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FLAUBERT'S DIS/EN CLOSURES

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FLAUBERT'S DIS/EN CLOSURES

—“Mais... nous n'avons pas fait notre testament?”

—“Tiens! c'est juste!”

Des sanglots gonflaient leur poitrine. Ils se mirent à la lucarne pour respirer.

L'air était froid; et des astres nombreux brillaient dans le ciel, noir comme de l'encre. La blancheur de la neige, qui couvrait la terre, se perdait dans les brumes de l'horizon.

Ils aperçurent de petites lumières à ras de sol; et grandissant, se rapprochant, toutes allaient du côté de l'église.

Une curiosité les y poussa.¹

There is in the work of Flaubert a persistent tendency to isolate discretely both subject and subject matter. In the above passage from *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, the structure of which is typical of Flaubert's framing technique, the attic window helps establish point of view within the equivocation between an objective and a subjective narrative register. Who but the scribes would compare the sky to *ink*? Yet the simile can also be read as a simple cliché coming from the narrator. Too, the window frames the movement from the twinkling stars to the lantern lights which are converging on, and will merge with, the lighted church. This passage is of course not merely the transition from (comic) despair to hope; it brings to a close the entire episode of the heroes' readings in philosophy and metaphysics, which did not lead as hoped to knowledge of the absolute (2: 314) and social harmony (2: 319), but had the opposite and somewhat predictable effect of fostering their “abominables paradoxes” (2: 319), of nurturing a scorn of mankind (2: 319) and of leading to thoughts of death as the final disintegration and dispersal (2: 321). In a metonymic transfer of the thematic search for unification to narrative description, the passage resolves earlier tensions caused by relativism and, in so doing, opens the way for a return to thematicism (the search for meaning in a meaningless world) and diegesis (the ensuing episode of the religious period).

The topos of the window and analogous framing devices is one of the recurrent characteristics of Flaubert's work, and, as examples of this discretionary

practice, one need recall only some of the many scenes that are framed by windows: the view of Yonville through the carriage window or the stained-glass window that is, very nearly, *La Légende de Saint Julien l'hospitalier*. But windows are only incidentally our concern, for as the views of Yvetot and Constantinople equally signify something beyond themselves, so does this topos tie into a larger question, which is the evolution of Flaubert's practice of closure.

The term evolution is meant as a temporal phenomenon only in referring to the order in which the major works were published or were to be published had not Flaubert's death intervened. Within this order (from *Madame Bovary* to *Bouvard et Pécuchet* and *Le Dictionnaire des idées reçues*) there is an obvious movement towards ever greater abstraction of character, narrative form and sequence, and causal and temporal referentiality. The atemporal aspect of this "evolution" is that one can find Flaubert practicing at the same time, and during the composition of a single work, forms that will be either used or deferred, indeed as he deferred some entire projects in favor of others.

Such a "split" practice can be seen in two scenes from *Madame Bovary*, one kept for publication and the other discarded, which serve as examples of two of the most prominent framing devices that Flaubert will use, with or without the topos of the window. In one case the window is a synchronizing device. In the other it is used to establish a diachronic series of successive views that compose a larger narrative unit. The main point of this essay is to show that the structure of synchronic framing and scenic closure is gradually displaced in importance by the diachronic series of open-ended episodes, each reiterative of the preceding in its failure to be resolved and in its search for a final disclosure that will enclose and close the search. Moreover, this development parallels an increased focalization of narrative point of view as well as the growing intrusion on narrative form of theatrical structures, at least as they were understood and practiced by Flaubert towards the middle of his career.

The Window That Frames

Jean Rousset has shown how in *Madame Bovary* the window serves as one of Flaubert's earliest devices for narrative focus, specifically, the transfer to descriptive narration of the point of view of one of the characters.² One of the best known of such scenes is where Emma first catches sight of Rodolphe. It is market day and the square is filled with the carts and stalls of the vendors and with the sounds of their wares. The crowd has gathered near the door of the pharmacy:

La foule, s'encombrant au même endroit sans en vouloir bouger, menaçait quelquefois de rompre la devanture de la pharmacie. Les mercredis, elle ne désemplissait pas et l'on s'y poussait, moins pour acheter des médicaments que pour prendre des consultations, tant était fameuse la réputation du sieur Homais, dans les villages circonvoisins

Emma était accoudée à sa fenêtre (elle s'y mettait souvent: la fenêtre, en province, remplace les théâtres et la promenade), et elle s'amusait à considérer la cohue des rustres, lorsqu'elle aperçut un monsieur vêtu d'une redingote de velours vert. Il était ganté de gants jaunes, quoiqu'il fût chaussé de fortes guêtres; et il se dirigeait vers la maison du médecin, suivi d'un paysan marchant la tête basse d'un air tout réfléchi. (1: 617)

This passage is characteristic in that there are two kinds of focusing at work. The first, alluded to earlier, takes place in the second paragraph with the switch from the narrator's point of view to Emma's. They are two compatible perspectives and nearly identical, as what the narrator describes is precisely the "cohue des rustres" that momentarily diverts Emma from her boredom and longing. The narrator here is distinct from Emma only in the parenthetical generalities that he draws about what is seen (why the village folk congregate at the pharmacy on Wednesdays, the cultural significance of the window in the provinces), conclusions of which Emma is incapable.

An outcome of the first, the second type of focusing is the moving in of Emma's hungry gaze from the amusing though chaotic bustle of the village square to Rodolphe's velvet overcoat and finally to his yellow gloves, an unmistakable sign of that quality first glimpsed at the Vaubyessard. What is significant about this scene is the exclusion which takes place with respect to the objects of description, as the eye rejects multiplicity in favor of the singular. It is as if there were too much for any one consciousness to take in and make sense of. The "cohue" begs, in its random and, to Emma, senseless movement, for the kind of intense focus that the close-up on Rodolphe's yellow gloves will provide. The disclosure of the new-comer's class, virility and sexual desirability at once visually closes this scene and lays the foundation for the adulterous affair.

Such scenic construction based on exclusion and exclusivity is of course often associated with the sexually fetishistic consciousness. In fixing on the desirable figure in the crowd (or in the clouds, in her more religious moments), Emma is certainly not alone: her male counterparts also lock onto an article of clothing or a part of the body. For example, in *La Tentation de saint Antoine* Antony remembers witnessing the martyrdom of a woman who, writhing in pain, recalls the erotic memory from childhood of a girl calling to him. This happens as Antony focuses, through the crowd and over distance, on the victim's open mouth:

[Un] flot de monde m'arrêta devant le temple de Sérapis. C'était, me dit-on, un dernier exemple que le gouvernement voulait faire. Au milieu du portique, en plein soleil, une

femme nue était attachée contre une colonne, deux soldats la fouettant avec des lanières; à chacun des coups son corps entier se tordait. Elle s'est retournée, la bouche ouverte; —et par-dessus la foule, à travers ses longs cheveux qui lui couvraient la figure, j'ai cru reconnaître Ammonaria . . . (1: 524)

This exclusive focusing at the end of a scene is not at all limited to descriptions of erotic fascination, however.³ It seems that any fixed attention on a single object will do, and certainly when it is a question of the dumb, rapt staring of *la bêtise*. Such is the case in the scene where Charles and Emma, on their theater outing in Rouen, hurry to keep up with the hustle and bustle of the city:

Charles immédiatement se mit en courses. Il confondit l'avant-scène avec les galeries, le *parquet* avec les loges, demanda des explications, ne les comprit pas, fut renvoyé du contrôleur au directeur, revint à l'auberge, retourna au bureau, et, plusieurs fois ainsi, arpenta toute la longueur de la ville, depuis le théâtre jusqu'au boulevard.

Madame s'acheta un chapeau, des gants, un bouquet. Monsieur craignait beaucoup de manquer le commencement; et, sans avoir eu le temps d'avalier un bouillon, ils se présentèrent devant les portes du théâtre, qui étaient encore fermées. (1: 649)

The irony in this passage is clearly multiple. There is of course the oblique commentary on the couple's provincial naïveté. Of more interest, though, is the way in which the closed doors ironize the structure of disclosure by postponing the revelation that the characters fully anticipated witnessing upon their arrival. This highlights the structure and valorizes it: in order that the couple's naïveté may be recognized as parodic, it must share the form of experienced behavior while differing in its content.

The movement towards resolution that we have been discussing is based on a progressive restriction of the field of perception. This progression has a subtilizing effect in that it tends to reduce the sheer materiality of the world. Passages that further develop this tendency are those where the descriptive axis shifts from a visual to an auditive focus, as in the description of Emma at Les Berteaux:

L'ombrelle, de soie gorge de pigeon, que traversait le soleil, éclairait de reflets mobiles la peau blanche de sa figure. Elle souriait là-dessous à la chaleur tiède; et on entendait les gouttes d'eau, une à une, tomber sur la moire tendue. (1: 580)

In the transition from sight to sound, the effect here is subtler than in the scenes discussed above, though the basic structure is the same. The "cohue" of the crowd has been replaced by the delicate movement of the patches of light across Emma's face, and Charles's consciousness, having worked its way through visual reality, comes to rest on the sound of the drops. Falling rain often works to this purpose in Flaubert, and especially in this novel where critics have associated it with a languid acceptance on the part of the listener

(usually Emma) of a dissolving of the will.⁴ This may be so. However, it should be noted that this tapping motif used as a framing device to close a predominantly visual scene includes the sound of footsteps (Hippolyte after his amputation), church bells (the close of Part II), the pulse as it is heard pounding in one's temples (Emma after her seduction by Rodolphe) and the sound of spoken words ("il y avait des paroles qui tombaient sur leur âme avec une sonorité cristalline," 1: 631). Caution needs to be exercised that an understanding of certain motifs not be tied too restrictively to thematicism. They should be considered, rather, as the expression of a manner of perception.

One of the most powerful of scenes framed in this way is the slaughter of the deer in *La Légende de Saint Julien l'hospitalier*. In fact, it stands as a clear exposition of Flaubert's treatment of the encounter between consciousness and physical reality. Typically, the scene opens in ill-defined multiplicity and works towards a focal point as it passes over the objects that fall within the range of the perceiving subject, eliminating them. Julien's gaze, which is metonymically coextensive with his crossbow, cannot come to rest until it has worked its way through the entire herd. In this context rest would seem to be knowledge. But the simple massacre of what Julien has taken to be the entire herd leaves him without an iota of material reality on which to fix the possibility of meaning, and he finds himself in that state of stupid aphasia so typical of Flaubert's characters: "Il contemplait d'un œil béant l'énormité du massacre, ne comprenant pas comment il avait pu le faire" (2: 181). He then sees the last family of deer and kills the fawn and doe; it is the solitary stag that supplies the resolution to the scene:

Le grand cerf l'avait vu, fit un bond. Julien lui envoya sa dernière flèche. Elle l'atteignit au front, et y resta plantée.

Le grand cerf n'eut pas l'air de la sentir; en enjambant par-dessus les morts, il avançait toujours, allait fondre sur lui, l'éventrer; et Julien reculait dans une épouvante indicible. Le prodigieux animal s'arrêta; et les yeux flamboyants, solennel comme un patriarche et comme un justicier, pendant qu'une cloche tintait, il répéta trois fois:

—"Maudit! maudit! maudit! un jour, cœur féroce, tu assassineras ton père et ta mère!"
(2: 181)

Nicholas Rand has pointed out that the curse "Maudit! maudit! maudit!" is "autant de mots dits,"⁵ his play on words emphasizing the aural resolution of this scene as disclosure (made with the help of the church bell). That closure comes with a sense of the depletion of physical reality is expressed by the depletion of the herd and by the reductive passage from a visual to an auditive focus. Directly inverse, disclosure is tied to a movement towards articulated speech, from the whistle and hum of the crossbow and confused noise of the herd, to the nearly human cry of the doe, finally to the curse and prognostication.

The above examples have been offered to show how in Flaubert the perceiving consciousness, which is often that of the narrator, naturally eschews broad multiplicity and a wondering gaze in favor of an intensely focused attention. What is important formally to these narratives and thematically to their characters is the way in which closure offers the promise of an opening to new meaning.

A formulation of what seems to be at stake may be developed from the discursive sixth tableau of *La Tentation*. Preparing the ground for the final image of the text, Antony's debate with the Devil is over whether the universe has an absolute focal point or is limitless and infinitely diffuse. Like all of Flaubert's principals, Antony is unable to comprehend the latter structure, and, speaking of God, he exclaims: "Un jour, pourtant, je le verrai!" (1: 565). And so he does. This conversation (the structure of which parallels that of the scenes we have discussed) is recast in the closing scene. Following a devolutionary chain of being to the point where matter was first animated, Antony is confronted with a teeming mass of primal cells, "de petites masses globuleuses, grosses comme des têtes d'épingles et garnies de cils tout autour. Une vibration les agite." As he contemplates them in a hallucinatory desire to become matter himself,⁶ the sight of the myriad cells has coalesced into a single image, magnified in the rising sun:

Le jour enfin paraît; et comme les rideaux d'un tabernacle qu'on relève, des nuages d'or en s'enroulant à larges volutes découvrent le ciel.

Tout au milieu, et dans le disque même du soleil, rayonne la face de Jésus-Christ.

(1: 571)

Such passages raise difficult questions of interpretation, and consideration of Wayne Booth's categories of stable and unstable irony may be helpful.⁷ In *La Tentation* specifically, the perpetual narrative confusion of the subjective and objective registers obviates the possibility of third-party collusion and hence of stable, localized irony. Furthermore, as Frank Bowman has shown, the text's depiction of historical progression is of one that destabilizes meaning, producing the generalized unstable irony of an absurd universe.⁸ Unlike the scene before the theater doors in Rouen, the ending of *La Tentation* is not at all ironic because of an attitude that the narrator might have towards his subject (which cannot be established), but it is ironic in the unstable sense that any attempt at closure is solipsistic, both personally *and* historically.

That said, what *La Tentation* helps clarify is one of the ways in which the works of Flaubert are vehicles for meaning. This signifying potential is not produced uniquely through the privileging of isolated themes or by raising the act of writing to the level of paradigm. Despite the allure of the *grands thèmes* in *La Tentation*, and despite Flaubert's stylistic preoccupations coupled with

his perhaps overly felicitous remarks about books about nothing,⁹ there remains in his work a thirst for resolution in the *vécu*. I am not arguing here in favor of mimeticism. What I do mean to suggest is that Flaubert seems to have sought in writing (and increasingly so) an analogue for experience. While, as Maurice Blanchot has made clear, "Flaubert n'est pas encore Mallarmé,"¹⁰ one might add that he is not yet Proust either. For Flaubert material reality has few of the self-effacing properties it will possess for his two successors. His characters choose to bestow meaning (sometimes multiple, contradictory meanings) on *phenomena*,¹¹ and it is in this way that material reality is a part of the life of the imagination. Consciousness seeks out the appropriate object and attempts to focus on it; this is the move towards closure which, though not always successful, is found nearly everywhere as a primary impulse. The closing of the search, which is the awakening of attention and the imagination, then *animates* the object, much in the way that matter is animated at the end of *La Tentation*. This gives experience a life that it did not have, which, for Flaubert, is the same thing as saying that the imagination acquires a life it did not have.

La Promenade et le théâtre

Among the scenes from *Madame Bovary* cut prior to publication is one where Emma wanders into a summer house on the grounds of La Vaubyessard on the morning after the ball. In one of the two large window frames have been placed diamond-shaped panes of different-colored glass. Emma looks out through each one in succession, and, while the general view does not change, the different hues color the landscape with a series of emotional values, changing what is described. Finally, she looks through the clear window, the entire sequence ending in the following way:

La rosée matinale fumait dans la prairie; un troupeau de moutons en passant brouillait la pelouse du parc et à l'une des lucarnes du château une femme en camisole de nuit nettoyait son peigne au vent, et le soleil blanc d'un bond entra dans l'appartement fermé dont les murs s'échauffant exhalaient une odeur tiède qui vous affadissait. Fatiguée, elle s'affaisa sur un coussin. Emma sentait une douleur qui la pinçait à l'occiput et, quoiqu'elle ne dormît pas, qu'elle [sic] commençait à rêver.¹²

This prolonged scene presents an important variant of the type considered up to now. Certainly, some of the basic features are the same: an exhaustive and restless survey of the field of vision where objects are described in their multiplicity, ending with a focus on a point that brings with it some sort of recognition (here, the woman at the tower window—an insider showing Emma up as an outsider who then perhaps dreams of what life is like inside). Where this

scene differs from those we have looked at already, and where it is more in keeping with certain aspects of the works to come, is in its deliberate sequential form.

In *L'Education sentimentale*, where diachronism is announced by the title, the window is replaced by *la promenade*.¹³ There are still images of a focal point within a wide field of vision: "l'univers venait de s'élargir . . . [Mme Arnoux] était le point lumineux où l'ensemble des choses convergeait" (2: 11); "Des nues sombres couvraient la face de la lune. Il la contempla en rêvant" (2: 36). But, in a sense, Frédéric knows "la mélancolie des paquebots" long before the penultimate chapter, in that his perspectives are often those of the lonely traveler:

Des champs moissonnés se prolongeaient à n'en plus finir. Deux lignes d'arbres bordaient la route, les tas de cailloux se succédaient; et peu à peu, Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, Ablon, Châtillon, Corbeil et les autres pays, tout son voyage lui revint à la mémoire, d'une façon si nette qu'il distinguait maintenant des détails nouveaux, des particularités plus intimes; sous le dernier volant de sa robe, son pied passait dans une mince bottine en soie, de couleur marron . . . (2: 11)

Again, as he enters Paris at the beginning of Part II:

L'enceinte des fortifications y faisait un renflement horizontal; et, sur les trottoirs en terre qui bordaient la route, de petits arbres sans branches étaient défendus par des lattes hérissés de clous. Des établissements de produits chimiques alternaient avec des chantiers de marchands de bois. De hautes portes, comme il y en a dans les fermes, laissaient voir, par leurs battants entr'ouverts, l'intérieur d'ignobles cours . . . Puis la double ligne de maisons ne discontinua plus . . . Des ouvriers en blouse passaient, des haquets de brasseurs, des fourgons de blanchisseuses, des carrioles de bouchers; une pluie fine tombait, il faisait froid, le ciel était pâle, mais deux yeux qui valaient pour lui le soleil resplendissaient derrière la brume. (2: 45)

While these passages share the type of closure that we have seen before, they have been shifted from a synchronic, framing axis (Emma looking down from her window onto the market place) to a diachronic, sequencing axis (Frédéric watching the landscape as he moves across it). This shift in emphasis produces interesting effects in the work, notably with respect to point of view. For instance, Frédéric often perceives the highs and lows of his sentimental life with Mme Arnoux in terms of a linear sequence that evolves diegetically from his surroundings: "Des nuages roses, en forme d'écharpe, s'allongeaient au-delà des toits . . . Il n'apercevait, dans l'avenir, qu'une interminable série d'années toutes pleines d'amour" (2: 40); "Quelquefois, il s'arrêtait au Louvre devant de vieux tableaux; et son amour l'embrassant jusque dans les siècles disparus, il la substituait aux personnages des peintures" (2: 33).

Most in evidence, though, are the structural consequences of this change in emphasis. An example is the continuation to the passage quoted above

describing Frédéric's entry into Paris. The closure provided by the image of Mme Arnoux's eyes is a *false* closure: it only anticipates a physical reunion with her. The passage in fact continues in much the same vein for another four paragraphs before leading to Frédéric's arrival at the address he knew to have been the Arnoux's, only to find that they had moved. Here the scene ends, and in a way that concludes many scenes in this novel: a sequence of pointed actions has ended, though without the intimate disclosure the movement has been heading towards, creating a series of equally unresolved scenes. There follows a sequence of short vignettes based on this same structure, rapidly displacing the frame, that trace Frédéric's attempts to track down the Arnoux household.

The structure that is generated by these often very long passages is one of a series of tableaux, each pushing on to the next in a kind of oneiric treasure hunt as forms of depletion and exclusivity turn into those of the search. Flaubert's first of the major works to be structured entirely on this formal principle is of course *La Tentation de saint Antoine*, in the main composed of ten visions or hallucinations that are strung together and lead to the final revelation of Christ's radiant face. Ever since the inception of the 1849 version this project was tied to theatrical form, most importantly to the *mystère* (and, to some degree, to the Punch and Judy shows of Flaubert's childhood). Moreover, thanks to a recent study of the unfinished theater project *Le Rêve et la vie*,¹⁴ it is a short step to tie in the development of this structural motif with Flaubert's experiments of the 1860s in the *féerie*, especially the completed *Château des cœurs* (though this is possible even with the earlier pantomime, *Pierrot au sérail*).¹⁵ In contradistinction to the usual, sparse didascalia of his comedies (*La Découverte de la vaccine*, *Le Sexe faible*, *Le Candidat*), the scenic indications and the décor of these plays have a narrative-like quality in that they play a pronounced role in their interaction with the characters, either as part of the fabulous, as hallucination (that is, as point of view), or as verbal-visual pun. So, rather than having anything vaguely corresponding to development of character or of plot, the result of such structure is the movement of a single point of view (that of the questing hero or heroine) through a series of décors. The point here, as before, seems to be that consciousness remains fairly constant in the face of the perpetual flux of the things that surround it and seeks to come to rest by means of disclosed signification rather than, say, through personal growth as the primary vehicle of knowledge.

Several consequences result from what can be thought of as a hybrid cross between narrative and the *féerie*. Among these is the ambiguity produced by the confusion of registers, which I have outlined above. In the final version of *La Tentation* this confusion is provoked in large part by the dramatic use

of hallucination which parallels the *féerie*'s active manipulation of décor. In *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, as in even *Le Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, the first person is joined with the third (in the plural as well as in the singular), all but eliminating any difference in narrative register, "de telle manière que le lecteur ne sache pas si on se fout de lui, oui ou non."¹⁶

Of equal significance is the fact that, in its linear sequence of frames that follow the movement of the protagonist, the text has taken on the form of the search that it recounts. It is no longer retrospective in the sense that there is a firm relation between the point of narration and the action recounted, as there is, for instance, in *Madame Bovary* or *Salammbô*. More in keeping with the norms of theater, where the point of "narration" for any given scene (décor, lighting, music, costumes, etc.) is contemporary with the action of that scene,¹⁷ the tableau-by-tableau structure (which is also episode-by-episode and entry-by-entry) maintains a constant distance between point of narration and point of action. The important formal similarities that unite *La Tentation*, *Bouvard et Pécuchet* and *Le Dictionnaire* override the relatively minor difference between the use of the present tense and that of the past tense or infinitives.

The importance of these three highly stylized works is in the way they articulate the problematic relationship between life and the library (between action and signification), whether it be trying to impose the library on life or, conversely, to inflict life on the library.¹⁸ In either case, the text becomes the analogue in writing (as well as the field) for this attempt, and so moves, as does the action, towards completion in *le monument*. Both are restless, and, like Antony, neither can embrace the absurdity of an endless and empty search. An omega must be found. Speaking of which, a kind of search, and one from alpha to omega, can be discerned in *Le Dictionnaire des idées reçues*. The first entry under A is ABELARD, and it concludes: "—Tombeau d'Héloïse et d'Abélard; si l'on vous prouve qu'il est faux, s'écrier: 'Vous m'ôtez mes illusions'" (2: 303). Like the *féerie*, this is a work that could go on forever; it does not, however. Though repetitious, it cannot regenerate itself through circularity, and so, through its exhaustiveness and out of exhaustion, it must find some "illusion" to replace those (facetiously) lost at the beginning. Hundreds of entries later, which are as many false closures, the journey ends and, while Z has not been reached, omega apparently has. It is the sole entry under Y and the last of the dictionary: "YVETOT. Voir Yvetot et mourir" (2: 314). Naturally, this cannot be read as a definitive conclusion to the *Dictionnaire*: though none of the manuscript versions go beyond this point, we must view the entire project as incomplete. That being true, the entry does offer an appropriate place to stop, if only because the "illusions" that it offers are different from those in the entries under "Naples" and "Séville," where, we are

told, similar fatal ecstasies await us. They are different because, in the bourgeois parlor that is ironized throughout most of the *Dictionnaire*, Yvetot is *not* every bit as good as Constantinople (or Naples or Seville). Such an equation can make sense only in the metatext of Flaubert's literary production, to which this last entry may indeed refer and in so doing take on a doubly ironic meaning.

While the dictionary is not the last thing that Flaubert wrote, it is as given as the last work to the precarious relationship between closure and unstable irony. This suggests a practice that may not have developed chronologically, though it did seem to be encouraged towards the middle of Flaubert's career by his reworking of theatrical form. An evolving relationship between point of view and subject matter, traceable through a study of scenic framing and closure, remains firmly part of the movement towards greater abstraction.

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1. Gustave Flaubert, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Bernard Masson (Paris: Seuil, 1964) 2: 276. Unless specified otherwise, volume and page number references in parentheses are to this edition.

2. *Forme et signification* (Paris: Corti, 1962) 123-33.

3. It is here that psychological studies of Flaubert's narrative construction can break down. The best recent one is Michal Ginsburg, *Flaubert Writing* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1986). See in particular the chapter on *La Tentation*.

4. See Jean-Pierre Richard, "La Création de la forme chez Flaubert," *Littérature et sensation* (Paris: Seuil, 1954).

5. Nicholas Rand, "Texte passeur: Dialogues intra-textuelles dans *La légende de saint Julien l'hospitalier* de Flaubert," *RR* 77 (1986) 46.

6. Antony's wish "to be matter" conforms to the structure of hallucination used throughout the novel and is another variant of his desire to know "le lien de la matière et de la pensée" (1: 568). For a discussion of other readings of the end of this novel, see Ginsburg 190-91.

7. Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1974).

8. Frank Paul Bowman, "Flaubert et le syncrétisme religieux," *RHLF* 81 (1981) 621-36.

9. Gérard Genette, *Travail de Flaubert* (Paris: Seuil, 1983) 9.

10. Maurice Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969) 488.

11. In exasperation Bouvard and Pécuchet finally were to have given up all efforts at comprehension, but not their fascination, in the face of their *copie*: "Pas de réflexion! copions! Il faut que la page s'emplisse, que le monument se complète. . . . Il n'y a de vrai que les phénomènes" (MS gg 10, f. 67r, quoted in *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, ed. C. Gothot-Mersch [Paris: Gallimard, 1979] 443). Did not Flaubert himself point to the same "dead spot" through the spectrum of his own responses to the *chose littéraire*? "Voilà ce que la prose a de diabolique, c'est qu'elle n'est jamais finie" (quoted in Blanchot 492); "*L'ineptie consiste à vouloir conclure*" (letter to Louis Bouilhet, 4 September 1850).

12. Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, ed. J. Pommier and G. Laleu (Paris: Corti, 1949) 216-17.

13. Following a tight linear sequence, the structure of *Salammbô* is transitional with respect to the present subject.

14. Katherine Singer Kovacs, *Le Rêve et la Vie: A Theatrical Experiment by Gustave Flaubert*, HSRL 38 ([Cambridge]: Department of Romance Languages and Literatures of Harvard U, 1981).

15. *Le Château des cœurs* was written in 1863, just prior to the beginning of the second *Education*. The idea of this flexible genre seems to have stayed with Flaubert: its formal elements are outlined in the *Education* (2: 40) and in the *Dictionnaire* (2: 312, MONTRE), its structure in *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (2: 227). *La Tentation* is of course a modified *féerie*, and one could argue plausibly that *Un Cœur simple* and *Saint Julien* share elements with the genre, notably serial structure and the clausal apotheosis.

16. Letter to Louis Bouilhet, 4 September 1850.

17. Michael Issacharoff has laid the groundwork for all discussion of the narrative aspects of theater, in "Texte théâtral et didascalecture," *MLN* 96: 4 (1981) 809-23.

18. Michel Foucault, "Une Bibliothèque fantastique," *Travail de Flaubert* 103-22. André Malraux, *L'Homme précaire et la littérature* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977) 162-81.