guarded daughter but rather his wife. In addition, Paulina and Dorothée are virgins when their respective dramas unfold whereas the count's wife, Hélène, is described as having a "nature . . . adultère" (193). Since de Sannis is highly esteemed by his noble peers and by members of the clergy, the reader might first suppose that the return of this "homme-donjon" from his military assignment will curb his wife's promiscuity (197). Like Signor Pandolfini and the *Conseiller Vénérable*, de Sannis

does indeed occupy an important paternal role; but rather than the protector of filial virginity, de Sannis is the generally absent but omnipresent oedipal father. Therefore "Dans les Années profondes" presents the adulterous nature of the count's wife not as an excess to be restrained by her mate but as a necessary component of her role as oedipal mother. As we explained in chapter one, it is the oedipal drama between father (de Sannis), mother (Hélène) and son (Léonide) which forms the substrata of this short story.

In his article entitled "Hélène, Lisbé," Jérôme Thélot labels the count's nephew, Pauliet, the demonic double of the short story's protagonist, Léonide (88). Pauliet clearly demonstrates an affinity for vice lacking in the portrait of the innocent Léonide. Nevertheless older oedipal sibling - rather than demonic double - is a more precise assessment of Pauliet's role vis-à-vis Léonide. We explained in chapter one that Pauliet's uncle's wife, Hélène, is the former lover of Pauliet and the current love interest of Léonide. Before the fatal pulmonary illness caused by his debauchery claims Pauliet's life, the text gives abundant indications that this dying young man serves as Léonide's older oedipal brother. Like a jealous younger brother, Léonide reveals his ambivalence toward this predecessor to his symbolic filial relationship with Hélène: "Je l'enviais avec dégoût et je le jalousais . . . J'étais fasciné par lui" (224). But Léonide manages to put his envy aside upon realizing the usefulness of this older sibling: "Pauliet allait 'm'apprendre quelque chose'" (225). Pauliet does not disappoint Léonide, for he is quite eager in his role as older oedipal sibling. Although the text does not recount the details of his infinite liaisons, it does indicate that the debauchee shares the details thereof with Léonide who comments that "les histoires de Pauliet . . . m'aidaient, en favorisant pour moi l'invention de formes d'érotisme" (219). Pauliet's own unbridled sexual appetite contributes to his premature death, yet he makes a positive contribution nevertheless to the sexual maturation of Léonide. While plying the boy with details of his countless, erotic adventures, Pauliet also encourages Léonide to allow his oedipal mother to initiate him sexually: "c'est la nourrice

des hommes jeunes. Vous réussirez, ce sera magnifique, je vous le promets! . . . moi Pauliet je pourrai vous aider" (220).

In addition to his role as older oedipal sibling, Pauliet's role as Don Juan is pertinent to our topic of male heterosexuality. Julia Kristeva's discussion of Don Juan in *Histoires d'amour* provides insight concerning this aspect of Pauliet's sexuality. Kristeva explains the differences between the Don Juan figures of Tirso de Molina, Molière, Mozart, *et al*., noting that they are united by a special amatory quest: "la recherche de la conquête sans la possession" (191). She adds that for the Don Juan figure, "aucun objet amoureux n'est captivant: aucune des belles ne saurait être La Beauté qui seule arrêterait la course du séducteur" (*Histoires d'amour* 191). Kristeva then ponders the existence and identity of "un objet; un objet impossible, soit, mais existant" that propels Don Juan's quest (*Histoires d'amour* 191). She suggests that this object may well be the Father since the Don Juan figure often seeks paternal punishment.

Reminiscent of other Don Juan figures, Pauliet explains that his keen sexual appetite is piqued by cities including Paris, Vienna, and Rome: "les villes où il y a des femmes" (216). Léonide reveals that Pauliet's licentious narration is peppered with Don Juanesque details: "Toutes sortes de femmes nues ou costumées dans des postures compliquées avec des hommes en couples, en trios, en chaînes" (216). Hélène's own comments about Pauliet bring Don Juan to mind, for in spite of his "nature de qualité, [il] procurait du tourment à toute la famille . . . Mais il restait cher à tous . . . en dépit de ses vices" (213). Regarding Kristeva's proposal that Don Juan's desire for the Father leads him to provoke paternal punishment, "Dans les Années profondes" does not reveal if Pauliet's father has reprimanded him for his wanton behavior. Nevertheless, the fact that the dying young man spends his final days with his uncle rather than his father may indicate that paternal punishment has taken the form of banishment from the family home. And predating the

short story, Pauliet's role as Hélène's oedipal son/lover would have carried the constant threat of punishment by the oedipal father: de Sannis.

After proposing that Don Juan's impossible love object is the Father, Julia Kristeva then wonders if this object "originaire, inaccessible, interdite" might be the mother (*Histoires d'amour* 195). She also emphasizes that the biological mother is a person typically absent in the characterization of Don Juan. In "Dans les Années profondes," Hélène explains to Léonide that Pauliet's mother died at the time of his birth. Although the birth mother is not to be confused with the primal mother, could not the death of Pauliet's birth mother have piqued his desire for the primal mother? Pauliet's oedipal liaison with Hélène was clearly an attempt to capture the filial intimacy he missed out on due to his birth mother's death. Yet neither this relationship nor those with his countless subsequent lovers could quench his thirst for the primal mother. But Kristeva would add that Pauliet's death brings us back to the Father, for she explains that "la Loi en tant que pouvoir de la mort, pouvoir du mort, est absolue, indépassable, garantie ultime de la communauté, de sa consistance et de sa pesanteur" (*Histoires d'amour* 194). Thus, in Kristevan terms, Pauliet's libertinism may be viewed as a tireless quest both for the Father (paternal punishment) and the primal mother - a fatal quest in which the Father as Law/power of death ultimately triumphs.

Although Pauliet and Léonide both experience their sexual initiation in the bed of Hélène de Sannis, this initiation has vastly different consequences for the two young men. For Pauliet it is merely the launching pad to the endless sexual encounters which take him throughout Europe and finally to his own death. We noted in chapter one that critics consistently applaud Léonide's sexual initiation by Hélène for it serves as catalyst to his literary vocation. Thus in his desire to eternally preserve "les états qui me faisaient tant de bien," Léonide vows that he will "les écrire sur du papier" (260). Again we must take issue with critics including Christiane Blot-Labarrère, Myriam Delmotte and Béatrice Bonhomme

who speak of Hélène's death with unbridled enthusiasm. Blot-Labarrère affirms that "même morte [Hélène] met en mouvement et féconde la destinée de Léonide" ("*Le Monde désert* " 26) while Delmotte praises this death as "le véritable érotisme, qui va au-delà des actes et des corps pour transcender le temps" (175). Bonhomme states that "Hélène doit mourir pour parachever l'initiation de Léonide" (157). Critical discussion of Hélène's death consistently fails to mention that this sacrifice of Madame de Sannis effects male maturation at the expense of a female life simultaneously eliminating Jouve's final female prose protagonist.

Different from previous Jouvian male heterosexuals, Léonide is not the devious seducer who ignores the bonds of friendship in order to possess his love object. From the very beginning of "Dans les Années profondes," it is Hélène who initiates the action. After inviting the young stranger to tea for two, she receives him on a daily basis and later pretends to her husband that he is a friend of her sister's. When he becomes her houseguest, Hélène makes the first declaration of love subsequently inviting Léonide into her bed and tenderly guiding his every move. Unlike Waldemar ("La Victime"), Luc Pascal (*Le Monde désert* and *Vagadu*), *et al.*, Léonide is not totally insensitive to his lover's suffering. After she has passed away, he criticizes himself for not having taken heed of "les traces d'une légère et mélancolique fatigue sur l'admirable visage" (246). Nevertheless, he admits that he was totally preoccupied with "le courant de mon bonheur" (246). And in spite of Léonide's lofty goal of immortalizing his deceased lover through literature, his preoccupation with his own sexual fulfillment brings to mind the self-centeredness of previous Jouvian male heterosexuals including Michele (*Paulina 1880*), Waldemar ("La Victime"), and Luc Pascal (*Le Monde désert* and *Vagadu*). In addition to focusing upon their own sexual gratification, Léonide, Michele, Waldemar and Luc bring death to their female partners - literally in the cases of Hélène and Dorothée and metaphorically with Paulina and Baladine.

Along with overlooking the phallocratic aspect of Hélène's death in "Dans les Années profondes," critics have also overlooked the Tournierian nature of Léonide's geographical, psychological and sexual journey toward harmonious integration. For in his Bildungsroman, Léonide's experiences greatly parallel those of the Tournierian androgynes we shall examine fully in chapter seven. Both Léonide and Tournier's androgynes undergo a voyage of initiation; an ostensible perfection of initial sexual orientation; the loss of a dear partner through death or abandonment; depression; and an auspicious final role.[40] Although his journey of initiation is shorter than that of Tournier's Robinson (*Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*), Tiffauges (*Le Roi des aulnes*) or Paul (*Les Météores*), Léonide's departure from "le val aux formes fraîches et rêveuses de la Bondasca" and his arrival in the village of Sogno set the stage for his encounter with the oedipal mother who will initiate him sexually: Hélène (170). At the outset of "Dans les Années profondes," the most salient feature of Léonide's sexuality is his markedly ambivalent attitude toward females. Since he explains that he is a "grand garçon" while speaking of his uncomfortable rapport with women, the sixteen year old is clearly insecure with his developing body - an insecurity which leads him to affect "le genre sévère" (174). Although Léonide is curious about women, he admits that he harbors nonetheless the secret "envie de les frapper," fearing "leur présence . . . leur odeur" and despising "leur peau lisse et veloutée " (174). He reveals that his apparent misogyny is actually a cover-up for his "besoin toujours refoulé de . . . tendresse [féminine]" (174). It is obviously this suppressed need for feminine tenderness which attracts the sixteen year old Léonide to the forty-three year old Hélène. Interestingly, when Léonide first sees Hélène, he notices that he reacts to her as if he too were a woman: "ce fut comme si je me sentais femme, moi-même, et attiré vers elle de cette façon. En effet, me sentant un peu femme je comprenais une belle femme" (173-74).

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[40]An alteration of the notion of time is another element shared by Jouve's Léonide and Tournier's Robinson and Tiffauges. Robinson's existence on the uncharted island puts him outside the constraints of time while Tiffauges deems that his journey to East Prussia takes him back in time. Léonide comments that his daily encounters with Hélène stop time: "L'horloge du temps était arrêtée à *midi*" (181).

Léonide adds that rather than his usual animosity toward women, this first sight of Hélène brings him "une brusque effusion de plaisir devant la beauté des choses" (174). Hélène graciously welcomes Léonide into her intimate life while her calming presence and role as patient guide allow his heterosexuality to slowly blossom. Similar to the experience of Tournierian protagonists Robinson, Tiffauges and Paul, Léonide undergoes a significant sexual evolution. But different from that of the Tournierian protagonists, Léonide's evolution does not take him to androgyny but rather from the sexual confusion of boyhood to confident, heterosexual manhood.

Reminiscent of the Tournierian protagonists Robinson and Paul, Léonide experiences a loss of his vital partner which plunges him into despair. The stealthy departure of Vendredi for England sends Robinson into suicidal depression while Jean's self-imposed exile devastates his twin, Paul. Béatrice Bonhomme notes that Léonide is also crushed by the death of his "nouvelle mère," Hélène, "qui laisse Léonide désespéré, en plein complexe d'abandon" (138). Thus Léonide moans: "Il était interdit de vivre la minute après celle-ci puisque dans la minute, dans chaque minute, ce qui est essentiel à la vie avait été arraché . . . Hélène en mourant tranchait ma vie . . . il n'y a pas lieu de décrire la torture dans laquelle je haletais" (256). But despite his painful suffering just after Hélène's death, Léonide - like Tournier's Paul and Robinson - acquires an auspicious new role. We shall see in chapter seven that Tournier's Robinson serves as mentor and nurturer to the stowaway cabin boy while Paul's newly discovered hypersensitivity ostensibly enables him to communicate with the heavens. Meanwhile Léonide's forthcoming career as a writer will allow him to celebrate his love for Hélène: "de communiquer avec Hélène désormais, de retrouver Hélène douce et noire désormais" (260).[41]

[41]"Dans les Années profondes" begins and ends with the concept of achieving immortality through writing. As the short story unfolds, Léonide writes his name on a cemetery wall "afin que ce mur en portant mon nom éternisât une minute solennelle" (171). Similarly, the story closes with Léonide's goal of refinding Hélène through his literary works-to-be, a creative process which will render her immortal.

In Pierre Jean Jouve's presentation of the male heterosexual, the following configuration emerges: the heterosexual male is a deceptive, self-centered seducer who ignores the bonds of friendship in order to possess his love interest. Thus Michele Cantarini seduces the daughter of his trusted friend and host (*Paulina 1880*); Waldemar rapes the enchanted Dorothée thereby violating his promise to Simonin ("La Victime"); and Luc Pascal shatters his friendship with Jacques by seducing Baladine (*Le Monde désert*). Motivated by their personal desire for sexual gratification, the aforesaid male characters disregard the effect that their seduction will have on their female partners. The abusive treatment which Catherine allegedly receives at the hands of her father, Louis Moutier and Luc Pascal ( *Vagadu*) is the result of an even greater form of male callousness.

Preoccupied with his sexual initiation, Jouve's final male heterosexual, Léonide, also reveals a similar self-centeredness. On the one hand, the reader might be tempted to forgive this shortcoming due to Léonide's youth and the fact that he vows to dedicate his life to immortalizing Hélène through literature. On the other hand, the fact remains that with the death of Léonide's muse Jouve's final female protagonist is swept from the narrative landscape. And underlying Hélène's posthumous role of muse to Léonide is the implication that female life is an expendable commodity if it serves as catalyst to literary productivity by males.

In spite of the disturbing ramifications of Hélène's death however, the initiation of Léonide provides a fascinating parallel to that of the Tournierian androgyne. Before exploring the latter in depth in chapter seven, we shall first examine Tournier's presentation of male heterosexuality in order to determine whether it compliments or contrasts with that feature of the Jouvian opus.

# Chapter VI

## The Heterosexual Male in the Novels of Michel Tournier

In accordance with the Jouvian configuration of the heterosexual male, the father is an imposing authority figure who misunderstands his child (i.e. the fathers of Paulina, Dorothée and Jacques de Todi) while the heterosexual lover is devious, self-centered (i.e. Michele Cantarini and Waldemar) and sometimes cruel (i.e. Louis Moutier and Luc Pascal). As we shall see, Michel Tournier's prose depicts the heterosexual male in a similar fashion stressing such characteristics as paternal distance (i.e. the fathers of Robinson, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* and of Abel Tiffauges, *Le Roi des aulnes*, *et al*.) and male cruelty (i.e. the English sailors, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, Göring, Blättchen and Raufeisen, *Le Roi des aulnes*, *et al.*). Finally, we shall indicate that Michel Tournier adds additional traits to the heterosexual male configuration, including that of mere propagator (*Les Météores*) and victim of a deceitful blonde (*Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* and *La Goutte d'or*).

Michel Tournier's first novel, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* (1967), contains the germinal form of ideas developed in his subsequent prose works including the exaltation of child carrying which blossoms in *Le Roi des aulnes* (1970); the theme of twinship which dominates *Les Météores* (1975); the fascination with bread making which inspires both "Pierrot ou les Secrets de la nuit" and "La Légende du pain" (*Le Médianoche amoureux*, 1989); and the presentation of the heterosexual male as either weak and ineffective (Edouard, *Les Météores*, 1975) or overbearing and insensitive (Commander Poucet, "La Fugue du petit Poucet", *Le Coq de bruyère*, 1978). Aside from the evolving

heterosexuals, Robinson Crusoé and Vendredi, whom we shall discuss in our chapter on the androgyne, the remaining males of *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* offer the aforementioned bipolar view of heterosexual maleness. As we shall see, the characterization of Robinson's father depicts the heterosexual male as weak while the sailors of the *Whitebird* offer the juxtaposing image of male cruelty.

We mentioned in chapter two that *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* focuses on negative female images: sea and storm of violence and death; boat of destruction (the *Virginie*); boat of false hope (the *Evasion*); deadly hole (*la souille*); ghostly apparition (Lucy, the deceased sister); and menacing, untamed female space (Désolation/Speranza). In spite of the text's preoccupation with female spaces, Robinson's allusions to his own wife are sparse. Mairi Maclean points out that the younger Mme Crusoé "remains nameless and faceless throughout [*Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*]" ("Tournier" 326). Nevertheless, Robinson's musings as a lonely shipwreck victim frequently evoke the memory of his parents. These recurring memories inform the reader that the elder Crusoé was a Quaker cloth merchant with a passion for cultivating tropical plants and an affinity for Ben Franklin's aphorisms. Pertinent to our study are the traits of Monsieur Crusoé which bring to mind similar elements of the paternal configuration within Pierre Jean Jouve's opus. We noted in chapter five that the residences of Jouve's Signor Pandolfini (*Paulina 1880*) and the *Conseiller Vénérable* ("La Victime") are enclosed, tomblike structures; that of the former is "funèbre" with "les hautes pièces entièrement noires derrière leurs volets de bois plein" (P 31) while that of the latter is "muet, de marbre gris et noir" ("La Victime" 111). Robinson's first flashbacks to his youth also associate his father with a somber, enclosed space. Describing the atmosphere of his father's shop as "confinée," Robinson adds that it was a "sombre magasin de laines et cotonnades en gros . . . [avec des] rouleaux de tissu entassés [qui] formaient autour de lui comme une forteresse molle" (34). Thinking back to his father later on, Robinson continues to associate him with

confined spaces including his library and the small conservatory where he cultivated tropical plants. But different from the sternness which exudes from the imposing residences of Signor Pandolfini and the *Conseiller Vénérable*, the padded fortress of the elder Crusoé's cloth shop walls in a weak, sickly man. The heavy odors of the cloth shop are therefore interwoven in Robinson's memory with "celle du benjoin dont usait en toute saison le père Crusoé pour combattre un rhume inextinguible" (34). In spite of his chronic respiratory condition, the text reveals that Monsieur Crusoé's life was claimed prematurely by a heart attack.

Robinson's recurring memories of his parents reveal that his father's physical and emotional weakness was countered by his mother's strength. The latter "était une maîtresse femme" while her husband was "timide et frileux . . . [ce] petit drapier d'York" (34). Robinson describes his mother's voice as "ferme et bien timbrée" while his father's was rather "le fausset toujours plaintif" (43). He adds that Madame Crusoé bravely managed to carry all six of her children to safety during a house fire in her husband's absence. Returning to find his home engulfed in flames, the terrified "petit drapier" knelt in prayer in the street until he saw his child-rescuing wife "émerger tranquillement d'un torrent de flammes et de fumée" (91). Regarding this episode, Mairi Maclean comments that the elder Crusoé "is merely an onlooker, excluded: an impotent, passive spectator to the drama" ("Tournier" 327).

Grief stricken at the thought of having lost his wife and children in the aforementioned fire, Monsieur Crusoé was obviously fond of his family. But like the fathers of Jouve's Paulina (*Paulina 1880*) and Dorothée ("La Victime"), the cloth merchant's paternal role placed an affective barrier between his children and him - a barrier reinforced by Monsieur Crusoé's introversion. Thus, Robinson's recollections do not show his father interacting with his offspring but rather "toujours perché sur son très haut pupitre ou inclinant ses lorgnons sur un livre de comptes" (34). Until the wreck of the

*Virginie*, Robinson deemed that his red hair was the only paternal trait he had inherited. But after his attraction to the island's wallowing hole reveals "ses propres facultés de repliement sur lui-même et de démission en face du monde extérieur," Robinson realizes that his resemblance to his father goes much deeper than their shared hair color (34).

The British sailors who land on Speranza at the novel's end provide a striking contrast to the elder Crusoé's image of the heterosexual male as sickly and self-effacing. No sooner have the sailors landed than they are pillaging the island, mutilating coconut trees and slaughtering wild goats for sport. After locating some coins in a field, they decide to set the grassy area on fire to facilitate their search for more gold. Along with their selfish rape of Speranza's flora and fauna, the sailors quarrel loudly amongst themselves boasting of the profits they have made in the trade of slaves and opium. François Nourissier intimates that the name of the sailors' captain and their port of origin reflect the men's baseness. Nourissier states that "[le] capitaine (Hunter: le chasseur), venu de Blackpool (bassin noir) et son équipage symbolisent tout ce que la civilisation a concentré de hâte, de hargne, de bellicisme, de goût du lucre et de vandalisme" (2).

Brash among themselves, the sailors' callousness is highlighted in their relationships with others. Struck by their total lack of interest in the story of his survival on the island, Robinson is horrified by the physical and emotional scarring which the sailors inflict upon their helpless cabin boy, Jaan. Invited on board the *Whitebird*, Robinson cannot help but notice the welts on Jaan's emaciated back and the restraint which fastens him to a mast. But contrary to Robinson's concern for the mistreated boy, the mate Joseph quips "que l'enfant aurait tort de se plaindre d'être dressé aux garcettes, ayant pour mère une garce à matelots" (197). As the novel closes, Vendredi sneaks on board the *Whitebird* while Jaan steals ashore to join the kindly Robinson. Since the sailors lose their whipping boy with the departure of Jaan, the reader is left to assume that Vendredi will now bear the brunt of their cruelty.

Aside from the androgynous transformation of the heterosexual Robinson and Vendredi, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* offers a polarized view of the male heterosexual as sickly and self-effacing (the elder Crusoé) or cruel and destructive (the sailors of the *Whitebird*). Turning now to *Le Roi des aulnes*, we shall see that Tournier's second novel presents a similar configuration of male heterosexuality.

As we explained in chapter two, *Le Roi des aulnes* ostensibly traces the metamorphosis of Abel Tiffauges from inept heterosexual to glorious androgyne arising to his predestined apotheosis. Charting this Tiffaugean metamorphosis, the text divides itself into the prelude in France (Tiffauges's repressed existence as an unhappy heterosexual) and the flowering in Germany (Tiffauges's rise from lowly prisoner of war to unofficial supervisor of daily life at Kaltenborn). Important for our study is the fact that - paralleling Tiffauges's own experience - the text highlights the failure of heterosexual relationships during its prelude in France and then presents Prussia as a milieu devoid of contact between heterosexual males and females.

As *Le Roi des aulnes* unfolds in France, male/female relationships are doomed to failure and/or desertion by one partner - a treatment of heterosexuality which concurs with that of Jouvian works such as *Le Monde désert*. For just as *Le Monde désert* portrays a male lover (Luc Pascal) abandoned by his wife (Baladine), so is Tiffauges abandoned by Rachel whom he describes as "ma femme. Non pas mon épouse devant Dieu et les hommes, mais la femme de ma vie . . . l'être féminin de mon univers personnel" (RA 17). Abandoned by their lovers, both Jouve's Luc Pascal and Tournier's Abel Tiffauges are unable to reestablish another meaningful relationship with an adult female. After Baladine vanishes, Luc Pascal has only an abusive, six month liaison with Catherine Crachat before devoting his full attention to the imagined vision of "Face Baladine" (MD 218). And with

the departure of Rachel, Tiffauges never again experiences an intimate relationship with a flesh and blood female.

After he is abandoned by Rachel, Tiffauges's flashbacks to his youth have a Jouvian ring to them for they highlight maternal absence and paternal sternness. But while Jouve's young Paulina Pandolfini (*Paulina 1880*), Dorothée ("La Victime") and Jacques de Todi (*Le Monde désert*) all lose their mothers to death, the absence of Madame Tiffauges is never explained. We have noted that the stern fathers of Jouve's Paulina Pandolfini (*Paulina 1880*), Dorothée ("La Victime") and Jacques de Todi (*Le Monde désert*) are enclosed within imposing milieux which reinforce an affective barrier between their children and them. This situation is amplified in the case of Abel Tiffauges - an only child sent from an unwelcoming paternal residence to the stark and hostile environment of a boys' boarding school, Saint-Christophe's. Unjustly accused of setting a fire at school, young Abel sneaks home fleeing Saint-Christophe's "tristesse . . . pesante, et comme respirable" (42-43). But rather than greeting his troubled son with sincere concern, Monsieur Tiffauges greets him with his usual "inébranlable indifférence" coldly informing him that he would have been sent back to school immediately had a train been available (100). This unsanctioned return to the motherless, familial nest does not provide Abel with a delicious respite from the boarding school's "atmosphère de rigueur et d'austérité" (42). For confronted with the "mélange de soins maniaques et de négligences sordides" of his father's home, the boy feels "aussi étranger qu'à Saint-Christophe bien que j'y fusse né et que j'y eusse grandi" (101). Concerning the coldness which emanates from both Saint-Christophe and the Tiffaugeses' residence, Arlette Bouloumié stresses that Abel Tiffauges "se sent totalement étranger aux lieux de son enfance" (170). Thus, while Jouve's young Jacques de Todi (*Le Monde désert*) is unhappily imprisoned within the inflexible walls of paternal authority, Abel Tiffauges is orphaned literally by maternal absence and emotionally by paternal distance.

Even as he approached adulthood, Abel Tiffauges reveals that he continued to feel uncomfortable in his father's presence. Thus the elder Tiffauges's attempts to initiate his son into the trade of automobile mechanic were met with frustration; for the younger Tiffauges, "La présence de cet homme taciturne et froid a toujours eu pour effet de me brouiller les idées et les mains" (107). Just as in the cases of Jouve's Paulina, Dorothée and Jacques, no mother or empathetic siblings were present to soften the paternal sternness to which Abel Tiffauges was subjected.

Intimate male/female relationships are decidedly lacking within *Le Roi des aulnes*, for other than the explained departure of Rachel and the unexplained departure of Madame Tiffauges, the text presents only one other couple: the Ambroises. Abel Tiffauges implies that it was the greed of Monsieur Ambroise and the laziness of his common-law wife, Madame Eugénie, which gave birth to their relationship. Madame Eugénie pretended to be an heiress in distress hoping that Monsieur Ambroise would come to her rescue. Although her inheritance never materializes, this union allows Madame Eugénie to devote her full attentions to spying upon neighbors while Monsieur Ambroise supports the couple and performs all household duties. Since *Le Roi des aulnes* erases both Rachel and Madame Tiffauges, the only flesh and blood male/female relationship which survives in the novel is that of the Ambroises. Underlying the portrait of Monsieur Ambroise is the exploitation of a would-be exploiter. Drawn into this relationship by the enticing prospect of Eugénie's inheritance, Ambroise pays a dear price for his own greed. He is subject ever after to waiting upon his immobile housemate: an obese gossip with a most unpleasant voice.

The configuration of the heterosexual male in the prelude to *Le Roi des aulnes* in France reflects Abel Tiffauges's personal experience thereby associating heterosexuality with failure. The heterosexual male is a cold, indifferent father (Monsieur Tiffauges); an abandoned sexual partner (Abel and Monsieur Tiffauges); and a greedy lover turned unhappy provider (Monsieur Ambroise).When Tiffauges's odyssey takes him to Germany

as a prisoner of war, the milieu of the heterosexual male - like that of Tiffauges himself - is devoid of female contact. For other than the intimate relationship between Tiffauges and the soil of Mother Prussia, gone are the albeit scarce and fragmented male/female relationships of the novel's prelude. With the exceptions of Mother Prussia, Frau Dorn and Frau Netta, the population of the Prussian segment of *Le Roi des aulnes* is exclusively male. And as we stated in chapter two, the lone female cameo roles of Frau Dorn and Frau Netta merely provide two poles of reaction to Tiffauges's metamorphosis as an ogre. Tiffauges seeks out Frau Dorn to have a golden fleece made of the clippings of hair from the Napola's four hundred young residents. But this proposal which horrifies the Napola outsider, Frau Dorn, is taken in stride by Kaltenborn's resident Mom and only female, Frau Netta.[42]

Like Frau Netta and Frau Dorn, the males surrounding Tiffauges during his odyssey in Prussia can also be divided into the opposing camps of true Nazi aficionados (Field Marshal Göring, Commander Professor Doctor Blättchen and Commander Stefan Raufeisen) and kindly souls caught up in this frightening war machine (the Chief Forester at Rominten and Count Herbert von Kaltenborn). Although the naïve Tiffauges is often fascinated by Blättchen's research, he views Göring as the egotistical ogre of Rominten who revels both in slaughtering prize game and in surrounding himself with the spoils of Europe's museums and aristocratic families. The genuine kindness of the Chief Forester and of Count von Kaltenborn sharply contrast with Göring's plundering of Prussian forests and European treasure troves; Blättchen's lethal racism; and Raufeisen's cruel treatment of the *Jungmannen*.

Different from Göring who delights at being photographed amidst twelve hundred slaughtered rabbits, the Chief Forester demonstrates a true affection for animals.[43] Upon finding Tiffauges absent without leave from his prison camp, the Chief Forester could have

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[42]Mairi Maclean comments that "Netta performs her duties as matron in a fortress whose very *raison d'être* is war. She is simultaneously a 'terre nourricière' and a 'veuve de guerre' "("Tournier" 328).

[43]Emphasizing Göring's bloodthirsty zeal for hunting, Arlette Bouloumié notes that "ce créateur de la Gestapo et des camps de concentration se plaît dans les massacres" (107).

had him imprisoned. But responding positively to Tiffauges's training as a pigeon handler and his tender nurturing of a blind elk, the Chief Forester selects the prisoner for his assistant at the Rominten reserve. When the escalation of the war forces him to reduce his staff, the Chief Forester enables Tiffauges to fulfill his aspiration of working at Kaltenborn. Arriving at the Napola, Tiffauges is soon befriended by Count von Kaltenborn who engages him in lengthy conversations prior to his own arrest by the Gestapo. Due to their shared interest in signs and symbols, Tiffauges reveals some of his most intimate thoughts to the count who in turn provides clear insight into the Frenchman's ostensible apotheosis. Like the Chief Forester, the count is clearly out of place among the infamous leaders of the brutal Nazi war machine. Ironically, the narrator states prior to the count's arrest that "personne [à Kaltenborn] . . . - même les enfants les plus jeunes - n'ignore que son prestige et ses titres éclipsent la gloriole macabre des S.S." (486).

During the prelude of *Le Roi des aulnes* in France, the male heterosexual is abandoned by his mate for explained (Abel Tiffauges) or unexplained (Monsieur Tiffauges) reasons and is also presented as the victim of his own greed (Monsieur Ambroise). When the Second World War takes Abel Tiffauges to Prussia, the flesh and blood female component of the novel is erased thereby paralleling the suppression of Tiffauges's own heterosexuality. Finally the Prussian males of *Le Roi des aulnes* conform to the male configuration we noted previously with both Jouve and Tournier. For both authors present the bipolar view of males as either weak and sensitive or brutal and domineering. The Tournierian examples of the weak Monsieur Crusoé (*Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*) and the gentle Count von Kaltenborn (*Le Roi des aulnes*) concur with the Jouvian examples of Michele Cantarini (*Paulina 1880*) and Pierre Indemini (*Hécate* and *Vagadu*): premature death is the fate of weak and/or sensitive males. Monsieur Crusoé succumbs to a heart attack, Count von Kaltenborn presumably perishes at a Gestapo death camp, Michele Cantarini is murdered by Paulina and the young Pierre Indemini wastes

away. But with the English sailors of Tournier's *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* and Göring and Blättchen of *Le Roi des aulnes*, the male brute thrives. On the other hand, Jouve's devious Waldemar ("La Victime") is executed and the cruelly chauvinistic Luc Pascal (*Le Monde Désert* and *Vagadu*) meets death metaphorically. Turning now to Tournier's *Les Météores*, we shall see that this work highlights an additional trait of the male heterosexual - a trait to which Abel Tiffauges alludes in *Le Roi des aulnes*.

With the characterizations of Abel Tiffauges and Alexandre Surin, *Le Roi des aulnes* and *Les Météores* both feature a male character whose rejection of heterosexuality includes diatribe against this traditional sexual persuasion. As his role of child-loving ogre begins to blossom in France, Tiffauges praises the beauty of children and decries the physical destruction wrought by "la fée Puberté . . . [qui jette] le petit prince . . . à bas de son trône . . . Le temps de la fleur est passé . . . Le piège matrimonial referme bientôt ses mâchoires sur le niais. Et le voilà attelé avec les autres au lourd charroi de la propagation de l'espèce" (154). At the close of the novel, Tiffauges repeats this condemnation of heterosexual relations as burdensome propagation. While watching his four hundred charges sleep at Kaltenborn, he regrets the fate of their male genitalia: "condamnés à être jetés dans les oubliettes génitales, et à ne s'animer qu'au service obscur de la perpétuation de l'espèce" (524).

In our discussion of Alexandre Surin in chapter four, we noted that his narrative segments throughout *Les Météores* are peppered with bitter comments criticizing every aspect of "la racaille hétéro" (224, 248, etc.). Alexandre charges that the milieu of "La morne hétérosexualité [est] . . . Un monde inhospitalier, inhabitable" (106). He maintains that lovemaking between heterosexuals is no match for the incomparable delights of lovemaking between gays and he dismisses the Second World War as "une querelle d'hétérosexuels qui ne me concerne pas" (335). Underlying Alexandre's multi-faceted attack against heterosexuality in *Les Météores* is a theme reminiscent of Abel Tiffauges's

anti-heterosexual remarks in *Le Roi des aulnes*: society yokes the heterosexual male into the burdensome role of propagator of the species. Thus Alexandre dismisses both tobacco and alcohol as a "vice médiocre, consolation dérisoire des attelés au lourd tombereau de la propagation de l'espèce" (141). Similarly he praises the freedom of sexual expression of the gay whose lovemaking is "A l'opposé de vos amours prisonnières du gaufrier reproductif" (248). He adds that this inhibition of expression applies to the straight male's dull wardrobe as well as to his unimaginative lovemaking since "le sexe étant chez lui entièrement assujetti à des fins utilitaires ne saurait remplir sa fonction essentielle qui est de transfigurer, de magnifier, d'exalter" (254).

In *Les Météores*, this view of male heterosexual as mere slave to the role of propagator is actually introduced by the omniscient narrator and subsequently echoed by both active (Alexandre and Paul Surin) as well as inactive (Thomas Koussek) gays. In the opening pages of the novel, the narrator introduces this perspective of male heterosexuality. Following his lengthy presentation of Maria-Barbara Surin as a fertile, baby machine, the narrator dismisses her husband as simply "le semeur, le donneur de cette pauvre chiquenaude qui déclenche le processus créateur" (12). The priest Thomas Koussek offers a similar opinion later on. After explaining that his religious vocation has allowed him to surpass his own homosexuality, Koussek notes that "Le fardeau de la procréation écrase . . . les hommes hétérosexuels . . . attelé[s] au lourd chariot de la perpétuation de l'espèce" (145). Paul Surin never gets to know his gay uncle, Alexandre, or his uncle's friend, Thomas Koussek, yet he shares their view of male heterosexuality nevertheless. For Paul, the life path society charts for the male heterosexual is merely "la voie stéréotypée tracée pour les besoins de la propagation de l'espèce" (388).

*Les Météores* contains brief allusions to three male heterosexuals: Gustave Surin, the deceased and overly proper brother of Alexandre; Olivier, the faithful Frenchman who follows his fiancée to Iceland; and Urs Kraus, the German who abandons his lover in

Japan to pursue the globe-trotting Jean Surin. But it is the characterization of Edouard Surin which predominates among the male heterosexuals of *Les Météores* - a characterization which is echoed by that of Ralph toward the novel's end. The roles of Edouard Surin and Ralph are especially significant for they exemplify the anti-heterosexual diatribe introduced by Abel Tiffauges of *Le Roi des aulnes* (1970) and repeated by Alexandre and Paul Surin, Thomas Koussek and the narrator of *Les Météores* (1975).

By outward appearances, Edouard Surin has managed to have his cake and eat it too. In marrying Maria-Barbara, he inherits her father's textile factory whose competent manager bears the brunt of the work load. Not overly taxed in his professional life, Edouard also enjoys a dual private life divided between his wife and mistress. His primary residence is at the family home in Brittany, in the emotionally secure environment provided by Maria-Barbara and their large brood. But since the responsibilities of caring for her numerous children keep Maria-Barbara happily occupied at home, she silently acquiesces to Edouard's maintaining a second residence: the apartment in Paris where he frequently entertains his mistress.

Edouard first views his "vie partagée" between Paris and Brittany as "un chef-d'œuvre d'organisation heureuse" (M 24), a view shared by critics including François Chatelet, Pierre de Boisdeffre (*"Les Météores"*), *et al*. Chatelet views Edouard optimistically as an "excellent chef de famille et d'industrie qui a des maîtresses" (5). But what de Boisdeffre and Chatelet overlook and Edouard slowly realizes is that his status is that of useless figurehead, both professionally and in his marriage to this woman "exclusivement préoccupée de ses petits" (22). His amorous life in Paris proves to be no more fulfilling than his conjugal and professional lives in Brittany. With his mistress, Florence, Edouard finds not the anticipated "seconde jeunesse," but on the contrary "le produit manqué et comme l'enfant mort-né de deux sources vainement mêlées" (24, 27). Thus rather than "un surcroît de richesse," Edouard ultimately feels that dividing his life

between his faithful wife and mistress yields "un double exil . . . un double déracinement" (25).

Failing to find fulfillment in the professional, marital and extramarital components of his life, Edouard later yearns for heroism and a valorous death in World War II. But the war provides him not with glory but with a triple loss: the death of his new mistress, Angelica, in a bombing; the deportation of his Jewish mistress, Florence; and the arrest of his wife, Maria-Barbara, for her Resistance involvement of which he was totally unaware. His wife's arrest is doubly hard for Edouard to bear. It strips the Surin family of its emotional fulcrum while granting the role of Resistance fighter not to the would-be hero, Edouard, but to his placid wife, Maria-Barbara. Edouard dies prematurely and nearly blind, broken by his wife's arrest, by the failure of his own attempts at heroism and by the diabetic condition he has long denied.

One of the last episodes of *Les Météores* presents the American Ralph - a heterosexual whose life greatly parallels that of Edouard Surin. Along with their striking physical beauty, Ralph and Edouard enjoy financial security without having to work. Both men settle with their wives into secluded compounds, Edouard and Maria-Barbara at their estate in Brittany and Ralph and Deborah on the island of El-Kantara. It is the wives who reign over their respective domiciles with the biologically fertile Maria-Barbara filling *Pierres Sonnantes* with countless offspring and the organically fertile Deborah transforming barren El-Kantara into a tropical paradise. Preoccupied with brood and garden respectively, Maria-Barbara and Deborah silently acquiesce to their husbands' desire for a mistress. But just as Edouard's mistress, Florence, knows that he will never leave Maria-Barbara, so Ralph's paramour, Hamida, explains that "Ralph est du type monogame. Il n'y aura jamais d'autre femme dans sa vie que Deborah. Nous le savions tous les trois" (490).

Endowed with physical beauty, wealth and faithful wives and mistresses, it appears that Edouard and Ralph's lives have all the makings of a *vie en rose*. But regarding Ralph,

the text reveals that "les années sont méchantes avec les êtres privilégiés!" - a comment which also applies to Edouard (487). In the company of his mistress in Paris, Edouard misses the emotional security which emanates from his wife. But alongside Maria-Barbara and the weavers of the family factory, Edouard "éprouvait parfois un grand accablement de solitude entre sa femme toujours enceinte et exclusivement préoccupée de ses petits, et la foule grise et laborieuse des Pierres Sonnantes" (22). This disillusionment is exacerbated by the diabetes which slowly erodes Edouard's handsome physique. Similarly, Ralph fails to find fulfillment with his wife or his youthful mistress in spite of the paradisiacal setting of their enclave on El-Kantara.

Another resemblance between Ralph and Edouard is that both men follow a self-destructive path to ease their disappointment with life. Ralph seeks solace in alcoholic binges while the diabetic Edouard becomes involved with the Resistance to grant himself an early and heroic death.[44] Ironically, premature death first claims not the self-destructive Edouard and Ralph but the fecund Maria-Barbara and Deborah. Ralph is totally devastated by Deborah's terminal cancer as is Edouard by Maria-Barbara's Gestapo death sentence. Since El-Kantara and *Pierres Sonnantes* are extensions of their mistresses, Deborah's and Maria-Barbara's deaths are accompanied by the destruction of the garden of the former and the dispersal of the offspring, textile workers and retarded neighbors of the latter. Edouard finally realizes that his wife was the emotional fulcrum of this extended family which included the Surin household and textile factory as well as the neighboring residential facility for the retarded. With Deborah's death, Ralph discovers belatedly "que sa femme l'a porté à bout de bras pendant les cinquante ans de leur vie commune" (451). Emotionally shattered and physically broken by diabetes and alcoholism respectively, Edouard and Ralph still cling to illusion. Reminiscent of Edouard, Ralph "refusait la réalité et ne voyait que ce qu'il voulait voir" (479). Thus, Ralph denies that a violent storm has permanently

[44]Jacqueline Van Baelen refers to Edouard as "un héros raté" for "il a raté la guerre de 1914-1918 et il rate sa résistance pendant les années 40" (206).

ruined Deborah's tropical paradise and Edouard jokes that Maria-Barbara is serving as a woodcutter at Buchenwald. *Les Météores* does not follow the alcoholic Ralph until his death but it does reveal that - five years after his wife's deportation - Edouard dies the invalid's death he had so feared.[45]

Clearly, the characterizations of Edouard Surin and Ralph (*Les Météores*) exemplify the anti-heterosexual diatribe of Abel Tiffauges from *Le Roi des aulnes* as well as that of the narrator, Thomas Koussek, and Alexandre and Paul Surin from *Les Météores*. The lives of Edouard and Ralph and the aforementioned bitter, anti-heterosexual comments from *Le Roi des aulnes* and *Les Météores* all indicate that the egotistical, self-centered male heterosexual is not an important figurehead but merely a propagator. The cases of Edouard and Ralph demonstrate that after providing the seed in the form of semen (Edouard) and seed money (Ralph), the male heterosexual is subsequently superfluous in the fecund microcosm of which his wife is the undeniable focal point.

Introduced in *Le Roi des aulnes* (1970) and exemplified by Edouard Surin and Ralph in *Les Météores* (1975), this Tournierian view of male heterosexuality as the burdensome continuation of the species is also echoed by Balthazar - one of the four wise men from Tournier's *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* (1980). Having accompanied a group of noble young aesthetes to Greece, Balthazar rejoices "de leur voir pleinement adopter [l'homosexualité], parce qu'elle est propre à apporter une diversion légère, gratuite et inoffensive à la pesante et coercitive hétérosexualité conjugale" (75). This derogatory opinion of heterosexuality is not the only aspect which Balthazar shares with Tiffauges (*Le Roi des aulnes*). After a negative experience with heterosexuality, both men suppress their sexuality. Nevertheless, an undercurrent of pedophilia is suggested by the delicious

[45]Colin Davis stresses that ironically, "the heroic demise for which Edouard longs is usurped by Maria-Barbara" leaving Edouard to "die alone, sick, almost blind, and tragically unheroic" (88).

intimacy which Tiffauges experiences with the *Jungmannen* of Kaltenborn and Balthazar experiences with his noble young charges in Greece.

Different from the bourgeois Tiffauges, Balthazar's kingly status forces him to marry and to produce an heir. Much more the aesthete than the heterosexual, Balthazar states that he will marry only the young woman whose portrait appears upon his treasured portrait-mirror. Due to the difficulty of locating this young woman, Balthazar assumes that he will lead a celibate life with his beloved portrait-mirror. However, when a search party finds the portrait's model, Malvina, Balthazar and she marry and produce numerous children. But Colin Davis notes that "If Balthazar and his wife have children, it is possible only because he uses her as a substitute for her portrait, to which he makes love 'par personne interposée'" (154).[46] Therefore Balthazar's marital happiness is doomed from the outset for he is mesmerized not by his wife but by her portrait: "L'image me suffisait. C'était elle que j'aimais" (71). Balthazar admits that "Sans la pression que mon père et mon entourage exerçaient sur moi, je n'aurais jamais songé à une Malvina" - the flesh and blood inspiration for the portrait he adores (71). And when time has eroded Malvina's resemblance to her portrait, he banishes her from the marital bedroom giving the portrait to the daughter it now resembles. Balthazar does not take into account his wife's reaction to this banishment which he dismisses as merely "ce médiocre épilogue de notre vie conjugale" (73).

Despite the fact that his beloved portrait-mirror bears the likeness of a female Other, a narcissistic component underlies Balthazar's fascination with this painting. Julia Kristeva reminds the reader that "Narcisse est coupable en somme de s'ignorer comme origine du reflet . . . celui qui aime un reflet sans savoir qu'il est le sien ignore en fait qui il est" (*Histoires d'amour* 105). If Balthazar had fallen in love with an unadorned mirror, Tournier's text could have faithfully followed the givens of the myth. But although

[46]Colin Davis also says that "For Balthazar, the work of art replaces woman as the object of desire. He leaves his kingdom to hunt for art treasures as other men chase women" (153).

Balthazar falls in love not with the mirror but with the portrait painted upon it, he proudly notes the resemblance between this portrait and himself: "Je me plus à trouver un certain air de famille entre cette petite fille et moi-même. Nous devions avoir à peu près le même âge; elle était comme moi brune et bleue" (69). Similarly, Balthazar states that the first object of his art collection - the butterfly named "Chevalier-Balthazar" in his honor - bears "une tête humaine indiscutable, et, plus discutablement, la mienne" (64). Thus, while both Balthazar and Narcissus fall in love with an image of themselves, Balthazar perceives that his treasured butterfly and portrait-mirror bear his likeness while Narcissus ignores that his beloved reflection is his own. Endowing Balthazar with a love for the portrait-mirror and the butterfly which bear his resemblance, Tournier playfully alters the myth of Narcissus.

Different from Balthazar, the remaining male heterosexuals of *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* and *La Goutte d'or* (1986) are not selfish, narcissistic iconophiles but rather the victims of an unfaithful female lure. Clearly, a biographical sketch of King Hérode could focus uniquely upon his cruelty. Nevertheless in his self-portrait within *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, Hérode contends that all the members of his family and entourage have plotted against him including his faithful eunuchs, his sons, his mother-in-law, his wives, his brother and sister, *et al.* Aware of the vulnerability of his beloved wife, Mariamme, Hérode explains that he took great pains to protect her from the machinations of his immediate family. Yet upon returning from an important voyage, Hérode was informed that he was the intended target of a lethal beverage prepared by his wife. Although he was tempted to overlook this alleged assassination attempt because of his love for Mariamme, charges by her own mother incriminated her further. Hérode's mother-in-law claimed that in addition to sleeping with the military governor entrusted to monitor her behavior, Mariamme had also promised to secure an important position for her lover after her husband's assassination. Despite these new allegations, Hérode claims that he still desired

to pardon Mariamme but public sentiment forced the queen to be put to trial - a trial whose jury unanimously condemned her to death.

Hérode was shattered by the execution of she whom he describes as "la première, la seule, l'unique femme de ma vie" (126). In spite of all the machinations of which he was the target, it was clearly those of his beloved Mariamme which caused him the most pain. Thus in speaking of the unhappy sequence of events of his life, he specifies that "A l'origine de ces malheurs, il faut bien placer au premier chef mon amour pour Mariamme. C'est le noir soleil qui éclaire toute cette tragédie" (128). It is a cold, cruel woman who emerges from Hérode's description of Mariamme. During their marriage she constantly reminded Hérode that her noble ancestry eclipsed his and she died without uttering a word of remorse. Mesmerized by the callous and unfaithful Mariamme, even her death does not release Hérode from her spell. He reveals that he kept her with him for seven years, painfully watching her flesh dissolve within a honey-filled, open sarcophagus. In spite of her verbal insults, alleged infidelity and attempt to assassinate him, Hérode insists that after Mariamme's execution he loved her all the more.

While corroborating this theme of male heterosexual as victim of a callous female heterosexual, the painful experiences of Tournier's Gaspard and Taor (*Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*) and Idriss (*La Goutte d'or*) specify that the unfaithful female is blond. Having purchased two blond Phoenician slaves, King Gaspard's detached interest in blondness soon gives way to amorous obsession and an accompanying shame of negritude. When he sleeps with the blond Biltine for the first time, Gaspard suddenly realizes that this union has been a fatal attraction from the outset when "la blondeur était entrée dans ma vie . . . comme une maladie . . . [au] marché aux esclaves" (20). Love-sick for Biltine, Gaspard feels shame for his own blackness and for that of his subjects. Reminiscent of Hérode's inferior lineage which proves divisive in his relationship with Mariamme, Gaspard deems that he is racially inferior to his blond mistress.

Gaspard's own behavior reveals his vulnerability in this relationship for during the first intimate moment between blond slave and black king, the latter asks: "Que veux-tu de moi?" (21) Gaspard then unknowingly facilitates his own cuckolding by granting Biltine's request that her fellow Phoenician slave join her at the palace. Even before the matron of his harem reveals that the supposed slave brother and sister are actually lovers, Gaspard senses that Biltine does not love him. Thus when she overindulges at a sumptuous feast, he deems that she does so "pour endurer l'intimité d'un nègre" (25). And when her overindulgence later culminates in nausea, the king feels that their coupling "avait fait vomir de dégoût la femme que j'aimais!" (26)

In spite of his obsession with Biltine, Gaspard's love - like that of Hérode for Mariamme - is not shared by his partner. Similar to Hérode, Gaspard is crushed to discover the infidelity of this partner he views as his racial superior. But whereas illness confines the unhappy Hérode to his palace, Gaspard's pursuit of a blond comet fortuitously erases his shame of negritude and his rage against the unfaithful Biltine.[47] During this journey the erudite Balthazar explains to him that since "*Adam*. . . signifie en hébreu: *terre ocre*," God certainly created Adam as either black, brown, red or ocher (47). Balthazar therefore rekindles Gaspard's pride in negritude which soars when the latter perceives that the Christ Child is black.[48]

In addition to fully restoring his racial self-esteem, Gaspard also notes that Jesus mends his broken heart. For while worshipping Jesus, Gaspard discovers that his obsession with Biltine was not true love. He adds that with his smile the Christ Child returns his love, thereby revealing that true love is not an expectation of joy or pleasure to

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[47]Serge Koster points out that "la supposée pureté de la blondeur bafoue honteusement les sincères élans de la négritude, qui n'esquisse son salut que dans l'identification de sa chimère avec la chevelure sanctifiante du météore" (41).

[48]Concerning this unorthodox portrayal of Jesus as black, Susan Petit comments that "One does not know if a miracle has taken place or if Gaspard is simply mistaken, but the effect is the same: the black king believes that what he has seen is 'une surprise miraculeuse que la Sainte Famille avait évidemment préparée dans la seule attente de [sa] venue' " ("Salvation, the Flesh, and God" 56).

be granted by one's partner but rather a mutual adoration. Instead of remaining the unhappy victim of an unfaithful blonde, Gaspard is healed through the "amour vrai" he feels for Christ (215).

Unlike Gaspard who speaks only in general terms of "amour vrai" (GMB 215), Julia Kristeva differentiates between the romantic love of Eros and the disinterested, Christian love of agape. She explains in *Histoires d'amour* that "la dynamique d'Éros . . . [*monte*] vers l'objet désiré . . . Agapê, au contraire, en tant qu'identifiée à Dieu, *descend* elle est don, accueil et grâce" (137). Kristeva also notes that "Dieu aime le premier: centre, source, don, son amour nous vient sans que nous ayons à le mériter" (*Histoires d'amour* 137). In keeping with Kristeva's analysis, Christ transforms Gaspard's purely erotic love for Biltine into agape. Thus Gaspard explains that he loves Biltine "pas moins, mais d'un amour différent" (215). He intends to return to his kingdom and to offer Biltine this newfound, disinterested love. Fully realizing that she may still prefer her Phoenician lover, the king maintains that granting freedom to his beloved slave will leave him satisfied nevertheless: "je serai . . . assez comblé du bonheur que j'aurai pu apporter à Biltine" (215).

In chapter two, we pointed out that Taor's elephant Yasmina reprises the role of the unfaithful blonde in the final narrative segment of *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*. Taor is therefore victimized by the only two women in his life: his mother and his female elephant. For although Taor has reached the age of twenty, his mother continues to rule Mangalore as she has done since the death of her husband, the Maharaja Taor Malar. Fearful lest her son claim the throne to which he is entitled, she entrusts him to a slave in her employ and receives Taor only when he requests an official audience. The Maharani is therefore delighted when the sweet-loving Taor requests her permission to launch an expedition in search of "*rahat loukoum*" - the confection known in English as Turkish delight (174).

Due to the Maharani's desire to continue ruling in Mangalore, she orders that her staff indulge Taor's sweet tooth and his frivolous occupations. Appearing more a spoiled

boy than a man of twenty years, Taor's sole female companion is not a young woman but his favorite elephant, Yasmina. Therefore the only female member of this expedition in search of the ultimate confection is Yasmina, Taor's replacement girlfriend. From the outset of their voyage, Taor is most attentive to Yasmina. When she is fearful prior to embarkation, he personally covers her eyes with his scarf and gently escorts her on board the ship named in her honor. He also carries a generous supply of her favorite rose petals and descends into the ship's hull to comfort her when she is frightened at sea.

In spite of Taor's loving affection for Yasmina, she proves as unfaithful as Hérode's Mariamme and Gaspard's Biltine. After Taor's expedition makes landfall, the Baobali tribe members secretly take Yasmina to adorn their temple to the goddess Baobama. Although it first appears that Yasmina has left a trail of rose petals in order to be rescued by Taor, he locates her only to discover that the defiant, ungrateful elephant wishes to remain with the Baobali. The defection by the blond elephant in the novel's last narrative segment thus brings to mind the blond Biltine's betrayal of Gaspard in the novel's opening segment.

In *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, Gaspard, Hérode and Taor are all victimized by unfaithful females. But whereas the voyages of Gaspard and Taor distance them from disloyal blondes, that of Idriss (*La Goutte d'or*) becomes a lonely exile within a country teeming with deceitful blondes. In the cases of both Gaspard and Idriss, blondness is a disruptive force which arrives from without. For like Gaspard, Idriss enjoyed a tranquil life in Africa until the intrusion of a blond foreigner. The blonde who shatters Idriss's tranquillity is not a Phoenician slave but rather a scantily-clad French tourist who arrives in a Land Rover. Offhandedly taking Idriss's picture, the Frenchwoman launches the boy's quixotic quest for a reunion both with his stolen image and with the blond photographer herself.

As we explained in chapter two, the blond photographer who fails to fulfill her promise to send Idriss a copy of his photograph is the catalyst for his journey to France. Embarking upon this odyssey fraught with frustrating encounters with unfaithful blondes, Idriss is dazzled by the shimmering locks of a prostitute in Marseille. Reluctantly surrendering his treasured *goutte d'or* in payment for her services, Idriss discovers that he has surrendered both the talisman and his virginity to a woman whose blondness is a mere trompe l'œil created by bleach (117). Having already lost his photograph to the Land Rover blonde, the surrender of his cherished talisman to the bleached blond prostitute seriously tarnishes Idriss's fascination with golden haired females. Thus Françoise Merllié comments that for Idriss the blonde has come to symbolize "celle qui prend et ne rend pas" (*Michel Tournier* 88).

The visual trickery of the Marseille blonde's bleached locks is greatly amplified by the "femme-lionne" who tantalizes Idriss at a Parisian peep show (190). For within the bewildering bombardment of visual imagery in Paris, the young immigrant is drawn one evening to a blinking sign promising "*Sex shop. Live show. Peep show*" (188). The narrator explains that "condamné à la chasteté par sa solitude et sa misère," Idriss seeks solace at the peep show "qui promettait . . . des assouvissements nerveux dans des gerbes d'images obscènes" (188). But rather than satiating the young man's thirst for female intimacy, the peep show exacerbates it by placing a glass barrier between him and the enticing performer clothed in a golden loin cloth and bathed in yellow light. Frustrated by this physical separation from his newfound object of desire, Idriss returns to the peep show only to have his superb *femme-lionne* unmasked as an ordinary cleaning woman with grey hair and varicose veins.

Thus far, Idriss has been deceived by each of his personal encounters with French blondes. After the Land Rover blonde fails to mail him a copy of his photograph, he is then visually tricked by the Marseille prostitute's false golden fleece and by the highly erotic

disguise of the Parisian cleaning lady turned *femme-lionne*. Following his disappointing encounters with these three females, Idriss then subconsciously reduces three blondes to one. Sitting in a cafe, he reads a comic strip while overhearing a conversation between a blonde and her companion. His imagination then fuses the identities of the blonde who photographed him at his African oasis with the blonde of his comic strip and the blonde present at the cafe. Idriss therefore perceives that the comic strip dialogue transcribes his own verbal exchange with the Land Rover blonde in Africa as well as the conversation he is currently overhearing at the cafe. To the consternation of the cafe blonde and her male companion, Idriss intrudes into their conversation sparking an altercation which lands the young immigrant in jail. Thus whereas his earlier experiences with blondes ended in keen disappointment and a sense of loss, Idriss's fantastic episode with the cafe blonde ends violently with his arrest.

Although his confrontation with the cafe blonde is Idriss's final encounter with a flesh and blood female, he is subsequently exposed to the legend of "La Reine blonde" and to a visual reminder of the African dancer, Zett Zobeida. Idriss hears the legend of "La Reine blonde" when he turns to calligraphy, seeking solace from the tantalizing imagery of Occidental society. Echoing his experience with French blondes, Idriss learns that "La Reine blonde" also cast a nefarious spell upon her aficionados. But different from the insensitive blondes Idriss has met, "La Reine blonde" mesmerizes males involuntarily. After the queen's blondness lures her brother-in-law to murder her royal husband, she rules in his stead all the while veiling her face and head and remaining celibate. But disguised as one of her maids, a male artist secretly paints a spellbinding portrait of the fair haired monarch thereby prompting his own suicide as well as the demise of all of the portrait's subsequent admirers. As we explained in chapter two, the legend of "La Reine blonde" concludes with the assertion that calligraphy can serve as an antidote to free the viewer from obsessive contemplation of a dangerously mesmerizing, visual image.

"La Reine blonde" clearly demonstrates that a woman can be innocently thrust into the nefarious role of blond lure. However, neither the narrator nor the naïve Idriss applies this idea retrospectively, thereby suggesting that financial needs may well have forced the bleached blonde of Marseille and the peep show's cleaning lady to deceitfully package themselves.[49] Rather than ending with such a rehabilitation of the disloyal blonde, the novel reintroduces the *goutte d'or* to highlight Idriss's role as alien in this land of the dangerous image.

At the novel's end, Idriss takes on yet another dehumanizing job - that of jackhammer operator with the team of immigrants building underground parking facilities at the *place Vendôme*. While wielding his phallic jackhammer, Idriss glances into a jewelry store window and spies the *goutte d'or* he had given to the Marseille prostitute. This glimpse of the golden pendant serves as catalyst for a flashback to his African oasis: "Il revoyait Zett Zobeida dansant dans la nuit avec ses bijoux sonores, avec sa goutte d'or silencieuse" (256). Idriss's visual reunion with the pendant he had obtained from Zett prompts Pierre de Boisdeffre to assert that "la merveilleuse goutte d'or de la danseuse continuera de le protéger" and that finally "Idriss a sauvé son âme" ("*La Goutte d'or* " 718, 719). Concerning the beneficial role of Idriss's calligraphy lessons, Colin Davis maintains that "Idriss is saved from the morbid fascination of the visual image by calligraphy" (166). But Davis and de Boisdeffre overlook the disturbing implications of the novel's last scene. Since the young Arab contemplates his treasured object in the jewelry shop's display case, the novel closes in a fashion reminiscent of the earlier peep show scene. For similar to his erotic visual encounter with the *femme-lionne*, Idriss's visual reunion with the *goutte d'or* reduces him to a spectator whose physical union with the object of his desire is thwarted by a glass barrier forming "un lieu clos . . . inaccessible aux mains, impénétrable" (187). With

[49]As Françoise Merllié states, Idriss is both "enfantin et analphabète" therefore lacking the emotional maturity and the intellectual capacity to empathize with the Marseille prostitute and the peep show artist ("*La Goutte d'or*" 117).

both the *femme-lionne* and his final encounter with the *goutte d'or*, Idriss is permitted to touch only with his eyes. As the novel concludes, the antidote to the dangerous Western image - *la goutte d'or* - has itself been entrapped in the showcase windows of the West. Similar to the novel's blond lures, the golden pendant is now placed safely out of Idriss's grasp.

Although Idriss is unable to unite physically with the encased *femme-lionne* and the *goutte d'or*, the violent penetration of the pavement by his phallic jackhammer is presented as a sexual act. Thus his cousin equates Idriss's jackhammer with "Un zob de géant. Avec ça, tu crèves Paris, tu niques la France!" (255). Nevertheless this "sex act" is performed by a mechanical phallus which rapes a vagina of concrete. Highlighting the theme of lack of physical intimacy, Idriss's rape of the Parisian pavement implies that as a Maghrebian outsider he is entitled only to a simulated version of lovemaking. Victimized by nefarious blond females and distanced from his golden talisman, Idriss's quest for reunion with his photograph ends only in alienation, depersonalization and rage.

A careful study of the Tournierian and Jouvian male heterosexual reveals that - like his bisexual and homosexual counterpart - he is often destined for premature death. Reminiscent of Jouve's prose, the heterosexual male is first presented in a bipolar manner in Tournier's novels. Similar to Jouve's Michele Cantarini (*Paulina 1880*) and Pierre Indemini (*Hécate* and *Vagadu*), Tournier's weak (the elder Crusoé, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*) or gentle (Count von Kaltenborn, *Le Roi des aulnes*) heterosexual male is destined for premature death. But unlike the Jouvian opus which executes devious (Waldemar, "La Victime") and cruel (Luc Pascal, *Le Monde désert* and *Vagadu*) heterosexual males literally or metaphorically, the male brute (the English sailors, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* and Göring and Blättchen, *Le Roi des aulnes*) thrives in Tournier's early novels. *Les Météores* adds another dimension to the configuration of the

Tournierian male heterosexual. Resounding with anti-heterosexual diatribe which concurs with that of Tiffauges from *Le Roi des aulnes*, *Les Météores* demonstrates that the self-centered heterosexual male is superfluous apart from his role as propagator. The final trait of heterosexual maleness within the Tournierian opus is that of male as the victim of a callous, deceitful female (Hérode, *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, *et al*). The examples of Gaspard, Taor (*Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*) and Idriss (*La Goutte d'or*) specify that the blonde is the avatar of this female perfidiousness.

So far our study has indicated that among Jouvian and Tournierian heterosexuals, bisexuals and gays, a fate of premature death, absence or exile clearly predominates. Turning now to the androgyne, we shall see if this exceptional being escapes the fate of Jouve's and Tournier's mainstream population of heterosexuals, bisexuals and gays.

# Chapter VII

## The Androgyne in the Prose of Michel Tournier and Pierre Jean Jouve

With its inherent promise of plenitude, the androgyne is a life form which has fascinated wo/man for centuries.[50] In his discourse on the theme of love from Plato's *Symposium*, Aristophanes explains the androgyne's role in the evolution of wo/man:

> The original human nature was not like the present, but different. The sexes were not two as they are now, but originally three in number; there was man, woman, and the union of the two, of which the name survives but nothing else. Once it was a distinct kind, with a bodily shape and a name of its own, constituted by the union of the male and the female: but now only the word 'androgynous' is preserved . . . (521).

Aristophanes adds that initially three sexes existed as a reflection of the trio of the sun, earth and moon: "man was originally the child of the sun, the woman of the earth, and the man-woman of the moon, which is made up of sun and earth" (521). Like the spherical orbs they reflected, these primeval human forms were also round. Aristophanes states that they were equipped with "four hands and the same number of feet, one head with two faces, looking opposite ways, set on a round neck and precisely alike; also four ears, two privy members, and the remainder to correspond" (521). Endowed with great flexibility of movement, the powerful beings could move forwards, backwards, roll at a great pace or stand upright. But their temerity proved to be more than the gods were willing to endure. Assailed by these terrifically strong creatures, the gods took action thereby forever destroying human primeval plenitude. Aristophanes explains that Zeus sliced the round

[50]The popularity of the androgynous character, Pat, from American television's "Saturday Night Live" and the international success of androgynous rock stars including Annie Lennox, Michael Jackson and Prince attest to present-day fascination with the androgyne. And to further showcase his androgyny, Prince recently changed his name to an unpronounceable symbol for the androgyne.

humans in two, and "bade Apollo give the face and the half of the neck a turn in order that man might contemplate the section of himself: he would thus learn a lesson of humility" (522). The severed humans then sought the half from which they had been divided and embraced to simulate their lost plenitude. In order to provide the gods with an ever increasing number of worshipers, Zeus removed the genitals from the humans' backs and repositioned them to the front. Thus, when the divided beings interlocked to recapture their former fullness, they also copulated and assured the existence of the human race. Aristophanes's speech on love therefore concurs with the theme running throughout the discourses of the *Symposium*: love is a desire to fill a lack within ourselves. In keeping with Aristophanes, this lack is our loss of physical plenitude so that uniting with our lover we are "reuniting our original nature, seeking to make one of two, and to heal the state of man. Each of us when separated, having one side only . . . is but the tally-half of a man, and he is always looking for his other half . . . And the reason is that human nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love" (523-24). Aristophanes concludes his discourse in a most optimistic fashion stating that the god of Love promises the restoration of our full, original state to those lovers leading pious lives.

Although Christian doctrine does not adhere to the Platonic concept of a third, androgynous sex, it maintains nevertheless that primeval man experienced a loss of original plenitude. Different from Plato's theory of creation which describes cleaving whole beings in two to form man and woman, the Book of Genesis asserts that God caused man to fall into a deep sleep "and while he slept took one of his ribs . . . and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man" (2). While the Bible indicates that man experienced the loss of his rib in the creation of woman, their ultimate banishment from the nurturing garden of Eden was a fragmentation experienced by both Adam and Eve. Although there is a diversion of details between the Christian and the

Platonic accounts of creation, they share nevertheless the idea of a fundamental loss of wholeness - an idea which runs throughout the prose works of Michel Tournier and Pierre Jean Jouve.

This theme of original fragmentation echoes throughout the Tournierian universe, for example in Tiffauges's lamentation from *Le Roi des aulnes*: "[la] *chute de l'homme* . . . qui brisa en trois l'Adam originel, faisant choir de l'homme la femme, puis l'enfant, créant d'un coup ces trois malheureux" (35). In *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, a Bedouin chief comments that "La chute de l'homme a cassé la vérité en deux morceaux" (191). Similarly, Paul Surin observes in *Les Météores* that after the Fall, "Le propre de l'homme est la séparation de l'âme et du corps" (525). Similarly, critics have noted Pierre Jean Jouve's preoccupation with the Fall and subsequent quest for unity. Kurt Schärer explains that "Dans l'optique jouvienne, l'aventure à la fois capitale et primordiale de la scission s'identifie avec l'expérience de la *faute* et de la *chute*" (145). Bruno Gelas also says that underlying Jouve's works is "la rupture d'une homogénéité initialement parfaite" (26). In "*Le Monde désert*," Christiane Blot-Labarrère emphasizes that Jouvian protagonists suffer from an "inguérissable division intérieure" (24) which Marina Balatti refers to as "une intériorité déchirée" (57).

Colin Davis also explains that Tournier's "Nostalgia for a lost paradise is combined with hope for the future correction of what made the Fall possible" (194). As we shall see, the fragmentation inflicted by the Fall is ostensibly "corrected" by Tournier's androgyne. Jérome Plignot states that Tournier's quest for androgynous harmony takes him "jusqu'à l'origine de l'humanité" in an attempt to recapture "cette unité primordiale perdue" (11). In *Michel Tournier*, William Cloonan likewise stresses the "need for order" which runs throughout Tournier's works, adding that the androgyne provides this ordering of experience (92). The androgyne presumably erases the division between male and female

thereby healing what Jouvian critic Bruno Gelas refers to as the ruptured "homogénéité initialement parfaite" (26).

Within the prose works of Tournier and Jouve, even characters not seeking the plenitude of androgyny yearn for unity. Thus, when the heterosexual Balthazar of Tournier's *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* describes what he found at Bethlehem, he says that "[J'y ai trouvé] la réponse à la question de toute ma vie, et cette réponse consistait dans l'impossible mariage de contraires inconciliables" (GMB 207; emphases mine). Although non-androgynous characters including Tournier's Balthazar and Jouve's Jacques de Todi (*Le Monde désert*) long for a restoration of unity, we shall limit our examination of this phenomenon to the androgynous figures of Tournier's Robinson Crusoé (*Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*), Abel Tiffauges (*Le Roi des aulnes*) and Paul Surin (*Les Météores*) and Jouve's Taddeo Buonvicini (*Le Monde désert*).

With the saga of Robinson Crusoé of *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* (1967), Tournier establishes the pattern he will follow subsequently in both *Le Roi des aulnes* (1970) and *Les Météores* (1975): the protagonist embarks upon a challenging voyage of initiation which seemingly culminates in his harmonious, androgynous apotheosis. Beginning his journey as a heterosexual (Robinson and Tiffauges) or homosexual (Paul), the protagonist ostensibly transcends human sexuality ending his cosmic journey in a tranquil showcase of androgyny.

When the voyage of the *Virginie* ends in shipwreck onto an uninhabited island, the voyage of initiation of the *Virginie*'s sole survivor, Robinson Crusoé, begins. We explained in chapter two that Robinson sets out to civilize the island in order to ward off insanity and death. Naming himself "gouverneur-général-administrateur," he imposes a strict routine upon the island: an exact copy of the regimented social structure he left behind in eighteenth-century English society (85). William Cloonan reminds the reader that

"Unlike Defoe's Crusoe, Tournier gives Robinson a wife and children whom he left behind in England" (*Michel Tournier* 29). Thus as he simulates the social structure of England, Robinson's sexuality has to be modified, for the island has no other human inhabitants. But although the unpopulated island forces Robinson into creative sexual practices, he maintains nevertheless what Judith Butler refers to as "coherent gender identities within a heterosexual frame" (*Gender Trouble* xii). After pessimistically naming the island "Désolation," he rechristens her "Speranza" in memory of a hot-blooded Italian girlfriend. Deciding that the island's configuration is that of a submissive, decapitated female, he takes the island literally and sexually for his female Other. Robinson first views Speranza as a maternal figure who permits him to recapture prenatal tranquillity in her womb-like cave. But having spilled some of his semen in the womb/cave, his incestuous guilt forces him to seek a different sexual expression and surrogate lover. Progressing from his role as the island's fetus, he becomes in turn her adult lover, taking as his mistress the toppled tree named Quillai. Once again his lovemaking simulates the heterosexual model for he deems that her branches are "deux énormes cuisses noires" while eagerly thrusting his penis into her "petite cavité moussue" (101). But equating the painful ant bite he receives in Quillai's "vagina" with a venereal disease, Robinson leaves behind his arboreal mistress to wed Speranza herself. For a full year before the arrival of Vendredi, Robinson receives the undivided attentions of his island/spouse in the marriage bed named "la combe rose" (114). No longer his mother/womb nor his licentious arboreal mistress, Speranza is the faithful wife with whom he produces floral daughters: beautiful white flowers with "le corps d'une petite fille" (115).

Vendredi's arrival puts an end to Robinson's carefully regimented society and to his albeit creative heterosexuality. When Vendredi explodes part of the island by accidently igniting gunpowder, the Englishman permanently abandons the rigid order of the society he has created. It is also due to Vendredi that Robinson ostensibly achieves divine androgyny.

First he abandons his final surrogate lover upon discovering that the unfaithful pink valley has produced striped flower children with Vendredi. And subsequently Robinson's emulation of Vendredi leads him to surpass earthly physical pleasure for a sublime relationship with the sun. Although Robinson insists that his solar worship is not sexual, it is nevertheless intimate and sensual. Eagerly awaiting sunrise in a tree, his face is enveloped by "Une chaude caresse" (166). When the sun finally appears, he feels "une allégresse nouvelle" as "Une vague chaleureuse le recouvrait" (167). All the while asserting that Vendredi and he have surpassed human sexuality, Robinson claims that he is forced to use sexual vocabulary to describe his solar union "en termes humains" (185). Thus although he refers to this bond as "œ coït solaire," Robinson adds that Vendredi and he have gained access to a superhuman level: "au suprême degré" where "la différence de sexe est dépassée" (185). In a fusion of gender typical of the androgyne, the biologically male Robinson explains that he is not the male lover but rather the female "épouse du ciel" opening himself up to the "fécondation de l'Astre Majeur" (185). In addition to alluding to Robinson's male/female makeup, this statement also establishes the cosmic apotheosis typical of Tournier's androgyne and, as we shall see, of Jouve's androgyne as well. Far surpassing mere human sexuality, Robinson maintains that he has become the intimate soul mate and spouse of the vital nucleus of our galaxy: the sun.

Devastated to discover that Vendredi has abandoned him to join the *Whitebird*'s odious crew, Robinson is subsequently rejuvenated by the unexpected discovery of a newcomer on Speranza: the ship's cabin boy, Jaan. With Jaan's arrival, Robinson takes on the nurturing role we shall also examine regarding Tournier's Abel Tiffauges (*Le Roi des aulnes*) and Jouve's Taddeo Buonvicini (*Le Monde désert*). When discovered within Speranza's cave, Jaan explains that he fled his cruel shipmates because of the kindness demonstrated by Robinson during the latter's visit on board the *Whitebird*. Interacting with the boy as a gentle, androgynous nurturer, Robinson takes his hand moved by the physical

evidence of the abuse Jaan has suffered. The text implies that just as the androgyne fuses female and male, so is Robinson's keen emotional sensitivity ("Il eut le cœur serré de . . . trouver [la main de Jaan] si mince, si faible, et pourtant labourée par tous les travaux du bord") united with an imposing physique ("Sa poitrine bombait comme un bouclier d'airain. Ses jambes prenaient appui sur le roc, massives et inébranlables comme des colonnes") (204, 205). Ostensibly transformed by the cosmic initiation he received from Vendredi, the colossal Robinson rechristens Jaan "Jeudi" - his first act as gentle guide for the boy's voyage of initiation on Speranza.

Critical reception of the androgynous metamorphosis of Tournier's Robinson Crusoé is a hearty endorsement of the text's premise. Critics therefore affirm that, emulating Vendredi, the heterosexual Robinson undergoes a transformation which fulfills the tarot card prophecy of the novel's prologue: "ayant accédé à la sexualité solaire . . . C'est le zénith de la perfection humaine, infiniment difficile à conquérir" (V 11). David Bevan asserts that Robinson "atteint . . . un état paradisiaque . . . isolé voluptueusement dans une éternité aérienne et ensoleillée. C'est une héliophanie . . . l'apothéose céleste de Robinson" (31). Bevan concludes that "La prophétie de Van Deyssel à Robinson au tout début du roman se trouve ainsi pleinement réalisée" (31). Patrick Grainville also speaks glowingly of Robinson's apotheosis, affirming that having begun his initiation in "le chaos des boues" of Speranza's wallowing hole, Robinson achieves "la sublimation aérienne et solaire . . . le couronnement d'une aventure totale qui nous a conduit du chaos au cosmos et de l'apocalypse à l'apothéose" (43, 45). André Thiel states that thanks to Vendredi, Robinson experiences "l'ultime métamorphose . . . il ne lui reste plus qu'à s'abandonner à la fécondation majeure des forces vitales" (98). Similarly, Michèle Duchet maintains that Robinson undergoes "[une] véritable conversation . . . à la 'vie sauvage', à 'l'éternité sereine des Dioscures'" (110-11).

While most Tournierian critics wholeheartedly endorse Robinson's ascension to solar ecstasy, Hubert Nyssen comments that "C'est, si l'on veut, un Robinson délivré de la culpabilité, dans une dialectique solaire pleine de contradictions mais aussi pleine de sève" (90; emphasis mine). But although Nyssen mentions that Robinson's glorious apotheosis is full of contradictions, he closes his article without delving into a single one. Nevertheless, a careful reading of *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* reveals the problematic nature of Robinson's ostensible discovery of divine, androgynous perfection. In her book entitled *Michel Tournier - le Roman mythologique*, Arlette Bouloumié devotes many pages to her explanation of the androgynous transformation of Robinson. Yet Bouloumié, Nyssen and other Tournierian critics overlook a striking feature of this androgyne: its reaffirmation of male/female bipolarity. Robinson says that he has undergone a conversion "radicale" under Vendredi's tutelage, for "au suprême degré où nous avons accédé, Vendredi et moi, la différence de sexe est dépassée, et Vendredi peut s'identifier à Vénus, tout de même qu'on peut dire en langage humain que je m'ouvre à la fécondation de l'Astre Majeur" (185). As we have noted, such comments are clearly intended to highlight Robinson's androgyny for this biological male asserts that he is symbolically the female spouse impregnated by the sun's rays. But ironically the text's androgynous fusion of masculine and feminine traits falls back on the traditional bipolar model decried by Judith Butler. In Butlerian terms, the androgynous Robinson "is constituted in part from the very heterosexual matrix that it seeks to displace" ("Imitation and Gender" 17). *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* intimates that Robinson's maleness gives rise to his colossal strength while his gentle nurturing of Jaan emanates from his latent femaleness.Thus, rather than truly displacing traditional concepts of gender, Robinson's androgyny is based upon stereotypes equating the male with physical strength and the female with sensitivity, fecundity and nurturing.Therefore the androgynous Robinson provides a reaffirmation rather than a seamless fusion of the male/female binary.

Arlette Bouloumié notes that Robinson's "reconquête de l'androgynat initial exprime la perfection de l'unité retrouvée" (185). She adds that this quest for unity "exprime le désir régressif d'un retour à la mère, le désir d'annuler l'essentielle coupure, la séparation qu'est la naissance" (247). Françoise Merllié also defines "le rêve d'androgynie [comme] . . . très proche d'un rêve de maternité" (40). However neither Bouloumié nor Merllié mentions the alarming outcome of this Tournierian simulation of maternal plenitude. For with the exception of the androgynous "Mère Noël" whose tale occupies a mere two pages of *Le Coq de bruyère*, the Tournierian androgyne is a biological male who appropriates maternity for himself thereby erasing the female Other. As Julia Kristeva explains in *Histoires d'amour*, the androgyne represents "Absorption du féminin chez l'homme, voilement du féminin chez la femme, l'androgynat règle ses comptes à la féminité: l'androgyne est un phallus déguisé en femme; ignorant la différence, il est la mascarade la plus sournoise d'une liquidation de la féminité" (71). In the case of Robinson, this liquidation of femaleness is amplified by the fact that - in addition to appropriating maternity for himself - he also appropriates the "female" space, Speranza, claiming "Robinson *est* Speranza" (82). William Cloonan responds to Robinson's statement by optimistically affirming that "what he has conquered is not the female Speranza but his own maleness, so that now his hitherto latent feminine qualities can begin to emerge" (*Michel Tournier* 29). But Cloonan fails to point out that Robinson is effecting a wholesale liquidation of the female as Other by equating himself with this space he has coded as female and by simulating maternal plenitude.

Another problematic component of the androgynous Robinson is the question of his purported self-sufficiency. Concerning their recreation of primeval physical plenitude, Françoise Merllié explains that Robinson and Vendredi "ont atteint une sorte d'équilibre en eux-mêmes, entre masculin et féminin [qui] . . . les rend autosuffisants"; "Robinson suffit à lui-même" (*Michel Tournier* 56, 57). But contradicting Merllié, Robinson demonstrates

not self-sufficiency but narcissistic, emotional dependency in a manner reminiscent of Tournier's Alexandre Surin (*Les Météores*). In chapter four we explained that Alexandre dresses young Daniel as his mirror image, thereby loving not an Other but himself. Different from the relationship between Alexandre and Daniel, that between Robinson and Vendredi is not homosexual but asexual. A second difference is that Alexandre dresses Daniel as himself while Robinson undresses in order to resemble Vendredi. To create this physical resemblance, Robinson bares his skin to the sun, shaves his beard and increases his physical strength, proudly concluding that "il était devenu son frère - et il n'était pas sûr que ce fût son frère aîné" (157). Vendredi's replacement, Jaan, has an innate resemblance to his mentor-to-be. In addition to sharing race, hair color and status as former British subjects, both Jaan and Robinson have been denied maternal intimacy. Thus the common link in the relationships between Alexandre and Daniel and those between Robinson and Vendredi/ Jaan is the notion of Other as vital, narcissistic mirror image of the Self. This younger mirror image serves a dual purpose for Alexandre and Robinson. First it youthens the adult male by providing him with a chronologically younger self-image described by Alexandre as "fils-jumeau, moi-même trente ans plus tôt, naïf" (M 250). In the case of Robinson, this aging *à rebours* occurs twice. For after youthening to resemble Vendredi, his next companion is an even younger lad, Jaan. His choice of name for the young boy, Jeudi, highlights that Robinson will continue the youthening already begun by his contact with Jeudi's predecessor, Vendredi. Secondly with both Alexandre and Robinson, their parenting of a younger, mirror image allows them to mentor and to reparent themselves. Although this reparenting is only implied in the case of Robinson/Jeudi, Alexandre clearly specifies that Daniel is "le petit garçon orphelin que maman a laissé derrière elle," "moi-même" (M 247, 250). Thus like Robinson, Alexandre acts anachronistically as his very own mentor: "je serai auprès de lui, tandis qu'il y a trente ans, je n'avais personne, je m'avançais sans guide, sans protecteur" (M 250). Robinson's parenting of Jeudi will fill a

dual lack of physical intimacy. For in addition to supplying the gentle nurturing so absent in the life of the abused cabin boy, Robinson will belatedly experience the intimacy his own undemonstrative parents never afforded him.

Julia Kristeva's discussion of the androgyne in *Histoires d'amour* reveals the relevance of Vendredi and Jeudi as vital mirror images to Robinson: "L'androgyne n'aime pas, il se mire dans un autre androgyne pour n'y voir que soi-même, arrondi, sans faille, sans autre. Fusion en lui-même, il ne peut même pas fusionner: il se fascine de sa propre image" (71). Thus contrary to critical affirmation of Robinson's androgynous plenitude and self-sufficiency, he is emotionally dependent upon his younger Other/Self in a fashion which recalls Alexandre's bond with Daniel. We noted in chapter four that Julia Kristeva explains the dandy may well be tied to "un Narcisse précocement blessé [qui] ait besoin d'un témoin pour qu'il puisse fixer une image propre dans le regard de cet autre" (*Histoires d'amour* 314). Although the shipwrecked Robinson is a far cry from the well-dressed Alexandre, both men work to cultivate a visual image of Other/Self and permanent separation from their Other leaves them devastated. While in Kristevan terms Eros keeps Thanatos at bay in the life of Alexandre until Daniel's death, in Tournierian terms solar ecstasy keeps Thanatos at bay in Robinson's life until the unannounced departure of Vendredi. When Alexandre's precious Daniel is torn to bits by rats, the aging dandy marches consciously toward a thinly-disguised suicide. And when Robinson discovers that Vendredi has left Speranza, he returns to die within the island's womb/tomb cave. But unlike Alexandre, who receives no replacement Other/Self, Speranza's tomb-like cave reprises its role as womb by symbolically presenting Robinson with a son/twin whom the sun will now bronze into a perfect copy of his mentor-to-be.

Focusing upon Robinson's solar apotheosis, critics including Hubert Nyssen, André Thiel, *et al.* do not even mention the suicidal depression which he experiences after Vendredi's departure. Like most critics, Michèle Duchet notes that before Vendredi's

arrival on Speranza, Robinson's rigidly organized society-for-one is "un 'système' qui tourne à vide" (108). But Duchet, *et al.* do not take into account Robinson's depression after losing Vendredi and the implications thereof. For Robinson's depression reveals that like the "île *administrée*," solar ecstasy is also meaningless without the essential, narcissistic Other with whom he simulates androgynous plenitude (V 98). The presence of the Other is also a necessary component for Robinson's ostensible immortality - another of his qualities which critics fail to question. Robinson proudly claims to have attained the promise of his tarot card fortune - an ascent to "la Cité solaire - suspendue entre le temps et l'éternité" (11). Françoise Merllié points out the connection between the androgyne and this conquest of eternity: "par sa plénitude même [l'androgyne est] au-dessus . . . du temps et du vieillissement" (*Michel Tournier* 38). But Merllié and the numerous proponents of Robinson's androgynous immortality ignore the sudden aging he experiences after Vendredi has left Speranza. Assuming that Vendredi will remain with him on the island, Robinson anticipates a return to "l'éternité sereine des Dioscures" after the departure of the *Whitebird* (199). Yet with the alarming discovery of Vendredi's absence, Robinson deems that the English sailors have inflicted him "comme les germes d'une maladie mortelle" with the twenty-eight years of aging he had escaped on the island (202). Without Vendredi, "il était devenu tout à coup un vieil homme . . . Mais, vieux et sans forces, comment recouvrerait-il cet état de grâce si longuement et durement conquis? N'était-ce pas tout simplement en mourant?" (202) Since his will to live is subsequently restored due to the discovery of Jaan in Speranza's womb/cave, the text reveals the fragility of Robinson's supposedly immortal, solar androgyny. Contrary to the assertions of Merllié, *et al.* which depict Robinson as both self-sufficient and eternal, his immortality - like his solar ecstasy and androgynous plenitude - depends upon the presence of a narcissistic Other.

Finally, the unmasking of Robinson's glorious, eternal androgyny as a fragile equilibrium dependent upon the presence of a narcissistic Other does not negate his tarot

card prophecy. In reading the cards, the captain warned Robinson that the organizer within him "s'efforce de maîtriser avec des moyens de fortune. Il semble y parvenir, mais n'oublions pas que ce démiurge est aussi bateleur: son œuvre est illusion, son ordre est illusoire. Malheureusement il l'ignore" (7). Thus, like Robinson himself, Tournierian critics have been duped by the precarious illusion of Crusoé's apotheosis perceiving neither that it amounts to an appropriation of the female nor that its plenitude, solar ecstasy and immortality all depend upon the narcissistic self-image afforded by the Other.

The basic elements of Robinson's androgynous metamorphosis are also evident in the saga of another Tournierian androgyne: Abel Tiffauges of *Le Roi des aulnes*. Like Robinson, Tiffauges undergoes a challenging voyage of initiation which transforms him from heterosexual to androgynous nurturer of a young boy. But whereas Robinson's heterosexuality was perfectly normal before he was shipwrecked, Tiffauges's failure in a heterosexual affair serves as catalyst for his odyssey. Abandoned by his mistress, Rachel, he interprets her epithet - "Tu es un ogre" - literally (13). While Robinson gradually evolves from the creative heterosexual lover of surrogate females to solar androgyne, Tiffauges immediately abandons heterosexuality after Rachel's departure. Thus unlike the major sequence of events in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* which follows Robinson's evolution from creative heterosexual to androgyne, *Le Roi des aulnes* quickly propels Tiffauges from inept heterosexual to pedophilic ogre and ostensibly to an androgynous reincarnation of Saint Christopher.

During his unhappy existence in pre-World War II France, Tiffauges's dual instincts as pedophile and ogre manifest themselves in the descriptions of his gargantuan feasts. He consumes oysters with the pleasure of both pedophile (savoring the "fraîcheur . . . de ces petits corps") and ogre (savoring "la possession orale . . . une des révélations de ma vocation ogresse") (111). After an accident at his garage, Tiffauges experiences a similar

dual pleasure when lifting the injured Jeannot. He senses that having the young man in his arms is the blissful pedophilic experience of child carrying which he calls "[la] phorie": "l'euphorie du 3 octobre était provoquée par le poids d'un enfant venu s'ajouter au mien" (133). But carrying Jeannot also stimulates Tiffauges's ogreish component. For, as he stated earlier concerning the carrying of the Christ Child by Saint Christopher, Jesus is "à la fois porté et emporté . . . il y a du rapt et de la corvée" (85-86). Later Tiffauges indulges these pedophilic and ogreish desires by photographing children and recording sounds of them at play. Studying his photographs, Tiffauges dreams of putting children into a cage: "Mettre des enfants en cage . . . Mon âme ogresse y trouverait son compte" (152). His tenant, Madame Eugénie, senses the ogreish pleasure which he derives from photographing children. Watching him return from a particularly fruitful photographic hunt, she comments: "Voilà M. Tiffauges qui revient du marché avec sa provision de chair fraîche. Il va maintenant s'enfermer dans le noir pour manger tout ça" (180).

After striking up a friendship with a young girl, Tiffauges is falsely accused of raping her. Imprisoned for the rape of Martine, his photographs and tape recordings of children are all confiscated by the police. Released from prison due to the mobilization for the war, Tiffauges first serves as the caretaker of French carrier pigeons. Upon discovering that his three favorite pigeons have been killed, Tiffauges's reaction is once again that of a pedophilic ogre. He deems that he alone should eat the three pigeons, whom he describes as "les petits corps assassinés" (237). He notes that his solemn feast of the "trois petits soldats égorgés" will have "un caractère presque religieux" (238).

Captured by the Nazis and sent to East Prussia, Tiffauges rises in stature until unofficially attaining the position of supervisor of daily life at the napola, Kaltenborn. Just as he collected pigeons for the army in France, now he hunts young men to serve the Führer. Reminiscent of Goethe's ballad, "Le Roi des aulnes," Tiffauges mounts his imposing steed, "Barbe-Bleue," and scours the countryside for potential *Jungmannen*

(352). Tiffauges also brings to mind the negative mythological connotations of the ogre by requesting to have a cape woven from the hair trimmed from his four hundred young charges.

Tiffauges rescues a dying Jewish child at the conclusion of *Le Roi des aulnes* thereby recalling the starving pigeon he rescued earlier in France. But rather than the pedophilic ogre's delight he experienced when hunting perfect human specimens for the Führer, it is genuine empathy which moves him to succor this Jewish orphan. Thus echoing Robinson's reaction to Jaan's thin, work torn hand in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, Tiffauges "eut le cœur serré" when first lifting Ephraïm's featherweight, almost lifeless body (RA 551). Extremely devoted to his charge, Tiffauges prepares a bed for him in the warmest part of the castle and tries "avec acharnement" to bring him back to life (552). As in the case of the colossal Robinson mothering/fathering Jaan, Tiffauges's nursing of Ephraïm also combines imposing physique with tender nurturing.

The text implies that by unselfishly nurturing the boy, Tiffauges sheds his negative connotations as pedophilic ogre. Thus Ephraïm's arrival prepares Tiffauges's ostensible ascension - an apotheosis typical of Jouve's and Tournier's androgyne. And as Jaan saves Robinson's life by rekindling his desire to live, Ephraïm serves as savior by enlightening the naïve Tiffauges concerning the horrors of the Nazi regime. Listening to the Jewish orphan's nightmarish recollections, Tiffauges begins to understand the evils of this Nazi empire he had so admired. Ephraïm's interpretation of the word "Canada" is especially painful to his gargantuan nurse. Since the time of his childhood initiation to James Oliver Curwood's *Le Piège d'or*, Tiffauges had associated the word "Canada" with a marvelous dreamland, "une province de son rêve personnel . . . le refuge de son enfance" (556). He is horrified upon learning that "Canada" is also the name given to the enclosure containing the valuables of Jewish victims at Auschwitz. In the novel's last scene, Tiffauges carries the boy away from the castle and the invading Russian troops. This final tableau provides the

gentle androgyne with the ultimate phoric experience presumably simulating the incomparable euphoria felt by Saint Christopher as he carried the Christ Child. Tiffauges's metamorphosis from pedophilic ogre to androgynous carrier of Child Savior is now seemingly complete.

Similar to the enthusiastic critical reception of Robinson's androgynous metamorphosis in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, critics have endorsed Tiffauges's androgynous transformation thereby endorsing the premise of *Le Roi des aulnes*. David Bevan extols Tiffauges's voyage - the long route "vers son sacrifice et son apothéose finale" which transforms him into "le Roi des aulnes, illuminé par la lumière de Saint-Christophe," showcasing "[sa] glorieuse inhumation finale" (22, 38, 55). Françoise Merllié explains that in choosing the way of *la phorie*, Tiffauges has chosen his path to sainthood: "la sainteté est une voie possible pour Tiffauges, qui en prenant un enfant sur ses épaules, cherche, comme St.-Christophe ou Albuquerque, à se sauver en sauvant" (*Michel Tournier* 29). Arlette Bouloumié adds that this denouement "est la reprise mot pour mot, du texte de Jacques de Voragine décrivant saint Christophe" capping Tiffauges's "assomption finale en Prusse Orientale" (74, 140). She deems that Tiffauges finds not death in the Prussian swamp but "régénération . . . rite de passage à un mode d'être supérieur" (174). Similar to the exhumed peat-bog man of whom Tiffauges has a final vision, Merllié indicates that Tiffauges will be preserved in the fen thereby receiving the "promesse d'éternité" (*Michel Tournier* 30).

Applauding what he views as Tiffauges's phoric self-sacrifice, Roger Shattuck asserts that the protagonist "s'en dégage en sauvant un jeune prisonnier juif et en l'emmenant à bon port, au prix de sa propre vie" (146). Similarly, John Weightman states that Tiffauges delivers Ephraïm to a safe haven. But this interpretation offered by both Weightman and Shattuck alters the novel's plot which indicates that Ephraïm is engulfed along with Tiffauges in the slime of the marsh. While Shattuck and Weightman's misreading of *Le Roi*

*des aulnes* is obvious, the interpretations of critics cited above are also problematic. For Arlette Bouloumié, Françoise Merllié, David Bevan, *et al*accept the text's premise that Tiffauges achieves a glorious, androgynous apotheosis without examining the fissures underlying this final tableau. Noting that Tiffauges "se sent tiré par une force irrésistible vers les marécages," David Bevan adds that "C'est à ce moment apocalyptique que, au mythe de l'Erlkönig, s'ajoute inséparablement et définitivement celui de Saint-Christophe" (37). As Bevan indicates, Tiffauges seemingly attempts to carry his charge to safety in imitation of Saint Christopher. And although Tiffauges's flight with Ephraïm ends in death, the text implies that the couple will be eternally preserved in the slime of the marsh. But applauding Tiffauges's last phoric action as pinnacle of divine transformation (Bevan) or noble self-sacrifice (Roger Shattuck), critics have ignored both the motivation for and results of Tiffauges's final moments. Rather than self-sacrifice, Tiffauges's ultimate *phorie* can be viewed as a selfish act which condemns both man/steed and boy/passenger to certain death. Tiffauges and Ephraïm will presumably be preserved in the Prussian swamp as were the peat-bog man and companion, yet Tiffauges attains the immortal stature of his dreams by sacrificing the life of his charge along with his own. Thus David Bevan's statement quoted above does not fully stress that Tiffauges's role as Saint Christopher still has a very strong component of the ogreish Erl-King. Reminiscent of Goethe's Erl-King, Tiffauges whisks a child away from safety to death. For as French prisoner of war and former concentration camp victim, Tiffauges and Ephraïm would have been granted safe haven by the Russian troops invading the napola. Instead of truly bearing the Jewish child to safety in imitation of Saint Christopher, Tiffauges's action can be viewed as an ironic reprisal of his role as ogreish Erl-King. Thus after painstakingly nursing the malnourished boy back to life, Tiffauges selfishly carries Ephraïm to certain death.

Clearly, Tiffauges's end is not the apotheosis applauded by Françoise Merllié, Arlette Bouloumié, *et al.* but rather an apocalypse which parallels the collapse of the Nazi

regime. As we noted previously, Tiffauges deems that the addition of a cape woven from the hair of his *Jungmannen* would provide the ultimate finishing touch to his regalia as unofficial supervisor at Kaltenborn. Nevertheless Tiffauges never receives his Golden Fleece for this request horrifies the carder, Frau Dorn. The text then supplies a clear indication of the impending apocalypse of both Tiffauges and the Third Reich. For in place of the mantle of human hair, Tiffauges soon receives a different human cloak when the violence of the war encroaches upon the sheltered haven of the napola. After young Arnim drops the mine he is carrying, the bloodied Tiffauges deems that he has received a cloak: "Un manteau de pourpre . . . et ce manteau était Arnim le Souabe" (545). Focusing upon Tiffauges's end as "l'apogée de sa quête, la splendeur d'un désir pur . . . une extase," Patrick Grainville (46), *et al.* have failed to notice both this vestmental indication of Tiffauges's apocalyptic descent and the one which follows: his final change of clothing from his authoritative attire as unofficial supervisor of the napola to his garb as prisoner of war. Grainville's statements seem to imply that Tiffauges achieves a metaphorical fulfillment of his dream to become "maître" in the hallowed land of the East, "où le destin ayant balayé la canaille remettrait entre ses mains les clés du royaume pour lequel il était né" (RA 263, 429). But Tiffauges's actual fate negates both his premonitions of glory and critics' endorsement thereof, for he marches to an unnecessary death clothed not in his napola finery and a Golden Fleece but in his prisoner's uniform.

The protagonist's final abandonment of the East is another point overlooked by Patrick Grainville and other proponents of Tiffauges's apotheosis. As the novel concludes, Tiffauges turns his back on the hallowed land he formerly deemed both "la source de lumière" and the keeper of the keys to his superhuman destiny (472). His journey to grandeur and enlightenment ends as a senseless, thinly-disguised suicide not facing the East he formerly revered but "en direction de l'ouest sauveur" (579).

Just as the tarot card prophecy in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* intimates that Robinson's solar ecstasy is a precarious illusion, *Le Roi des aulnes* contains a prophecy predicting that Tiffauges's fate will be more the apocalypse experienced by the Nazi regime than the apotheosis indicated by Tiffauges and Tournierian critics. Speaking frankly with Tiffauges prior to his own arrest by the Gestapo, Count Herbert von Kaltenborn predicts an apocalyptic end both for the Third Reich and for the French prisoner. Concerning the destiny of the latter, the count warns that "un homme marqué par le destin est voué fatalement à finir en Allemagne, comme le papillon qui tournoie dans la nuit finit toujours par trouver la source de lumière qui l'enivre et le tue" (472-73). Coinciding with our assertion that Tiffauges's final carrying of Ephraïm reprises the former's role as Erl-King, the count also foresees "une inversion maligne [qui] bouleverse la phorie [pour indiquer que] la fin des temps est proche" (473). As we explained in chapter two, Tiffauges deems that the "inversion maligne" is an important element of his legacy from his childhood friend, Nestor (520). Tiffauges explains that the "inversion maligne" is related to "un certain tour de mon destin, toujours menaçant" which is capable of distorting even the most propitious prognostication of his future into an omen of doom (520). He adds that this evil transformation occurs in direct proportion to the degree of his favorable appraisal of the sign. But just as we noted that the full implications of Captain Van Deyssel's prophecy are ignored by both Robinson and critics of *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, Tournierian critics unconsciously imitate Tiffauges in turning a deaf ear to the full implications of the count's prophecy.

Another similarity between Tournierian critics Colin Davis, *et al.* and Tiffauges is their shared assessment of Ephraïm's role as clairvoyant. Listening to the lad's horrifying memories of life at Auschwitz, Tiffauges is totally devastated to learn that the concentration camp is "une Cité infernale qui répondait pierre par pierre à la Cité phorique dont il avait rêvé à Kaltenborn" (560). Colin Davis explains that - enlightened by Ephraïm - the dazzling

"light" of Tiffauges's adoptive land begins to diminish (60). But Davis does not fully explain that Tiffauges remains convinced of his superhuman destiny in spite of the enlightenment provided by the young clairvoyant. Thus Tiffauges marches to death still intoxicated by the flame to which the count had partially alluded: his imagined legacy from Nestor, Saint Christopher and the exhumed peat-bog man.

Metaphorically blind regarding his grandiose dreams of immortality, Tiffauges is also literally hampered by impaired vision. Naturally endowed with poor eyesight, he also loses his thick glasses after fleeing the napola. Begging Ephraïm to guide him by the ears, Tiffauges moves on "les bras tendus en avant, comme un aveugle" (580). After revealing that Tiffauges turns his back on the East he formerly revered, the narrator adds that "l'obscurité se referma sur lui. Il avança encore quelques minutes, doublement aveugle" (579; emphases mine). Ironically, when the East ceases to dazzle Tiffauges, the light goes out literally in this former "source de lumière" (472). Colin Davis maintains that this ending offers ambiguous, "incompatible readings": "Salvation through Ephraïm or the final consequences of Tiffauges's will-to-death; sublime apotheosis or the banality of accidental death; the fulfilment of destiny or its ultimate frustration" (62). Referring to these interpretations proposed by Davis, a careful reading of *Le Roi des aulnes* reveals that Tiffauges's end is not "sublime apotheosis" but rather "the final consequences of Tiffauges's will-to-death" (62). Thus the culmination of Tiffauges's phoric ecstasy is a shortsighted death march, mired by literal and symbolic blindness - a microcosmic reflection of the Nazi regime's final apocalypse.

Similar to his forerunner, Robinson Crusoé, Tiffauges's asexual union with a young boy/twin ostensibly allows him to achieve timeless, androgynous plenitude. In *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, the twinship between Robinson and Jaan is immediately established by their shared race, hair coloring and nationality. The reader also assumes that the boy's forthcoming exposure to the sun will soon transform him into Robinson's albeit

younger sosie. Although Ephraïm is an emaciated Jewish lad of East European descent, he can be viewed nevertheless as Tiffauges's younger twin/self. For in spite of the massive physical stature of the adult Tiffauges, as a boy he had "[la figure] la plus mince, la plus souffreteuse" of all his classmates (23). And while Ephraïm is literally orphaned when his parents are killed in a Nazi death camp, Tiffauges also refers to himself as an orphan in his journal due to his father's coldness and his mother's absence. Both Tiffauges and Ephraïm are marginal members of society, the latter as a Jew and the former as social misfit, alleged rapist and prisoner of war of possible gypsy extraction. The emotional and physical torture to which Ephraïm was subjected at Auschwitz clearly surpasses that experienced by Jaan at the hands of the *Whitebird*'s crew, yet each boy is a needy candidate for the gentle attention of his newfound caretaker. Furthermore, the physical intimacy which Robinson and Tiffauges experience with their charges allows the two adults to fill this painful void within themselves - the void created by Robinson's undemonstrative parents and by Tiffauges's absent mother and overly stern father. Finally, in both novels the union of adult nurturer and younger twin/self supposedly takes place outside the bounds of time. Robinson claims that Speranza is free from the restraints of chronological time due to her location "[dans] les limbes du Pacifique" (108). In accordance with what he perceives as his superhuman destiny, Tiffauges deems that his existence is timeless both as mythological ogre ("j'étais là déjà, il y a mille ans, il y a cent mille ans") and as future peat-bog man ("immergé dans les marécages, protégé, par une lourde nappe de limon, de toutes les atteintes, celle des hommes et celles du temps") (13, 531).

Just as critics have generally failed to notice the fissures which underlie Tiffauges's supposed apotheosis, so have they overlooked the alarming implications of the Tiffaugean androgyne. First we noted in *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* that the unexpected arrival of Jaan restores Robinson's will to live. But ironically, Tiffauges gives life and then death to his young charge in *Le Roi des aulnes*. After secretly housing the dying Jewish

boy and gently nursing him back to life, Tiffauges subsequently negates his role as nurturer carrying Ephraïm away from the liberating Russian troops to a needless death. Secondly, both *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* and *Le Roi des aulnes* simulate androgynous plenitude by uniting an adult biological male with a prepubescent biological male. Regarding this recreation of plenitude, Arlette Bouloumié explains that the Tournierian concept of *la phorie* (the ecstasy resulting from carrying a child) is an obvious imitation of maternity, of woman as the "porte-enfant" (102). She adds that Tiffauges experiences *la phorie* seeking "à réintégrer en lui l'élément féminin" (102). William Cloonan also defines *la phorie* as "the experience of emotional satisfaction that comes from . . . carrying a child" (*Michel Tournier* 42). While Bouloumié and Cloonan view Tiffauges's phoric ecstasy as a positive blossoming of the female component within the male protagonist, they totally overlook the disturbing implications thereof. For as Julia Kristeva stresses, the androgyne entails "Absorption du féminin chez l'homme . . . l'androgyne est un phallus déguisé en femme . . . la mascarade la plus sournoise d'une liquidation de la féminité" (*Histoires d'amour* 71). With the androgynous Robinson's claim that he is the female island, Speranza, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* erases the female as Other. Subsequently with the androgynous Tiffauges, *Le Roi des aulnes* develops the concept of *la phorie*: the euphoric child carrying which entails a blatant appropriation of maternity by a biological male.

Although Robinson appropriates Speranza and Tiffauges appropriates maternity with *la phorie*, the female space of Mother Prussia prevails in the conclusion of *Le Roi des aulnes*. Paralleling the final "inversion maligne" which converts Tiffauges from Ephraïm's gentle nurse to a reprisal of the Erl-King, a similar inversion takes place in the relationship between Mother Prussia and Tiffauges (520). Initially Tiffauges perceives that Prussia is his nurturing mother earth - the phoric soil who will "carry" her privileged child to his predestined, glorious ascension. Belying Tiffauges's claim that he will ultimately rise to be

the "maître" of his adoptive country, Mother Prussia ironically usurps his ogreish role sucking Tiffauges and Ephraïm to death in one of her water-logged fens (263). But although *Le Roi des aulnes* concludes with a demonstration of the power of female space, we explained in chapter two that said demonstration associates femaleness with death thereby adding a final endorsement to the novel's negative female portrait.

Following on the heels of the child-carrying Tiffauges, with Paul Surin of *Les Météores* Tournier returns to the theme of an androgynous simulation of maternal plenitude by a biological male. But whereas the odysseys of Tiffauges and Robinson take them from heterosexual maleness to androgyny, *Les Météores* implies that as identical twins, Paul and Jean Surin are naturally endowed with androgynous plenitude. While the previous Tournierian couples of Robinson/Vendredi, Robinson/Jaan and Tiffauges/Ephraïm imply twinship, Jean and Paul Surin are perfectly identical twins: "le même corps enlacé à son double, le même visage . . . qui présente à la fois sa face et son profil droit" (M 12). Albeit unconsciously, the family members of the Surin twins highlight the premise that twinship affords androgynous plenitude by referring to them collectively as "Jean-Paul." Similarly, the narrator indicates that Jean-Paul do not speak individually but in a single, unified voice: "Jean-Paul se dresse sur son séant et dit: 'J'ai faim'" (13). *Les Météores* adds numerous details which attest to the plenitude and self-sufficiency of young Jean-Paul. We have seen that Robinson and Tiffauges are initially heterosexuals who are forced to seek a female Other to achieve sexual fulfillment. But since Paul and Jean are geminate homosexuals, *Les Météores* asserts that their self-sufficient sexuality is superior to that of both gays and heterosexuals. To highlight the self-sufficiency of the geminate cell, Paul affirms that the nocturnal, seminal ritual of making love with Jean erases the contamination of their day-long contact with non-twins. And even during their daytime contact with the non-twin world, Paul and Jean are able to partially restore the cell of twinship through their use of

cryptophasia - the language created by the twins themselves. Speaking their very own language obviously serves to unite Jean-Paul who are able to carry on secret conversations linguistically creating an exclusive, geminate universe to which only they can gain entrance. As young boys, Jean-Paul relish in dressing alike and constantly exchanging identification bracelets thereby creating a fusion and confusion of identity for themselves as well as for others. Regarding this exchange of identification bracelets, the adult Jean jokes that it was done so frequently that even to this day he himself cannot tell who is Jean and who is Paul.

The irony of Jean-Paul's identical twinship is that these twins are not truly identical. Therefore Paul thrives on the incestuous unity of twinship which stifles Jean. In chapter four, we noted various traumatic incidents which pave the way for Jean's breaking free of the geminate cell: his inability to distinguish his own photographs from Paul's; his selection of a wardrobe identical to Paul's; his perception that Paul's image has replaced his own in a triple mirror; and the seduction of his fiancée by Paul. The latter action is the catalyst for two separate quests: Jean's quest for freedom and Paul's quest to relocate Jean and to return with him to the hermetically sealed, geminate cell.

Different from the odysseys of Robinson Crusoé and Abel Tiffauges, that of Paul Surin is not presented as a transformation from heterosexuality to androgyny but rather a restoration of the latter state. In addition, Paul's voyage of initiation occurs much later than the ones of Robinson and Tiffauges. Robinson embarks upon his initiation phase immediately, coinciding with his shipwreck. Tiffauges's journey toward the hallowed east begins on page two hundred forty-nine, less than halfway through the five hundred and eighty-one pages of *Le Roi des aulnes*. In *Les Météores*, Paul's journey takes place after the disappearance of Jean - on page four hundred twenty-four of this six hundred and twenty-five page saga. Paul's departure differs from the ones of Robinson and Tiffauges in its timing and its restoration of the protagonist's geminate plenitude. Nevertheless *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, *Le Roi des aulnes* and *Les Météores* ostensibly demonstrate

that Robinson, Tiffauges and Paul all experience a voyage of initiation culminating in sexual metamorphosis and cosmic apotheosis.

Trailing Jean around the globe in hopes of restoring the fragmented unity of their twinship, Paul travels from France to Venice, Djerba, Iceland, Alaska, Japan, Canada and Berlin. The reader soon realizes that Paul's voyage will not end in a reunion with Jean but rather in an incorporation of traces of the departed twin and a subsequent self-expansion by the remaining twin. But before Paul can expand to fill the entire cell of twinship, he must psychologically detach himself from his absent twin. Paul's lengthy voyage is therefore a diary of this gradual, psychological detachment. For example, when Paul explains why he has come to Iceland, the reader senses that preparation is underway for the protagonist to come to grips with his separation from Jean. Paul states that he has come to Iceland not to find Jean, but to locate "en Islande ce que Jean est venu y chercher" (504). During the Japanese leg of his journey, various portraits of Jean help Paul to accept his twin's individuality as well as his own. Jean's portraits reveal "un profil de perpétuel migrant" and "une folie de fuite vers des ailleurs indéterminés" (539). Clearly seeing his brother for the first time through the series of paintings, Paul sees his own image there "de moins en moins" thereby offering a reversal of Jean's childhood experience with the triple mirror (539). Paul then gives an ogreish preview of his final apotheosis. Like a meteorite, Jean will dissipate through his flight, while Paul feels "je m'engraisse de sa substance perdue, je m'incorpore mon frère fuyard" (539).

During the last leg of his journey, Paul arrives in Berlin just as the Wall is being constructed. Attending mass in the crypt of a church, Paul hears a sermon appropriate both to his own status as severed twin and to the status of divided Berlin. Speaking of the relationship between martyred cities such as Berlin and "le sacrifice fratricide" which accompanies them, the priest mentions that Cain killed Abel and founded a city, Romulus killed Remus and founded Rome, etc. (595). Paralleling this sermon on the foundation of

cities and fraternal sacrifice, Paul receives a message stating that he will be united with Jean in the French sector of divided Berlin. In order to achieve this long-desired reunion, Paul has to descend into a tunnel under the city. Underneath divided Berlin, Paul is crushed by a wall of mud, symbolically amputating his errant twin and literally amputating the left side of his body.

Rather than deeply resenting the disfigurement he suffered in Berlin, Paul deems that it is a necessary prelude to his cosmic metamorphosis. While critic Jean-Didier Wolfromm complains that the symbolism of the Berlin tunnel is unclear (37), Paul would clearly reject the following interpretation by William Cloonan: the Berlin tunnel is "a womb that rejects him horribly and leaves him deformed and bereft forever of his brother's presence" (*Michel Tournier* 62). On the contrary, Paul affirms that the "mutilations rituelles de Berlin" had the fortuitous result of replacing "le vide" of his symbolically amputated brother with "une magnifique surabondance" (614). He adds that he has gained "hyperconnaissance" which gives him the sensation of being able to launch his invisible yet superior limbs "à la conquête du monde" (616-17). The text's premise concurs with Paul's assessment thereby presenting the ritual mutilation in Berlin and the disappearance of Jean as necessary stages in Paul's cosmic conversion to an omnipresent being. As foreshadowed by a gull in Iceland, Paul's metamorphosis ostensibly allows him to interpret the language of the cosmos, the "chant du monde" (623). Reminiscent of the ogreish Tiffauges, Paul claims that "je m'engraisse de . . . [la] substance perdue . . . [de] mon frère fuyard" (539). But swallowed by the ogreish fen of Mother Prussia, Tiffauges deems that his corporeal form will be eternally preserved. On the other hand, Paul explains that he ultimately ascends from lowly humanness to a higher, gaseous state indicated by the final word of *Les Météores*: "sublimation" (625).

Paul's apotheosis presents a variation on those of Tournier's Robinson and Tiffauges and of Jouve's Taddeo. In their final tableaux, the three latter characters serve as

androgynous nurturers for a male child (Robinson and Tiffauges) and for two adults (Taddeo). Robinson and Tiffauges are gentle androgynes of gargantuan proportions and Taddeo is also large. On the other hand, Paul is a slender man even before his accident in Berlin. Different from Robinson, Tiffauges and Taddeo, the severely disfigured Paul is nursed by his family's maid, Méline, rather than nursing an Other. But in spite of his dependence upon Méline and the literal and metaphorical amputation he has experienced, the text indicates that Paul has nevertheless surpassed the plenitude afforded by the geminate cell. Similar to Tournier's Robinson and Tiffauges and to Jouve's Taddeo, Paul also appears to have transcended the constraints of human sexuality and achieved fullness. But having incorporated Jean, his human Other/Self, Paul maintains that he has also acquired the hypersensitivity and sensation of omnipresence to take his place alongside his cosmic Other: the heavens.

Just as we noted concerning the critical reception of *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* and *Le Roi des aulnes*, critical reception of *Les Météores* generally endorses the novel's premise. Thus, Anthony Purdy explains the importance of Jean's departure and Paul's disfigurement: "Paul, séparé de son frère jumeau . . . se met à s'initier aux mystères de l'espace intergémellaire" (40). Purdy adds that "Les mutilations rituelles de Berlin viennent consacrer cette ouverture qu'est l'âme déployée" (41). David Bevan affirms that Paul "doit finalement chercher son propre salut individuel dans une sorte de nouvelle intégration verticale avec le cosmos" - "sa renaissance spirituelle" (17, 23). Similarly, André Clavel says that Paul "connaîtra une métamorphose atmosphérique, aérienne . . . jusqu'à l'euphorie" (122). Arlette Bouloumié maintains that Paul ultimately finds "rédemption," and as "le jumeau du monde élémentaire rendu à sa dimension sacrée" he attains "l'état divin" (39, 46, 180). Jacques Chabot states that Paul "compense la gémellité perdue en ravissant le don d'ubiquité . . . amputé de son double, Paul fait corps avec le monde . . . il en devient le frère jumeau" (49). Finally, Pierre de Boisdeffre comments that

"Paul, amputé, revenu dans la maison familiale, ne retrouvera pas le frère disparu, mais il héritera de son esprit, il recueillera 'le vent paraclet'" ("*Les Météores*" 415).

Formulating their interpretations of *Les Météores*, the critics cited above and many more obviously fall back upon this formula supplied by Paul (M 618) and by Tournier himself in *Le vent Paraclet*: "gémellité dépariée = ubiquité" (VP 263). André Clavel affirms that Paul achieves "un sentiment d'omni-présence," "un *télé-corps*" (126, 128) and Susan Petit states that "Paul feels omnipresent, like God" ("Joachim de Fiore" 97). But Clavel and Petit do not heed their very own words for the "sentiment" to which the former refers (126) and the "feeling" mentioned by the latter (97) can clearly be viewed as mere illusion. Thus what Christiane Baroche applauds as Paul's ability "de se déployer tout à fait jusqu'aux confins du Cosmos" may be deemed a clever Tournierian embellishment of an amputee's phantom limb sensation (1183). After all, "l'œil de Dieu" with which the ostensibly divine Paul is endowed is no more than a set of ordinary binoculars which Méline has unearthed from his childhood possessions (M 613). Thus Paul's supposed apotheosis can be interpreted as a psychological illusion of grandeur - the wishful thinking of having not only restored but surpassed the perfection of the union of twinship culminating in a superior omnipresence.

Reminiscent of Susan Petit, André Clavel, *et al.*, Christiane Baroche offers an extremely positive interpretation of the odysseys experienced by Tournier's androgynous protagonists, Robinson, Tiffauges and Paul. She maintains that Paul is able not only to "reconstituer l'unité gémellaire [mais] . . . de conquérir l'espace. . . l'espace gonflé jusqu'à l'infini, déployé" (1178). Baroche adds that Robinson's experience "annonce cette explosion cosmique [car il] . . . songe à envahir à son tour l'infini" while the imposing "Tiffauges n'éprouve guère le besoin de se donner une expansion illimitée, il EST l'âme universelle" (1179). But in spite of the enthusiasm of Baroche, *et al.*, the "glorious apotheoses" of Robinson, Tiffauges and Paul are all problematic. Underestimating the

necessary presence of a younger, narcissistic Other/twin, Robinson mistakenly attributes his ecstasy and his youthening to his intimate relationship with the sun. Emulating both an exhumed peat-bog man and Saint Christopher, the metaphorically and literally blind Tiffauges marches into a Prussian swamp thereby sacrificing Ephraïm's life along with his own. Reminiscent of Robinson and Tiffauges, Paul also deludes himself by thinking that he has replaced the lost union of twinship with a superior omnipresence while his body has sublimed to take its rightful place in the heavens. As we have seen, critics consistently fail to accurately assess Robinson's solar ecstasy, Tiffauges's peat-bog preservation and Paul's ubiquitous mind-set for what they are: creative artifices which provide the illusion of having surpassed the mortal limitations of the human condition. Importantly, Christiane Baroche, André Clavel, *et al.* overlook the fact that these three androgynes and their twin Others are all biological males. Thus, while Tournier claims that he was inspired by the *Symposium*, his novels do not offer Plato's full complement of female/female, male/female and male/male models but only the latter. Tournier appears to have erased the Platonic female components, yet a careful study of Robinson, Tiffauges and Paul corroborates Julia Kristeva's assertion that the androgyne "est la mascarade la plus sournoise d'une liquidation de la féminité" (*Histoires d'amour* 71). Since it is maternity which inspires the fullness simulated by Tournier's androgynes, this appropriation of maternal plenitude is tantamount to an ogreish incorporation of the female as Other by the biologically male Robinson, Tiffauges and Paul.

While critics have written extensively on the androgynous component of Michel Tournier's prose, so have they affirmed the importance of this element in the prose of Pierre Jean Jouve. In "Le Motif de la statue dans les romans de Pierre Jean Jouve," Christiane Blot-Labarrère notes Catherine Crachat's androgynous qualities (113) while Béatrice Bonhomme also comments that "le mythe de l'androgyne" is an important aspect

of Jouve's "Dans les Années profondes" (160). Martine Broda maintains that Jouve's Pierre Indemini (*Hécate* and *Vagadu*) and Michele Cantarini (*Paulina 1880*) both display "l'hermaphroditisme physique," while Pierre is endowed with a feminine "angélisme" ("Le Trajet du roman" 75). Although the aforementioned characters display androgynous qualities to a certain extent, Jouve's prose offers only one truly androgynous figure: Taddeo Buonvicini of *Le Monde désert*.

Taddeo Buonvicini is presented to the reader from the vantage point of Jacques de Todi's housemate, Baladine Nikolaïevna. Karen Levy stresses that unlike the troubled bisexual Jacques, Taddeo "is secure and at ease with his sexuality" (21) which Baladine describes as that of "ni un homme ni une femme; d'un sexe qu'on imagine en rêve" (MD 104). Baladine marvels that even after his homosexual affair with Jacques has ended, Taddeo remains Jacques's most devoted friend - his "Ami unique" (105). Indicative of Taddeo's eminence within the Jouvian universe is the fact that even Baladine - his ex-lover's frustrated, would-be mistress - presents him in glowing terms. In spite of her own unfulfilled sexual desires, Baladine expresses only "un pincement de jalousie" for Taddeo who, albeit briefly, was the lover of her housemate and financial dependent (105). Nor does she resent the fact that Taddeo's artistic talents outshine those of Jacques - the fledgling painter she supports and dreams of molding into a great artist. She comments that "j'aimais bien Taddeo . . . Taddeo savait bien plus de choses que Jacques, c'était un délice de l'entendre causer. Il m'apprenait beaucoup" (105).

It is within the purely positive framework above that Baladine reveals Taddeo's androgynous qualities. He is "pâle, charmeur et aussi simple qu'une fleur des champs; . . . [avec] de beaux traits . . . rougissant comme une fiancée . . . Très énergique à la manière d'une jeune fille" (104-105). But in juxtaposition to this description of Taddeo as a pale, charming flower, his hands are very large and his shoes are enormous. Baladine notes that he is "grand," wearing "de gros souliers ferrés qu'il traînait sur les trottoirs et

dans les maisons" (104). Thus, as in the case of Tournier's androgynes, Taddeo's characterization unites stereotypically feminine and masculine traits. Also reminiscent of Tournier's Abel Tiffauges and Paul Surin is Taddeo's preference for male company. Baladine states that his warm relationship with her is exceptional since he does not scorn women yet he generally keeps himself at "une distance énorme de toute femme" (104-105).

Another link between Taddeo and Tournier's androgynes is the fact that they all undergo a metamorphosis which sublimates their sexuality and culminates in a divine apotheosis. Tournier's androgynes begin their odysseys as sexually active beings, Robinson with his island/lover, Tiffauges with Rachel and Paul with his twin brother. These characters then evolve and surpass physical love, and - with the exception of Paul Surin - their voyage of initiation culminates in the nurturing of a young child. Robinson emerges as an asexual being who will nurture the stowaway cabin boy and Tiffauges transforms into an asexual, supposedly protective figure for Ephraïm. Similarly, Taddeo's sexual relationship with Jacques evolves into an asexual relationship in which he serves as nurturer to both Jacques and Baladine. We noted previously that Robinson's solar ecstasy affords him an intimate relationship with the sun. Tiffauges and Paul Surin also deem that their respective roles have a divine quality, the former as a child carrier resembling Saint Christopher and the latter as cosmic Other to the heavens. Similarly, Baladine affirms the divine nature of Jouve's Taddeo who resembles not a human being but "un ange; il avait de l'ange sa réalité manquée et sa tendresse excessive" (105).

Tormented by their fragmented psyches and by the failure of their relationship, Baladine and Jacques become the emotional charges of their guardian angel, Taddeo. After his brief affair with Jacques has ended, Baladine explains that Taddeo continues to call upon his ex-lover. During these evening visits, it is Taddeo who prepares the tea, fills the teacups and offers sugar, lemon and milk to Baladine and Jacques. Baladine states that he is "charmant" in his role as surrogate host/ess, as if he were playing "la gracieuse jeune fille

de la maison" (109). Clearly, Taddeo is just as nurturing as Tournier's androgynes. When Jacques becomes suicidally depressed following the seduction of Baladine by Luc Pascal, Taddeo organizes a surveillance team to protect him. Taddeo serves as a true guardian angel, trailing the despondent Jacques nightly, on into the wee hours. He also plays the role of guardian angel for Baladine, mysteriously materializing at her home to keep her constantly informed of Jacques's whereabouts. Reminiscent of the gentle nurturing provided by Tournier's Robinson and Tiffauges, Taddeo calms Baladine and settles her into bed during one of Jacques's many late-night absences. When Jacques finally vanishes, Taddeo realizes that the efforts of his surveillance team have been foiled. The tireless Taddeo awakens a police agent to report Jacques's suspected suicide and comforts Baladine prior to and during Jacques's funeral.

As we have seen, many of Taddeo Buonvicini's qualities make him a true forerunner of Tournier's androgyne, including his fusion of stereotypically male and female characteristics, his preference for male company, his role as nurturer and his angelic association with the heavens. But while Jouve's Taddeo is a secondary character with no narrative voice in *Le Monde désert*, Tournier's Robinson, Tiffauges and Paul all serve as both protagonist and frequent narrator of their respective novels. Although Taddeo is a secondary character and the lone androgyne of Jouve's prose, his status as the only Jouvian character free of character flaw or painful fragmentation of the psyche gives him a privileged position. As we have seen, all Jouvian characters with the exception of Taddeo suffer either fragmentation of the psyche (Paulina Pandolfini, Jacques de Todi, Catherine Crachat, *et al*) or character flaw (Luc Pascal, Signor Pandolfini and sons, *et al*). Thus, although the androgyne's role is not nearly as quantitatively important in Jouve's works as in Tournier's, a careful study of Taddeo reveals this essential qualitative role.

Since the prose works of Pierre Jean Jouve and Michel Tournier are haunted by a loss of primeval plenitude, it is not surprising that both authors are captivated by the inherent fullness afforded by the androgyne. However similar to the androgynous Tournierian couples (Robinson and Vendredi/Jaan; Tiffauges and Ephraïm; and Paul and Jean Surin), both Jouve's androgynous Taddeo Buonvicini and his "Ami unique," Jacques de Todi, are biological males (MD 105). Critics including Françoise Merllié (*Michel Tournier* 101), William Cloonan (*Michel Tournier* 78) and Arlette Bouloumié (102) applaud the androgyne deeming that this being intentionally creates sex role confusion thereby challenging society's narrow definitions of male and female sexuality. Bouloumié explains that the phoric child carrying of Tournier's Tiffauges is an imitation of woman as the "porte-enfant" (102), yet like Cloonan and Merllié she never points out that this appropriation of maternity by a biological male is tantamount to an ogreish incorporation of the female as Other. Turning now to our conclusion, we shall offer a final overview of the relationship between sexuality, integration and fragmentation in the prose works of Jouve and Tournier including the ramifications of the conquest of plenitude by their biologically male androgyne.

# Conclusion

As this study has demonstrated so far, human sexuality is a keenly divisive component within the prose works of both Pierre Jean Jouve and Michel Tournier. This conclusion will provide a final overview of both the fragmentation generated by sexuality and Jouve's and Tournier's attempts to restore integration in the works previously discussed.

Béatrice Bonhomme is among the many critics who have noted the importance of the theme of fragmentation in Jouve's prose. For Jouvian prose works depict the failure of human relationships in a fashion Bonhomme describes as "un véritable processus de désintégration" (160). In chapter two we pointed out that the divisive yet interdependent elements of spirituality and sexuality wage war within the psyche of Jouve's Paulina Pandolfini (*Paulina 1880*). This war finally culminates in Paulina's assassination of her lover, Michele Cantarini, which transforms her into the non-being, Marietta. Paulina Pandolfini resurfaces in Jouve's *Le Monde désert* as the Lorelei figure who lures her great-nephew, Jacques de Todi, to a watery grave. Sexuality is again a problematic component within *Le Monde désert*. Shattered by his own inability to accept that gayness is his predominant sexual orientation, Jacques de Todi deems that death will afford him the sensation of unity which has eluded him in life. Jacques's failure to accept his gayness is echoed by his housemate and would-be mistress, Baladine. The latter naïvely attempts to mold Jacques into the configuration of her dreams: a brilliant heterosexual artist. Although her hopes are dashed by Jacques's suicide, Baladine's continued fidelity to her deceased housemate dissolves her subsequent marriage to Luc Pascal. Abandoned by his bride, Luc has a final, abusive liaison with Catherine Crachat before retreating from the world with his imaged vision of "Face Baladine" (217).

We saw in chapter one that Jouve's first novel, *Paulina 1880*, introduces the notion of woman as deadly lure for the young Paulina lures the count with her beauty while the mature Paulina assassinates Michele after luring him once again with her youthful photograph. The subsequent sagas of Dorothée ("La Victime") and Fanny Felicitas (*Hécate*) continue this Jouvian theme of the destructive power of human sexuality by providing first a heterosexual and then a bisexual example of a deadly *femme fatale*. Dorothée is such an irresistible lure for Waldemar that he risks death and damnation to indulge in the erotic delights afforded by this enticing female *topos* of sexual pleasure. When their lovemaking proves fatal to Dorothée, Waldemar is executed alongside his sorcerer accomplice who had enchanted Dorothée to mask her death. While Paulina and Dorothée lead their male lovers to death, *Hécate* introduces Fanny Felicitas - a fatal lure to lovers both male (her paramour, Guido) and female (her hostess, Elisabeth Hohenstein).

As previously indicated, Béatrice Bonhomme is among the many critics who affirm that Jouve's prose is replete with fragmentation. But in keeping with favorable critical reception of Jouve's "Dans les Années profondes," Bonhomme asserts that "'Dans les Années profondes' constitue l'étape finale de l'œuvre romanesque et intégration de la totalité psychique" (160; emphasis mine). However we noted in our discussion of both Hélène de Sannis (chapter one) and Léonide (chapter five) that the overwhelmingly positive critical assessment of "Dans les Années profondes" ignores the fundamental process traced by this short story. As Bonhomme, *et al* have pointed out, Hélène de Sannis generously sacrifices her life in her role as Léonide's guide, thereby lovingly transforming him from an awkward lad to a confident, adult writer-to-be. In the words of Bonhomme, "Hélène doit mourir pour parachever l'initiation de Léonide" (157). Yet by applauding Hélène's self-sacrifice, Jouvian critics, Léonide and the premise of "Dans les Années profondes" all readily accept that what is good for the gander kills the goose. Bonhomme, *et al*

unthinkingly endorse the disturbing implication of "Dans les Années profondes": the female is an expendable commodity within a hegemonic system which privileges the male.

At first glance, it might appear that Jouve's last novel, *Vagadu*, closes his prose opus on a final, positive note of integration. As we indicated in chapter three, Jouve's *Hécate* introduces Catherine Crachat - the deeply troubled actress whose neuroses transform her from unhappy heterosexual libertine to voyeuristic bisexual. After suppressing both her sexuality and her neuroses at the end of *Hécate*, Catherine undergoes psychotherapy in the novel's sequel, *Vagadu*. It seems that Catherine's therapy harmoniously resolves what Christiane Blot-Labarrère refers to as the "déchirure intime profonde" typical of Jouvian characters ("*Le Monde désert*" 24). Thus Simonne Fischer affirms that at the end of *Vagadu*, Catherine "est libérée de ses névroses . . . Catherine trouve un salut qui passe par une guérison et qui s'ouvre sur la vie" (61). But although Catherine eventually finds happiness through this process of psychological reintegration, in our third chapter we pointed out that the Jouvian cure silently endorses compulsory heterosexuality. For in reestablishing Catherine's equilibrium, psychoanalysis à la Jouve falls back upon what Judith Butler would label "a heterosexual matrix for conceptualizing gender and desire" (*Gender Trouble* x). Rather than questioning the heterosexual hegemony, Jouvian therapy reasserts it, thereby implying that lesbianism and female bisexuality are not viable sexual orientations. Thus, while Béatrice Bonhomme, Simonne Fischer, *et al.* attest to the integrating role of Jouve's final prose works, the careful reader must surely question the endorsement of the heterosexual hegemony implicit both in the sacrifice of Hélène ("Dans les Années profondes") and in Catherine Crachat's psychotherapy (*Vagadu*).

As we explained in previous chapters, Michel Tournier's prose works are also replete with sexuality-based fragmentation. Just as the sea casts the solitary Robinson Crusoé onto the shore of a deserted island in the opening pages of *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*, so does she force him into creative sexual practices with surrogate, non-human lovers. But

while his shipwreck is all that prevents Robinson from living a traditional, heterosexual life, Tournier's Tiffauges (*Le Roi des aulnes*) and Paul Surin (*Les Météores*) both disdain the procreative role which society forces upon the heterosexual male. In Tiffauges's case, this scorn arises from having been abandoned by the female lover who serves as catalyst to his ogreish metamorphosis. In Paul's case, this disdain for heterosexuals is a by-product of his conviction that geminate homosexuality is far superior to heterosexuality.

Just as Baladine flees her groom, Luc Pascal, in Jouve's *Le Monde désert*, so are Tournierian couples prey to the abandonment of one partner by the other. Jean Surin flees Paul in *Les Météores* due to the latter's insistence that both brothers remain within the hermetically sealed cell of twinship. But rather than a geminate homosexual male, the abandoning member of couples within Tournier's last two novels is generally a blond female. In *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, the blond Biltine secretly abandons the chambers of King Gaspard to join the Phoenician lover disguised as her brother. And after describing the treachery of a non-blonde in Hérode's saga of his beloved Mariamme, *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* concludes its female portrait with Yasmina - the unfaithful blond elephant who deserts her devoted prince, Taor.

While the infidelity of females is an important theme of *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*, this theme is amplified within Tournier's *La Goutte d'or* - the Bildungsroman of the young Arab, Idriss. Without requesting his permission beforehand, a blond French tourist takes Idriss's photograph at his native oasis. Her failure to comply with her promise to mail him a copy of his photograph launches Idriss's odyssey to France. His experiences in France are a series of dehumanizing misadventures which highlight his status as alien within this country teeming with deceitful blondes. Following his disappointing encounters with a bleached blond prostitute in Marseille and a peep show performer in Paris, Idriss's fantastic experience with a blonde in a cafe culminates in his arrest. Deeming that he has been unfairly victimized by French blondes, the young Arab seeks solace in calligraphy

lessons. But while Pierre de Boisdeffre calmly asserts that "Idriss a sauvé son âme," *La Goutte d'or* closes on a note of madness and rage as Idriss violently rapes the Parisian pavement with his phallic jackhammer (" *La Goutte d'or*" 719).

In chapter one, we pointed out that the Jouvian heterosexual female is linked to death both as biological (the mothers of Paulina, *Paulina 1880* and of Dorothée, "La Victime") and symbolic (Hélène, "Dans les Années profondes") mother and as deadly *femme fatale* (Paulina, *Paulina 1880* and Dorothée "La Victime"). She is also erased metaphorically with the self-imposed exile of Baladine (*Le Monde désert*). Our chapter two adds that the Tournierian heterosexual female is prey to premature death as illustrated by Maria-Barbara, Florence, Angelica, Deborah and Frau Kraus (*Les Météores*). Like Jouve's Baladine, Tournier also presents heterosexual women who abandon their significant other (Rachel, *Le Roi des aulnes* and Sophie, *Les Météores*) as well as women who are banished or kidnapped (Balthazar's wife and Melchior's mother, *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*). We noted that both Jouve and Tournier objectify women in a misogynist fashion, as a *femme-paysage* utilized for male pleasure (Jouve's Hélène, "Dans les Années profondes" and Tournier's Speranza, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*). In addition to objectifying woman as *femme-jardin* (Deborah), Tournier's *Les Météores* also presents her as "WOMB-an" (Maria-Barbara), lair/vagina (Florence), and *femme-pain* (Angelica) while his *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* and *La Goutte d'or* metaphorically dissect her. *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* presents Speranza as a headless female while in *La Goutte d'or* the dancer Zett Zobeida is described as a lipless stomach/mouth and the calligraphic rendering of "La Reine blonde" is mouthless.

Our chapters three and four point out that erasure and premature death are not reserved for Jouve's and Tournier's heterosexual females since their gay and bisexual females and males generally experience a similar fate. Jouve's bisexual Elisabeth Hohenstein and Fanny Felicitas (*Hécate*) both commit suicide. Tournier's lesbian Fabienne

(*Les Météores*) is presented solely through the eyes of the misogynist Alexandre and ultimately erased from the prose landscape. Reminiscent of the fate of Jouve's bisexual Fanny Felicitas and Elisabeth Hohenstein, suicide or a thinly-disguised version thereof claims the lives of Jouve's bisexual Jacques de Todi (*Le Monde désert*) and Tournier's gay Alexandre Surin (*Les Météores*). In the latter novel, Alexandre's young lover, Daniel, experiences a violent death while his nephew, Jean Surin, vanishes into self-imposed exile. Although Jouve's Catherine Crachat (*Hécate* and *Vagadu*) and Tournier's Thomas Koussek (*Les Météores*) do not die, their painful odysseys intimate that gayness (for Koussek) and bisexuality (for Catherine) are mere manifestations of neuroses.

Reminiscent of the fate of his bisexual and homosexual counterpart, premature death often strikes the Tournierian and Jouvian male heterosexual. Similar to Jouve's Michele Cantarini (*Paulina 1880*) and Pierre Indemini (*Hécate* and *Vagadu*), Tournier's weak (the elder Crusoé, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* ) or gentle (Count von Kaltenborn, *Le Roi des aulnes*) heterosexual male is destined for premature death. But unlike the Jouvian opus which executes cruel and devious heterosexual males literally or figuratively, the male brute (the *Whitebird*'s crew, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*) thrives in Tournier's early novels. With *Les Météores*, Tournier adds an additional feature to the configuration of the male heterosexual by intimating that said male is superfluous apart from his role as propagator. Tournier's final novels, *Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar* and *La Goutte d'or* present the heterosexual male as victim of a deceitful female the avatar of whom is the perfidious blonde.

Clearly, Jouve's and Tournier's male and female heterosexuals, bisexuals and gays are generally destined for premature death due to their authors' preoccupation with the Fall and the loss of primeval plenitude. We have seen that Jouve and Tournier offer the same antidote to recapture wo/man's initial fullness: the androgyne. As explained by critics Françoise Merllié, Arlette Bouloumié, *et al*, the androgyne affords not only plenitude but

also the perfection and immortality which accompany divine stature. But while Merllié, Bouloumié, and a host of other critics applaud Tournier's androgynes, they clearly ignore the important fissures in the characterizations of the ostensibly perfect Robinson (*Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique*), Tiffauges (*Le Roi des aulnes*) and Paul (*Les Météores*). Contradicting the notion of the self-sufficiency of the Tournierian androgyne as praised by Merllié (*Michel Tournier* 56), *et al*, a careful study of Robinson and Tiffauges reveals their dependence upon the presence of a younger, Narcissistic Other/Self. This younger sosie is vital both to Robinson's asexual experience of solar ecstasy and to Tiffauges's simulation of the couples Christ/Saint Christopher and peat-bog man/ companion. In the case of Paul, we noted that it is not the physical presence of an Other but rather this amputee's sensation of phantom limbs which allows him to imagine that he has surpassed geminate plenitude. Critical enthusiasm for Tournier's androgynes notwithstanding, Paul's supposed omnipresence, Robinson's timeless, solar ecstasy and Tiffauges's glorious apotheosis can all be unmasked as mere illusions. For Paul achieves his ubiquitousness due to the sensation of phantom limbs while Robinson youthens only in the company of his younger twin/self and Tiffauges carries his charge not to a safe haven in his hallowed east but to an unnecessary death in a fen facing the west.

Different from the Tournierian androgyne who seeks to mold his Other/Self, the nurturing which Jouve's androgynous Taddeo Buonvicini offers his "Ami unique," Jacques de Todi, is uncompromising (MD 104). Nevertheless, Taddeo's secondary role within *Le Monde désert* demonstrates many features of the Tournierian androgyne including the metamorphosis from sexually active to asexual nurturer, the divine quality, and the preference for male company. Reminiscent of the enthusiastic critical reception for Tournier's androgynes, Jouvian critics fail to discuss Taddeo's gender. For like Tournier's Robinson and Vendredi/Jaan, Tiffauges and Ephraïm, Paul and Jean, Jouve features the pairing of a biological male (Taddeo) with a biological male (Jacques). As we have seen,

Robinson, Tiffauges, Paul and Taddeo all undergo a sexual metamorphosis which culminates in a significant nurturing role for each androgyne except for the amputee, Paul. Speaking of this sexual metamorphosis in glowing terms, William Cloonan affirms that Robinson conquers "his own maleness, so that now his hitherto latent feminine qualities can begin to emerge" (*Michel Tournier* 29). But Cloonan does not heed the words of Arlette Bouloumié who reminds the reader that with this nurturing role - and specifically the child carrying exalted in Tournier's *Le Roi des aulnes* - the androgyne imitates pregnancy: woman as the "porte-enfant" (102). Bouloumié praises this appropriation of maternity by the biologically male, Tournierian androgyne, yet this simulation of maternal fullness brings to mind Julia Kristeva's frank appraisal: "L'androgyne est un phallus déguisé en femme . . . il est la mascarade la plus sournoise d'une liquidation de la féminité" (*Histoires d'amour* 71). Thus even if the reader were to imitate critics and overlook other fissures in the tableaux of the supposedly perfect Robinson, Tiffauges, Paul, and Taddeo, these androgynes all achieve their plenitude by appropriating maternity.

Deeming that heterosexuality, bisexuality and gayness are greatly inferior to wo/man's primeval state of plenitude, Pierre Jean Jouve and Michel Tournier turn to the androgyne to simulate this lost fullness. Françoise Merllié (*Michel Tournier* 101), William Cloonan (*Michel Tournier* 78), *et al.* praise the androgyne as a being who intentionally creates sex role confusion to erase society's traditional delineation of fe/male sexuality. But underlying the purportedly divine stature of the Tournierian and Jouvian androgyne is a disturbing, phallocratic system which not only privileges the biological male but also endows him with the uniquely feminine potential for maternity. In conclusion, we take issue not with the dream of harmoniously correcting the fragmentation inflicted by the Fall but with the Jouvian and Tournierian version of the androgyne. For unlike the androgynes of Plato's *Symposium* which include female/female, female/male and male/male models,

Jouve and Tournier present only the latter: a biological male who simulates maternal fullness by an asexual union with another biological male. In their quest for plenitude, Pierre Jean Jouve and Michel Tournier create an ogreish, biological male who appropriates maternity thereby effecting not a harmonious erasure of gender but rather an alarming, wholesale liquidation of the female as Other.

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