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COMEDY, NATURE, AND DEATH:
THE DIALOGIC IMAGINATION IN
FLAUBERT'S "RABELAIS," "SMARH," AND
"LES FUNÉRAILLES DU DOCTEUR MATHURIN"

presented by

Robert O. Steele

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COMEDY, NATURE, AND DEATH: THE DIALOGIC IMAGINATION IN FLAUBERT'S "RABELAIS," "SMARH," AND "LES FUNÉRAILLES DU DOCTEUR MATHURIN"

By

Robert Otto Steele

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ABSTRACT

COMEDY, NATURE, AND DEATH:
THE DIALOGIC IMAGINATION IN
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The fertile chaos present in these neglected texts from Flaubert's juvenilia provides tools for dismantling the prevailing view of Flaubert as an impassive, ironic stylist. In "Rabelais," Flaubert proposes for himself the role of a comic destroyer of masks; as the satirist of all the beliefs of his time; as, in short, a new Rabelais for the nineteenth century. The voice of Yuk in "Smarh" represents Flaubert's first attempt to realize this project. But in "Smarh," Rabelaisian profusion is continually undercut by Byronic anguish as the two voices struggle for control of the meaning of poetic images. The imminent collapse of language under the pressure of this repeated mutual reinvestment of the word is repeatedly delayed by the irruption of the desire for a transparent language devoid of cliché and completely adequate to its object.

"Les Funérailles du docteur Mathurin" parodically performs inherited discourse in an ambivalent carnivalesque travesty. In this chaotic, fragmented text, Flaubert joyfully dismembers Rabelais and Byron as well as the transparent language imagined in "Smarh," here slandered as merely borrowed from the Neoclassics. The image of a

penetrating gaze that dismembers is itself a cliché, appropriated from medicine, Romantic novels, and/or Flaubert's experience of his father. The repeated collapse of the project of universal dismemberment leads to a crisis in the relationship between Nature and Culture, as the text's realization that all language is cliché explodes in a Sadeian flood of pure destruction. And yet, in a final fragment, a sudden calm space opens up in a vision of joyful emptiness, as Nature, Culture, and self seamlessly fuse in a beautiful, meaningless flow.

The new view of comedy and cliché in Flaubert derived from reading these texts leads to a re-examination of "Novembre," Madame Bovary, L'Éducation sentimentale, and "La légende de saint Julien l'Hospitalier" as stages in the realization of the boundless flow already visible in "Les Funérailles." In "Saint Julien," Flaubert's comic restructuring of a bête legend allows him his own voice as he transforms his source into a complex parable of the embrace of the bête beyond repugnance.

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1993

This dissertation is dedicated to Steven R. Hemker, my lover, without whose enthusiasm, encouragement, and computer skills it would never have been completed.

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INTRODUCTION: WRITING CLOSE TO READING: DIALOGIC CRITICISM

As Lawrence R. Schehr has pointed out in a recent article in Nineteenth Century French Studies,[1] Flaubert's oeuvre is usually constructed as consisting of Madame Bovary, L'Éducation sentimentale, Bouvard et Pécuchet, and "Un coeur simple," plus the correspondence. Since Bouvard et Pécuchet is often seen as anomalous, Flaubert is typically construed as a stylist, a writer of restrained, ironic pathos, an anguished but amused chronicler of petty tragedies. The construction of an author's oeuvre, like the construction of a canon, is ideological: the claim that certain works are standard is typically accompanied by a justification of this claim, so that, indirectly, certain values are upheld.[2] Thus when "Novembre" is agreed to be the "best" of the juvenilia, it is usually linked to a series of the other "best" works, and certain values are mentioned: delicate observation, controlled voice, understatement, style. For example, according to Nadeau, "[Flaubert] montre un tel souci des lieux et du temps, du cadre, de la nuance et du détail, des mille impressions du coeur."[3] Nadeau makes it clear that he wants Flaubert's work to be seen as pessimistic and that he believes his

placing of "Novembre" at a pivotal position will achieve this: "Flaubert, nous aurons l'occasion de voir, vit en vue de se fabriquer des souvenirs, et plus ces souvenirs sont frustrateurs et déchirants, plus ils excitent en lui une ironie à la fois amère et nostalgique qui alimente et justifie son pessimisme, nourrit son oeuvre" (38). He is also explicit about how he intends to use the juvenilia as a way of orienting his readings of the mature works: "Les chefs d'oeuvre [sont] tous en germe dans ces premiers récits: La Tentation dans 'Smarh', Madame Bovary dans 'Passion et Vertu,' L'Éducation sentimentale dans 'Mémoires d'un Fou,' et Bouvard et Pécuchet dans 'Une Leçon d'Histoire Naturelle Genre Commis'" (40). Note that we are to see L'Éducation as basically an extended memoir, and Bouvard et Pécuchet as a character study; neither is to be seen as a massive orchestration of prior texts, and in fact this aspect of Flaubert's work is to be de-emphasized. Thus major works like Salammbô are left out of the list altogether, and La Tentation is treated as a romantic, pessimistic outpouring.

It would not be fair to attack only traditional critics: this kind of thinking is so typical of the way one reads Flaubert that even Flaubert himself was led to suppress La Tentation for a quarter century; and indeed, according to certain statements preserved in the correspondence, he considered "Novembre" pivotal in his oeuvre.[4] And even the Lacanian Shoshana Felman focuses on

"Novembre" and its "precursor" "Mémoires d'un fou" in the section of La Folie et la chose littéraire devoted to Flaubert.[5] This is perhaps because she is not very interested in the question of oeuvre construction and merely accepts the oeuvre wholesale from the past. Note, for instance: "C'est bien vers l'aphonie de l'oeuvre flaubertienne ultérieure [Felman refers the reader to a passage by G. Genette] que va 'Novembre,' par son passage du 'je' au 'il' [...]" (210). Felman here supports her assertion of the pivotal nature of "Novembre" by an appeal to an authoritarian precursor on the essential nature of the oeuvre. In other words, since an analysis of the whole oeuvre is outside her scope, she positions her text in relation to the usual construction of the oeuvre: a selection of works interpreted as a unit by a critic considered to be an authority. In doing so, she begs a number of questions: why must the texts that bear the signature "Flaubert" be constructed as a narrative series, correlated or not to a narrative of the life of the (presumably) historical person that bears that name? Why must any text in this series be read in relation to the others? Why must one's own reading be positioned within an authoritative interpretation, even if this interpretation has an impact only on oeuvre construction (if, indeed, it is possible to construct the oeuvre without a broader hidden agenda)? Why do critics always act as if they believe that a text can be understood only with reference to an authority

or a progression, a specific external text hierarchically superior to the critic or to the text at hand, or to an external narrative that puts texts in order?

The convention that literary criticism must construct a hierarchy of texts seems not yet to have disappeared. Programmatic statements of an inevitable future, like the manifestoes of Jean Ricardou and Alain Robbe-Grillet,[6] which claim superiority for certain texts based on their insertion into a master narrative of artistic progress toward certain values, seem to have become less and less common; in the meantime, rightists like Allan Bloom and Dinesh D'Souza[7] have reasserted the view of a static hierarchy based on eternal values. Frankly, it seems little different to me whether value is seen as transcendent and unchangeable or dependent on a known direction of history; authority and telos are both rhetorical demands for submission that do not acknowledge personal responsibility for the creation of value. Perhaps the focus of the debate could be shifted: away from a static evaluation of texts as monuments, away from an emphasis on innovative form as progress, to the open restructuring of the past as a way of creating the future. This approach would envision criticism not as the explication of a text seen as authoritative, but as an active and subjective response, as an acknowledged attempt to move history in the direction of the critic's desire: "The past is not prologue, nor should it be: it is something to improve on, as quickly as humanly possible."[8]

The theories of Mikhaïl Bakhtin provide a possible way of recentering the debate about the construction of textual hierarchies by his focus on the act of interpretation as an answer to the text, not a translation of it. As Bakhtin points out in "The Problem of Speech Genres" and in "The Problem of the Text,"[9] a text is not merely a form, because language is not merely a code: "language" is an artificial, synchronic construct of linguistics based on the real phenomenon of the communication of attitudes, ideas, and values, a phenomenon which is diachronic. Although form (langue) can in fact meaningfully be analyzed, such an analysis dismembers, truncates: the text as utterance (parole) is a rejoinder in a great debate: it answers other utterances and anticipates response. "The speaking subject [. . .] manifests his own individuality in his style, his world view, in all aspects of the design of his work" (Genres, 75). He chooses a generic form, and specific words, because his utterance is related to other utterances that have preceded it: it is a response. But it re-evaluates terms, reverses their positions, orchestrates points of view, and thus can locate itself within a new position in the debate. "We [. . .] take [words] from other utterances, and mainly from others that are kindred to ours in genre, that is, in theme, composition, and style [. . .] Hence the possibility of typical expressions that seem to adhere to words [. . .] In our example, 'Any joy is now bitterness to me,' the

expressive tone of the word 'joy' as determined by the context is, of course, not typical of this word. Speech genres in general submit rather well to re-accentuation [. . .]" (Genres, 87). Thus one can create an original position for oneself within the debate through the manipulation of received materials: through collision, recontextualization, reversal, and other operations. A major way this is done is through irony, which "has penetrated all languages in modern times (especially French)" (Genres, 132).

As for the reader, Bakhtin points out that understanding is dialogic, that reading in fact rewrites the text in a way that itself anticipates response. For Bakhtin, the best reading is one that neither abdicates the self to reproduce the point of view of the author (in fact, following the logic of Bakhtin's position, this is impossible) nor imposes a structure on the text, ignoring its individuality, what Bakhtin calls its "unrepeatability" (134). In the telegraphic style of "The Problem of the Text," he scrutinizes the problem of understanding: "To understand a given text as the author himself understood it. But our understanding can and should be better. Powerful and profound creativity is largely unconscious and polysemic [. . .] Understanding supplements the text" (Genres, 141-142). Understanding can proceed only from a strong point of view: "Creative understanding does not renounce itself, its own place in time, its own culture; and it forgets nothing.

In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be located outside the object of his or her creative understanding [. . .]" (Genres, 7, emphasis in original). This involves an active rewriting of the work: "Understanding is impossible without evaluation [. . .] The person who understands approaches the work from his own already formed world view, from his own viewpoint, from his own position" (Genres, 142). However, if the interaction with the work is to be truly productive, one must be willing also to be rewritten by the text: "These positions [. . .] do not always stay the same. They are influenced by the artwork, which always introduces something new. Only when the position is dogmatically inert is there nothing new revealed in the work (the dogmatist gains nothing; he cannot be enriched) [. . .] In the act of understanding, a struggle occurs that results in mutual change and enrichment" (Genres, 142). Each age can see things in a great work that could not be seen either by the author or by her contemporaries; reading enriches the meaning of a text. Yet each age, by its rereading of great texts, finds itself changed in the process: through its reading of the past it makes its future.

Bakhtin sketches a sort of reading steeped in values but does not evaluate the text from a superior position, as if the text were a mere object; instead, it responds to the text from a position that is clearly stated and exterior to the text, and allows itself to be changed by the reading.

In short, Bakhtin projects a sort of reading that enters into contact with the position of the text within the great historical dialogue, and represents not an interpretation or an evaluation, but a rejoinder.[10]

But a rejoinder to whom? To the author who stands behind the text, undoubtedly. Interpreters of Flaubert are continuously confronted with the "impersonality" of his texts, and in the absence of explicit authorial statements, they either praise the beauty of the form, or search elsewhere in the oeuvre for evidence of Flaubert's position: sometimes they do both, quoting extensively from the correspondence to support their emphasis on form. But a number of questions arise. First, why is the correspondence canonical? Or in other words, why are statements made privately and not intended for publication taken as keys for the interpretation of the public works? Surely the public works are more thoroughly thought out and definitive than remarks made to friends. Is it because as literary critics we default on exactly that task that confronts us: the understanding of literary texts? Because statements made in the normal way, with explicit referents in the real world, explicitly stated positions and goals, are easier to understand than works that subvert normal reference and purpose? But perhaps the statement represented by the text of, say, Madame Bovary is not the same as statements made in letters to Louise Colet -- not only in its form, but also in its content. The interpretation of a literary work cannot

follow the same method as the interpretation of a personal letter. And why should we believe that one is more "honest" in private than in public? The mask the author creates for himself in a literary work is different from the mask he creates for each of his friends. But the mask created for posterity, the mask that establishes one's position in the great dialogue, could be seen, conceivably, as more "honest" than that created for friends, from whom one wants very specific and limited things in the here-and-now. Perhaps, for instance, the claims for the purity of art Flaubert borrowed from Gautier to fling at Louise Colet were part of his strategy for keeping her at a distance from his private life at Croisset. Undoubtedly the various masks overlap. But as literary critics confronted by a text, we need to be able to respond to the author's position as stated <u>in that text</u>; and for Flaubert, because of his complete renovation of the generic conventions of the novel, this task demands an entirely new type of reading.[11]

Bakhtin's notion of criticism as a rejoinder can provide insight into the sort of reading that is appropriate for Flaubert's texts. As Bakhtin reminds us, the author of the literary work is not the same as the real-life author. The former creates himself in the work; an attempt to explain the text from the biography of the real-life author destroys it as literature: "A work's author is present only in the whole of the work, not in one separate aspect of the whole, and least of all in a content that is severed from

the whole" (Genres, 160). The primary author, whom Bakhtin describes by borrowing theological terms of which the historical Flaubert would have approved,[12] is "natura non creata quae creat"; any image of the author present in the work, any self-description, is "natura creata quae non creat." The hero, likewise, is "natura creata quae non creat" (Genres, 148). Thus any statement the author makes about himself has the same status as a statement he makes about anybody else. He is present here only as elsewhere: "The author cannot be separated from the images and characters [. . .] He is revealed in all [his] best pictures" (Genres, 116, 161). No explicit statement made by the author reveals him as well as his whole artistic utterance: "the primary author clothes himself in silence. But this silence can assume various forms of expression, various forms of laughter (irony), allegory, and so forth" (Genres, 149). Thus the author is re-produced by our reading of the work in which he has produced himself: "To see and comprehend the author of a work means to see and comprehend another, alien consciousness and its world, that is, another subject ('Du')" (Genres, 111). The author and his text are not to be explained from a superior position; rather, the meaning of the utterance is to be understood, that is, answered. This can occur only within a comprehension of the literary text itself, not from the point of view of an unchangeable system, not as proof of a preconceived structure, and not from external texts seen as

explanatory, least of all from the author's self-portrait painted elsewhere. What is important is to learn to respond to the author's position as revealed at each moment of the reading, without recourse to other, easier texts, and without sacrificing one's own point of view. In short, one must confront the text as ich to du, as an equal, without accepting as authoritative the text at hand, nor any other text, nor indeed oneself.

The sort of reading I am advocating is one that starts from a strong point of view, involving but not limited to beliefs, principles, and values, and which then responds to moments in the text where these beliefs are challenged. Such a reading would enrich the text as it would transform the reader.[13] But further: I advocate a sort of writing-about-reading that stays as close as possible to this reading process, starting out with a statement of position, following a text through moments of transformation and crisis, then concluding with a modified statement.[14] The original position for such a writing will have normally already been modified by a prior reading of the text, but the process of writing will undoubtedly again modify the position. The original position will have been enriched as well by other reading as well as life experience: it ultimately need not be justified by reference to authoritative texts, but ought rather to be adjusted by the experience of responding to the text at hand. During the course of the reading or writing memories of other texts

will occur; these might as well be duly noted and explained so that the reader of my text can pursue the idea further, if he or she so desires. Some of these other texts may in fact be other works by the same author, some even written in the first person. But never should it be assumed that one text can explain another, nor that the author as constructed in one text is more authentic than the author as constructed in any other. I cannot promise that my version of another writer is objectively valid; I can merely transform each text according to my position; it is up to my reader to decide whether I have enriched it.

My position at this moment of writing is the following: Flaubert is not a tragic, but a comic writer.[15] This position is strategic in my general project to advocate the comic view of life rather than the tragic, a project I seem to share with Bakhtin. Admittedly, my statement represents a reversal that is perhaps not judicious, as Flaubert is perhaps sometimes tragic; strategically, however, I believe it is sound. It was Derrida who first alerted me to the strategic value of hierarchical reversal as an intervention in the discourse of power: "J'insiste beaucoup et sans cesse sur la nécessité de cette phase de renversement qu'on a peut-être trop vite cherché à discréditer." Normally in Western discourse opposite terms exist in a hierarchical relationship to each other, and a questioning of the terms must proceed through a questioning of the hierarchy: "[D]ans une opposition philosophique

classique, nous n'avons pas affaire à la coexistence pacifique d'un vis-à-vis, mais à une hiérarchie violente. Un des deux termes commande l'autre (axiologiquement, logiquement, etc.), occupe la hauteur. Déconstruire l'opposition, c'est d'abord, à un moment donné, renverser la hiérarchie." This process is necessary strategically in order to intervene in the power relation: "Négliger cette phase de renversement, c'est oublier la structure conflictuelle et subordonnante de l'opposition. C'est donc passer trop vite, sans garder aucune prise sur l'opposition antérieure, à une neutralisation qui, pratiquement, laisserait le champ antérieur en l'état, se priverait de tout moyen d'y intervenir effectivement. On sait quels ont toujours été les effets pratiques (en particulier politiques) des passages sautant immédiatement au-delà des oppositions, et des protestations dans la simple forme du ni/ni."[16] Ultimately, the close link between the concepts of tragedy and comedy will allow me to argue that Flaubert transcends the opposition; for the moment I have accepted the distinction between the two in order to transfer Flaubert from one category to the other while reversing the relative valuation of the two.

This text will attempt a strategic intervention in the discourse about Flaubert through the advocacy of three texts from 1838-1839 as fundamental juvenilia; it will assert that they are pivotal in an understanding of Flaubert's oeuvre because they are the site of a struggle

that will become dominant in Flaubert's mature style: a struggle between Rabelaisian excess, Byronic agony, and Neoclassic restraint. I will proceed from a close reading of "Rabelais," where Flaubert's comic project is given its first theoretical development; through an examination of key passages of "Smarh," where Rabelaisian and Byronic voices struggle over the interpretation of the relationship between Man and Nature; to a detailed analysis of "Les Funérailles du docteur Mathurin," in whose fertile chaos lie the seeds of Flaubert's mature project.[17]

In short, I wish to unhinge certain assumptions and drive certain wedges into the oeuvre as it has been constructed, which will (I hope) lead to a view of Flaubert not as a tragic realist, but rather as a comic reworker of prior texts, a playful revealer of and reveller in emptiness, an inventor, manipulator, and destroyer of masks, in short, as a renovator of the carnivalesque tradition, and, pace Bakhtin (who preferred Dostoevsky), the most innovative and important representative of that tradition in the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 1: A NEW RABELAIS

Most Flaubert critics have ignored "Les Funérailles du docteur Mathurin," a short story written in 1839 when Flaubert was eighteen. Yet this story is clearly the most complete application of the principles enumerated in his essay "Rabelais," and Rabelais was one of the few writers Flaubert consistently praised throughout his life.[1] For example: "Les gens que je lis habituellement, mes livres de chevet, ce sont Montaigne, Rabelais, Régnier, La Bruyère, et Le Sage" (à Louis de Cormenin, 7 juin [1844]; Corr. I:210); "Je tâche de fermer l'oeil après avoir lu un chapitre du sacro-saint, immense et extra-beau Rabelais" (à Ernest Feydeau, [25 décembre 1867]; Corr. III:716); "Donne de ma part une pensée de respect et d'adoration devant la maison [de Rabelais]" (à Caroline, [8 juillet 1876]; Conard vii:317); "[de Rabelais] découlent les lettres françaises" (à Guy de Maupassant, 19 février 1880; Conard viii:398).

Not only have "Les Funérailles" and "Rabelais" been largely ignored; the connection between Flaubert and Rabelais has been explored rarely. Bruneau,[2] however, sees Rabelais as a major source of the figure of the Garçon,[3] the root and archetype of Flaubert's comedy: "Le 'Garçon' aurait donc à la fois pour origine les romans de Rabelais et

le type bien connu à l'èpoque romantique du commis-voyageur."[4] He considers Rabelais the source of the bourgeois, bon-vivant aspect of the Garçon (Débuts, 153), as well as of his exaggerated, parodic eloquence (Débuts, 152): one can put in his mouth "tous les clichés habituels"; but as a "farceur méchant" given to sadistic "jouissance... dans le malheur des autres," he also represents "une critique violente de la société bourgeoise" (Débuts, 158). Thus the language of the Garçon is both an exaggerated example of the ridiculous, and an attack on the ridiculous. Bruneau ponders the following formulation of the Goncourts, which he finds "loin d'être clair" (Débuts, 152): "Il [le Garçon] représentait la blague du matérialisme et du romantisme, la caricature de la philosophie d'Holbach."[5] Bruneau, who notes that the terms materialism and romanticism are contradictory,[6] explains the sentence as meaning that "le 'Garçon,' matérialiste et ridicule, se moque du romantisme" (Débuts, 153). In Bruneau's reading of this phrase, then, the Garçon is a mockery of the mockery of Romanticism, a satire of materialism. It is not insignificant that he connects this figure to Homais, and to Arnoux (Débuts, 160): he is attaching himself to the traditional reading of these figures as wholly objects of satire. In the face of the complex vertigo of Flaubert's relationship to the characters, values and languages that he depicts, most critics feel moved to choose sides, but this is a fatal temptation. For suppose that the Goncourts' formulation is

not contradictory, that what the Garçon represents is in fact la blague of contradictory opinions linked in a sociologically representative type, the ridiculousness of both the materialists and the romantics, in short a caricature of philosophy, of language itself as an object of and vehicle for belief.

Bruneau's dilemma confronts anyone who attempts to specify Flaubert's position regarding one of his characters: for Flaubert, belief, or more specifically, the language of belief, is itself the object of his satire. The result of this is that when one finalizes one's position regarding something represented in one of Flaubert's texts, one finds oneself mocked by the text. At the same time it is never certain that the satire of belief precludes the author's identification with his object: after all, Flaubert played the Garçon, and became Madame Bovary.[7]

When Bruneau quotes Flaubert as saying that "Mon Rabelais est tout bourré de notes et commentaires philosophiques, philologiques, bachiques, bandatiques, etc." (à Chevalier, [28 octobre 1838]; Corr. I:30-31), he considers these commentaries "peut-être la source d''Ivre et Mort', certainement des 'Funérailles du docteur Mathurin,'" and concludes that "le conte bachique n'est donc pour Flaubert qu'une variété du conte philosophique, un moyen pour lui d'exprimer ses idées sur la vie et sur la société" (Débuts, 184). Bruneau reduces statements made in Flaubert's texts to the mere expression of opinions, rather

than viewing them as the display of language in the mode of laughter. He sees Flaubert's writings as serious commentary on a comic text; the process of generating the text can thus be described as one in which "le conte bachique [...] se [fait] philosophique" (Débuts, 184), in which a drunken text learns to think about itself, rather than as thought learning to become drunken, or as irreducibly ambiguous drunken thought. Bruneau's project is inscribed within the general Western project of finding a meaning for every creative outburst, a purpose for every enjoyment. Flaubert's creation is outside of, if not contradictory to, that project.

The connection between Flaubert and Rabelais is most thoroughly explored in H. Patry's 1904 article "Rabelais et Flaubert." Patry here makes the essential point that most other critics have missed: Flaubert not only commented on Rabelais, he emulated him. Thus it is significant that he was reading Rabelais not only during the late 1830's, when "Rabelais" and "Les Funérailles" were written, but also that he reread him during the periods when he was writing Madame Bovary, Salammbô, and L'Éducation sentimentale. Patry unearths several obvious emulations of the Rabelaisian style in the correspondence, notably this one from 1837:

> Le père Langlois et Orlowski ont dîné hier à la maison et ils ont passablement bu, mâqué, blagué. Achille, moi et Biset sommes invités pour dimanche à aller ribotter [sic], fumer et entendre de la musique chez Orlowski [...] On mange des saucisses, des boudins, des oeufs durs, de la cochonnaille et il n'est permis d'en sortir que saouls et après

> avoir vomi 5 ou 6 fois.
>
> J'ai une nouvelle agréable à t'apprendre. Je puis t'en garantir l'authenticité, elle vient du sieur Ducoudray, pion de M. Mainot et élève en médecine. Il porte un chapeau, une redingote et une chemise. Il m'a donc dit ce matin à l'amphithéâtre que... que... eh bien, que le censeur des études M. Cabrié qui [a] une chemise sale, des bas sales, une âme sale et qui enfin est un salo[p]... il m'a dit bref qu'il avait été surpris dans un bordel bordelant et qu'il allait être traduit devant le Conseil Académique [...] Voilà qui me réjouit, me récrée, me délecte, me fait du bien à la poitrine, au ventre, au coeur, aux entrailles, aux viscères, au diaphragme, etc. Quand je pense à la mine du censeur surpris sur le fait je me récrie, je ris, je bois, je chante ah ah ah ah ah ah et je fais entendre le rire du Garçon, je tape sur la table, je m'arrache les cheveux, je me roule par terre, voilà qui est bon. Ah! Ah! voilà qui est Blag[u]e, cul, merde. Adieu, car je suis fou [de] cette nouvelle (à Ernest Chevalier, [24 mars 1837]; Corr. I:22-23).

What is specifically Rabelaisian here are the lists of food, of body parts, of synonyms for pleasure; as well as the conflation of drinking and conversation ("bu, mâqué, blagué"). Likewise it seems significant that the laughter of the Garçon is mixed with signs ambiguously of excessive pleasure and of distress ("je m'arrache les cheveux") and that "blague" appears very close to "fou."[8] This nexus of oral and anal enjoyment, of things pouring into and spewing from the mouth, of laughter that is both painful and pleasurable, of swallowing that results in vertigo and vomiting, of painful enjoyment that is akin to folly, of playful defilement that degrades also the defiler, carries in germ the principal dynamics of Flaubert's later works: the gueuloir, the nauseated rejection of what one has assiduously collected, the sadistic mockery of what one

wears as a mask; but most of all the fact that all of this takes place in the mode of pleasurable verbal display, of play and enjoyment.[9]

We know what attracted Flaubert to Rabelais in the late 1830's because there has been preserved an essay he wrote, probably in 1838 or 1839, probably as a class assignment. Critics who write about "Rabelais"[10] usually dismiss it as "sans grande originalité" (Débuts, 265). If it is taken seriously, it is in the context of the letter of 13 September, 1838 to Ernest Chevalier (Corr. I:27-28) which links Byron and Rabelais: "Vraiment je n'estime profondément que deux hommes: Rabelais et Byron les deux seuls qui aient écrit dans l'intention de nuire au genre humain et de lui rire à la face" (28). "Rabelais" is interpreted by Coleman[11] and, following him, Shanks,[12] as Byronic, as a source for "Smarh." Coleman's article dates from 1925, when "studies of Flaubert tend[ed] to regard as his most spontaneous production, not Madame Bovary or L'Éducation sentimentale, in which are embodied the realist's tables of the law, but Salammbô and the three versions of the Tentation" (205). This construction of the oeuvre was inscribed within the overarching structure of "pessimistic determinism" which "constituted the foundation of Flaubert's philosophy" (207). Coleman quotes from the essay Flaubert's description of Rabelais's laughter: "Rabelais est un Luther dans son genre. Sa sphère, c'est le rire. Mais il le pousse si fort, qu'avec ce rire il démolit

tout autant de choses que la colère du bonhomme de Wittenberg [...] ce rire-là est terrible. C'est la statue du grotesque" ("Rabelais," 1:180); somehow he transforms its revolutionary joy into "pessimism" and "brutal irony" (213). For Coleman, Flaubert's laughter is different from Byronism in that it welds to a "savage and inhuman pessimism" a "brutal sneer, a coarse contempt for human relations, a sort of delight in rolling them in the mire" (215). Shanks, using again "Smarh" as his example of Flaubert's Rabelaisianism, calls this last "a new type of grotesque expressive of his disillusion," and claims that Flaubert "transmogrifies the sane humour of Rabelais in order to create another spirit that denies, an obscene Mephistopheles [. . .] the monster born of the rape of Flaubert's illusions by reality" (87); according to Maynial, this is because Flaubert has confused Rabelais with Byron: "Flaubert's bracketing of Rabelais and Byron shows his misinterpretation of the former: to this repressed and adolescent Romanticist even the healthy laughter of Pantagruel rings bitter" (86).

Yet in the essay Flaubert explicitly separates Rabelais from Byron: "ce n'est ni la pointe acérée [...] de Voltaire, ni la colère naïve [...] de Jean-Jacques, ni les sanglots étouffés de Byron, ni la douleur réfléchie de Goethe, c'est le rire vrai, fort, brutal, le rire qui brise et qui casse,-- ce rire-là qui, avec Luther et 93, a abattu le moyen âge" ("Rabelais," 1:183). What Flaubert admires in Rabelais is his strength, his truth,[13] and the fact that his

laughter is revolutionary. In fact, as Patry has pointed out, Flaubert admired Rabelais for his "force," and also, surprisingly enough, for his "impersonnalité" (37): "Les épithètes qui reviennent le plus souvent quand il veut caractériser l'oeuvre de Rabelais, ce sont celles d''exagéré,' de 'monstrueux,' de 'puissant,' d''immense,' d''énorme,' de 'pyramidal'" (37-38); yet Flaubert also finds in Rabelais the absence of the artist from his work: "L'artiste doit s'arranger de façon à faire croire à la postérité qu'il n'a pas vécu [...] Je ne peux rien me figurer sur la personne [...] de Rabelais" (à Louise Colet, [27 mars 1852]; Corr. II:62). Rabelais acts as a force of Nature:

> Ce qui me semble, à moi, le plus haut dans l'Art (et le plus difficile), ce n'est ni de faire rire, ni de faire pleurer, ni de vous mettre en rut ou en fureur, mais d'agir à la façon de la nature, c'est-à-dire de faire rêver. Aussi, les très belles oeuvres ont ce caractère. Elles sont sereines d'aspect et incompréhensibles. Quant au procédé, elles sont immobiles comme des falaises, houleuses comme l'Océan, pleines de frondaisons, de verdures et de murmures comme des bois, tristes comme le désert, bleues comme le ciel [...] Rabelais [...] m'appara[ît] impitoyable. Cela est sans fond, infini, multiple. Par de petites ouvertures, on aperçoit des précipices; il y a du noir en bas, du vertige. Et cependant quelque chose de singulièrement doux plane sur l'ensemble! C'est l'éclat de la lumière, le sourire du soleil, et c'est calme! c'est calme! et c'est fort (à Louise Colet, [26 août 1853]; Corr. II:417, emphasis in original).

Thus a powerful comedy transcends laughter, tears, and sexuality: it leads one to contemplation. In the midst of Rabelais's excess is serenity, calm. The variety of its

procedures masks an infinite depth that is vertiginous emptiness, but also light, the smile of the sun. It embraces opposites, as does Romanticism, but its ultimate nihilism is indistinguishable from the harmony, calm and reason of Classicism. What must be retained from this letter is Flaubert's view of superior art as transcending all contradictions, and that this ultimate reconciliation of emotions, moods and schools is modeled on Nature. For Flaubert, excess can be wedded to clarity, variety to immobility, power to calm. And all of this can take place within a laughter that is pitiless.

Given the importance of Rabelais for Flaubert, then, it seems wise to analyze in depth the image of the master produced by the youthful essay, whether or not the insights are original, whether or not the style is admirable. What is needed is an understanding of the view of Rabelais that the essay produces, and thus its view of comedy. What I will attempt to show, through a reading of the essay and of its companion piece "Les Funérailles du docteur Mathurin," is that the comic impulse, the "triumph of spring over winter" (Frye, 183), is fundamental to an understanding of Flaubert's relation to Nature and language. As will be seen, moving these works from a marginal to a central position in Flaubert's <u>oeuvre</u> can illuminate the comic aspects of Flaubert's mature works. What "Smarh" dramatizes, then, is the last gasp of Byronism; "Les Funérailles" represents the first attempt at a reworking of

Byronism in the new Rabelaisian mode.

"Rabelais" begins with a claim that its interpretation of Rabelais is original, a corrective to the general misreading: "Jamais nom ne fut plus généralement cité que celui de Rabelais, et jamais peut-être avec plus d'injustice et d'ignorance" ("Rabelais," 1:180). Yet two alternative interpretations are given. Which one is incorrect? Are both unjust, ignorant? "Ainsi, aux uns, il apparaît comme un moine ivre et cynique, espirit désordonné et fantastique, aussi obscène qu'ingénieux, dangereux par l'idée, révoltant par l'expression." If this interpretation is to be rejected, what of its implicit connection of cynicism with revolt and insult? Although a quick reading of this passage might lead one to reject this first interpretation of Rabelais as representing an opinion condemned by the text, the fact is that such a reading is undercut elsewhere, where Rabelaisian laughter is connected with Luther and the execution of the King in 1793 ("Rabelais," 1:183). But what then of the second interpretation of Rabelais? "Pour les autres, c'est toute une philosophie pratique, douce, modérée, sceptique il est vrai, mais qui conduit après tout à bien vivre et à être honnête homme" ("Rabelais," 1:180). Contrasted in this juxtaposition of two interpretations of Rabelais are disorder, revolt, drunkenness, danger and genius, versus practicality, mildness, moderation and correct living; in short, cynicism ("une moine [...] cynique") versus

skepticism ("une philosophie [...] sceptique"), which in this context apparently mean, respectively, destructive nihilism ("désordonné [...] dangereux [...] révoltant") and calm, rational domesticity ("pratique [...] modérée [...] bien vivre [...] honnête homme"). One sees here the two sides of the Garçon described by Bruneau: the bourgeois lover of comfort and the anti-bourgeois épateur. Perhaps both readings are misreadings because of their reductiveness. For although the text seems momentarily to ally itself with the first reading ("son prodigieux génie a jeté à la face du monde sa satire mordante," emphasis added), it soon signals its position as regards interpretation itself, when it invokes "sa satire mordante et universelle" and says that "chaque siècle a tourné sous tous les sens, interpreté de mille façons cette longue énigme." Rabelais's texts satirize everything: they are thus an enigma, a puzzle inviting an interpretation; Flaubert's text envisions this interpretive process as a turning in all directions, a twisting, a deformation: but also, through polysemy, a curdling as of milk, a spoiling; as a placing of the text under meanings, as a subordination to an imposed sense.[14]

Rabelais's texts are satires: they invite one to discover their intent, the position from which they attack, the serious purpose that underlies their laughter; but they are universal satires: any interpretation of them that limits them, and thus distorts them, is an attempt to tame

their laughter by subordinating them to a unique meaning. What precedes any distorting reception of them is the moment of their origin as escape: "sa satire mordante et universelle, qui s'échappe si franchement par le rire colossal de ses géants" (emphasis added). The irrepressible and colossal force of their birth trivializes any purpose interpretation can afterward foist on them. They escape interpretation thanks to their vulgar and seemingly insignificant joy ("cette longue énigme si triviale, si grossière, si joyeuse") which masks profound depths that represent truth ("cette longue énigme [...] au fond peut-être si profonde et si vraie"). The injustice and ignorance that the essay promises to correct are those of interpretation itself, through a view of Rabelais's comedy that sees it as a spontaneous, creative force, unbounded by any particular meaning, that is powerful and true precisely because of its joy in what seriousness considers low.

The following paragraphs of Flaubert's text outline the history of Rabelais's influence throughout the ages: "Son oeuvre [...] a [...] une telle importance qu'elle se lie à chaque âge et en explique la pensée." One thinks of this phrase from the correspondence: "Je lis toujours Rabelais et j'y ai adjoint Montaigne [...] c'est selon [moi] un point d'où est parti la littérature et l'espirit français" (à Ernest Chevalier, 13 septembre 1838; Corr. I:28). The sentiment was apparently lifted from Chateaubriand, although Flaubert may not have known this at

the time: "Rabelais 'd'où découlent les lettres françaises' suivant Chateaubriand" (à Guy de Maupassant, 19 [16] février 1880; Conard viii:398). When Rabelais's works were written, they were revolutionary: "c'est une révolte ouverte [...] Elle a toute l'importance de l'actualité, elle est dans le sens du mouvement, elle le dirige." There is a sense, apparently, that is not imposed by a deforming interpretation: a sense that is a direction of history that the text, through following, leads. Rabelais's laughter demolishes as many things as the anger of Luther, because of its strength ("il pousse [son rire] si fort, qu'[...] il démolit tout autant de choses que la colère du bonhomme de Wittenberg"), but also because of the precision of its style: "Il le manie si bien, il le cisèle tellement [...] que ce rire-là est devenu terrible." Carefully worked style hones laughter into a weapon, and creates a work that is "éternelle comme le monde." This last notion resonates in a number of directions: Flaubert's later view of artistic creativity as like God's creation of the world; the eternal nature of laughter and its connection with the power of Nature. Here the formulation is abrupt, unmotivated by the preceding sentences ("Ce rire-là est devenu terrible. C'est la statue du grotesque. Elle est éternelle comme le monde"). "Rabelais," like many of Flaubert's early texts, sometimes becomes a disorderly network of linked assertions, a sketching-in of connections that in some cases Flaubert would later explore more thoroughly. Moments of incoherence

in these early texts signal points of creative productivity, points therefore worthy of scrutiny and expansion. What is problematized at this point in the text is the relationship between meaning and history. Subsequent ages have subordinated Rabelais to their own sens (meaning, direction, project); but Rabelais is the expression of a specific historical sens (direction, project, meaning). The force of Rabelais's originality here makes his creation eternal: this durability is what allows all subsequent deformations, as well as its subsequent development along a historical trajectory. The following paragraphs of "Rabelais" sketch a series of deformations, transformations, and continuations in various ages. Yet a question remains unanswered: how is one to distinguish between valid continuations and invalid continuations? between true expressions of a tendency's eternal nature and the degradations of time? between the uniqueness of an artist's spontaneous, timeless creation and its historical position? The problem indicated but not thoroughly explored here of the relationship between art and history would obsess Flaubert throughout his life.

The text asserts that Rabelais's historical revolutionary force finds a valid continuation in the seventeenth century in the works of Molière and La Fontaine: these two are "insouciants des philosophies, des sectes, des religions." Although they have reduced the laughter of Rabelais to "un demi-sourire," they are like him in that the serious analytic portion of their project is motivated by

enjoyment: "un demi-sourire de bonhomie et d'analyse" and by their directness and freedom: "[ils sont] francs, libres." Rabelais, Molière and La Fontaine are, in fact, "les plus vraiment français que nous ayons," because their first allegiance is not to a school or system of belief, but to the representation of the human. "Ils l'ont retournée [la religion de l'homme] et analysée, disséquée": one thinks of Flaubert's dissection of the heart of Madame Bovary.[15] This cutting is a function of the precision of their language: "ce dialogue si habilement coupé." This chiseled and cutting language is in fact better than systems: the laughter of Molière, for example, is "plus philosophe [...] que tous les philosophes depuis qu'il y en a." Analysis devoted to truth and motivated by laughter is superior to belief.

La Bruyère liked Rabelais, but this is atypical for the century of Boileau, Racine, and Maintenon, because of its "goût [...] réserve [...] pureté" and prudishness: "ce siècle prude [...] si bien représenté dans l'anguleux et plat jardin de Versailles." The century feared Rabelais because of his connection to the Revolution: "[Le dix-septième siècle] se trouvait entre deux choses terribles pour lui [...] Les démolisseurs des croyances avant, les démolisseurs de têtes après." The century is lost in admiring self-contemplation, "guindé, dans l'adoration de soi-même," too serious, too <u>bienséant</u> to appreciate "cette littérature débraillée, bruyante, nue." There is an

implicit contrast between analysis and truth on the one hand and absorbed self-admiration on the other: of the gaze that travels outward into the universally human and discovers the truth, and the gaze that is turned toward its own reflection and is pleased, hence mistaken. Perhaps truth is negative, destructive not only of illusion but of the admiration of the human? The force underlying the Rabelaisian tendency in French literature seems in fact to be destructive: Rabelais's laughter demolishes; Molière's half-smile analyzes through dissection. Both laughters imply a corpse; this corpse is perhaps that from which the narcissistic spectacle of the seventeenth century is intended to divert (the text echoes Pascal: "deux abîmes au milieu desquels [le dix-septième siècle] se tenait guindé dans l'adoration de lui-même," emphasis added). The spirit of Rabelais is medical in the sense of dispelling the illusions that veil the corpses its act of revelation dismembers.[16]

The eighteenth century did not like Rabelais. They misread his vertigo ("ce tourbillon"), which the essay interprets as an irrepressible font of invention ("cette verve de saillies, cet entrain, ce tourbillon, cette veine poétique palpitante d'inventions, d'aventures, de voyages, d'extravagances," "Rabelais," 1:181). For the eighteenth century, this vertigo was merely drunken vomiting: "Voltaire [...] appelle son livre: 'Un amas des plus grossières ordures qu'un moine ivre puisse vomir.'" The century's contempt for Rabelais reveals the secret beneath

its illusion: "Le petit goût musqué, réglé et froid du siècle avait horreur de ce qu'il nommait le dévergondage d'esprit. Il aimait mieux celui des moeurs." The century's attempt at fixing Rabelais's meaning ("Voltaire [...] n'excuse Rabelais que parce qu'il s'est moqué de l'Eglise") merely reveals its pettiness and hypocrisy. Misreading Rabelais does not cripple him: his texts are so constructed that fixing their meanings or showering them with contempt makes one the object of their satire. This is because of the text's vital force that explodes hypocritical refinement, the fact that its sens is historical, but larger than any school or program that tries to harness or confine it.

In fact, its uniqueness derives from its rejection of even the restraint required for clear communication: "Où lui trouvons-nous un rival? [...] est-ce Pétrone, Apulée, avec leur art prémédité, mesuré, leurs contours purs [...] ?" Classical art, with its clarity and carefully considered effects, is for Flaubert inferior to the formless vitality of Rabelais. Yet the text has already praised Rabelais's chiseling and manipulation of his laughter, as well as Molière's skillfully cut dialogue. Perhaps at this point Flaubert is merely reproducing standard Romantic clichés about classical style, clichés his thought escapes when engaging Rabelais directly. In any event, the struggle between Rabelaisian profusion and polished restraint would continue to trouble him, as would the difficulty of keeping

his voice pure of Romantic cliché.

Flaubert rejects the idea that Rabelais had precursors, although he admits a connection to medieval comedy: "la partie matériellement comique de Rabelais apparti[ent] à l'élément grotesque du moyen âge, nous ne lui trouvons de prédécesseur dans aucun document littéraire." What, precisely, is the distinction between material links and literary predecessors? Why is the mere act of inscribing within literature what already existed outside of it proof of originality? In fact, this part of the text is not particularly well developed, nor is the following: leaping suddenly to "les temps modernes," it merely states that Béroald de Verville "en est si loin" that there is no comparison. One would have hoped that the text's evaluation of Sterne as a modern emulator of Rabelais ("Sterne a voulu le réproduire") might have given insight as to how such an emulation might proceed, but the text merely attacks his "affectation" and "sensibilité raffinée," attaching him somewhat speciously to the eighteenth century. In fact, as we shall see, the text is unsure of exactly how Rabelais is to be emulated, although it does speculate on the question.

But first, it explores the idea that Rabelais is "unique parce qu'il est â lui seul l'expression d'un siècle, d'une époque." Geniuses "disent leur mot, le mot de leur temps," and thereby "créent des littératures ou [...] en ferment de vieilles." Thus Homer is the singer of the springtime of a world, Virgil of its end. The former

"chante la vie guerrière, la jeunesse vaillante et belliqueuse du monde, la verte saison où les arbres poussent." He is associated with struggle, youth, and Nature, rather like Rabelais. Virgil, whose "civilisation est déjà vieille" is full of "larmes [...] nuances [...] sentiment [...] délicatesse" -- not at all like Rabelais. Dante, however, is both "sombre et rayonnant"; as "le poète chrétien," the poet of death and hell, he contains both "mélancholie et [...] espérance": are we to see this as the poetry of an age in transition between decadence and a new life, if only in its own metaphysical imagination?

Next comes an analysis of the historical conditions that produce Byronism:

> dans les sociétés vieillies, quand la satiété est venue à tous, que le doute a gagné tous les coeurs et que toutes les belles choses rêvées, toutes les illusions, toutes les utopies sont tombées feuille à feuille, arrachées par la réalité, la science, le raisonnement, l'analyse, que fait le poète?

The text attributes the disillusion of Byronism to the Enlightenment and to science, and it reviles them for it. Yet it has just argued that Rabelais, hero of the text, is in fact the very embodiment of the attack on faith. It is not clear at this point in the text either that Byronism is the only valid response to the modern age, or that it is the model the text proposes emulating. In fact, although the text here seems to indicate otherwise ("de nos jours, c'est Byron"), it is not clear that the age being described is in fact 1839, date of the text, rather than the period just

before: indeed the end of the text seems ambiguously to indicate that 1839 is a period of transition propelled forward by the ambivalent blessing of science. Readings that argue that the text as a whole upholds Byronism must be selective, and they must ignore the entire context that leads up to this passage.

In fact, the late 1830s were a period when the influence of Byron was on the wane, according to Edmond Estève,[17] for whom "le fond du byronisme peut se définir d'un mot: c'est l'individualisme, hautain, irréductible, absolu. Étendre son moi au delà de toutes lois [...] c'est l'instinct de l'homme" (4). By the early 1830s this tendency had led to a politics of extremes:

> sous le régime du juste milieu orléaniste, [certains des Jeune-France] sont légitimistes, [...] les autres, la plupart, républicains [...] Mais ils ont tous un sentiment commun: c'est la haine du bourgeois [...] De là [...], les excentricités d'opinion et de langage [...] Le bourgeois est ami de l'ordre: on lui parle de révolution sociale. Le bourgeois estime [...] les professions honorables: on lui déclare qu'il n'y a que trois états possibles dans une civilisation avancée comme la nôtre: voleur, journaliste ou mouchard, et qu'on aurait aimé à être voleur (220).

This led quite naturally to the proclamation of a belief in "l'anarchie morale et littéraire" (229), if not quite political anarchy.

Part of the reaction against this tendency was the call of the more moderate opponents of Louis-Philippe like Lamartine for a reformist poetry that would lead humanity to strive for political utopia, a poetry not lyric, epic, or

dramatic, but a poetry "philosophique, religieuse, politique, sociale [...] C'est elle qui plane sur la société et la juge, et qui, montrant à l'homme la vulgarité de son oeuvre, l'appelle sans cesse en avant, en lui montrant du doigt des utopies, des républiques imaginaires, des cités de Dieu, et lui souffle au coeur le courage de les atteindre."[18] The political theory of "Rabelais" seems calculated to escape from the excessive despair engendered by the frenetic Byronism of the 1830s[19] without giving up its revolutionary energy and without sinking into piously reformist platitudes. Flaubert's solution is Rabelais, which Estève says was already an option for the young Romantic of the 1830s: "Il y a [...] le Jeune-France rabelaisian [...] Le Jeune-France byronien se grise 'd'une manière tout à fait byronien'" (Estève, 221-222; the quote is from Gautier).[20] Drunkenness, of course, is not necessarily revolutionary, or even Rabelaisian: the danger is that drunkenness can easily be read as Byronic unless it is purged of all despair.

According to Flaubert, the poet's response to a disillusioned age is Byronic isolation and nihilism: "Il se recueille en lui-même [...] il chante [...] tous les néants de la pensée" ("Rabelais," 1:181). Yet in his isolation, he reflects his age, reproducing within himself all of the discourses that surround him in a dying world: "toutes les douleurs qui l'entourent, tous les sanglots [...], toutes les malédictions": all these voices "résonnent dans son âme"

and "sortent par la voix du génie" to give an eternal place in history to the misfortunes of an epoch. The poet's resonant power comes from the immense void of his soul: "vaste, sonore, immense." Surprisingly, although this void had previously been seen as historical (the two "abîmes" of the Renaissance and the Revolution), here it is seen as God-given ("son âme que Dieu a faite vaste"). This moment in the text is a monument to Byronic Romanticism; but it will soon prove to be a funeral monument ("pour ciseler la mémoire de ses infortunes"): the final passage of the text will speculate on how to fill its resonant void.

It must be emphasized that the representation of surrounding voices is not the monopoly of Byronism: "Les grands écrivains [...] reçoivent l'espirit [...] de chaque individualité, y mêlent ce que leur est personnel, original: ils l'amalgament, ils l'arrangent, puis ils le rendent transformé dans l'art." In this way "le vrai poétique est plus vrai que le vrai historique." The text will soon speculate on the voices that the Rabelaisian text articulates: notably the resistance of the people, through humor, to the church and to the aristocracy. "Le roi [Louis XI] avait abattu la féodalité, le moine [Luther] allait abattre la papauté, c'est-à-dire tout le moyen âge, le guerrier et le prêtre. Mais le peuple lassé de l'un et de l'autre n'en voulait plus." This political desire is based on observation: "[Le peuple] <u>s'était aperçu</u> que l'homme d'armes le mangeait, que le prêtre l'exploitait et le

trompait de son côté" (emphasis added). Popular humor, at this moment of transition, sought a new form:

> Longtemps il s'était contenté d'inscrire ses railleries sur la pierre des cathédrales, de faire des chansons contre le seigneur, de lâcher, comme dans le Roman de la Rose, quelque mot mordant sur le pouvoir ou la noblesse. Mais il fallait quelque chose de plus: une révolte, une réforme... c'était un besoin général de sortir des entraves, d'entrer dans une autre voie. Besoin de la science, même besoin dans la poésie, dans la philosophie ("Rabelais," 1:181).

Thus Rabelais, living in the midst of a society "toute chancelante sur ses bases [...] devant tant de choses démolies et tant de ruines," gave birth to an "immense sarcasme" directed at the Middle Ages. The text has said that Rabelais was the originator of that literature that can legitimately be called French ("Rabelais est le père de cette littérature [... la] plus vraiment français[e] que nous ayons," "Rabelais," 1:180). It has said that great geniuses give rise to, or close, literatures. Rabelais seemingly does not represent the pristine moment of Homeric creation; since he is an originator, his literature cannot be exactly the same as that of Byronic despair. Is it that Rabelais's epoch is different in kind from Byron's, as it is from Homer's? Or is it merely that his response to the decadence of his world is different from Byron's? Perhaps both: the poet's representation of the voices that surround him depends partly on what those voices are, partly on what he adds that is personal, original to him, like the God-given vastness of Byron's soul. But the text describes the

object of Rabelais's sarcasm as: "ce passé hideux du moyen âge, qui palpitait encore au seizième siècle, et dont le seizième siècle avait horreur lui-même" ("Rabelais," 1:181). Rabelais lived at a moment when the past survived only as despised relics; Byron just after the illusions had fallen, one by one. Has Flaubert outlived the historical moment of Byronism to reach a moment when a renewed Rabelaisianism is needed?

This is precisely the question that the last section of the essay addresses. Most commentators have skipped the intervening section, where Flaubert summarizes and comments on each of Rabelais's five books in turn. In fact, this section was omitted when the essay was originally published in 1886,[21] but it is important for several reasons. First: in the light of the last section, where Flaubert calls for a new Rabelais for the nineteenth century, it is important to see which aspects of Rabelais Flaubert emphasized. Second: in this passage, direct quotations from Rabelais gradually seep into Flaubert's style, contaminating it: this is particularly interesting in light of the emulation of Rabelais to be discussed at the end of this chapter. Third: the analytic passages scattered throughout the summary help to explain what Flaubert was doing in "Les Funérailles."

"Qu'est-ce donc que Rabelais?" The aspects of Rabelais that Flaubert emphasizes in his plot summaries are unsurprising: food, drink, sex, and philosophy; profusion and vigor. As for philosophy, it is significant for the

connection between "Rabelais" and "Les Funérailles du docteur Mathurin" that Flaubert emphasizes medical writers ("Pline, Athénée, Dioscoride, Galien, Aristote, Elien; il apprend la géométrie, la musique, la médecine," "Rabelais," 1:181-182). But what is "le plus beau" in Rabelais is not its "inventions [this is a bit surprising, given Flaubert's admiration of Rabelais as an originator], ni ce style [...] à la phrase si bien ciselée en relief [again surprising, since this also had been emphasized earlier], c'est le dialogue, le comique des caractères, les longues causeries philosophiques" ("Rabelais," 1:182). In fact, it is such a "longue causerie philosophique" which is the central focus of "Les Funérailles."[22]

The text describes the contrast between the first two books as that between joyous force and malicious sarcasm: "Dans le roman de Gargantua [...] c'est surtout la force et la vigueur qui prédominent: ce sont de joyeux buveurs aux propos libertins, à la saillie franche, avec moins de malice sceptique et de satire mordante que dans Pantagruel," 150). Perhaps it is this malice that distinguishes "Smarh" from the more joyous "Funérailles." The monologues of Dr. Mathurin, however, are internally dialogic, which is to say that they display a number of discourses in a shifting, kaleidoscopic mode that allows them to interpenetrate freely; and further, they do this in a way that weds Byronic skepticism to Rabelaisian drunken joy. "Les Funérailles" represents the initiation of a

post-Byronic Rabelaisianism, a Rabelaisianism that has absorbed the Byronic influence.

In the paragraphs that retell the five books of Rabelais, Flaubert gives examples of Rabelaisian exaggeration, both in quotations and in his own voice: extended lists, huge numbers, juxtapositions of exaggerated joy and agony (as in the letter emulating Rabelais quoted above). The text spends a rather large amount of space (twenty-one lines of the 134 in the summary, including sixteen lines of direct quotation, by far the longest quotation in the text) on the reaction of Gargantua to the birth of his son that happens at the moment of the death of his wife. Gargantua is torn between a despair for the death of the old that is arguably Byronic ("'Ha faulse mort! tant tu me es malivole, tant tu me es outrageuse de me tollir celle à laquelle immortalité appartenait de droit'"); like Flaubert's Byron, he imitates what he mourns: "pleurait comme une vache." But the cow becomes a calf when Gargantua's thoughts turn to his son: "mais tout souldain riait comme ung veau quand Pantagruel lui venait en mémoyre." Gargantua celebrates the birth of the new in a way that would be imitated by Mathurin:

> "Oh! mon petit-fils, disait-il, mon couillon, mon péton, que tu es joly [...] Ho! ho! ho! que je suis ayse, buvons, ho! laissons toute mélancholye, apporte du meilleur, rince les verres, boutte la nappe, chasse les chiens, souffle ce feu, allume la chandelle, ferme cette porte, taille ces soupes, envoie ces pauvres, baille-leur ce qu'ils demandent [...] que je me mette en pourpoint pour mieux festoyer les commères [...] Ma femme est morte, je

> ne la ressusciterai pas par mes pleurs, il faut [sic] mieux pleurer moins et boire davantage."

Thus Byronic elegy is to be replaced by drunken joyousness, for the death of the old is the birth of the new; and the moment of the transition is signalled within language itself through a comic metaphor (vache/veau) that subordinates both mourning and laughter to a comic world in which mourning itself is a mask that can be exchanged freely for joy. Change can be mourned, or celebrated.

The next paragraphs recount the adventures of Pantagruel and Panurge, emphasizing their sexual adventures and Panurge's search for the truth about marriage, a search that leads him unsatisfied from poets to prophets, from prophets to philosophers, and reaches its conclusion at the Dive Bouteille. Only two passages are directly quoted: another extended list, comically describing Panurge, and a sentence about Pantagruel's rebellion against authority that is unconnected to anything in the sentence before or after, although it is emphasized by its position at the beginning of a paragraph: "'Et toujours machinait quelque chose contre les sergents et contre le guet.'" Flaubert displays this quasi-political revolt as if sure that it is significant, but unsure about what to do with it. The stylistic profusion evident in the other quotation ("'[Panurge] estait malfaisant, pipeur, buveur, batteur de pavé, ribleur s'il en estait à Paris'") and in the passage quoted above is, however, freely absorbed into Flaubert's

own style as he gives lists of events, actions, characters, places. He pauses for several lines to describe Panurge's fear during a storm at sea ("il a peur, il se recommande à Dieu et à tous les saints, il pleure, sanglote, gémit, fait des voeux"). This fear, transformed through a grotesque list to a comic mask, is denied by Panurge once the storm is over: "Après l'ouragan Panurge fait le bon compagnon et soutient qu'il n'a pas eu peur, il se raille de Dieu et se moque de l'Océan." This could be seen as an alternative description of the poet's behavior in a time of transition: rather than putting aside sorrow for drunken joy, one pretends not to have been afraid and turns to mockery. Yet this reaction, too, is transformed through comic language into a parody of itself: seen by the comic eye, Byronic mockery itself becomes a comic mask. Flaubert's descriptions are also invaded by the Rabelaisian tendency to include seemingly irrelevant details about bodily needs: "Il se munit de force provisions de bouche et part." This constant turning from high themes to low ones is characteristic of Mathurin's monologues.

As a final summary of the Rabelaisian corpus, Flaubert describes Rabelais's laughter: "C'est un éternal rire immense, confus, un rire de géant, qui assourdit les oreilles et donne le vertige." It confuses and stupefies, it makes the world seem to turn upside down because it attacks all social classes: "moines, soldats, capitaines, évêques, empereurs, papes, nobles et manants, prêtres et

laïques," who are "flagell[és] et stigmatis[és]" and who emerge from beneath his pen "tous mutilés et tous saignants" ("Rabelais," 1:182-183). This idea of the artist as a revolutionary who stands outside all social classes, who brutally mocks both rulers and ruled, is particularly Flaubertian; as Estève has argued, it is also Byronic. But the superiority of the déclassé is apparently undercut almost immediately by the fervor of the engagé, when the text bewails the "longues douleurs du peuple" ("Rabelais," 1:183). The distinction between the peuple and the manants is specifically bourgeois, separating the legitimate "haines contre le seigneur et contre le prêtre" from the stupidity of the manual laborer. The impulse toward a general satire of all social classes that the text will soon make explicit is here implicitly undercut by approval of a particular revolutionary position. Yet, as will be seen in "Docteur Mathurin," rejection of a particular revolution can easily become a reactionary rejection of revolution in general.

The essay imagines at this point the effect Rabelais must have had on his contemporary reader. The material and spiritual conditions were archaic, survivals from a dead age: "depuis longtemps les croyances et les servitudes pesaient également; mais la vieille société vivait encore avec ses tyrannies pour le corps, ses entraves pour la pensée"; it is the material aspect of both these dominations that is emphasized: "le seigneur était encore dans son donjon, le prêtre dans sa riche et grasse abbaye." A book

appears, which will give the people the last bit of intellectual freedom necessary to overthrow their oppressors ("et pour que la raillerie soit plus forte, [écrit par] un moine!") The book is "sans suite, sans formes, à la pensée vague, peut-être sans plan prémédité, sans idée fixe." A formless book, without logically linked episodes, without definite message or point of view: it is difficult not to think of L'Éducation sentimentale. But not any formless book would have had the desired effect: it was necessary that the book be full of "railleries mordantes et cruelles, contre le seigneur malgré son armée, contre le prêtre malgré sa sainteté, contre le pape malgré ses bulles," full of outrageous and courageous humor that attacks everything previously respected, "la vieille cathédrale gothique [...] philosophie, science, magie, gloire, renommée, pouvoir, idées, croyances," even "l'humanité" which is "dépouillée de ses robes de parade et de ses galons mensongers," thus naked, ugly, replusive; Panurge "lui jette à la tête ses brocs de vin et se met à rire."

This courageous humor that takes everything as its target is interspersed with delicate analyses of the human heart: "les aperçus les plus fins sur la nature de l'homme, les nuances les plus délicates du coeur, les analyses les plus vraies." Rabelais's laughter is here explicitly contrasted to "la pointe acérée et aguisée de Voltaire, avec son rire perçant, sa bile recuite, sa morsure envenimée," that is, vicious and petty spite: remember that according to

the text Voltaire misread Rabelais, liking him only for the fact that one of his targets was the Church, and misunderstanding the universal nature of his laughter. Neither is Rabelais's laughter "la colère naïve et déclamatoire de Jean-Jacques, ni les sanglots étouffés de Byron, ni la douleur réfléchie de Goethe." Romantic complaint is rejected for something stronger, more effective. For Rabelais's laughter is "vrai, fort, brutal, le rire qui brise et qui casse, -- ce rire-là qui, avec Luther et 93, a abattu le moyen âge." The confused, formless, total satire of Rabelais, with its courageous mockery of everything, is revolutionary both for the intellectual freedom of the spirit and for the material freedom of the body.

Because of the random formlessness of this book "sans suite," a careful reading ("une attention suivie") makes it impossible to interpret each word of Rabelais: "ceux qui ont prétendu donner de Rabelais des clefs, voire des allégories à chaque mot, et traduire chaque lazzi, n'ont point, selon moi, compris le livre. La satire est générale, universelle, et non point personnelle ni locale." Thus a close reading that takes note of the text's mockery of everything without making too much of any of its individual targets is capable of comprehending the nature of its universal satire, a satire that is by nature vague and not subordinated to any specific purpose. Compared to Falstaff and Sancho Panza, who also flung mud on the middle ages from

which they emerged, the figure of Gargantua is "plus vague, moins précise. Les formes en sont plus amples, plus lâchées, plus grandioses." To perceive these vague, large, grandiose forms requires "une longue étude [...] il faut le connaître [Rabelais] tout en entier pour l'apprécier, des analyses et des extraits le mutilent et le gâtent." A series of moments of careful, precise reading creates a series of fragments that do not add up in the normal way to a particular point of view, a particular parti pris. The gradual frustration of the reader's desire to make sense of Rabelais creates the impression of a world in which everything is ridiculous, the butt of joyous mockery. This purposeless world of unlimited enjoyment can be perceived only by a deep gaze that can penetrate beneath its "forme triviale" to see "tout ce qu'il y a de sève, de vigueur, d'imagination, de génie" hidden like "tant de diamants ensevelis." The careful chiseling of a rigorous style that seems to operate on trivial subjects, that seems to have no definite point of view, is the only means of revealing the powerful depths of the universal comic vision; for the reader to share in this vision, he must carefully savor each detail as he drinks large draughts.[23]

To summarize, then: great writers express the spirit of their time by representing the various voices and tendencies that surround them, allowing all these voices to interact in the vastness of their imagination and giving them a new meaning that derives from the writers' own

personalities. Rabelais focused the dissatisfactions of the people with the state and the church of his time, which were mere anachronous vestiges: through a general courageous satire he destroyed these vestiges. Byron gives voice to the pain of a dying world. What must a writer of the late 1830s do?

This question, present implicitly from the first few pages of the essay, is introduced near the end as an afterthought: "une dernière reflexion qui termine." Rabelais penetrated (a sondé) only the world of his time, denounced its "abus [...] ridicules [...] crimes," and perhaps "a [...] entrevu [...] un monde politique meilleur, une société toute autre." He saw his world as a farce, and treated it as a farce. But the abuses and ridiculousness of the 1830s are not exactly the same as those of the sixteenth century, although the world perhaps is still a farce.

By 1838, "tout est changé. La réforme est venue. Indépendance de la pensée. La Révolution est venue. Indépendance matérielle." The twin targets of nobleman and priest no longer have power. The world finds itself in the midst of a "tourbillon" of "mille questions [...] sciences, arts, philosophies, théories." In this cacophonous babble of discourses, one is unsure how to evaluate the historical moment: "où êtes-vous? Est-ce le crépuscule? est-ce l'aurore?" What is the appropriate response of the poet to his times: elegiac lament, or drunken creation? The beliefs of the past are dead: "Vous n'avez plus de christianisme."

What one has instead are the material rewards of science, the modern inheritor of the revolution in free critical thought that Rabelais pioneered: "des chemins de fer, des fabriques, des chimistes, des mathématiciens. Oui, le corps est mieux, la chair souffre moins." The universal skepticism of Rabelais, so liberating in its time, has destroyed the soul: "la chair souffre moins, mais le coeur saigne toujours. L'âme, la sentez-vous se déchirer [...]?" The text becomes elegiac, as it bemoans the way the soul "s'abîme dans le scepticisme universel, dans cet ennui morne," as it bemoans the fact that all official discourse has become idiotic: "la politique bégaye, [...] les poètes [...] jettent [leur pensée] à demi écrite sur une feuille éphémère." Stupid politics and journalism: yet are these not the debased results of the free thought that Rabelais championed? The current dilemma takes the form of a homicidal fury that explodes in the homes of the poor as of the rich, "dans chaque grenier, ou dans chaque palais"; this fury is caused by poverty ("misère") and by the same "orgueil" and "satiété" that characterized the eighteenth century.

Thus progress, although it has cured material woes, has caused a "gouffre béant" within the human soul; and the sciences, powerless to fill the abyss (in fact it can be argued that its skepticism <u>caused</u> it), "ne valent pas un brin d'herbe" ("Rabelais," 1:184). "Vienne donc maintenant un homme comme Rabelais!" But what will he attack? What

form will his laughter take? (And a harder question: how exactly is his laughter to fill a void he himself has created? The text doesn't answer this question, and it will take Flaubert some time even to pose it). First, the new Rabelais must divest himself of anything personal or local: his satire must be general. "Qu'il puisse se dépouiller de toute colère, de toute haine, de toute douleur!" In any event, he must not be Byronic, in part because 1838 is a time <u>after</u> the death of all belief, when only the vestiges of dead beliefs remain; in part, as has been argued above, because 1838 is a time already striving to move beyond Byronism. "De quoi rira-t-il?" Not at kings, "il n'y en a plus." Note that this is itself a veiled attack on Louis-Philippe, apparently not a real king, according to the text. How ignoble to be dismissed as no longer worthy even of satire! Not at the Jesuits, "c'est déjà vieux." Mocking the Church is unoriginal. Not at God: "quoiqu'on n'y croie pas, cela fait peur." Note the subtle grammatical slur: "y" treats God as a thing, as does, more ambiguously, "cela" ("cela" also refers to the implicit "rire à Dieu"). Note also the complexity of the attack: what is officially being mocked is not God, but those who don't believe yet still fear, and the new Rabelais is ambiguously assimilated to that group: he will not laugh because that causes (his or their?) fear. Already Flaubert has discovered the mockery of a point of view which he ambiguously attributes to a character (here, the new Rabelais), but also perhaps to his

listeners, or to the author himself, in a shifting game of identification and alienation that produces both vertigo and delight at the edge of the precipice of complete undecidability.

For the object of the new Rabelais's satire will be the void itself, the void his ancestor created, the void his laughter is intended to fill. "Le monde matériel est pour le mieux [...] mais l'autre? -- Il aurait beau jeu." The new Rabelais will take the hollow language of lost belief as his object, the language of politics and journalism; perhaps also Byronism itself. For in this period of transition ("Le monde matériel est pour le mieux, ou du moins il est sur la voie"), the poet must put aside Byronic lament ("cacher ses larmes"), even though it may be his deepest impulse (in which case his work cannot totally avoid identifying with what it mocks), and "se mettre à rire." This new laughter will produce "le livre [...] le plus terrible et le plus sublime qu'on ait fait."

Flaubert's version of Rabelais is in many ways similar to Bakhtin's, as presented in his Rabelais and His World.[24] Both talk about the representation of powerful popular sentiment in Rabelais's art, and about its historical impact; both talk about the joyousness of Rabelais's text, of its escape from all official seriousness and restraint. But there are some important differences.

Flaubert says that Rabelais gives a meaning to the historical direction of his time: according to him,

Rabelais's laughter focuses popular anger against institutions that are already nearly dead, thus sweeping them away. His laughter is therefore predominantly destructive: Flaubert merely notes in passing that Rabelais has "entrevu peut-être un monde politique meilleur, une société toute autre" ("Rabelais," 1:183); he never discusses passages of utopian thinking, like the description of the abbey of Thélème; and the ultimate results of the Rabelaisian current proceeding from the Renaissance, namely, free thought and material progress, are seen as the roots of the malaise of the modern world. Likewise, Rabelais's laughter is seen as the innovation of a heroic genius, although the argument supporting this position is far from cogent: Flaubert says that Rabelais has no rival in the comic production of the Middle Ages, although "toute la partie matériellement comique de Rabelais appartien[t] à l'élément grotesque du moyen âge" ("Rabelais," 1:181). Perhaps he is merely saying that the nature of Rabelais's genius raises him above any of his predecessors; or merely that Rabelais was the first to transpose the medieval comic impulse into literature: "nous ne lui trouvons de prédecesseur dans aucun document <u>littéraire</u>" ("Rabelais," 1:181, emphasis added). Flaubert's argument preserves the Romantic commonplaces of the heroic creative genius, as well as the standard distinction between high and low literature. Although its explicit analysis of Rabelaisian humor is superficial and imprecise, indiscriminately calling it

satirical, grotesque, cynical, skeptical, and sarcastic, its description of the five books points out exaggeration, profuse lists, display of parodic encyclopedic knowledge, juxtaposition of the high and the low, and of birth and death, as characteristic traits. Its explicit analysis is perhaps willfully imprecise, since it is intent on emphasizing that Rabelais did not write with a single specific target in mind, that he did not choose sides within what was essentially an empty debate among dead forms, but rather that he satirized all possible positions within the dead culture of the past in order to sweep them away. Flaubert sees Rabelais as predominantly destructive.

Bakhtin's view is substantially different, in that it emphasizes Rabelais's connection to the popular humor of the past, and views Rabelais's laughter as utopian. According to Bakhtin, Rabelaisian humor is directly linked to carnival, when for a limited time the people experienced a "liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; [carnival] marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions" (Rabelais, 10). In the town square, privileged space of carnival, all sorts of people mixed freely and familiarly: any special roles that existed were costumes, masks, assumed for the closed time of carnival, to be put on and taken off at will: even the king was merely acclaimed by popular consent, to be deposed when carnival was over. The "uncrowning" (Rabelais, 305) or debasement of the high was

accompanied by an ironic crowning of the low, of a "roi pour rire" (Rabelais, 81). Thus all established truths are transformed by carnival into something adopted and rejected at will; all social signs are manipulated in the mode of play. Carnival laughter is general: "It is not an individual reaction to some isolated 'comic' event [. . .] It is the laughter of all [. . .] directed at all and everyone" (Rabelais, 11). It is not purely destructive: "it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives" (Rabelais, 11-12). Thus carnival laughter represents a moment in which all dies and is reborn; like the Roman Saturnalia,[25] it was a moment of feasting and abundance, when the people, like Janus: "looked into the future and laughed, attending the funeral of the past and present" (Rabelais, 81), unlike official medieval culture that looked only to the past to sanction the existing order.

In carnival, praise is intimately bound up with abuse, so that everything is both mocked and celebrated. Thus there is a conjunction of death and birth, of eating and vomiting, of all processes of change and renewal. The reversal of all hierarchies brings ultimately all pretentious seriousness into contact with the lower bodily element, where it is degraded in order that it be born anew. The predominance of descriptions of physical bodily functions in Rabelais has as its ultimate meaning the display of the body as the undoer and source of all

significance; it has as its origin the carnival view of the body in process:

> It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world. This means that the emphasis is on the apertures or the convexities, or on various ramifications or offshoots: the open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly, the nose. The body discloses its essence as a principle of growth which exceeds its own limits only in copulation, pregnancy, childbirth, the throes of death, eating, drinking, or defecation. This is the ever unfinished, ever creating body (Rabelais, 26).

Rabelais's laughter, then, represents a death that is also a new birth, "for death is life's rejuvenation" (Rabelais, 405). Rabelais's negation does not result in nothingness but in the "carnivalesque upside down [. . .] The object that has been destroyed remains in the world [as] the 'other side' of the new object that has taken its place" (Rabelais, 410). It is not pure negation, but a "description of the world's metamorphoses, its remodeling, its transfer from the old to the new, from the past to the future" (Rabelais, 412). As such it is the enemy of all that is fixed, static, of all official seriousness. Thus its general ambivalent laughter attacks everything that resists change, yet preserves it as the ancestor of the new. Carnivalesque laughter continually serves up corpses, simultaneously praised and mocked.

According to Bakhtin, this joyful ambivalence that

creates as it destroys is specifically what was lost in the Romantic revival of the Renaissance grotesque: "laughter was cut down to cold humor, irony, sarcasm [. . .] Its positive regenerating power was reduced to a minimum" (Rabelais, 38). Thus the world of the Romantic grotesque is the world of terror. "On the other hand, the medieval and Renaissance folk culture was familiar with the element of terror only as represented by comic monsters, who were defeated by laughter. Terror was turned into something gay and comic" (Rabelais, 39). Madness, which in Rabelais is a renewal of vision that rejects commonplace, official reason, becomes the tragic sign of individual isolation. Likewise the mask, in carnival associated with "change and reincarnation [. . .] gay relativity and [. . .] negation of uniformity" (Rabelais, 39) becomes in the Romantic period the keeper of a secret, a deceiver: "a terrible vacuum; a nothingness lurks behind it" (Rabelais, 40). The Romantic grotesque invents the theme of the marionette as "the victim of alien inhuman force, which rules over men" (Rabelais, 40); it transforms the devil from the "gay ambivalent figure expressing the unofficial point of view, the material bodily stratum" (Rabelais, 41) of the fabliaux into a figure that is "terrifying, melancholy, and tragic, [whose] infernal laughter [is] somber and sarcastic" (Rabelais, 41). And finally, the Romantic grotesque occurs mostly at night, whereas the folk grotesque "is a festival of spring, of sunrise, of morning" (Rabelais, 41). Thus the Romantic

grotesque eliminates the positive, joyous aspects of Renaissance laughter, and retains only the references to death, not to rebirth. It is purely destructive, purely negative, purely melancholy. Its separation from popular sources leads to isolation and solitude.[26]

In the late 1830's, Flaubert was writing imbued with Romantic values, but he had just read Rabelais. Thus he wavers between a view of the artist as Byronic, expressing the agony of a dying world, and a new view that he was unsure how to express.[27] He made a number of statements that conformed to the Romantic grotesque; but the text of "Rabelais" indicates a dim awareness of the connections of Rabelais to sub-literary sources, and of Rabelais's positive, joyful side. The text is aware of the possibility of a laughter occurring at a moment of transition that clears away the past as it delights in the new; and it is aware too that any positive historical tendency can become fixed into rigid, empty forms. The text's vision of the new Rabelais as the renewal of an original force that serves to destroy that force's decrepit heir reflects a similar phenomenon of the Renaissance: the return to Latin antiquity in order to find justification for championing vernacular contemporaneity against a fixed and artificial medieval Latin officialdom (Bakhtin imagines that "Rabelais could have compared this triple linguistic process to the farce jouée à trois personnages," Rabelais, 467). But Flaubert's formulation of laughter as revealing ugly nakedness, of

stripping away the dead forms that mask a void, is Romantic, and can do nothing to fill that void. The development of his comedy will long languish in a view of laughter as strictly destructive, of the past as merely empty, rather than as the fertile soil for the new. This will be played out as anguished isolation, rejection of popular vulgarity, glorification of the poet as an isolated genius: clichéd poses he adopts like one of his own characters, as if carried along by the force of his own language despite himself. But the way out of the dilemma is already glimpsed in "Rabelais," and implicitly played out in "Les Funérailles du docteur Mathurin." Bakhtin spelled it out in Rabelais and His World: "The relative nature of all that exists is always gay; it is the joy of change, even if Romantic gaiety and joy are reduced to their minimum" (Rabelais, 48). Flaubert's emphasis on instability and change, on the relativity of all that people would prefer to consider stable, bears within it the seed of joy, even though that seed often remains hidden and undeveloped. And despite all his Romantic agonizing in the correspondence, Flaubert's literary practice will gradually grope toward a type of comedy worthy of a new Rabelais.

CHAPTER 2: "SMARH"

The new insights provided by the encounter with Rabelais enter Flaubert's oeuvre in two ways: as a fully differentiated voice (that of Yuk) in "Smarh," and as the frame and foundation of "Les Funérailles." There is a reason that "Smarh" is the longer, more fully developed of the two and "Les Funérailles" shorter, more fragmented, and less definitive: "Smarh" is closer to its Romantic sources, and to earlier juvenilia like "Rêves d'enfer," "Ivre et mort," and "Agonies"; "Les Funérailles" represents a new direction, that of an emulation of Rabelais.

The basic structure of "Smarh" is that of a dialogue between Satan and Smarh, a saintly hermit. As a counterpoint to this serious, agonized conversation there is introduced the figure of Yuk, who laughs heartily as Satan destroys Smarh's faith through means that echo a number of Romantic sources, among them works by Goethe, Byron and Edgard Quinet; the influence of Byron is considered by most commentators to be fundamental.[1] Smarh is dazzled by the infinite emptiness of space, and the infinite emptiness within his heart; he is forced to confront the hostility of nature, the vanity of civilization, the superfluity of the Church, the emptiness of lust, gluttony, pride; at last,

about to find love, he is destroyed. During all of this Yuk's voice repeatedly intervenes, mocking Smarh and inventing fictions to dazzle and dishearten him. The voice of Yuk is fundamentally Rabelaisian in that it destroys high seriousness in the mode of a profane celebration of carnality;[2] yet inasmuch as Yuk is the servant of Satan, presented here as the sardonic isolated destroyer of the early Romantic or Byronic tradition,[3] Yuk's Rabelaisianism is implicitly subordinated to Satan's Byronism. More importantly, the world of "Smarh" is more or less that described in "Rabelais" as that of Byron ("les hommes étaient faibles et méchants, le monde [...] suait de fatigue, il allait se mourir," "Smarh," 1:187), so that Yuk is presented as a figure in a Byronic landscape, and his discourse rarely escapes the limitations forced on it by the disillusion and discouragement inherent in that world that Satan has all but destroyed: "pas une vertu que je [Satan] n'aie sapée par le doute, pas une croyance que je n'aie terrassée par le rire, pas une idée qui ne soit un axiome, pas un fruit qui ne soit amer." Thus the laughter that clears away belief, which "Rabelais" identified as positive, if problematic, is here purely evil. None of the ambiguous valuation of this laughter is present: in fact, the laughter that survives is reduced to the sardonic laughter of the Romantic grotesque: "On riait, mais ce rire avait de l'angoisse." In short, the potential fertile duality of Yuk's laughter, inherited from Rabelais and carnival, is

limited in a particularly Romantic way, and does not freely interact with the Romantic tradition.

On the other hand, "Docteur Mathurin" parodies, dissects, in short dominates Romantic discourse, in a context that is itself dialogized: it is variously neo-classic, realist, and grotesque; drunken and sober; comic and lyric. "Les Funérailles" represents a fertile chaos that is an experimental transplanting of Rabelais's carnival freedom into the world of mid-nineteenth-century discourse. Its attempted subordination of Romanticism is a reversal of the hierarchy of "Smarh," and thus the first step toward a new balance between the old dominant and its suppressed other half. "Les Funérailles" is therefore the most important of the juvenilia for an understanding of the mature works.

Yet a close reading of selected passages of "Smarh" can reveal that although Yuk's discourse is everywhere infested and dominated by the discourse of Byronism, it reveals processes that point to a new, Rabelaisian rereading of Byron; which is to say that it contains in germ the processes that will become dominant in "Les Funérailles." In fact, and this is of the highest significance for the understanding of Flaubert's oeuvre, it is Yuk's laughter, and not Satan's, that triumphs at the end of the work.

From its first appearance, it is evident that Yuk's discourse is Rabelaisian: it reproduces many of the structures familiar from our previous discussion of

Bakhtin's theories of carnival, as well as from Flaubert's Rabelaisian emulations in "Rabelais" and the correspondence. It rapidly juxtaposes high, religious images and low, common ones ("[je fais] le gros de la besogne, comme d'allumer les cierges, d'apprêter le dîner, de confesser, de préparer les hosties, de nettoyer, de gratter, d'écurer," "Smarh," 1:188); it creates grotesque strings of synonyms ("Il est maintenant occupé à réfléchir, à causer, à disserter, à savantiser avec ce saint homme"). Yuk's first humorous speech is an attack on the Church that turns to lust:

> Yuk: [...] ce saint homme que vous voyez là, en habit de docteur [...] La Femme: [...] Est-ce un nonce du pape? ou quelque théologien de Grèce? Yuk: C'est l'un et l'autre; il est fort lié avec la papauté et les moines, auxquels il a conseillé d'excellents tours pour se divertir. Pour la théologie, il la connaît. Vous connaissez votre ménage, et, comme vous, il y jette de l'eau trouble et y fait pousser des cornes. La Femme: Que voulez-vous dire là? Yuk: Que vous êtes bien gentille, ravissante, avec une gorgette à faire pâmer toute une classe d'écoliers.

Yuk's comic conversation with the woman parallels the serious conversation between Smarh and Satan. Thus Satan reveals to Smarh "un monde nouveau" ("Smarh," 1:189), that of erotic desire, that unmasks the superficiality of Smarh's pious advice; for example, his advice to husbands to love children that aren't even theirs. In the meantime, Yuk is reminding the woman that her apparently happy marriage is to "[un homme] un peu benêt [...] et la nuit de vos noces vous fûtes même obligée de lui apprendre certaines choses que les femmes ordinairement savent trop bien [...] depuis

l'âge de neuf ans" ("Smarh," 1:188). He breeds dissatisfaction in her heart through the vision of a "beau, grand joli cavalier, aux sourcils noirs et aux dents blanches" ("Smarh," 1:189); he separates her from the Church by flattering her pride ("Si la vertu existe, chaque créature doit pouvoir d'elle-même la discerner et la mettre en pratique"); he uses erotic descriptions of nature ("lorsque le soir vient [...] et que les rayons du soleil meurent sur les dalles, que les fleurs d'oranger laissent passer leurs parfums, que les roses se referment, que tout s'endort, que la lune se lève dans ses nuages blancs") and more blatantly erotic images ("aux bains vous avez aperçu [...] des hommes nus, et vous rêvez de tout cela [...] Vous avez un bataillon de cuisses charnues dans la tête"; "cette bouche dit: [...] 'nos deux corps nus sur un tapis [...] je prendrai tes hanches [...] j'embrasserai tes seins,'" "Smarh," 1:189-190) to seduce her into adultery. This entire scenario brings to mind Madame Bovary, as do specific details like the "beau jeune hommme qui vous baisait la main" ("Smarh," 1:189). Here, eroticism is foregrounded, so that even standard Romantic images are invoked within an explicit atmosphere of sexual excitation. Feverish eroticism is brought into contact with the lower bodily element, thus deflated, carnivalized, and implicitly renewed; but here as elsewhere, Rabelaisian elements are deployed within a humorous destruction of belief that is ultimately agonized, tragic. The Romantic framework itself

needs to be subordinated to ambiguous carnival laughter in order to move beyond the echoing emptiness of abandoned belief.

This direction is sketched in "Smarh." At the end of the dialogue between Yuk and the woman, she rhapsodizes in a Romantic, exaggerated way that the context teaches us to see as ridiculous, because it is a self-induced frenzy that excuses illicit desire:

> Qu'il vienne donc, qu'il vienne! j'aurai pour lui des baisers de feu et des voluptés sans nombre. J'étais bien folle, en effet, de vieillir sans amour. A moi, maintenant, les délices des nuits les plus ardentes; que je m'abreuve de toutes mes passions, que je me rassasie de tous mes désirs! De longues nuits et de longs jours passés dans les baisers! ah! toute ma vie passée à un soupir, tout ce que je rêvais à moi! oh! comme je vais être heureuse! Je tremble cependant, et je sens que c'est là mon bonheur ("Smarh," 1:190).

Yuk gives us an analysis of the particular form of her pleasure: "Quel plaisir, n'est-ce pas? de se créer ainsi, par la pensée, toutes les jouissances désirées, et de se dire: 'Si je l'avais là [...]!'" The woman is too distracted to listen to Yuk's analysis, but it ought to give us pause. Here, Yuk has found a way to represent empty belief within a comic world view: as a willful acceptance of what one <u>wants</u> to believe, because of pride and lust; as a sort of self-hypnosis that the poet induces in the listener as she reveals the deeper impulses that make her <u>want</u> to be dominated.

Satan's disillusioning of Smarh proceeds according to the same dynamic: desires are awakened through dazzling

images, then the images are either reversed (the calm sea is shaken by a storm) or revealed as empty (the church crumbles). It is likely that the process would not work if the impulses were not awakened rather than created: the woman must already have lust within her, or she could not be moved to adultery.[4] Yet the motivation of an artist that awakens desire only to disappoint it must be questioned: is it merely a matter of striking a last blow against belief that is already empty, as "Rabelais" seems to indicate, or a more deeply sadistic motivation? Even if the ultimate purpose of the creation of dazzling empty images is the revelation of the bad faith of the reader who desires to be dazzled by empty images, an unearthing of the reader's hidden corruptions and lies, one could claim, as Bakhtin might, that this is salutary, a comic unmasking, a clearing away of pretention, a revivification. But in "Smarh," all of this unmasking is subordinated to the works of Satan, and the end is death.

One constant of the story is a continual reinvoking of Nature as good, desirable. Thus Smarh, terrified at the immensity of space, of the emptiness that was before all things and that will follow them, of the infinite solitude of freedom and of human knowledge ("Satan: [...] la science, c'est le doute," "Smarh," 1:195), maintains the beauty of Nature and man's fitness for it against Satan's temptations to despair: "La mer, des prairies de hautes falaises; temps calme; le soleil se couche sous les flots. Smarh: Me voilà

enfin sur la terre! l'homme naturellement s'y sent bien, il y est né. Satan: Pourquoi la maudit-il toujours?" ("Smarh," 1:196). Smarh does not answer but merely repeats: "Moi, je suis fait pour y vivre; comme cette nature est belle! Satan: Et comme tu la comprends bien, n'est-ce pas?" Smarh must recognize this last as at least a valid point: his fear of the nothingness of science was the last straw that made him want to return to Earth. So he responds: "Tu as beau m'entourer de tes subterfuges et de tes sophismes, je ne suis plus ici dans les régions du ciel, où tous les mondes errants m'effrayaient; non, j'étais fait pour celui-ci, c'est sur lui qu'il faut vivre. Satan: Et mourir aussi, n'est-ce pas? il y a longtemps que tu y respires, que tu y souffres [...] explique-moi donc le mystère d'un de ces grains de sable [...] ou celui d'une goutte d'eau de l'Océan?" Smarh responds with a lyrical description of the world's beauty:

> Mais regarde toi-même comme la mer est douce et comme les rayons du soleil lui donnent des teintes roses sous ces ondes vertes! Sens-tu le parfum de la vague qui mouille le sable, comme les flots sont longs et forts [...]? vois donc cette bande d'écume qui festonne le rivage avec des coquilles et des herbes [...] quelle beauté! Nieras-tu que mon âme ne s'ouvre pas à un pareil spectacle, quand j'entends cette mer qui roule et <u>meurt</u> à mes pieds, quand je vois cette immensité que j'embrasse de l'oeil? (emphasis added).

Smarh has here opened up the possibility of the undoing of his position: he has introduced death, a metaphor borne of his Romantic rhapsodizing about sunsets and immensity; the notion was earlier invoked by Satan, but

Smarh ignored it. As for immensity, it has already been linked in the preceding conversation to the impossibility of knowledge, also invoked by Satan. Smarh claims against Satan that this immensity is visible, that it can be dominated by the eye. Satan responds by invoking the limitations of the human senses: "Aussi loin que ton oeil peut voir, oui; tu vois l'infini, jusqu'à l'endroit où ton espirit s'arrête." Smarh reiterates the beauty of Nature: "Mais non, tout cela est trop beau pour n'être pas fait pour l'homme, pour son bonheur, pour sa joie." This slippage from "beau," to "pour l'homme," to "pour son bonheur," to "pour sa joie" is rather illogical, subjectively true as it may be; no amount of repetition of beauties can cover up the fact, for example, that a calm sea can turn dangerously violent. Nonetheless Smarh goes on with a lyrical descriptive passage: "Vois donc aussi ces hautes falaises blanches sur lesquelles plane la mouette aux cris sauvages, aux ailes noires; vois plus loin ce pâturage touffu avec ses herbes tassées et ses fleurs ouvertes."

This last description of Nature is relatively free of metaphors: it merely names objects, notes a color contrast, registers height, and describes in simple terms the pasture with its massed plants and open flowers. It is the mere presence of things that is here invoked; and it is likely that these are things Flaubert himself saw more than once on the Normandy coast. The last word is sober, simple, not at all flowery; but it ought to give pause, because it

is redundant: a flower not open is a bud. In fact this last word is present as a sign of the receptivity of the world to Man; it is subtly metaphoric, ideological, as is in fact the cliché of the solitary seagull.[5] But none of this undoes the impact of this passage's calm, unrhetorical presentation of the sober fact.

The recurrence of this aspiration to an unagonized portrayal of Nature's visible presence in a language wholly adequate to its object is a constant not only in this story but throughout Flaubert's oeuvre, as is the repeated undercutting of this portrayal by cliché, metaphor, and rhetorical purpose: in short, by the impossibility of subtracting description from its engagement within discourse.[6] Here, the calm portrayal contrasts sharply with Satan's highly rhetorical description: "Et regarde aussi comme tu es petit [...] Oui, tu es plus faible que ces cailloux que la mer roule en criant, comme si elle avait des chaînes dans le ventre [...] Et toi donc? N'y a-t-il pas un pied aussi qui t'écrase sous son talon invisible? Ecrase donc un grain de sable, homme fort!" Of course, Smarh is not as confident as his calm description would indicate: he can ignore Satan's points momentarily, but he is far too easily pushed into a defensive position. Satan invokes again the limitations of Man's power, and Smarh immediately counters with his power to escape the sea's fury. Then he reverts to the mere repetition of his former position, clothed as theology: "Tout cela, te dis-je, m'a été donné

par Dieu," after which he confidently reasserts Man's technological power, to which Satan opposes the fact of decay and death. Satan then moves on to the claim that "l'échelle de forces et d'intelligences successives" ("Smarh," 1:197) that Smarh invokes is really a chain of superior destructive power and of suffering: "Smarh: Est-ce que je ne suis pas supérieur au cheval, et le cheval à la fourmi, et la fourmi au caillou? Satan: Oui, parce que tu es sur le cheval et que tu l'accables, et que le cheval écrase la fourmi, et que la fourmi creuse la terre." Satan then launches into a Byronic wail in the face of infinite emptiness:

> Tu es plus grand par tes malheurs que tout ce qui t'entoure, grandeur digne d'envie! [...] quand la terre gémit sous tes coups, quand les vagues murmurent en battant la proue de tes navires, [...] tout cela souffre moins que toi seul [...] sans rien qui te déchire la peau [...] mais seulement les yeux levés vers le ciel, l'abîme, et demandant pourquoi cela? pourquoi ceci? [...] C'est [...] que la mer s'étend devant toi, ouvre sa surface, mais elle t'engloutit, c'est que ton intelligence te sert, mais te trahit et te fait souffrir; c'est que l'infini est ouvert devant toi, mais sans bornes et sans fin, et qu'il te perd.

To this Smarh can only say "C'est vrai," and a Byronic storm erupts. Satan forces Smarh to admit that "la création est méchante" ("Smarh," 1:198); it is one step from this to "Smarh: L'Océan est ce qu'il y a de plus grand. Satan: Oui, c'est ce qu'il y a de plus vide." The beauty of the empty presence of Nature has been invoked by Smarh as a sign of Man's fitness for it; the emptiness itself is invoked by Satan as a sign of his unfitness. As the unmetaphoric

presence of Nature repeatedly asserts itself in "Smarh," it will gradually be seen that it is the temptation to poetic language that gives Satan the foothold by which he can fill emptiness with the meaning "despair." Flaubert's search for an unproblematic adequation of self, Nature, and language was to be lifelong; because of its tendency to exaggerated emotion expressed in grandiose metaphors, Romantic discourse could not provide that adequation: we shall soon see what alternatives Flaubert explored.

Disillusioned by Nature, Smarh wonders if "Le bonheur n'est donc qu'un mensonge?" ("Smarh," 1:199). No, says Satan, it can be found in the passions that occupy the heart. Smarh, as a saint, knows nothing about the world; but Yuk constructs fictions for him from which he can learn about it. Of course we have already seen what Yuk's fictions do: they manipulate the reader into admitting hidden passions, or perhaps they create those passions, or perhaps both. In any event, the ambiguous exposure/creation of these passions is sadistic: it turns the reader into an object of satire. And it does this through the manipulation of clichés, sometimes clichés about Nature fused with images of lust.

Despite the constant investment[7] in "Smarh" of images of Nature with resonances of lust and destruction, Nature continually rises anew, usually in a mode of remembrance; pure, as a sober physical presence, without metaphors, conveyed in a language adequate to its object.

Yet every time this purity is undone. This constantly cycling dynamic produces a work whose form is repetitious, unresolved. One can hypothesize that unmetaphoric description is a third voice, beyond Rabelais and Byron, beyond carnival and agony; but a voice that seems unachievable, at least within the dynamics of the voices that Flaubert attempts to articulate in "Smarh." We will come back to this point in our discussion of "Les Funérailles."

Before we move on to the analysis of Yuk's voice and how it operates, let us examine the textual processes by which Nature is reduced to a small number of images invested with isolation and despair as Byronism gradually subverts its calm, healing presence in the text. An earlier appearance of Nature occurred immediately after Satan had awakened Smarh's awareness of lust: Smarh gazes at the beauties of the night, but he finds their appearance altered:

> Autrefois l'air des nuits me faisait du bien, je me plaisais à cette molle langueur des sens qu'il procure, je me plongeais dans l'harmonie dont elle se compose, j'écoutais avec ravissement le bruit des feuilles des arbres que le vent agitait, l'eau qui coulait dans les vallées, j'aimais la mousse des bois que les rayons de la lune argentait; ma tête se levait avec amour [his passion was already dimly present before his awareness of it] vers ce ciel si bleu, avec ses étoiles aux mille clartés [...] Mais pourtant, cette nuit, est aussi belle que toutes les autres [...] Pourquoi mon âme ne s'ouvre-t-elle plus au parfum de toutes ces choses? je suis pris de pitié pour tout cela, j'ai pour elles une envie jalouse [...] Oh! qui viendra me retirer de cette angoisse [...]! ("Smarh," 1:191).

The passions destroy the harmony between the self and Nature: but one wonders if Smarh's description would be quite so lyrical, quite so beautiful, if his lust had not already been awakened. Actually, many of the details of this speech were already present in a short description of Nature that Smarh makes before he meets Satan, and these details are already suffused with a somewhat abstract "amour": "j'aime à voir la rivière serpenter au bas de la vallée, à voir l'oiseau étendre ses ailes et le soleil se coucher lentement avec ses teintes roses. Cette nuit sera belle, les étoiles sont de diamant, la lune resplendit sur l'azur; j'admire cela avec amour" ("Smarh," 1:187). The bird, the river in the valley: these are images that constantly recur in the Nature descriptions in "Smarh." The emphasis on sunset and night are already Byronic, as is the eroticization of death (the sunset is "rose"). The images Smarh uses to describe Nature are already invested with the passions that Satan awakens. Thus his new awareness of passion takes the form of a new awareness of the investments already present in the language he deploys.

After his awakening, the trouble of his senses is directly reflected, in good Byronic fashion, in Nature itself: the leaves are agitated, water flows in a valley, soft dark moss is vivified by the penetrating rays of the moon. Nostalgia for a past fusion is marked by signs that anticipate fusion: Smarh has presented the image of fusion in language already invested with desire; it is possible

that fusion is always in the future, never actually in the past, but always the result of progress, not return. This possibility could be visible only in a discourse that emphasized joyous motion toward fusion, rather than an original loss.

In "Smarh," the cycle from assertion of fusion with Nature, to awareness of rupture, to assertion of fusion seems endless. In any event, Yuk's fiction, which is intended (or so says Satan) to teach Smarh about the world, begins again in Nature, in the past, with a Savage whose surroundings seem perfectly adequate to him. Yuk marks the Savage's description of Nature at the beginning of the fiction with fragments of Smarh's own descriptions:

> Oh! que j'aime la mousse des bois, le bruissement des feuilles, le battement d'ailes d'oiseau, le galop de ma cavale [this fragment comes from a speech of Satan, to be cited shortly], les rayons du soleil, et ton regard, ô Haïta! et tes cheveux noirs qui tombent jusqu'à ta croupe [another horse image: woman and horse fuse already, as they will soon more thoroughly under the sign of the pun cheveux/chevaux], et ton dos blanc, et ton cou qui se penche et se replie quand mes lèvres y impriment de longs baisers, je t'aime plein mon coeur ("Smarh," 1:200, emphasis added to mark elements from previous descriptions).

Yuk has invested with lust elements of Smarh's nostalgic remembrance of his harmony with Nature, as well as his pure, calm description of a seagull flying over a cliff ("ces hautes falaises sur lesquelles plane la mouette [...] aux ailes noires," "Smarh," 1:196): even the stark beauty of the bird's dark wings contrasting with the white cliffs here clothes the desirable body of the woman ("cheveux noirs

[...] dos blanc," "Smarh," 1:200). This is the same sort of ploy Yuk used earlier with the woman, as he awakened desires already dimly present in her consciousness, linked to images she had observed ("vous avez vu un beau jeune homme [...] souvent les soldats passent sous vos fenêtres [...] aux bains vous avez aperçu [...] des hommes nus," "Smarh," 1:189). Here we can see more clearly his skill, since we have at our disposal the texts he is using. But as soon as he elicits Smarh's positive reaction to his tale through the manipulation of images dear to him, Yuk turns to images Satan has used against him, investing them also with sexual desire. "Quand ma bonne [Haïta?-no-] bête court et saute" ("Smarh," 1:200). From the woman one reverts to the beast, and the shift is masked by the fusion of woman and beast in the sexually charged image of freed hair, already once invoked ("tes cheveux noirs qui tombent [...] je laisse aller ses crins") and by invoking images Smarh already dimly associates with lust: "ses crins qui <u>bruissent</u>, j'écoute <u>le vent</u> qui siffle et parle, j'écoute <u>le bruit des branches</u> [...]" (emphasis added). Quickly Yuk disorients Smarh by invoking images Satan has used against his belief in the adequation of Nature to Man: images of domination and destruction: "j'écoute le bruit des branches que son pied casse" (cf.: "tu es sur le cheval et [...] tu l'accables; [...] le cheval écrase la fourmi," "Smarh," 1:197). The transition from harmony to disharmony with Nature is as abrupt as the passage from woman to horse, from lust to

beauty. The lyric description of force ("une échelle de forces et d'intelligences successives," "Smarh," 1:197) and vigor that follows is dimly undercut by the image of "la poussière" that flies up about "ses flancs" ("Smarh," 1:200): dust and flanks, death and sexuality: a typical ploy texts use to dazzle and dominate their readers, here resonating with Satan's imagery of stones and crushed sand that stand as signs of the limit of Man's force, of his disharmony with Nature, and with the resonant network of woman and horse, freedom, flying, birds, moss, and branches that represents a fusion of the human and the world of nature. The text's lyric beauty turns, through force and its associated resonances of domination and death, to an image of killing: "la flêche [...] a frappé le léopard ou le lion, qui se débat sur le sable et répand son sang sur la poussière [clearly linking this word to the nuances postulated above]." The following sentence fuses sex and death through a rapid alternation of discourses, so that the desire for fusion is inextricably linked to the desire to dominate and destroy: "J'aime à l'embrasser corps à corps, à l'étouffer, à sentir ses os craquer dans mes mains, et j'enlève sa belle peau, son corps fume et cette vapeur de sang me rend fier."[8]

Yuk's fiction reveals in no uncertain terms the connections between the doctrine of the adequation of Man and Nature and the underpinnings of lust and violence that are evident in the language used to talk about it. All of

this carnivalesque play of unmaskings and fusions, of shifting identities and puns, opens up the question of Man and Nature far more thoroughly than the dialogue between Smarh and Satan -- at least for the attentive[9] reader. The casual reader who, like Smarh, lets the images fly by rapidly, without slowing them down and dissecting them, is dazzled, manipulated, moved: to despair. The casual reader's assumptions are shattered; the attentive reader glimpses the abyss of language. Perhaps despair is not the only reaction to that abyss.

We need not analyze every detail of Yuk's fiction of the Savage: the slippage of Haïta's discourse from an erotic description of her husband's body to an erotic description of Nature, now less exciting than the new perfume with which the sight of his body has flooded her;[10] the eroticism of the juxtaposition in the Savage's discourse of newly gathered fruit and the "lait tiré de la mamelle de [sa] vache blanche." Suffice it to say that a dense web is woven that tangles Nature up with sexuality and violence, and that the Savage, like so many other characters in this story, is finally sundered from Nature, dissatisfied with it, and tormented by vague desires: "Une main invisible me fait aller en avant comme le sable du désert emporté par les vents" ("Smarh," 1:201). He is pushed on, toward the city, which he knows is death: "en voyant les feuilles jaunies de l'automne rouler dans l'air, j'ai souhaité d'être feuille comme elles, pour courir dans l'espace," as Smarh has done.

He leaves everything: his wife, his children, his horse, his native land. Satan promises him a number of things that sound Rabelaisian (for Satan is now a character in Yuk's fiction, therefore at least partially subordinated to a Rabelaisian discourse): "ivresse [...] des joies, des voluptés [...] des femmes nues [...] des nouveaux mets, des nouveaux vins [...]"; but these are undercut by a number of markers of vanity, of the seven deadly sins: "une ivresse folle! [...] des joies, des voluptés, des raffinements de plaisir [...] des femmes nues [...] le bruit des armées [...] le sang [...] tu étais libre et tu seras roi [...] des nouveaux mets, des nouveaux vins, des frénésies inconnues [...] la volupté, la puissance, l'ambition [...] un palais d'or." Pleasure is linked with power; civilization with decadence; drunkenness with frenzy. Somehow Satan has managed again to subordinate Rabelais to Byron, to reassert the Romantic grotesque. And soon, "Le Génie du Sauvage" puts Rabelais's values definitively into a framework that cannot see them except as vain deceptions: "Mieux vaut la hutte de roseaux que leur palais de porphyre, ta liberté que leur pouvoir, ton innocence que leurs voluptés, car ils mentent, car leur bonheur est un rire, leur ivresse une grimace d'idiot, leur grandeur est orgueil et leur bonheur est mensonge" ("Smarh," 1:202). Thus when the Savage enters the city, the drunk are indistinguishable from the dead: both seem to sleep.

The city is described as the site of a diabolical

orgy, operating under the sign of sin, doomed to death: "le roi et ses empires, ses voluptés, ses crimes, tout cela dans son linceul, tout cela poussière et néant" ("Smarh," 1:203). Yuk laughs for a long time; "Satan dit que cela l'ennuyait et qu'il en avait vu assez." He dismisses Yuk's fiction as a hodge-podge of genres, both high and low: "De l'érotique, du burlesque, du pastoral, du sentimental, de l'élégiaque!" Genre-mixing will be one of Flaubert's major strengths: Satan denounces this mixture as "une littérature au lait pour un poitrinaire," as sickly, weak. Yuk defends his style as appropriate for his audience: "Que voulez-vous que nous montrions au novice?" And he sketches out a number of choices that have a rather bourgeois flavor: "des fiancés, des mariés ou des morts? un mensonge ou un serment?", to which Satan responds: "Oui. Yuk: Ensemble, n'est-ce pas?" But lest we think that we are going to escape the subordination of Rabelais's laughter to Byronism in a light-hearted juggling of opposites, Yuk marks everything, even the clearing-away of belief as pretense, with the sign of despair: "car serment et mensonge sont synonymes, ainsi que mariage et cocus, ainsi que fiancés et morts."

Yuk's new fiction (a "Petite Comédie Bourgeoise") is a retelling of the story of the woman he spoke with at the beginning of the text, as well as an anticipation of Madame Bovary. A woman is married to a man who does not understand her: "elle aimait la poésie, les rêves, les pensées capricieuses, brumeuses et vagabondes, et son mari commence

par lui dire que Lamartine est incompréhensible, que les rêveurs sont des fous, qu'il n'y a de vrai que l'argent et la géométrie" ("Smarh," 1:204). Yuk works up the audience's sympathy for the woman's plight through the Romantic metaphor of a crown of flowers the woman has in her heart that is crushed "feuille à feuille" (note the connection to Smarh's personal imagery of open flowers and rustling leaves) by "le gros rire brute de l'homme qui triomphe, de la raison écrasant la poésie." The text manipulates us into a Romantic rejection of the laughter that dispels illusion. Yet the purpose of the text is to dispel Smarh's illusions through mockery, and it does this by first playing to them as it evokes his empathy for the woman as a sort of martyr: after the birth of their child, her husband finds her ugly; he returns to prostitutes; she lives a life of sacrifice, he a life of pleasure; they live together as strangers; they die; and the last scene is "toute remplie par un rire de Yuk" ("Smarh," 1:205). But after Smarh thoroughly identifies with the woman, Yuk adds that when the husband died he was a cuckold: "Comment diable [...] avec une petite femme si vertueuse?" says the narrator ironically. The sudden reversal renders the text's values ambiguous: a fictional laughter (the husband's) was marked negatively through its opposition to a value we were led to accept (the wife's Romantic transcendence of the material world through poetry and dreams); yet this laughter is very similar to one (the narrator's) that destroys the value we have accepted

(the wife's Romantic transcendence of the material world, which to the naïve reader might seem naturally to include the transcendence of physical desire). The mutual undercutting of values produces a void in which illusions are dispelled, but we are not sure how to react. The shock of the ending leaves us with two possibilities: either the woman was not truly contemptuous of the mundane world, or Romanticism is not as pure as we believed. It seems clear that Yuk intends the fiction as a means of awakening Smarh's awareness of lust; but the elaborate seduction of Smarh's sympathies that ends in their betrayal is cruel, intended to produce despair.[11]

The text moves on to a scene in which Satan tempts a poor man to murder Yuk, whom he takes for a rich bourgeois. The theme of political revolution as a revolt against divine order is a Romantic cliché, stretching back to Milton by way of Byron: "it was Byron who brought to perfection the rebel type" (Praz, 61).[12] The theme was repeatedly used by the Right: "Caïn le révolté [...] créait [... l'école] de l'insurrection morale, [...] de la rébellion à outrance et du romantisme."[13] Le Maistre finds "un caractère satanique"[14] in the Revolution of 1789 ; it is, he says, "une insurrection contre Dieu,"[15] inspired by "la haine du christianisme" and "la haine [...] contre son saint Auteur" (305), since: "Il était [...] inévitable que le philosophe du siècle ne tardât pas de haïr les institutions sociales dont il ne lui était pas possible de séparer le principe

religieux" (306). According to Antoine Adam, the connection between political revolution and rebellion against the divine order was made also by Romantics and by revolutionaries themselves:

> "La Révolte était un des grands thèmes de la littérature romantique [...] elle s'inspire d'abord d'un refus d'adhérer à l'ordre social [...] Dressés contre l'ordre politique, contre la morale commune, contre les conditions mêmes de la vie humaine, ils devaient, du même coup, se tourner contre Dieu et l'insulter. Satan devenait le symbole de leur révolte.[16]

The theme was most notably developed by Baudelaire in the section "La Révolte" of Les Fleurs du mal, published in 1857,[17] and the prose poem "Assommons les pauvres!" from Le Spleen de Paris, published in 1869.[18] At this point in "Smarh," the cliché is activated to produce a space of political ambiguity analogous to the space of moral ambiguity that preceded it.

The poor man claims he has never thought of murdering a rich bourgeois: "O mon Dieu! voilà des pensées que je n'avais jamais eues." Yet he has already said: "je hais les riches": Satan is awakening desires dimly present, as Smarh awoke the woman's lust at the beginning of the text. The man's tale of woe is constructed of exaggerations and Rabelaisian lists ("Personne ne m'a aimé, ni homme, ni femme, ni chien"), and it moves Yuk to laughter. Yet the text does not succeed in subordinating Byronic agony to Rabelaisian revelry, for the poor man is unwilling to allow the carnivalization of his discourse: "Ne ris pas, par

Dieu!" Satan treacherously reads Yuk's laughter as superior mockery: "Tue-le, c'est un homme méchant. Pourquoi, quand tu lui contais tes maux, s'est-il mis à rire? C'est un riche au coeur dur." Yuk collaborates with Satan's interpretation of his laughter by disguising his fertile profusion as material wealth: "Yuk se découvre et laisse voir un magnifique costume; une bourse garnie de diamants [...]"

Yuk's laughter at the plight of the poor can trigger revolution. Yet, this time at least, the rebellion is futile; after Yuk's death, he is reborn: "il n'y aurait plus de monde, ni de création, du jour où je cesserais de vivre [...] il n'y aurait plus ni gouvernement, ni religion, ni vertu, ni morale, ni lois" ("Smarh," 1:206). Yuk's statement can be taken two ways, depending on whether he is speaking in character (the bourgeois in the person of the Garçon[19] comically taking himself as the source of all order) or in his own voice (all order springs from fertile disorder). Because of the instability of Yuk's identity, it is likely that both readings are intended. Yuk's statement that "je me fâche à cette horrible idée d'anarchie sociale" is immediately undercut when Satan causes the poor man to escape in order that "il brûle sa prison, viole six religieuses et massacre une trentaine de personnes avant de rendre l'âme," and Yuk, stepping gratefully out of the constraint imposed on him by his role, "se frotte les mains, s'étend au soleil, crache au nez du magistrat, et pisse sur

l'église."

Thus the Byronic cliché of revolution as demonic is liberated in Rabelaisian joy. But the means to this end is the ambivalent rejection of all possible political positions: the poor man is satirized as bête: "[il] sourit bêtement" ("Smarh," 1:205), yet feared as a wild beast: "[il] avait un froid rire de bête affamée." Sympathy for the poor man's plight is bête, as Yuk's laughter asserts; but mockery of his plight is bourgeois, as Satan claims. Revolution is a valid response to oppression, yet merely motivated by sexual jealousy and Romantic illusion: "Le Pauvre: Personne ne m'a aimé [...] Yuk: C'est ça, compère, les jeunes filles aiment les beaux cavaliers riches et les pourpoints de velours. Le Pauvre: Ne me parlez pas des riches, encore une fois, -- je les hais!" Revolution is futile, because destruction necessarily ends in the creation of form; yet this is so merely because Satan wants to let destruction proliferate. The text accepts as valid neither the poor's passive acceptance of their plight nor their active rebellion against it; nor does it accept any possible response from the rich, neither philanthropy, nor reaction, nor the belief in their own eternal nature. Unless Smarh can forget his own position in relation to the problem of poverty and wealth, he must be moved to despair.

Likewise the collapse of the church is envisioned not as a joyful liberation; it is heavily moralized as due to the vanity of Man's works in the face of a hostile

Nature: "tu vas retomber sur la terre, où l'herbe te couvrira pour toujours" ("Smarh," 1:207). Yet this pessimism is figured in a language that subordinates Man's creation to metaphors representing clear, precise descriptions of Nature: "Les colonnes frêles vont se casser comme un roseau sous le poids de leur cathédrale, qui s'abaissera tout à l'heure comme un flot de la mer qui s'est monté bien haut, et qui tombe ensuite sur la surface unie et vide." Here, for a moment, civilization is seen as natural, as following the same process as all Nature. It is true that destruction is emphasized, not creation. But the text has already discovered a truth that Flaubert will seem endlessly to forget: the conflict of Nature and Culture is illusory; thus language, although a human artifact marked by its history and hence infested with clichés, is perfectly adequate to Nature, because it is already Nature. Here the insight is, as usual, subordinated to the general rhetoric of Byronic despair: it ends in the void, and is followed by "un immense rire [...] celui de Yuk" ("Smarh," 1:208).

The text, after this triumph of destruction and laughter, again gives rise to the image of Nature, which springs up first as an image of Smarh's unbroken spirit: "ne suis-je déjà assez ployé comme un roseau?" against the destructive and tempting force of Satan's knowledge: "Satan: [...] je veux [...] que les tempêtes et les vanités soufflent dans ton existence comme le vent dans la voile, t'entraînent vers quelque chose d'immense, d'inconnu, et que

moi seul je sais. Smarh: [...] Tu veux donc que l'orage aille toujours jusqu'à ce qu'il m'ait brisé tout à fait?" This wind which creates the void is opposed to Smarh's despairing hope that the present age is in fact an age of transition: "Dis-moi donc si l'horizon ne s'éclairera pas et si le soleil dormira toujours dans les ténèbres?" It is in fact this hope that Satan wishes to destroy: "Il n'y a de bonheur que pour ceux qui espèrent [...]" Thus he gives Smarh the possibility of realizing all his hopes that he might experience their emptiness: "forme un rêve, creuse une idée, désire quelque chose, et ton rêve aussitôt va devenir une réalité [...] je te ferai descendre jusqu'au fond du gouffre de ta pensée, j'accomplirai ton désir." Thus he plans to stop once and for all the perpetual rebirth of Smarh's hopes, like the endless cycle of sunset and dawn caused by the earth's rotation, and help them reach once and for all a certainty that is motionless: "je veux que tu n'aies plus de doute, et que ta pensée s'arrête et ne tournoie plus sur elle-même comme la terre dans sa course ivre et chancelante." Smarh finds his heart empty, battered by Satan's temptations ("mon coeur est sec comme un roc brûlé du soleil et battu de la tempête," "Smarh," 1:209), like the heart of the woman in Smarh's fiction ("ces fleurs flétries de croyance et d'amour, d'illusions perdues," "Smarh," 1:209). Yet he feels within him the voice of life, which Satan has called "poison" ("Smarh," 1:208), but which he imagines as "une voix d'enfant dans la nuit, cherchant sa

mère" ("Smarh," 1:209), and as a desire for the erotic relationship to Nature his knowledge of lust has caused him to lose: "si quelque rosée du ciel, toute humide et toute fumeuse de parfums, venait baigner mon coeur et l'endormir! Si le vent frais des nuits d'été pouvait ranimer mes yeux usés et fatigués de veilles et de fatigues!" (emphasis added). Compare this speech to the one after the awakening of the awareness of lust: "Autrefois je dormais [...] Autrefois l'air des nuits me faisait du bien [...] Pourquoi mon âme ne s'ouvre-t-elle plus au parfum de toutes ces choses?" ("Smarh," 1:190-191, emphasis added). But as we have already seen, this perfume and this wind are already associated with lust; and the cycle of sleep and awakening is here figured forth in language that resonates with its own undoing: is this secret voice that always reawakens hope Nature, or the "rosée" that Satan said he had poured from his heart at the very beginning of the text: "Mon orgueil me dévora le coeur, mais le sang de ce coeur ulcéré je l'ai versé sur la terre, et cette rosée de malédiction a porté des fruits" ("Smarh," 1:187, emphasis added). Satan's Byronic discourse has swallowed up transition, reversal, rebirth, and Nature itself, calling all these powerful carnivalesque Rabelaisian forces "poison" ("Smarh," 1:208). But these forces are not entirely subordinated: the description of Smarh's subsequent wallowing in the seven deadly sins must itself arise as an image of Nature calm and beautiful; and Smarh's ultimate disgust and disillusion with

life is again reversed by hope, youth, Nature. Satan's discourse, which seeks to give a monolithic, despairing reading to the endless cycling of Nature, is constantly undone by the reassertion of the cycle of Nature as hope, as a new beginning. Byronic despair is continually overturned by Rabelaisian ambivalence. But since the frame is Byronic, it continually overturns Rabelaisian ambivalence by giving it a monolithic, despairing reading. Within this discourse, there is seemingly no possible issue.

The description of Nature that precedes Smarh's final plunge into the passions of life represents a fight between despair and calmness, between a reading of Nature as evidence for Byronism and Nature described in a sober language adequate to its object: "ils arrivèrent au bord d'un beau fleuve. On entendait [note the shifting point of view: "on" may or may not be the same as "ils": observation is becoming neutral, uninvested with anything personal] le bruit de l'eau dans les bambous, dont les têtes ployaient sous le souffle du vent" ("Smarh," 1:210, emphasis added). The calmness here is subtly eroticized by echoes of Smarh's speech after his awakening to lust ("l'eau [...] coulait dans les vallées," "Smarh," 1:191); it is more directly undercut by reminiscences of Satan's investment of Nature with despair: the bamboos bend under a gentle breeze reminiscent of the "tempêtes" of vanity which were to break Smarh like a "roseau" ("Smarh," 1:208). Likewise the calm image of the moon reflected in the water is agitated by the

wind-blown clouds which obscure it: "la lune [...] se réflétait sur [les ondes]; [...] les nuages l'entouraient et roulaient emportés en se déployant" and by the never-still surface of the water: "les eaux du fleuve aussi s'en allaient" ("Smarh," 1:210).

But the potentially turbulent description of the rolling clouds and waves is smoothed out by the imposition of an adverb: "les eaux du fleuve aussi s'en allaient lentement, entre les prairies toutes pleines de silence, de fleurs." Silence has been associated by Satan with the void of meaninglessness; it is here reinvested by its association with fullness, and with flowers, which have alredy been used as images of desire in Smarh's discourse.

Calmness itself soon becomes Byronic: "Les flots étaient si calmes qu'on eût pris le courant pour quelque serpent monstrueux qui s'allongeait lentement sur les herbes pour aller mordre au loin l'Océan." One is tempted by this last metaphor, if not before, to read the river as not merely an image, but as a metaphor itself: but of what? Of the wellsprings of life, the dew that has revitalized Smarh's veins? Of the meaningless flow of life toward violence and death ("mordre [...] l'Océan"), the dew of malediction that flows from Satan's heart? The text suggests a nexus of possible investments of the image; clouded and rolling as it is, it soon opens up to produce another reading: of the possibility of a discourse reflecting its object in the flow of its language with

minimal distortion, despite the rapid reversibility of metaphorization, visible in swirling oxymorons that alternate black and white like letters on a page: "Cependant on voyait glisser dessus les ombres scintillantes des étoiles et les masses noires des nuages" (emphasis added). To the danger of metaphoric illusion ("on eût pris") the text attempts to offer the hope of a language based on observation ("cependant on voyait"); what can be observed is the interaction of language and nature, of nature mirrored in a flow. Meaninglessness is reread as the possibility of a language devoid of metaphor ("cygnes [signes] disparaissaient"); devoid also of dualities ("les deux ailes [...] des cygnes disparaissaient"); and devoid of the ego of the Romantic writer ("ils," which had become "on," disappears behind an impersonal third-person description).[20] The bird is ambiguously read as death: the white swans disappear: but not into blackness, into the green of rushes ("les deux ailes blanches des cygnes disparaissaient dans les joncs verts") which according to whether they are read as Smarh or as Satan would read them, figure eternal springing up after the storm has passed, or the soul broken by disillusion. Thus the language of the text breaks open under the collision of the multiple reinvestment[21] of images by both Smarh's and Satan's points of view to leave the vision (only partly resolved, only dimly visible under layers of battling meanings) of a language calmly and purely reflective.

But this clarity is again reinvested as lust and destruction: "La nuit était [...] **limpide**, toute vaporeuse de parfums, toute humide de la rosée des fleurs; elle était **transparente** [...] comme si un grand feu d'étoiles l'eût éclairée par derrière [this last is a reflection of the fiery earthquake that swallows up a church and spews forth skeletons and corpses on the previous page]. C'était un horizon **large et grand**, qui baisait au loin le ciel d'un baiser d'amour et de volupté" (emphasis added).

Yet despite all of these warnings, the soul of Smarh soaks up Nature and fuses with it:

> Smarh se sentit revivre; je ne sais quelle perception, jusque-là inconnue, de la nature entra dans son âme [...] comme une jouissance intime et transparente, au dedans de laquelle il voyait se mouvoir confusément des pensées riantes, des images tendres, vagues, indécises. Il resta longtemps plongé dans la béatitude de l'extase et se laissant enivrer par tout cela, laissant son âme humer par tous ses pores l'harmonie et les délices de ce ciel diaphane, si large et si pure; de cette campagne, avec ses herbes courbées par la brise embaumant, avec les fleurs [... dont] le parfum [...] s'envole; de cette onde de lait murmurante [...] dans les roseaux, avec ces cygnes.

The fusion has re-created his soul as female ("Son âme se déployait et nageait à l'aise, elle étendait ses ailes et planait au milieu de cette création, tout ivre de parfums, toute dormeuse et nonchalante, comme une sultane sur des lits de rose," emphasis added); such a re-creation suggests the reconciliation of all opposites. And soon images of women pour forth from his imagination: "De vagues formes de femmes nues, blanches [...] on voyait leur dos blanc, tout

couvert de cheveux noirs [...] elles étaient vives, folâtres, errantes, douteuses come une suite d'images dans un songe d'amour." Despite the lush profusion that owes something to Rabelais, the scene ends in Byronic disillusion: the women run in and out of the river; Smarh's responsive soul reflects their image in a "vague géante" which rises within him, a hope the text labels as "illusions," which "éclairaient son coeur" with images of "un avenir plein de délices"; the image leads him only to a continual striving devoid of success: "il voulait courir après, mais il [l'avenir] lui échappait toujours et il courait toujours." The women themselves become a "guirlande," like the crown of roses in the heart of the woman in Yuk's fiction; his burst of life force becomes a "démon en lui, qui le poussait en avant." The temptation degenerates into a vicious circle: "sa pensée malade courait dans un cercle de fer et se brisait la tête en voulant le franchir." But this cycle has already found an issue at the moment of its inception; and the image of failure and death continually gives rebirth to the image of calm Nature.

For after Smarh has passed through desire, and fulfillment of desire, through war, power, glory, and death, when he has reached the ultimate stage of disgust and disillusion, "au milieu de ses larmes silencieuses, [...] il s'éleva cependant comme un dernier soupir, un dernier baiser, quelque chose d'immense, d'amoureux, d'impalpable.

Il se ranima" ("Smarh," 1:214). He yearns for "ce qu'il n'avait jamais vu, désira ce qui n'existait pas"; perfumes and distant sounds seem to reawaken him; "il reprit à la vie, et son coeur se rouvrit à l'espérance comme les fleurs au soleil." The dynamic of the text is so well set that the narrative voice is suddenly invaded by Satan's: "Quelle journée devait l'attendre? Quel ouragan allait la casser sur sa tige? Pauvre fleur! pauvre âme!" This invasion of Byronism makes the last phrases ring ironic. Since we have learned in this text that all joy will end in despair, the next line, also, is subsumed by sardonic mockery entirely out of proportion to the discreet reservation expressed in "encore": "C'était un enfant, tout jeune, tout rose encore, l'âme impregnée d'amour, de rêveries, d'extases." The power of the Byronic world view is so great by this point in the text that all gentle, hopeful sentiments ring false. Yet if Byron had definitively triumphed, why would the image of a calm and peaceful Nature recur at all? And why in a passage so long, fluid and beautiful, so devoid of anguish (except inasmuch as we assume that the calm and peacefulness are temporary)?

As always in this text, Nature is envisioned in memory, in the imperfect tense. The relationship between the child to Nature is not economic ("il n'allait ni vers les champs où son père labourait, ni sur le rivage où la barque de ses frères aînés était attachée": it is contemplative ("il aimait à contempler"). What follows is

some fifty lines of description, of (nearly) non-metaphoric fragments of language wholly adequate to their object, where the pleasure of remembered contemplations is concretized in language pleasurable to read. In this passage, the same sentence can include references to harvests and snow: the images are linked freely, as if in memory, with no discernible rhetorical purpose behind their choice. A number of images appear that have already been invested by the discourse between Satan and Smarh: "les nues fugitives [...] le vent mugir [...] l'aigle [...] la vague [...] les mouettes [...] les feuilles qui tremblent au vent [...] tempêtes" ("Smarh," 1:214-215).

But although the nexus of invested images returns, they do so connected with a number of images that have not been invested; and contemplation does not take place at night, in the midst of vague erotic desires. Fleeting clouds give rise to leaves blowing in the wind, and to the sea; but the rustling sound that has so often been emphasized has disappeared and the leaves are displaced by fruitful fields: "il aimait à contempler les nues fugitives, les moissons qui se ploient et s'ondulent aux vents comme une mer" ("Smarh," 1:214). Birds and flowers are associated with uninvested images: rain, hedges, insects, and sun. Thus observable reality (or observed reality preserved in memory) dissipates the fascination of the images that have been multiply invested.

Unlike the Savage, who sadistically penetrated and

wrestled with Nature, the contemplative Child is passive: he is wounded by Nature ("Le soleil brûlait sa peau blanche, les rochers déchiraient ses pieds"); but this wounding is compensated by pleasurable perception ("lui qui écoutait [...] qui regardait"). The danger of Byronism itself is still present: what is listened to are dying waves, and what is watched is a setting sun; and the child watches "dans un [...] rocher, comme l'aigle dans son aire." But the Byronic frame and content are undercut by soberly observed images of Nature: "l'ombre des rochers [...] s'allongeait et diminuait sur le rivage." Contemplation, already made timeless by imperfects of repetition, is stretched out in time to become nearly mystical: how is it possible to watch "la même vague pendant longtemps"? What state of mind is induced by gazing "immobile" at something seemingly so commonplace and meaningless as a "brin d'herbe"?

Escape from the economic tyranny of farming and fishing allows the Child to enter a world of pure pleasure, without purpose, so that from his vantage-point he can contemplate scattering sand, despite the fact that it has previously been invested as an image of the ultimate vanity of human endeavors, in a mode of aesthetic enjoyment that is also one of sensual physical grasping: "Souvent il prenait du sable plein les mains, il ouvrait les doigts, et il prenait plaisir à voir les rayons de sable partir de différents côtés et disparaître en tourbillonnant, en s'élevant." Likewise sunset can be contemplated as

beautiful despite its Byronic connotations: it forms "un immense réseau lumineux."

As previously invested images are purged of investment through contemplation, the contemplator dissolves into Nature to become analogous to a natural object: "il vécut comme les fleurs elles-mêmes, vivant au soleil et regardant le ciel": these are "ses plus belles années" ("Smarh," 1:215). To figure the "vaste harmonie" of Nature that "résonn[e] dans son âme," the text has recourse to a Rabelaisian list, as if the soul were drinking in Nature's profusion in great draughts:

> Tout ce qui chantait, volait, palpitait, rayonnait, les oiseaux dans les bois, les feuilles qui tremblent au vent, les fleuves qui coulent dans les prairies émaillées, rochers arides, tempêtes, orages, vagues écumeuses, sable embaumant, feuilles d'automne qui tombent, neiges sur les tombeaux, rayons de soleil, clairs de lune, tous les chants, toutes les voix, tous les parfums, toutes ces choses qui forment la vaste harmonie qu'on nomme nature, poésie, Dieu, résonnaient dans son âme.

The majority of fragments in this list are directly borrowed from the commonplace imagery of Romantic poetry; many were directly invested by the preceding discourse between Smarh and Satan. But here each is cut away from the discourse of despair or nostalgia that surrounds it; no fragment is allowed to generate discourse, so that any implicit resonances, whether merely metonymous ("vagues [...] sable") or potentially metaphoric ("feuilles d'automne qui tombent, neiges sur les tombeaux") are directly undercut by seemingly random juxtaposition ("sable [...] feuilles"; "neiges [...]

soleil"), so that any partial fusions are deferred to a general harmonization that is in fact pantheist ("nature, poésie, Dieu"). The ultimate goal of this detailed observation that subtracts itself from previous discourse is fusion with Nature, or with God; or with language, or at least with that special form of language called poetry.

In fact, it is the relationship to language itself that remains problematic. It was necessary that a Rabelaisian depiction of carefully observed Nature be preceded by a ruthless purging of Romantic investments of Nature; yet the result of this must be poetry, not common language. How is one to imagine a language able to describe things soberly, without investment, that is yet higher than common speech? The resonant soul of the Child is like Byron's in "Rabelais": it is therefore unsurprising that the Child will leave Nature because of a troubled soul: "il y avait dans son âme bien d'autres tempêtes que celles de l'Océan, bien d'autres nuages que ceux du ciel." This dissatisfaction causes the Child, like the Savage in Yuk's fiction, to leave Nature and enter the city. The Savage's force was taken from him by images of gold and power ("des palais d'or dont j'étais le maître," "Smarh," 1:200), but also by the same vague desires ("j'ai souhaité des bonheurs inconnus, des ivresses qui ne sont pas," "Smarh," 1:200) as the Child ("il avait voulu un horizon plus vaste," "Smarh," 1:215). For the Savage, dreams of material glory lead him from an active to a passive, contemplative view of Nature:

"j'errais comme de coutume, mais [...] je ne tendais pas la corde de mon arc; je m'assis au milieu des bois et j'entendais vaguement la pluie tomber sur le feuillage [...] les feuilles blanches du peuplier tremblaient au clair de lune. Alors, j'eus peur, je me suis mis à trembler comme si j'allais mourir" ("Smarh," 1:200).

But whereas in Yuk's discourse poetry is taken as a sign of weakness that denotes that one is prey to the temptation to fall from a state of original fusion with Nature, here poetry is a term for the fusion that can take place once all the clichés blocking immediate vision have been removed. The problem is that the notion of "poetry" is already so heavily invested that it falls back into the Byronic mode, one of despair, separation, alienation. Thus soon after the Child's interior visions separate him from Nature, the same images of Nature invested with dissatisfaction and desire recur:

> il voyait, dans les belles nuits d'été, les bouquets de roses et les jasmins secouer aux souffles des vents leurs têtes fleuries, que la brise agitait les feuilles verts et qu'elle remuait, dans ses plis invisibles, des échos lointains d'amour et des parfums de fleur, que la lune brillait toute pure et toute sereine, avec ses lumières qui montent et brillent et coulent silencieusement là-haut, avec les nuages qui s'étendent comme des montagnes mouvantes ou les vagues géantes d'un autre Océan (emphasis added).

Natural details become metaphors for one another ("les nuages [...] comme des montagnes [...] ou les vagues"), direct fusions between material details are effected by emotional terms ("la brise [...] feuilles [...] amour [...]

parfum des fleurs"). Poetry, only a page before an equivalent term for Nature, becomes engulfed in the Romantic myth of the original creator ("il y avait en lui des sources intarissables"); soon, the myth of the Byronic resonant soul emerges full-blown:

> Oh! poète! se sentir plus grand que les autres, avoir une âme si vaste qu'on y fait tout entrer, tout tourner, tout parler, comme la créature dans la main de Dieu; exprimer toute l'échelle immense et continue qui va depuis le brin d'herbe jusqu'à l'éternité, depuis le grain de sable jusqu'au coeur de l'homme; avoir tout ce qu'il y a de plus beau, de plus doux, de plus suave, les plus larges amours, les plus longs baisers, les longues rêveries la nuit, les triomphes, les bravos, l'or, le monde, l'immortalité! N'est-ce pas pour lui, la mousse des bois fleuris, le battement d'ailes de la colombe, le sable embaumant de la rive, la brise toute parfumée des mers du Sud, tous les concerts de l'âme, toutes les voix de la nature, les paroles de Dieu, à lui, le poète? ("Smarh," 1:215-216).

The separation of poetry from common language leads to the myth of superiority, so that Nature and God become, not equivalent terms for poetry, but the personal property of the poet.

All previous themes for poetry have been exhausted, revealed as empty: love, glory, death: "Et cependant... tout n'a pas été dit!" ("Smarh," 1:216). The search for originality in the face of the emptying-out of all poetic images, in the absence of all belief, leads the poet to despair: "Dieu? autrefois j'y croyais" (note the insult that treats God as a thing; this same insult appeared in "Rabelais"); this section ends with the image of the poet's soul trapped in his body like an eagle in a cage: "tu n'as

plus qu'à mettre ta tête sous ton aile et à mourir [...] bientôt tu ne seras plus qu'un cadavre encore tiède qu'on appelle désespoir" ("Smarh," 1:217).

Poetry, invested with superiority, despair, and the desperate search for originality, separates the poet from his original fusion with Nature. Thus, the notion of matter emerges, as a sort of physical reality devoid of poetry, but full of force: "la matière resplendissait dans sa force [...] elle siègeait sur des trônes [...] Aussi le poète sortit, chassé, méprisé, honni." Yet Nature, devoid of Poetry, becomes less than matter, it becomes mere dust: "tout s'écroula," and its emptiness produces "un grand rire." The possibility that Rabelaisian style coupled with careful representation of uninvested Nature could lead out of Byronism has been undercut by the residual desire for Poetry: Byronism has slipped in by the back door, separating Poetry from Nature, and from God, creating emptiness and despair, and allowing Rabelaisianism space only in the Romantic grotesque. If language were not elevated into a Poetry separated from common speech, if one were not diverted from observation and representation by the fear of the already-said, a new joyous vision, the voice of the new Rabelais, could be produced.

The text of "Smarh" attempts to integrate the Rabelaisian influence in a number of ways; it is much better at describing a Rabelaisian style than in producing one. We have already examined the attempted fusion of Rabelaisian

style and precise observation in the Child's narrative; we will further examine fully the description of Yuk's discourse ("Smarh," 1:202) as contrasted to his answer to Satan's question "'On te demande ce que c'est que la vie'" ("Smarh," 1:199).

The descriptions of Nature in the Child's narrative that purge Romantic images of their investment and invoke uninvested natural details are sober: the baldly presented fragments of observable reality are not interpreted, and the only emotion is that of calm aesthetic enjoyment. The achievement of these descriptions is the achievement that was attributed by Flaubert in the correspondence to Rabelais. One could call their fusion of Rabelaisianism and precise observation that of a drunken style deployed soberly, or of a fusion of drunken form and sober content. Let us hasten to specify that by "sober" is not meant "depressed" or "purposive," but merely calm. And let us remember that the descent into Byronism was triggered in this passage by the desire to maintain the category of Poetry as a special form of exclusive language, a form not necessarily adequate to precise observation; and that the descent took the form of the display of all the clichés with which the discourse of Poetry was associated in the late 1830s.

On the other hand, the description of Yuk's discourse that accompanies the Savage's entrance into the city is itself Rabelaisian and depicts a form of speech that

is fluid, interpenetrating and fertile:

> Quand Yuk ouvrait la bouche, c'étaient des calomnies, des mensonges, des poésies, des chimères, des religions, des parodies qui sortaient, partaient, s'allongeaient, s'amalgamaient, s'enchevêtraient, se frisaient, ruisselaient, finissant toujours par entrer dans quelque oreille, par se planter sur quelque terrain, par germer dans quelque cerveau, par bâtir quelque chose, par en détruire une autre, enfouir ou déterrer, élever ou abattre ("Smarh," 1:202).

Religion and poetry are assimilated to lies, calumnies and chimeras; the reduction of grandiose verbal productions to low, playful ones is more or less Rabelaisian, as is the image of discourse proliferating and interpenetrating, and the dual process of building and destroying, burying and reviving. However, even in this paragraph negative tones are dominant: calumnies and chimeras could have been called insults and fantasies; rather they have been assimilated to lies, so that their enslaving effect on their audience, rather than any joyful liberating effect, is emphasized. In the preceding paragraph, Yuk's skill at producing adulteresses is reiterated: "bientôt on voyait les murailles se disjoindre et de volumineuses cornes s'étendre [...] pendant qu'une femme tournait le dos à un homme et donnait son devant à un autre."

Yuk's face is a comic mask, which mocks everything: "sa figure était une grimace, grimace devant l'église, grimace devant le palais, grimace devant le cabaret, devant le bouge, devant le pauvre, devant le roi." This lack of respect for social categories is Rabelaisian; but the

destructive effect of Yuk's actions ("il faisait rouler une couronne, une croyance, une âme candide, une vertu, une conviction") is not tempered by any sort of identification or creativity: his grimaces are resolutely in front of, separate from their objects, and these objects are indiscriminately destroyed, even when the language describing them is unambiguously positive ("âme candide, vertu"). The joyful Rabelaisian ambivalence is visible, but in the process of being distorted into the Romantic grotesque. Thus Yuk's laughter is described as "un rire de damné"; but from this Byronic appelation it soon escapes and it associates itself with its historical force and vigor: "mais un rire long, homérique, inextinguible, un rire indestructible comme le temps, un rire cruel comme la mort, un rire large comme l'infini, long comme l'éternité, car c'était l'éternité elle-même." Note, however, that death is specifically named, and that life is mentioned only in the mode of its escape from death ("inextinguible, indestructible").

The escape of Rabelaisianism from Byronism does not quite yet reach the level of affirmation or resurrection, although that possibility had been glimpsed a moment before; and in the next sentence, although framed by night and storm ("dans ce rire-là flottaient, par une nuit obscure sur un océan sans bornes, soulevés par une tempête éternelle"), a Rabelaisian list flows forth in a flood of oppositions and amalgamations: "empires, peuples, mondes, âmes et corps,

squelettes et cadavres vivants [death and life momentarily fuse], ossements et chair, mensonge et vérité, grandeur et crapule, boue et or; tout était là, oscillant dans la vague mobile et éternelle de l'infini." However, unlike the Rabelaisian list in the tale of the Child, here every detail is completely invested, invoked only as a marker in a play of oppositions, as a member of a list which is rhetorically determined to signify "tout" ("empires, peuples, mondes") or "tous les deux" ("âmes et corps"; "boue et or"). No member of the list is described in sufficient uninvested detail to produce any sort of disinterested aesthetic contemplation of remembered or imagined images: its use of physical details is relentlessly metaphoric; in fact, the rhetorical structure moves very easily from concrete terms to abstract ones ("ossements et chair, mensonge et vérité"), since the concrete details are mere allegorical markers for abstractions.

Yuk's discourse is potentially fertile <u>in the abstract</u>: it is described as building as well as destroying, of resurrecting as well as burying; and embraced in his laughter are truth and greatness as well as lies and filth. But warring against this is a force that can be identified as Byronic, a force associated with unambivalent damnation, destruction, grimaces and lies.[22] Thus among the physical details thrown up in the Rabelaisian list quoted above are a disproportionate number of dismembered corpses, and the result for Smarh is the illusion that revelation is

equivalent to suffering: "Il sembla alors à Smarh que le monde était dépouillé de son écorce et restait saignant et palpitant, sans vêtement et sans peau" (emphasis added). The text can imagine an act of revelation that reveals light, but only in a mode that emphasizes darkness and calls light illusion: "Son oeil plongea plus loin dans les ténèbres, il crut un moment y voir les astres, les ténèbres étaient encore là" (emphasis added). Two mutually undercutting points of view are visible in that sembla and that crut: sembla reminds the reader that the claim that clear vision produces corpses is just that: a claim, a belief, itself subject to penetration by vision; crut counters that all vision is illusion and occurs surrounded by darkness. Darkness, here, has the last word; and only dimly, in passing, in the midst of cruelty and dismemberment, is it glimpsed that this very ambivalence of vision is inherently joyful. At the beginning of the text, Satan claimed the production of chimeras as a way to alienate Man from an original state in the earth was "faite pour la félicité de l'homme" ("Smarh," 1:187); the original adequation of Man for the earth is what the sober description in the Child's narrative seeks to reclaim. If Rabelaisian proliferation could be clearly separated from Romantic posturing, if the chimera of language could be seen as joyful, fertile, productive rather than as anguished, void, destructive, there would perhaps be seen a way out of Byronism.

Yuk's answer to the question of "ce que c'est que la vie" ("Smarh," 1:199) begins with a double invocation to interchangeable opposites: "ah! par Dieu ou par le Diable": one hopes one is in the realm of joyful carnivalesque reversibility and ambivalence. Truth in Yuk's discourse is associated with laughter: "La vie? [...] c'est fort drôle, fort amusant, fort réjouissant, fort vrai"; in Satan's discourse it was associated with man's anguished emptiness. Indeed, the association here of laughter with truth is subordinated to the truth of Romantic despair: "La farce est bonne, mais la comédie est longue"; this despair is clothed in a carnivalized Rabelaisian form in which opposites collide:[23] "La vie, c'est un linceul tâché de vin, c'est une orgie où chacun se soûle, chante et a des nausées; c'est un verre brisé, c'est un tonneau de vin âcre, et celui qui le remue trop avant y trouve souvent bien de la lie et de la boue." Drink here is not unambiguous joy: it is joy that ends in nausea; carnival imagery is given a particular pessimistic twist that is typical of the Romantic grotesque. Thus Rabelaisian food metaphors clothe despair: "l'existence te paraîtra une mauvaise ratatouille d'auberge [even before its appearance the metaphor is marked negatively], qu'on jette à chacun et que chacun repousse." Free mixing of all in public space without respect to class is here not the carnival feast in the public square, where all fuse into a joyous mass, but a negatively valued deviation from the supreme value of the unique individual,

so that all are nauseated with a sickness the text has just called "le mal de mer," and which must in this context be associated with the devil's use of the sea to signify the vanity of human endeavor.

At this point in the discourse, however, food imagery begins to proliferate,[24] although associated with continual marks of despair so that the Byronic maintains the upper hand: "car les femmes te paraîtront de maigres mauviettes, les hommes de singuliers moineaux, le trône une gelée bien tremblante, le pouvoir une crème peu faite, et les voluptés de tristes entremets." Note that the feast has been reduced to meager, unsubstantial foods, and pleasure itself merely a morsel between courses, previously marked with sadness. Only the next line escapes briefly from the overwhelming Byronic imagery, and that only because of its ambivalent re-evaluation of religious values: "Un digne cuisinier, c'est vous, mon maître [Satan], qui nous servez ce qu'il y a de plus beau sous le ciel; vous, qui donnez les jolies pêcheresses, laissant aux anges du ciel les dévotes jaunies." In this reversal, sinners are seen as more sexually desirable than religious women, so that religious values are reinterpreted according to the needs of the body. The description of the "festin de la mort" that follows is more death than feast; all the agitation of life is reduced to a grotesque enumeration (again, a Rabelaisian device without Rabelaisian content):

A nous, dont la nappe est faite avec les linceuls

> des rois, qui nous asseyons au large festin de la mort sur les trônes et les pyramides, qui buvons le meilleur sang des batailles, qui rongeons les plus hautes têtes de rois et qui, bien repus des empires, des dynasties, des peuples, des passions, des larges crimes, revenons chaque jour regarder le monde se mouvoir, les marionnettes gesticuler aux fils que nous tenons dans la main, qui voyons passer, en riant, les siècles amoncelés, et l'histoire avec ses haillons fougueux et sa figure triste, et le temps, vieux faucheur glouton, aux talons de fer et à la dent éternelle, tout cela, pour nous, tourne, remue, marche, s'agite et meurt; nous voyons la farce commencer, les chandelles brûler et s'éteindre, et tout rentrer dans le repos et dans le vide, dans lequel nous courons comme des perdus, riant, nous mordant, hurlant, pleurant [...] le Dieu du grotesque est un bon interprète pour expliquer le monde.

Perhaps, indeed, the grotesque is a good interpreter of the world. The comic reversibility of values mentioned above does momentarily provide a fresh vision. If only reversible values ("par Dieu, ou par le Diable") were maintained throughout! But in this passage, as in nearly all of "Smarh," the Rabelaisian comic is thoroughly subordinated to Romantic despair. This, in fact, seems to have occurred to Flaubert: in a passage appended in the name of another narrator, the text ridicules itself for having taken itself seriously: "tu te regardais comme un petit Goethe" ("Smarh," 1:218). Yet the voice that ridicules is itself suffused with despair: "tu iras ainsi enthousiasmé de ce que tu rêves, dégoûté de ce que tu as fait. Tout est ainsi, il ne faut pas s'en plaindre." In fact, it is possible to hear in this moralizing postscript a reflection of the final narrator of Goethe's Werther, so that the form itself only reiterates Romantic clichés.

But the climax of the story itself is complex and ambiguous enough to indicate that the triumph of Byronism is inconclusive. A woman appears to Smarh, a woman Flaubert called in the correspondence "la Verité" ("Se présente une femme... une femme il l'aime [...] cette femme, c'est la Vérité" à Ernest Chevalier, [18 mars 1839]; Corr. I:40), although here she is called only "un ange": she invites Smarh to "aime-moi, je suis si belle" ("Smarh," 1:217). For a moment, Smarh feels a rebirth of hope: "voilà la poussière qui monte au ciel, voilà les ruines qui se lèvent et se placent [...] il y avait eu un immense espoir dans la création." Satan, Smarh, and Yuk each claim the woman, and a dispute ensues. In the end, what Smarh wins is "l'éternité [... il] tournoya dans le néant, il y roule encore" ("Smarh," 1:218). Yuk reveals himself as the most powerful: it is he who casts Smarh into eternity, which is to say, nothingness; Satan responds only through passive, although perhaps ironic, sorrow: "Satan versa une larme." Yuk "se mit à rire et [...] étreignit [la femme] dans un baiser si fort, si terrible, qu'elle étouffa dans les bras du monstre éternel." If in fact this woman is intended to be Truth, as the correspondence claims, it is difficult to see how laughter has killed her. In fact, the final situation bears some resemblance to the conversation between Yuk and Death that precedes the narrative of the Child. Yuk claims a superiority over Death, because of his power to embrace both creation and destruction, birth and death, the

vast and the small, the high and the low:

> quand je parle, c'est le monde qui dit quelque chose, c'est le créateur qui crée [...]; je suis le passé, le présent, le futur, le monde et l'éternité, cette vie et l'autre, le corps et l'âme; tu peux abattre des pyramides [...] mais tu ne m'arracheras pas la moindre parcelle de quelque chose. Je me moque de [...] toute la poussière qui t'entoure [...] tout ce magnifique cortége [...] les ruines, le passé, l'histoire, tous ces grains de sable qui forment ton trône, le monde qui est la roue sur qui tu tournes dans le temps, tout cela [...] depuis les océans les plus larges jusqu'aux larmes d'un chien, l'Atlas jusqu'à un tas de fumier, depuis un tronc jusqu'à un brin d'herbe [...] tout ce qui vit et meurt, tout ce qui est commencé pour finir, tout cela me fait pitié, tu entends? tout cela me fait rire ("Smarh," 1:213).

Death begs to know the nature of this power greater than she; Yuk responds that he is "le vrai [...] l'éternel [...] le bouffon, le grotesque, le laid [...]; je suis ce qui est, ce qui a été, ce qui sera; je suis toute l'éternité, à moi seul." The two are necessary to each other; in fact they are spouses: "plus d'une fois je t'ai baisée au visage et j'ai mordu tes os, nous avons eu de bonnes nuits, enveloppés tous deux dans ton linceul troué." This fusion of truth, creation and death, of history and eternity, was also evoked when the Child become poet searched for a theme: "Si je parlais de la mort plutôt? c'est du néant, cela, c'est du vrai" ("Smarh," 1:216). The significance of the final passage is thus ambiguous: beautiful truth inspires life and becomes death; eternity is equivalent to nothingness. Laughter precipitates the move from the positive to the negative pole, and thus reveals itself as powerful in an act of destruction. But the act of reversal

reveals the more powerful fact of reversibility, of ambivalence: this is what has been revealed by the presentation of unmotivated observable truths, by the representation of ambivalent fact through description. The very ambiguity of the ending escapes the imposition of the hegemony of Byronism. The possibility of a joyously ambivalent celebration of death and life that escapes one-sided despair: this possibility is what will be explored in "Les Funérailles."

CHAPTER 3: BRICOLAGE AND PENETRATING VISION: VOICES IN "LES FUNÉRAILLES DU DOCTEUR MATHURIN"

As I have argued above, "Les Funérailles du docteur Mathurin" is the most clearly Rabelaisian of Flaubert's juvenilia. In it the Byronic force of mordant despair is dominated by a fertile profusion of "mensonges [...] chimères [...] religions [... et] parodies qui [...] s'enchevêtr[ent]" ("Smarh," 1:202). The plot, such as it is, is quickly summarized: a doctor has retreated from the world to the peace of the countryside. Feeling that he is about to die, he calls his few friends to his bedside; they spend the night drinking while the doctor pronounces satiric philosophical and political discourses. He dies calmly and at peace, and the friends parade the corpse through the town pouring wine into its gaping gullet at each tavern before burying it under a broken barrel near a river.

"Docteur Mathurin" is a bricolage, by which I mean a text pieced together from various debris of previous discourses in various states of decay: an image here of unknown provenance, a line or two there trailing shreds of cultural meaning, words resonating with history, even a few areas clear, transparent, and calm, almost pristine. Dick Hebdige discusses bricolage in the context of the subculture

of youthful revolt: "[Youth-culture bricoleurs] appropriated [. . .] commodities by placing them in a symbolic ensemble which served to erase or subvert their original straight meanings."[1] This view of appropriation and juxtaposition as "intentional communication" (102) derives from cultural theorists like Claude Levi-Strauss, who in La Pensée sauvage argues that the mind in its pre-scientific or natural state solves problems through bricolage, which is to say that it "engag[e] une sorte de dialogue" with whatever materials are on hand "pour répertorier [...] les réponses possibles que l'ensemble peut offrir au problème qu'il lui pose [...] pour comprendre ce que chacun d'eux pourrait 'signifier,' contribuant ainsi à définir un ensemble à réaliser, mais qui ne différera finalement de l'ensemble instrumental que par la disposition interne des parties."[2] The possible solutions are limited by the fact that "elles possèdent déjà un sens" being "une collection de résidus d'ouvrages humains" (19). On the other hand, the scientist tries to escape from the constraints imposed by his culture: "le savant [...] dialogue [...] avec un certain état du rapport entre la nature et la culture, définissable par la période de l'histoire dans laquelle il vit, la civilisation qui est la sienne, les moyens matériels dont il dispose" (29). He "cherche toujours à s'ouvrir un passage et à se situer au delà (30, emphasis in original). The artist operates rather like a bricoleur and rather like a scientist: she is in

dialogue with her materials and with the world, both "faisant des événements (changer le monde) au moyen de structures" and "faisant [...] des structures au moyen d'événements" (33). For Levi-Strauss, a work of art is in essence a reduced model of something in the world, which we contemplate in order to see the parts and the whole and to see how the model was pieced together. Art is "la découverte d'[une] structure" (38). The work of art, then, is partially limited by the available materials and partially limited by the model it imitates: certain artists might be more like bricoleurs, focusing on manipulation of their materials; others more like scientists, focusing on accurate representations of their models.

But Levi-Strauss's notion of bricolage as the permutation of given elements within a single set is too limited to describe art in a context of competing traditions, movements, or cultures, as is the situation for most art produced after the eighteenth century. Cultural theorists like John Clarke have therefore expanded the concept: "When the bricoleur re-locates the significant object in a different position within [the] discourse [. . .] or when that object is placed within a different total ensemble, a new discourse is constituted, a different message conveyed."[3] The transference of elements across boundaries produces new meaning through all sorts of unforeseen juxtapositions, forbidden contacts, and degradations.[4] This is approximately what Bakhtin calls the

carnivalesque: "All distance [. . .] is suspended, and a special carnival category goes into effect: free and familiar contact [. . .] Discourse [is . . .] freed from the authority of all hierarchical positions [. . .] Carnival brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid." This "profanation" is linked with the "reproductive power of the earth and the body" (Dostoevsky, 123, emphasis in original). After the eighteenth century, values are not so clearly situated along a vertical axis: each artistic movement, for example, promulgates its own values, by which it holds itself to be superior to all other movements. The notion of bricolage must thus be complicated in yet another way: in bricolage, the transfer of elements from one system to another implies the re-interpretation and re-evaluation of the entire original system according to the meanings and values of the new system. Sometimes in bricolage, codes judge one another.

Although there is a connection between my analysis of the interaction of inherited voices in Flaubert's texts and the notion of intertextuality, there is little similarity between my view of an open, dynamic relationship between elements renewed through bricolage and Michael Riffaterre's theories outlined in his Fictional Truth. Riffaterre's view that "the intertext [. . .] acts as the unconscious of fiction and that readers recover or discover

that intertext because the narrative itself contains clues leading back to it"[5] envisions the intertext as something closed and potentially knowable with certainty; for Riffaterre, the intertext as genre "regulates and directs comparisons" (95).

However, according to Bakhtin, the novel is precisely that genre that subverts regulation, in which there is "no language center at all."[6] For Bakhtin, the novel is characterized by "heteroglossia," by "the ridiculing [of] all 'languages' [. . .] where all 'languages' [are] masks and where no language [can] claim to be an authentic, incontestable face" (Bakhtin, "Discourse," 273). Thus in the novel, "a multiplicity of 'language' and verbal-ideological belief systems [. . .] are unmasked and destroyed as something false, greedy, limited, narrowly rationalistic, inadequate to reality" (Bakhtin, "Discourse," 311-312). The novel, far from being limited by its intertext, is a response, and it invites a response.

Closely related to Bakhtin's notion of the dialogue between the novel and its pre-texts is the notion of intertextuality developed by Julia Kristeva in Le Texte du roman.[7] According to Kristeva, it is characteristic of the novel that "les textes les plus connus sont confrontés, mis en dialogue l'un avec l'autre et souvent même neutralisés" (Kristeva, Texte, 147). For Kristeva, this confrontation of texts is political: "La culture vocalique [...] est étroitement liée à l'organisation politique et aux habitudes

sociales de la cité. Elle parle la pluralité non plus soumise [à la] vérité" (Kristeva, Texte, 153, emphasis in original). Kristeva's view of intertextuality is historical and social, but also open-ended and transformational. For her, meaning is not controlled by the intertext; the individual writer juggles the intertext to produce new meaning: "[les] énoncés [...] obtiennent, ajouté à leur sens original, un sens supplémentaire [...] le roman [...] ne peut être lu que comme une polyphonie" (Kristeva, Texte, 176, emphasis in original). Ultimately, the manipulation of the intertext may trigger a crisis in meaning in which the process of signification itself is brought into question:

> En s'appropriant les discours présupposés et légiférants et par le seul acte de cette appropriation (négation, transformation, etc.), [les textes modernes] s'arrogent d'abord le droit de se poser. Mais, en même temps [...], ces textes dévoilent que le présupposé est une convention de discours [...] ce type d'appropriation [...] laisse planer le doute sur la possibilité même d'un posé.[8]

The confrontation of texts in the novel causes the destruction of the reader's naive belief in the stability of meaning; but this destruction is also a clearing-away that allows an act of creation: "le texte touche à la possibilité même du symbolique; mais s'il la met en question, s'il la menace, ce n'est que pour la renouveler" (Kristeva, Révolution, 340). Freeing the reader from the power of social meaning (from "l'usage normatif du langage et donc la position du sujet," Kristeva, Révolution, 340) has the same beneficial liberating effect as does the

process of transference in psychoanalysis: "le sujet présuppose l'autre (l'analyste) 'en savoir,' et [...] il cherche à s'approprier ce lieu présupposé, avant d'éprouver la vérité: que l''autre' supposé savoir ou légifier n'est qu'une structure de langage et donc [...] vide" (Kristeva, Révolution, 339). For Kristeva, intertextuality is a political struggle within a text that culminates in a revolutionary, utopian moment that is ambiguously both destructive and creative; it is not surprising that she lists Bakhtin in the bibliography of Le Texte du roman.[9]

Since intertextuality has taken on so many radically different meanings (Genette, attempting in Palimpsestes a typology of intertextuality and related notions, suggests that "il serait temps qu'un Commissaire de la République des Lettres nous imposât une terminologie cohérente"[10]), I have chosen to avoid it in my reading of "Les Funérailles," using instead a variety of words (bricolage, dialogue, carnivalization) that suggest the heterogeneity of my approach, and thus the experimental nature of my reading of the text. Rather than forcing Flaubert's texts to conform to a theory formed prior to my reading, I have allowed my theoretical assumptions to be restructured continually by the process of reading.

Following Bakhtin and Kristeva, I shall read "Les Funérailles" as the site of a struggle between various systems. We have already seen such a struggle taking place in "Smarh," where various dramatized voices fought over the

meanings to be invested in images, and ultimately over the value of life itself. But the struggle for dominance between two systems need not be dramatized as a struggle between clearly separated voices, nor need the outcome be the annihilation of one code. According to Bakhtin, "dialogic relations are [. . .] possible between language styles, social dialects, and so forth, insofar as they are perceived as semantic positions, as language world views of a sort" (Dostoevsky, 184). Codes can interact through various fusions and contaminations: through parody, for example, or imitation, thereby becoming "double-voiced" (Dostoevsky, 192). In fact, innovative thought may require such double-voicedness: "When there is no adequate form for the unmediated expression of the author's thoughts, he must resort to refracting them in someone else's discourse" (Dostoevsky, 192). On the other hand, the voices in the text might react only implicitly to each other, through "reservations, concessions" (Dostoevsky, 196), or other anticipations or invitations of response.

Bakhtin sees systems as always belonging to somebody: embedded in one's experience and projects, representing a position in what he sometimes calls the "great dialogue" (Dostoevsky, 165). For him, the great achievement of Dostoevsky as a novelist was the representation of a plurality of voices which cannot be given a "finalizing definition" (Dostoevsky, 163): "the ultimate position of the author [. . .] does not permit any

single point of view to be absolutized [. . .] The author [. . .] leaves the dialogue open and puts no finalizing period at the end [. . .] The carnival sense of the world [. . .] is, in fact, hostile to any sort of conclusive conclusion (Dostoevsky, 165, emphasis in original). The deepest meaning of the unfinalizability of the work of art is that "nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is in the future and will always be in the future" (Dostoevsky, 166, emphasis in original).[11]

For Bakhtin, then, Dostoevsky represents the best example of what he calls the "polyphonic novel" (Dostoevsky, 5 ff.); Bakhtin claims that Flaubert, on the other hand, is not polyphonic:

> A novel such as Bouvard et Pécuchet, for example, unites material of the most heterogeneous content, but this heterogeneity does not function in the structure of the novel itself and cannot so function in any well-defined way -- because it is subordinated to the unity of a personal style and tone permeating it through and through, the unity of a single world and a single consciousness (Dostoevsky, 15).

The claim that style destroys polyphony is correct only if the style indeed irons out all individual differences in voices; but Flaubert's mature style is born of a struggle between diverse voices: its apparent calm reflects only a precarious and shifting equilibrium of various points of view; indeed sometimes, of a multiplicity of various identifiable sources. Even in juvenilia like "Smarh," as

has been shown above, these various points of view interact dialogically at the level of style itself, which is to say, on the level of the word as image.[12]

Voices merge and interact in complex ways in "Docteur Mathurin," and the voices are more numerous than in "Smarh." The pre-texts have diversified as well: there are references, for instance, to nymphs and to Horace: "Oh! jadis les nymphes [...]" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:221); "la bibliothèque commune se composait d'Horace, de Rabelais" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:222). Neoclassicism as it was filtered through the official culture of the public schools was certainly familiar to Flaubert;[13] he apparently admired Horace.[14] And, indeed, Sartre, in L'Idiot de la famille, cites Neoclassicism (especially the rationalism of the eighteenth-century Encyclopedists) as the main influence other than Romanticism on the writers of Flaubert's generation. Sartre sees the Encyclopedists as the origin of the negative analytical strain in writers like Flaubert, Baudelaire, and Mallarmé; he sees the Romantics as the origin both of their sense of the organic unity of the world and of their belief in failure as the proof of success. Unable to choose between these two influences:

> les post-romantiques [...] juger[ont] Boileau par Hugo et Hugo par Boileau sans autre résultat qu'une vacillante incertitude qui donne à l'oeuvre future la mission d'être romantique par négation des classiques et classique par reprise et enveloppement du romantisme et de ses oeuvres au nom des règles et du goût (emphasis in original).[15]

But the voices of "Docteur Mathurin" are too complex to be

reduced to two historical tendencies. For instance, Nature imagery in "Docteur Mathurin" is sometimes associated with nymphs (Classical? Neoclassical?), sometimes with drunkenness (Rabelais? Anacreon?), sometimes with pantheistic fusion (Rousseau? Chateaubriand?), sometimes with emptiness and silence (?). The number of points of view, the number of centers of evaluating consciousness, does not neatly line up with the number of apparent "sources": it is as if in absorbing cultural influences, the text has already begun permuting and combining them. Indeed, any text, even one composed with open books and a scholarly apparatus, must combine its influences into a structure of interacting voices that are permuted and combined, sometimes in fresh and startling ways. Every text must create its own prehistory. In any event, Sartre's account, by de-emphasizing eighteenth-century writers who were not Encyclopedists, and ignoring the fact that some Encyclopedists such as Rousseau were Pre-Romantic, is "clearly incomplete, one-sided, and misleading," according even to Hazel Barnes, who herself minimizes Rousseau's historical importance.[16]

Indeed, one need not depend on a generalized literary history that groups writers together in great historical blocs, as if the objective external situation could determine what happens in the text. If one wishes to seek sources for Flaubert's literary project, one may examine any of the several lists of writers he admired and

wished to emulate that can be found in the juvenilia and the correspondence. For example, in "Smarh," the narrator dreams of writing:

> la plus belle page qu'ou ait faite, mais je vous avertis d'avance qu'elle sera superbe, monstrueuse, épouvantablement impudique [...]; ce sera une page qui passera en prodigalité la poésie de M. Delille, en intérêt les tragédies de M. Delavigne, en exubérance le style de J. Janin, et en fioritures celles de P. de Kock; une page, enfin, qui [...] mettrait les murs en chaleur eux-mêmes [...] et forcerait hommes et femmes à s'accoupler dans la rue ("Smarh," 211).

But in what sense are these authors "influences"? Although Flaubert owned at his death a seven-volume set of works by Delavigne, for instance,[17] he never seems to have had a very good opinion of him, calling him at one point "un Louis-Philippe en littérature" (à Louise Colet, [29 mai 1852]; Corr. II:96); at another, saying of himself that he was "la dernière ganache romantique [...] qui a insulté personnellement Casimir Delavigne (action d'éclat!)" (à M. Léon Hennique, [2-3 février 1880]; Conard viii:375). Yet his contempt for Delavigne did not keep him from parodically quoting Delavigne's poetry in a letter to George Sand: "Si votre rhume s'obstinait (voir l'Épitre de Casimir Delavigne à Lamartine) et que votre brulante haleine/ Par secousse en sifflant s'exhalât avec peine soyez [sans] crainte, on pourrait humecter vos poumons irrités/ Des sirops onctueux par Chalard inventés" (à George Sand, [24 août 1866]; Corr. III:521, emphasis in original).

As for Delille, Flaubert feared becoming like him

and used him as an insult when he disapproved of something a friend had written, and yet on at least one occasion quoted his style mockingly: "Où suis-je? Où vais-je? Comme dirait un poète tragique de l'école de Delille" (à Louise Colet, [14-15 août 1846]; Corr. I:301); critiquing a poem of Louise Colet's: "C'est du Delille et du pire!" (à Louise Colet, [11 mars 1853]; Corr. II:2644); while writing Salammbô: "Quel chien de sujet! je passe alternativement de l'emphase la plus extravagante à la platitude la plus académique. Cela sent tour à tour le Pétrus Borel et le Jacques Delille" (à Ernest Feydeau, [fin novembre 1857]; Corr. II:782). Thus Flaubert's own voice may be invaded by the voice of a writer he detests, as if he were possessed by a demon he must struggle to exorcise.

While writing Madame Bovary, Flaubert was constantly afraid of becoming Paul de Kock: "J'ai peur de tomber dans le Paul de Kock ou de faire du Balzac chateaubrianisé" (à Louise Colet, [17 octobre 1853]; Corr. II:453); "ce que j'écris présentement risque d'être du Paul de Kock si je n'y mets une forme profondément littéraire" (à Louise Colet, [13 septembre 1852]; Corr. II:156). He likewise fears after the publication of Louise Colet's Lui, a roman à clef which included Flaubert as one of its characters, that he will be taken as Paul de Kock: "on a sur moi une opinion toute faite [...] que je n'ai aucune espéce de sentiment, que je suis un farceur, un coureur de filles (une sorte de Paul de Kock romantique), quelque chose entre le bohème et le

pédant" (à Amélie Bosquet, [novembre 1859]; Corr. III:60, emphasis in original). Yet Paul de Kock can move him: having read Paul de Kock with his niece, he was "plongé dans une atroce mélancolie" (à Mme Roger des Genettes, [18 août 1872]; Conard vi:403). The voice of a despised writer may not only possess Flaubert, it may also threaten to cover him up in the eyes of the public, or even (horror!) to seduce him into a bête response.

As for Janin, Flaubert in 1839 was outraged that Janin attacked the Marquis de Sade: "J'ai lu sur [le Marquis] un article biographique de J. Janin qui m'a révolté sur le compte de Janin bien entendu, car il déclamait pour la morale, pour la philanthropie, pour les vierges dépucelées" (à Ernest Chevalier, 15 juillet 1839; Corr. I:48). Yet it is uncertain whether or not he liked Janin's other efforts, such as L'âne mort et la femme guillotinée, which is every bit as bloody and melodramatic as it sounds, and which is so exaggerated that Janin in his preface calls it "une parodie sérieuse, une parodie malgré moi."[18] Consider Flaubert's description of Hot-Corn, an American temperance work, with its elusively ironic reference to Janin's grand moments: "Sais-tu quelle est l'idée du livre? l'établissement sur une plus grande échelle des sociétés de tempérence, l'extirpation de l'ivrognerie, le bannissement du gin, le tout en style lyrique à la Jules Janin dans ses grands moments, et avec des anecdotes! [...] J'en étais malade de dégoût" (à Louis Bouilhet, [17 août 1854]; Corr.

II:568). In any event, Flaubert eventually became Janin's friend,[19] although he considered him bête: he consoles Bouilhet for having been criticized by "un tel monsieur, dont les âneries rempliraient un volume" (à Louis Bouilhet, [21 septembre 1856]; Corr. II:633). Nonetheless he tells de Maupassant that Janin should be included in any history of criticism (à Guy de Maupassant, [octobre 1876]; Conard vii:355).

Flaubert's relationship to his "sources" is not simply one of imitation: he is tempted by them, he steers clear of them, he admires them, he is ashamed of them, he wallows in their bad taste, he insults them, he calls them bête, he befriends them. If he had written a page combining these four authors (and there may be one somewhere in a draft of Salammbô) his imitation would undoubtedly have been full of parodies, calumnies, false compliments, exaggerations, mock-serious declamations, and broad attempts to épater les bourgeois. He probably would have orchestrated the interaction of a number of voices that he found both horrifying and fascinating, as if the Garçon were "refracting his thoughts" in a carnivalesque bricolage.

Thus, when the narrator of the Première Éducation sentimentale of 1845 lists Jules's models during his literary apprenticeship, there is no reason to believe that every emulation is to be taken seriously -- by Jules, by the narrator, or by Flaubert:

> Aussi passait-il d'une école à une autre, d'un

> sonnet à un dithyrambe, du dessin sec de Montesquieu, [...] au trait saillant et ferme de Voltaire, [...] de la plénitude de Jean-Jacques aux undulations de Chateaubriand, des cris de l'école moderne aux dignes alllures de Louis XIV, des naïvetés libertines de Brantôme aux apretés théologiques de d'Aubigné, du demi-sourire de Montaigne au rire éclatant de Rabelais.
>
> Il eût souhaité reproduire quelque chose de la sève de la Renaissance, avec le parfum antique que l'on trouve au fond de son goût nouveau, dans la prose limpide et sonore du XVII^{e} siècle, y joindre la netteté analytique du XVIII^{e}, sa profondeur psychologique et sa méthode, sans se priver cependant des acquisitions de l'art moderne et tout en conservant, bien entendu, la poésie de son époque, qu'il sentait d'une autre manière et qu'il élargissait suivant ses besoins [...] Comment [...] enfermer sous la même forme, toutes ces différences essentielles [...]? (<u>Éducation sentimentale, version de 1845</u>, 1:354-355).

The fact that these emulations are multifarious, that they pull and stretch in opposite directions, that they are perhaps contradictory, is no reason to dismiss them as impossible in principle, as does Sartre:

> Dans ce texte, Gustave se borne à nous offrir un pot-pourri de ses préférences: Homère, Rabelais, Molière, Voltaire et Rousseau, Byron; il aimerait que son écriture fût un plat complexe qui réunît tous ces éléments [...] C'est que le style <u>des autres</u> le tourmente, quel qu'il soit: fasciné, envieux, il porte en lui la tentation hystérique d'<u>imiter</u> chacun des écrivains qu'il admire; ce qui le sauve, c'est leur nombre et la différence de leurs projets. Alors il rêve de les condenser tous et que sa phrase soit un cocktail. Mais comment relever Molière d'un zest de Byron? (Sartre, II:1973, emphasis in original).

I will argue that this kind of mixture is <u>precisely</u> what Flaubert is trying to do in "Docteur Mathurin," as well as in the mature works. This is not to say that Molière plus Byron equals Flaubert; although a case could be made that Flaubert can be precisely defined as the addition of

Romantic agony to a comedy of types. As I have stated above, I believe that Flaubert's mature project is more clearly described as a Rabelaisian universal satire played out in the mode of a carnivalesque bricolage.

Thus my task in reading "Docteur Mathurin" will be to identify the voices in the text and their apparent provenance, which will often be multiple and indeterminate. For the voices in the text represent the tendencies struggling within the author as he writes; it is not necessary that each of these be associated with an identifiable source, as in the writing of Salammbô, L'Education sentimentale, or Bouvard et Pécuchet.[20] It is more likely that various voices from Flaubert's readings, which "résonnent dans son âme" ("Rabelais," 1:181), enter here in essence, as a set of elements implying codes, and that Flaubert playfully juggles their permutations as he mockingly or seriously tries out their values.

There are two principal voices in "Docteur Mathurin": that of the narrator and that of Mathurin himself.[21] Free indirect style and carnivalesque parody create in both voices an indeterminate decentered space of playful interaction that, like Mathurin's tomb, "rappel[le] des joies, et montr[e] un vide" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:227).

The title, "Les Funérailles du docteur Mathurin," begins the text with a celebration of death that is the commemoration of a life, a solemn fixing of a dead consciousness under a tombstone so that it can be free

firmly in memory. Here, however, the funeral is a farce and a mockery: memory is dismembered and ridiculed so that in the unblocked flow of joyful language itself a fertile chaotic nothingness can be revealed.

The funeral is of a doctor named Mathurin. The historical Robert Maturin[22] was an English writer of Gothic romances, whose Melmoth the Wanderer was published in 1820 and appeared in French the following year, becoming quite popular in French Romantic circles;[23] Balzac wrote a continuation, "Melmoth réconcilié," which appeared in 1835.[24] Baudelaire analyzed at some length the laughter of Melmoth in "De l'essence du rire" of 1855:

> [Les héros de] l'école romantique [...] sont presque tous des petits-fils légitimes ou illégitimes du célèbre voyageur Melmoth, la grande création satanique du révérend Maturin [...] il rit, se comparant sans cesse aux chenilles humaines, lui si fort, si intelligent [...] Et ce rire est l'explosion perpetuelle de sa colère et de sa souffrance [...] Sa nature [...] est infiniment grande relativement à l'homme, infiniment vile et basse relativement au Vrai et au Juste absolus [...] C'est pourquoi ce rire glace et tord les entrailles [...] [25]

This is Byronic sardonic laughter; Balzac says that the laughter of Melmoth "tordait les entrailles et [...] travaillait la cervelle comme si quelque chirurgien le trépanait avec un fer brûlant" (289). Laughter; surgery. In Maturin's novel Melmoth, having seen a young girl and her lover struck dead by lightning, "burst into a laugh so loud, wild, and protracted, that the peasants, starting with as much horror at the sound as at that of the storm, hurried

away, bearing the corse [sic] with them."[26] Laughter; storms; horror; corpses; (class) superiority. Deaths abound in Melmoth the Wanderer: a descendent of Melmoth dies drinking (12); an old monk dies laughing: "There is something very horrible in the laugh of a dying man. Hovering on the verge of both worlds, he seems to give the lie to both, and proclaim the enjoyments of one, and the hopes of another, alike an imposture" (87). Laughter; drinking; death; despair; emptiness.

Melmoth's superiority to the human is revealed in "Melmoth réconcilié" through his ability to read thoughts: he has "un regard de feu qui vomissait des courants éléctriques, espèces de pointes métalliques par lesquelles Castanier se sentait pénétré, traversé de part en part, et cloué" (288). When the character Castanier receives for himself the powers of Melmoth, "sa penseé embrassa le monde, il en vit les choses comme s'il eût été placé à une hauteur prodigieuse [... Il] avait le pouvoir de lire dans les âmes" (295): penetrating vision which sees the world as if from a great height.

In Melmoth the Wanderer, the curse that Melmoth lays on his victims is that they will remember his eyes (Mathurin's narrator quotes Southey: "'only the eyes had life, -- they gleamed with demon light'"[13]); "'the glance of these eyes shall be reflected from every object, animate or inanimate, till you behold them again'" (34). Mario Praz traces the origin of Melmoth, who has "something of Goethe's

Mephistopheles, something of the Byronic hero, something of the Wandering Jew, something of the vampire" (118), ultimately to Milton's Satan (53-57); a more immediate ancestor is Radcliffe's monk Schedoni in The Italian: "his eyes were so piercing that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts."[27]

Now the purpose of all of this is not to trace the specific origin of the figure of Dr. Mathurin in Flaubert's tale;[28] nor is it to discover the true meaning of his laughter; nor to understand the true significance of Dr. Mathurin's penetrating eye ("quand il [...] vous regardait [...] en souriant, vous sentiez qu'une sonde magnétique entrait dans votre âme" ["Docteur Mathurin," 1:221]). There is no evidence in the correspondence that Flaubert read Melmoth, or "Melmoth," or that he was even familiar with them; "De l'essence du rire," for example, was not written until sixteen years after "Docteur Mathurin." However, the Romantic nexus of laughter/superiority/penetrating gaze/ death/nothingness did exist in the culture that surrounded the text; which is not to say that this nexus determined the portions of the text that reflect it, and certainly not that the meaning of those portions can be determined by reference to this nexus. What is really important is the way in which the text absorbs and transforms the clichés which precede it.[29]

Flaubert's correspondence refers to a penetrating

gaze: his. "Je dissèque sans cesse, cela m'amuse et quand enfin j'ai découvert la corruption dans quelque chose qu'on croit pur, et la gangréne aux beaux endroits, je lève la tête et je ris" (à Ernest Chevalier, 26 décembre 1838; Corr. I:35). For Flaubert, this penetrating gaze is similar, perhaps, to what he will call "ce coup d'oeil médical de la vie, cette vue du vrai enfin, qui est le seul moyen d'arriver à de grands effets d'émotion" (à Louise Colet, [24 avril 1852]; Corr. II:78); it is associated with "l'art [...] scientifique," "un style qui vous entrerait dans l'idée comme un coup de stylet," "la griffe de lion," and literature which "vous prend aux entrailles" (same letter; 76, 79, 78, 77-78). Already by 1837 he had noted that "la plus belle femme n'est guère belle sur la table d'un amphithéâtre, avec les boyaux sur le nez, une jambe écorchée et une moitié de cigare éteinte qui repose sur son pied," (à Ernest Chevalier, 24 [juin] 1837; Corr. I:24): he will later write to Louise Colet: "Je n'ai jamais vu un enfant sans penser qu'il deviendrait vieillard ni un berceau sans penser à une tombe. La contemplation d'une belle femme nue me fait rêver à son squelette" (à Louise Colet, [6 ou 7 août 1864]; Corr. I:275). Flaubert had ample opportunities to see dissected corpses in his father's hospital;[30] these images are undoubtedly based on early memories.

This leads us to a curious notion: that Dr. Mathurin is a representation of Flaubert as much as is the narrator. In a sense, it is not surprising that all voices in a text

have something of the author in them: the multiplication of voices represents the fragmentation of the author through "refract[ion] in somebody else's discourse," in part because there is "no adequate form for [their] unmediated expression" (Bakhtin, Dostoevsky, 192). Critics, however, have repeatedly asserted that characters with a penetrating gaze in Flaubert's work, like Dr. Larivière in Madame Bovary, whose "regard, plus tranchant que ses bistouris, vous descendait droit dans l'âme et désarticulait tout mensonge à travers les allégations et les pudeurs" (Madame Bovary, 1:682), merely represent Flaubert's father: "Sous les traits du Dr. Larivière, Flaubert a portraituré son père" (Dumesnil, 139); "le docteur Larivière, figure de son père";[31] "the great Dr. Larivière, modeled on Dr. Flaubert."[32] Mason goes so far as to assert that "le beau portrait du Dr. Larivière de Madame Bovary dont l'original fut le père de Flaubert est très reconnaissable dans celui du Dr. Mathurin" (Mason, 41). None of these authors adduces any basis for his or her claim; the ultimate source is probably the "Souvenirs intimes" of Caroline Commanville, Flaubert's niece, that were published as a preface to the Conard edition of the correspondence: "Mon grand-père, dont les traits ont été esquissés dans Madame Bovary, sous ceux du docteur Larivière appelé en consultation au lit d'Emma mourante [...]"[33] But Caroline was born after Dr. Flaubert's death (Bart, Flaubert, 133); she had no direct experience of her grandfather. Thus when Sartre goes so far

as to assert that "pour Gustave, [son père] est demeuré le 'démon' dont le regard chirurgical perce les mensonges les plus secrets" (Sartre, 2:1829), he is on shaky ground: he seems to be using details of literary texts to explain the life of the author who produced them in a sort of circular logic the truth of whose claims can never be tested. Even if Flaubert told Caroline that Dr. Larivière was based on his father, it is a great leap to assume that Dr. Flaubert was the sole source of the image of penetrating vision in Flaubert's work.

What is certain is that the scientific/surgical/ medical gaze is present in various Flaubertian texts: his correspondence, his novels, his oeuvres de jeunesse; but also his life, his memory, his readings, maybe even his experience of his father. But the operation of this image in any of these texts is not necessarily the same as its operation in any other; it makes no difference whatsoever whether or not the "origin" of the image is Flaubert's personal experience or his immersion in cultural history. Indeed, how is it possible to distinguish clearly between the two? Voices in Flaubert's texts are amalgams of other texts articulated in the text which is himself.

"Se sentant [...]": the text begins centered on the experience of itself, and in process. But what is itself? "[...] vieux [...]": already outmoded, feeling in itself only the weight of history: "[...] Mathurin [...]" destroyer, doctor, penetrator "[...] voulut [...]" with the

resolute force of his will, decided "[...] mourir, pensant [...]" to die while thinking, death as the result of thought in process "[...] bien [...]" (an evaluation, an intensifier): the result of thinking correctly, of thinking indeed "[...] que la grappe trop mûre n'a plus de saveur": a metaphor based on drinking, for the thought of Mathurin is drunken speech. "[...] trop mûre n'a plus [...]": a life, like wine, like a discourse, can outlast its best moments and no longer produce "saveur," pleasure in the mouth of the wine-taster who takes it in, swirls it around, and spits it out. Discourse, life, wine: all live according to this model: a rise in perfection, an epitome, a consciously chosen death. What is it like for a discourse to live that chosen death in drunkenness? "Mais pourquoi, et comment cela?" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:220).

The text, being caused by the weight of history, turns first back against itself, and in the parody of a normal fiction, gives us a description of Mathurin: his appearance, his character, his motivation. Mathurin's physical appearance displays signs of old age: "cheveux blancs [...] dos voûté [...] nez rouge [...]" (and, in this last case, of drunkenness) which are parodically read as beauty: "en somme, c'était une belle tête de vieillard." Signs here can be read according to the narrator's whim. Mathurin's "pur et limpide" eye is merely noted: its significance as penetrator will be detailed in a few paragraphs. His teeth "blanches et fines, sous de petites

lèvres minces et bien ciselées" are rather arbitrarily read by the narrator as representing "une vigueur gastronomique," which he claims is "rare à cet âge ["70 ans, environ," states the narrator who, unlike Mathurin, is apparently not able to penetrate souls, and so must content himself with appearances]"; at this age, according to the narrator, it is more usual to "dire des prières et à avoir peur qu'à bien vivre." Living well, eating and seeing: limpid eyes, fine teeth, delicate lips: clarity and delicacy allied with devouring and destroying: already the narrator's version of Mathurin is no longer only Romantic or even Rabelaisian: something almost classical has entered in.

"Le vrai motif de sa résolution" is the subject of the next paragraph, but the narrator here gives several: first, that "il était malade"; second that "tôt ou tard il fallait sortir de là-bas." Certainly the second is true whether or not one is sick; which is the cause, then, illness or the fact of eventual death? Is the move from sickness as an accident of history to the generalized truth of eventual death parodic, or serious? We could perhaps answer this question if we knew the position(s) from which the statements were made. But from what point of view is the world "là-bas"? From the point of view of the narrator, looking down on Mathurin? Of Mathurin, already rising above the world? Or merely from the cynical perspective that Earth is already hell? Although Bruneau admits the tale's "remarquable unité" (Débuts, 187), the elusive reasoning of

this text and its already developed free indirect style produce an undecidability that Culler calls meta-irony: "one's sense of an elaborate artifact whose meaning cannot be pinned down,"[34] which is rather like what Barthes praises as Flaubert's "ironie frappée d'incertitude" because it "n'arrête pas le jeu des codes" which "opère un malaise salutaire de l'écriture."[35] The logical slippage here rapidly multiplies the text's duplicity: for what had only a moment before been will ("voulut") becomes mere preference in the face of the inevitable ("il aima mieux"): his choices are to "prévenir la mort," to anticipate death, or, by a happy misreading, to prevent it; or to "se sentir arraché par elle": to feel in his own being a tearing away by death. The meaning of preventing the wound of alienation by embracing the shifting ambiguities of dead language will become clearer by the end of the tale; for now, Mathurin is fixed by the already-completed fact of his own experience: "Ayant connu sa position": will has become clear-eyed but passive acceptance. The result is a flurry of negatives; since history has already happened, the only possibility left is to reject everything. Mathurin does not feel "ni étonné ni effrayé [...]"; he does not express his feelings: "il ne pleura pas, il ne cria pas"; he does not make verbal gestures: "il ne fit ni humbles prières ni exclamations ampoulés." The text quickly strips Mathurin of attributes: "il ne se montra ni stoïcien, ni catholique, ni psychologue, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'eut ni orgueil, ni crédulité, ni bêtise

[...]" It is possible to map each member of the first list into all three members of the second list ("ni stoïcien, [...] c'est-à-dire qu'il n'eut ni orgueil, ni crédulité, ni bêtise," etc.); but even a more limited reading, that links the lists in parallel, reveals some odd incoherencies: "ni stoïcien [...] ni orgueil." Self-control is mere pride; Mathurin has neither. Yet although pride is a Catholic sin, he is "ni [...] catholique," which means he has no "crédulité." This, however, does not imply that he is an unreserved partisan of the Enlightenment; for although the text will later talk about his vision that can penetrate souls, here he is "ni psychologue, c'est-à-dire qu'il n'eut [...] ni bêtise": science is linked with stupidity. Not all of these negations can be taken with complete seriousness: it is as if the text, carried along by its own momentum, were mocking both itself and the reader, while, at the same time, sometimes speaking the truth: the fact that Mathurin is skeptical, for instance. The playful meta-ironic discrepancies of the list keep the reader off-balance so that she is not sure whether <u>any</u> of it is to be taken seriously: whether Mathurin, who, in a sense, <u>is</u> a psychologist, since he reads souls, is therefore really "bête"; whether psychologists are stupid merely because of a certain prideful credulity regarding their own "insights"; whether the list is meant to imply that Mathurin is rejecting <u>all</u> philosophies, religions, and sciences; or whether "ni stoïcien," for example, is to be taken as

seriously implying its opposite: that Mathurin is an Epicurean.[36] All this ambiguity is compounded by the statement that Mathurin merely abjures the appearance of any of these things: "il ne se montra [...]"

The result of this complex denial is that Mathurin, at the moment of his death, is "grand," even heroic: "son héroisme surpassa" a long list of heroes of the ancient and modern worlds, connected with at least one bête bourgeois irrelevance: "M. de Talleyrand mourant dans sa robe de chambre verte," and ending with a thief, traitor, spy, and would-be assassin of Louis-Philippe, who is presented as the most heroic of all (except Mathurin): "son héroisme surpassa [...] même celui de Fieschi,[37] qui disait des pointes encore qu'on lui coupa le cou." Pronouncing clever, humorous sayings in the face of death is the most heroic act of all; this will be Mathurin's response. That a form like the pointe, which reached its highest development in the Neoclassical restraint of La Rochefoucauld, could be upheld as supreme in a list Rabelaisian in its profusion is a tension that will be present throughout the text.

Next, all convictions and devotions are parodically assimilated to stage costumes after they have been debased by epithets that level them: "tous ceux, enfin, qui moururent pour une conviction quelconque, par un dévouement quel qu'il soit, et ceux qui se fardèrent à la dernière heure encore pour être plus beaux, se drapant dans leur linceau comme un manteau de théâtre" (emphasis added).

Flaubert will expand this carnivalesque image of belief as costume in L'Éducation sentimentale of 1869: it is strange that already in 1839 he envisions the structure that will prove the downfall of the Romantic revolution of 1848. The list ends with a series of short phrases consisting of a noun and an epithet; some of these epithets are frankly negative: "républicains stupides [...] héroes de bagne"; in context the positive epithets are also contaminated: "capitaines sublimes," as are even the neutral ones: "rois détrônés," so that all adjectives, and by extension all language, are potentially as suspect as makeup or theatrical costumes. But are Fieschi's pointes other than theatrical poses? And for that matter, what of Mathurin's drunken speech? Does consciously choosing bêtise innoculate one from being infected by it? When Flaubert plays the Garçon, is he "bête" and therefore not bête? The text now states, perhaps to answer the charge that Mathurin's choice of death is a pose, that he did not die "ni par conviction, ni par orgueil, ni pour jouer un rôle, ni par religion, ni par patriotisme," not because of anything to do with a text or a performance, but "d'une pleurisie [...] et d'une indigestion": of natural causes.

This version of the situation, that Mathurin's death is caused, rather than willed, casts him as passive: in order to avoid the charge of posing, he submits. In its avoidance of bêtise, the text has teetered on the brink of rejecting all culture; but all texts are a part of culture.

Is it possible for words to be woven into a text without the weight of history, without striking poses, without cliché?

The text, as if afraid to assert anything in the uncertain space it has opened up, spends more time running through a list of negations, pausing only to reduce things to the level of food and drink, à la Rabelais: "il savait manger [...] il fut enterré dans un baril." Yet swamped in this sea of negation is one thing that must give us pause: not that the narrator caps a list of ridiculous last words with Christ's ("'Mon père, pourquoi m'avez-vous délaissé?'"); this sort of move is to be expected. What is surprising about this list is Cato's "'Vertu, tu n'es qu'un nom.'" But the text is aware of the emptiness of language. What about this is bête? Such thoughts can make one afraid to speak.[38]

Gradually, in the development of the narrator's text, a voice has come into being which is "pleine de railleries mordantes et cruelles," in short a "satire [...] générale, universelle" ("Rabelais," 1:183), which is to say, a Rabelaisian voice. In this text the Rabelaisian voice claims the right to judge Romanticism, as it has already judged the official culture of philosophy, religion, history and politics. Romantic suicide is condemned in a Rabelaisian list, first of all because it is such a cliché that it has engendered a number of types, which can be listed ("Un poète romantique aurait [...] un autre se serait [...]"), but also because it "gâte [...] le palais," and

because poison is "une détestable liqueur qui [...] fait vomir," which is to say, a "bêtise." This Rabelaisian view of Romantic posturing gives the insight that republican virtue is similar to it: the list of Romantic suicides ends: "un républicain aurait tenté d'assassiner le roi, l'aurait manqué, et se serait fait couper la tête" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:220-221). All of this clearing away allows space for an affirmation, albeit disguised as a negation: "la philosophie lui défendait de se faire souffrir" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:221). But perhaps this is not an affirmation: perhaps it does not mean that philosophy teaches pleasure, but merely the avoidance of suffering. If so, this is not a Rabelaisian thought, although Rabelais has cleared a space for it. Yet despite the fact that the text emphasizes the thought by placing it at the end of a paragraph, it quickly (for now) moves away from it.

So far, the text's re-evaluation of socially accepted values has been primarily negative, Rabelaisian, ground-clearing. But the nineteenth-century Rabelais must also "entre[voir] un monde [...] meilleur" ("Rabelais," 1:183). The text now tentatively moves toward affirmation as it discusses Mathurin's status as a doctor. But first (yet another delay!) the narrator describes all the other chapters that he will eventually write about the doctor's life, which other than "voyages," seems to have consisted entirely of texts: "tous les livres qu'il a faits [...]" which, the narrator says, "j'analyserai." This serious,

analytic activity is brought down to earth by focusing on its materiality: "un volume de notes sur ses commentaires et une appendice de papier blanc et de points d'exclamation à ses ouvrages de science"; for apparently science is not valued negatively at this point in the text, although psychology was a moment before. But Rabelaisian wordplay suddenly Carnivalizes it: "C'était un savant des plus savants en toutes les sciences possibles." This last word echoes the refrain of Candide, perhaps bringing Rabelais a little closer to Voltaire. Against "orgueil," "modestie" is now presented as a positive value: "Sa modestie surpassait encore toutes ses connaissances, on ne croyait même pas qu'il sût lire; il faisait des fautes de français, il est vrai, mais il savait l'hébreu et bien d'autres choses." Is Mathurin's incompetence to read merely apparent, and if so is it consciously feigned? Are his errors in French bêtises, or consciously chosen to conceal his power? Is conscious modesty a pompous costume? In any event, his real knowledge is not of texts, which he treats cavalierly: "Il connaissait la vie surtout."

The next portion of the text explores the notion of the devilish, penetrating gaze, merging it with scientific observation and (surprisingly) Pastoral, as the narrator attempts to construct a bricolage of Romantic, Neoclassic, and medical elements in a tumult of Rabelaisian lists. In order to do this, mistakes are made, which is to say that elements inappropriate to a particular discourse are wedded

to it. The disorderly violence this produces is in direct opposition to the goal of its quest, which, as we shall see, is calm. Unsurprisingly enough, the unstable calm this struggle produces will not last even until the end of Mathurin's death-speech.

"Il connaissait la vie surtout, il savait à fond le coeur des hommes": personal experience moves into abstract knowledge that is the penetration of secret spaces; no longer does the text reject psychology. It is impossible to escape "son oeil pénétrant et sagace." Who is it that wants to escape penetration? the reader? the narrator? Already violent sexual fantasies are arising. "Quand il [...] vous regardait de côté en souriant [...]" Indirectly and with (mocking?) humor he looked at... you, which is probably "on," but might be the reader. Is the text's aim the dissection of the reader? "[V]ous sentiez qu'une sonde magnétique entrait dans votre âme et en fouillait tous les recoins."

The text now makes an Oriental reference that is perhaps Romantic, although numerous Enlightenment writers also used Oriental references. "Cette lunette des contes arabes" by means of which "l'oeil perçait les murailles" is a textual remnant of a movement across cultural barriers which itself has circulated between artistic movements, penetrating space and time and now piercing and revealing the secrets of bodies as well as souls. Mathurin's eye <u>seen as</u> an exotic tool (is this not costuming?) "vous dépouillait

de vos vêtements": the rape of the reader (and/or of the cultural "on") is proceeding apace, as s/he becomes the object of satire: "vous dépouillait [...] de vos grimaces, de tout le fard de vertu qu'on met sur ses rides [...]" The Rabelaisian list continues, now openly attacking the connection between persons and their attributes that was implicitly problematized earlier: "il arrachait aux hommes leur présomption, aux femmes leur pudeur [first clothes were ripped off, now even shame!], aux héros leur grandeur, au poète son enflure, aux mains sales leurs gants blancs." The doctor's gaze, after having seen a man make a gesture, take two steps, say "deux mots," can make him "nu, déshabillé, et grelottant au vent." Nudity is here clearly named for the first time; and the clear boundary between genders is blurred: a man here is stripped, for you: "il vous le rendait nu."[39]

Although the victim of the visual rape was at first "vous," then women, then men, "vous" is now clearly enlisted on the side of the penetrating viewer: "Avez-vous quelquefois, dans un spectacle": the image of the theater is once again brought forward, but here it will be the spectators who are dissected, not the actors; and here, after a brief confusion, gender identity will straighten itself out: the victims will be women.

The first move in the dissection is the reduction of objects to a single polysemic word: "éclats." Time is de-individualized ("quelquefois"), and the individuals in the

audience are turned into an undifferentiated mass ("le public") that is reduced to the organic ("palpitant"), then to one gender ("femmes") who are synecdochically reduced to fragments of bodies ("mains"). The initial vision ("spectateur") is broken up into fragments ("mille feux"), then expanded into numerous, tiny events on the surface of an undifferentiated mass ("mains [qui battent ...] sourires [...] diamants qui brillent [...] vêtements blancs"), so that abstractions can also be listed as mere flickers on the bright surface ("richesses [...] joies"), then summarized in a word that means bursts of sound and/or light, but also shattered fragments ("éclats"). This Byronic use of Rabelaisian lists leads to a transvaluation of joy as horror, read first as an imagined reversal of brilliant light: "vous êtes-vous figuré [m.] toute cette lumière changée [f.] en ombre." The polysemic "éclat" then generates this series: "lumière" becomes "ombre," "bruit" becomes "silence," and "vie" becomes not <u>mort</u> but "néant," as if life and existence were alike mere palpitating flickers on a dark background. The missing term reasserts itself ("être") in an erotic image of bound breasts that is briefly sexually ambiguous, but which straightens itself out as soon as persons are fragmented ("êtres décolletés [m.], aux poitrines haletantes [f.]"), then resolves itself in a starkly erotic light/dark contrast ("cheveux noirs [...] sur des peaux blanches"). This image occurred in "Smarh" in Yuk's tale of the savage: it was the means which allowed the

passage from woman to horse to the erotic embrace with the Savage's dying prey. Here it is living human women themselves who are destroyed in imagination: they are reduced to skeletons, whose future is death ("des squelettes qui seront longtemps sous la terre"); in a cliché from Renaissance drama, actors and spectators are collapsed into a circulating reciprocity which sub specie aeternitatis is motionless: "ils [... se sont] réunis [...] dans un spectacle [...] pour s'admirer [...] pour voir une comédie [...] qu'ils jouent eux-mêmes, dont ils sont les acteurs éternels et immobiles." The spectator imaginatively reconstitutes joy as horror, but in a comedy in which light is darkness, life is death, spectators are actors, motion is immobility and, sometimes, men are briefly women. In the light of this dark vision, language becomes silence: "une comédie qui n'a pas de nom."[40]

This Byronic black comedy has not yet discovered the values that will create a new Rabelais. In the context of the playfulness and indeterminacy that has preceded this macabre scene, it is not certain that one should take it entirely seriously; although it may be meant to demoralize a certain sort of reader, another sort of reader might laugh. In any event, the fact that the scene is posed as a question that invites a reader to own or disown it ("Avez-vous [...]?") indicates that it is not to be taken as the text's final word. But by its power, length, and repetition of images and themes from "Smarh," it rather insistently

reminds the reader that Byronism is a part of the text's dismembering vision, and that the new Rabelais cannot merely discard it.

Mathurin's vision is not quite exactly the same as this sardonic Byronism: "Mathurin faisait à peu près de même" (emphasis added). Rather, Mathurin's vision is medical: it penetrates the clothing to the skin, the epidermis to the flesh, and the bone to the marrow, seeing even the skeleton not as a momento mori, but merely as a tissue within which there is another. Nonetheless, this dissection is called exhuming, as Mathurin uncovers death in the midst of life: "il exhumait [...] lambeaux sanglants, pourriture du coeur." Mathurin's medical vision is here reconstituted as moral, because of the culturally inscribed "coeur," so that the opposition "sain"/"gangrène" ("sur des corps sains, vous découvrait une horrible gangrène") is also redolent of moralizing, though as a metaphor it is empty, which is to say that the text is not specific about how the opposition "sain"/"gangrène" is to be read, about how it is to be filled with a specific content. Certain meanings can be supplied in context ("orgueil," for example, might be seen as a "gangrène"); but the theme of health represents a project, an optic for exploration, rather than a pre-determined end. Likewise, the metaphor "sain" promises a healthy core once disease has been pitilessly cut away, but does not specify in advance what that core will be.

This medical vision, in fact, is associated with

happiness, and with greatness: "Cette perspicacité, qui a fait les grandes politiques, les grands moralistes, les grands poètes, n'avait servi qu'à le rendre heureux"; it also puts Mathurin in the context of heroes of both the Neoclassics and the Romantics: "Richelieu, Molière et Shakespeare," who, unlike him, "ne [...] furent pas [heureux]." The goal, then, is to modify unmitigated Byronic negativity with an image of health and happiness. The text now details the values that are to be added to flesh out this vision; they are decidedly not Romantic.

He lives in a world of the senses in which he is passive: "Il avait vécu, poussé mollement par ses sens [...] sans effort," in a world without extremes ("sans malheur ni bonheur [...] sans passion et sans vertu"). A metaphor of drinking is used that is surprisingly Neoclassical in its elevation of repos to a supreme virtue: "Son coeur était une cuve pleine, il l'avait vite fermée, laissant encore de la place pour du vide, pour la paix." Thus the image of a diseased heart here finds its opposite in the image of a heart that has space for emptiness. "Emptiness as health" is a rereading of a Byronic negative metaphor according to a medical metaphor assimilated to Neoclassicism. Language is made empty (hence healthy) here not by stripping adjectives from nouns, conflating opposites or refusing to name, but by peeling away from the human being all social relationships, hence leaving only the biological: "il n'était donc ni poète mi prêtre, il ne

s'était pas marié, il avait le bonheur d'être bâtard, ses amis étaient en petit nombre [...] il n'avait ni maîtresses [...] ni chien." What he has left is (the very Rabelaisian) food and drink connected with health: "sa cave était bien garnie [...] il avait une excellente santé et un palais extrêmement délicat." These values of the lower bodily element subvert negative lists by insinuating themselves unexpectedly: "ni poète ni prêtre [...] pas marié [...] bonheur [...] bâtard [...] peu d'amis [...] cave bien garnie" (emphasis added), but they do this delicately, gradually, without insistence; the calmness of this discourse is in evident contrast to the frenzy at the theater or the rapid parallels of most of the earlier lists ("il arrachait aux hommes leur présumption, aux femmes leur pudeur, aux héros leur grandeur, etc."). In fact, in retrospect, the reader may perhaps be led to wonder whether what was being rejected so violently in the theater was not life itself but the emptiness of vain social pleasures; a bit later the text will confirm that Mathurin lives "dans un oubli complet du monde [...] avec son organisation multiple." Perhaps the excessive Romantic despair of the passage is meant to be rejected along with the vanity of the applauding spectators.

It will be instructive to pause at this point and compare the struggles so far in this text to the similar struggles in "Smarh." The Rabelaisian and Byronic voices in "Smarh" are clearly differentiated (those of Yuk and Satan

respectively), although as I have shown the voice of Yuk is sometimes invaded by Byronic elements. These voices struggle for dominance with Smarh, by, among other things, reading Nature as hostile to Man against Smarh's belief in Nature's fitness for Man; this process includes reinvestment of specific images in which Smarh has invested personal meanings. Here, since the voices are not clearly distinguished, various strands are allowed to interpenetrate and develop themselves freely on a variety of levels, so that experimental modifications and nuances can arise which bring elements of a number of different discourses into new relationships. For example, the operation of stripping away can be performed linguistically (nouns stripped of adjectives) or in an image (skeletons stripped of flesh); the resulting lack of differentiation may occur on the level of culture (distinctions between men and women stripped away so that genders mingle) or on the level of the discourse of fiction ("vous" moved between "on" and the reader, associated first with the stripped object, then with the stripping subject); the meaning of stripping can be read variously as scientific, medical, Romantic, Rabelaisian, or Neoclassical (stripping as exploration, as diagnostic, as anguished, as joyous, as resulting in calm); and negotiations of meaning may be performed on the level of words (the connotations of "vide") or on the level of entire discourses (political action is like Romantic suicide; medicine is erotic). In short, because no voices are given

clearly independent existence, there is greater freedom to explore possible interactions.

The discourse of Yuk, with its freely interpenetrating forms and genres, is close to that of the narrator of "Docteur Mathurin." However, Yuk's discourse invents fictions that demoralize by finding images with particular meanings for particular listeners, thus developing desires that are already present, in order to cause social disorder (motivating the woman to commit adultery, for example). Here, multiple strategies are employed for clearing away social meanings because of the multiplicity of discourses that were active in nineteenth-century France; any given reader may or may not identify with any of the targets of destruction. In this text, demoralizing is merely a possible effect of the principal aim: health; which is to say, fitness to Nature. Comedy is used as a beneficial antidote to a Culture too distant from Nature. This presents its own set of problems.

In "Smarh," Nature was unconsciously eroticized by Smarh, a fact that was used against him by both Yuk and Satan. Smarh's belief in the fitness of Man to Nature, challenged by Satan through reinvestment of images dear to him, ultimately sought realization in a language free of investment, a language transparent and wholly adequate to its object. Here, this clear language is re-envisioned as a marriage of Romantic and/or Rabelaisian negativity coupled to Neoclassical and/or scientific restraint; in short, of a

wedding of "vide," "paix," and "santé." Whether language can in fact embody these values remains to be seen.

CHAPTER 4: NATURE AND CULTURE: THE DEATH OF MATHURIN

"Mais je dois vous parler de sa mort" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:221). At the end of a paragraph devoted to a description of Mathurin's life that in fact consists mostly of negations, the narrator reminds the reader of the announced subject of his tale. And so Mathurin calls his two disciples (here, as previously, his social ties are limited) and gives them two additional reasons for choosing death: that he is tired of being sick and of having been "tout un jour à la diète," another reference to his appetite. Yet despite the author's promises, he engages in another apparent delay, speaking rather of the surrounding countryside; this is in fact not a delay at all, since a major purpose of this text is to discover a way of speaking about Nature. What is first given is a list of details that sketch a landscape, a list without obtrusive grammatical parallels between phrases which parody and undercut one another, but rather a list of moments of beauty which map out space and awaken the senses. Places near and distant are named, in words both common and mellifluous ("tonnelle [...] échalas [...] haie [...] bois"); the senses of sight ("blanc") smell ("embaume") and sound ("chante [...] rire") are invoked; the images are calm, peaceful, and beautiful.

Individual human beings are not portrayed: all that is depicted is their collective actions in Nature ("on commence à courber la vigne") and their traces ("les foins sont enlevés"). Their voices, like the other things portrayed, have become mere objects of sensory contemplation without specific content ("on entend des rires d'enfants dans les bois"). Other than the children, whose presence is merely inferred from the sounds of voices, people are referred to only as "on," so that the observer ("on entend") is fused with the worker in the field ("on commence").

This is not to say that the goal of transparent language has been reached merely because Rabelaisian playfulness and Romantic anguish have been stripped away. From the very beginning of the description ("C'était la saison dorée où les blés sont mûrs") the scene is labeled as a recognizable time of the year, which is to say, something constantly recurring and already seen; and the very epithet used to identify the season ("dorée") is reminiscent of the Golden Age, perhaps even of the golden mean or of the true riches of simple pleasures. Nor is the rest of the paragraph free from clichés like "vigne" or "rossignol," or of <u>bêtises</u> ("les raisins pendent [unsurprisingly enough] en grappes"). All of these details could have been observed in a real French countryside, and their presence here simply named in a disorderly jumble tends to strip them of investment, partly because the text refrains from expanding on their presence in commonplace ways (there is nothing here

on the order of: "the nightingale, sweet singer in the dark of night, beloved of star-crossed lovers and poets..."). But still, why mention a nightingale at all? Why not another bird without such a wealth of association? Or to put it another way, is it possible to say "nightingale" even when a nightingale is really present without uttering a cliché? Is it really possible ever to say anything without evoking the weight of history?[1]

Words related to wine occur three times ("vigne [...] raisin [...] grappes"). This clichéd image, which will become the dominant motif of the work, is here invested with peace, calm, and plenty; this investment will nuance the later appearance of the image in the contexts of Rabelaisian excess and Romantic frenzy. The presence of this motif in this paragraph is integral to the economy of the work; but it is still a motif, and in fact it has already been used as a symbol of life (in the first line) and of experience ("son coeur était une cuve"). The tendency in this work toward a language that is transparent, free of cliché, is opposed by another tendency toward the enrichment of images through their investment with associations in more and more discourses, thus producing instruments that can undercut the presuppositions of discourses by increasing the points of view from which they are seen. "Rossignol" is, perhaps, already such an instrument, being already invested in a number of discourses (Neoclassical, Romantic, Oriental, etc.). Here, however,

the presence of these clichés undercuts the pretension toward transparency. Can any work of art ever produce an image that is not contaminated by significance? Is it ever possible to say anything without producing new clichés? Is transparent language ever possible?[2]

The opening of the next paragraph is so artificial that it must be a conscious self-parody ("Oh! jadis les nymphes [...]"). The iterative imperfect of this sentence ("les nymphes venaient danser [...] la fontaine murmurait [...] les colombes allaient voler"), despite its claims, does not refer to a past: springs, presumably, still murmur and doves still fly; and nymphs never danced. The sentence refers to a past <u>discourse</u>, where symbols of peace ("colombes") coexisted with sources whose onomatopoeic voices ("la fontaine murmurait un <u>roucoulement</u>," emphasis added) echoed them, mingling sound and touch ("un roucoulement frais"), and fusing as if in love ("un roucoulement frais et amoureux") origins, images, language, and senses into a whole whose mutual adequacy sprang from a mutual origin. In fact, remnants of that former time present only in texts can still be seen in daily reality's recurrent beginnings: "Le matin encore, quand le soleil se lève, l'horizon est toujours [...] bleu" and in faint breathings that still smell of erotic investments and the most eternally recurring of all poetic clichés ("un frais parfum, humide des baisers de la nuit et de la rosée des fleurs"). Is it ever possible to <u>see</u> Nature without the

interference of past texts? Can a frank acknowledgement of the clichéd nature of vision save one from the embarrassment of being derivative?

Mathurin is now sleeping before an open window, and the narrator describes the scene from that perspective. The narrator claims no ability to penetrate Mathurin's consciousness: his dreams are "sans doute comme sa vie, calmes et purs" (emphasis added). But the narrator's eye can penetrate Nature: it moves outward, past "La fenêtre [...] la jalousie [...] la muraille [...] la basse-cour" to "les grands noyers"; this penetrating vision, content with the surfaces of things and their names, avoids (it seems to me) all allegorical meanings, all agonies, all historical references, except for one, that, again, of wine ("la treille"):

> La fenêtre ouverte lassait entrer à travers la jalousie des rayons de soleil, la treille, grimpant le long de la muraille grise, nouait ses fruits mûrs aux branches mêlées de la clématite; le coq chantait dans la basse-cour, les faneurs reposaient à l'ombre, sous les grands noyers aux troncs tapissés de mousses.

The effect is that of a cliché surrounded by a frame of uninvested details, so that it becomes nearly uninvested itself. Thus, when the observed scene provokes memory, it is not the cultural memory of mythology: dancing nymphs give way to the homely memory of the "méridienne" as motion is replaced by sleep, the "guirlandes [des] fleurs de prés" of the nymphs becoming "un rond de gazon où ils allaient souvent faire la méridienne, et dont la verdure touffue

n'était seulement tachée que d'iris et de coquelicots," secret stains ("pourriture du coeur") parodically invoked to be recuperated as beauty. And there, in Nature, they (repeatedly) "buvaient," while the "cigale" sang, insects buzzed in the sun, and leaves moved in the hot wind of summer nights. In this Pastoral description, birds have been replaced by insects; lest one think that this was to reduce cliché, note that the insect chosen is a reputedly lazy one from a famous fable.

In all of these Pastoral descriptions, images that repeatedly appeared in nature descriptions in "Smarh" have surreptitiously reappeared: birds, flowing water, rustling leaves. When these occurred in Smarh's first lyrical description of communion with Nature, he was not aware of their erotic content; the erotic content has been clearly named here ("baisers de la nuit"). This Pastoral idyll, then, is a sort of recuperation of Smarh's vision before his demoralization by Satan and Yuk. However, this vision is not pristine, being heavily influenced if not directly inspired by the Neoclassical tradition of lyrical nature description. And although Mathurin's life has been called calm and pure, Rabelaisian themes have not convincingly been integrated with Pastoral ones: images of drinking have merely been <u>invoked</u>, as metonymic fragments of landscape ("vigne," "raisin," "treille"), or as habitual actions in a list that does not add up to a coherent scene ("buvaient [...] dans les rayons de soleil [...] sous le souffle chaud

des nuits d'été": when did this occur?). Could a Rabelaisian orgy by Mathurin and his disciples look idyllic?

"Tout était paix, calme et joie tranquille." This remains to be demonstrated. Rather than describing Mathurin's life, the text contrasts the Pastoral images of Mathurin's surroundings to life in society. There are complex lists relating to economic activities ("les hommes travaillaient [...] machines," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:221-222) but especially political ones ("lois [...] soldats [...] intrigants [...] révolutions," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:221-222) reduced to violence done to the body ("sang," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:222). Mathurin's separation from politics is acknowledged as a willful disregard ("dans un oubli complet du monde, dans un égoïsme divin, ils vivaient, inactifs, inutiles, heureux," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:221). They lived, in short, like aristocrats, or children of the bourgeoisie who neglect their responsibility: "Parlez de devoir, de morale, de dévouement [...]" The fact that they may live idly because there are peasants at work in the fields and agents of the state to keep the peasants from rebelling is not touched on here; the farmworkers have been picturesquely reduced to elements of landscape. The fact is that the text is willing to accept certain social ties while making a great show of rejecting others; this is typical of Flaubert's ambiguous relationship to Culture in the face of Nature.

But let us examine more closely the form of the

present rejection: it is not the wholesale renunciation of the previous lists. For one thing, it is presented as a reply to two distinct readers. The first is imagined as the voice of social responsibility: "Accusez-les d'égoïsme," a charge which has already been mockingly answered by the earlier phrase "égoïsme divin": the text has already accepted an insult that can be leveled at its characters, and revels in it. The second reader is the voice of political rebellion: "Ô hommes, vous qui [...] faites les révolutions [...]" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:222). The motivation of revolutionaries is reduced to the earlier stigmatized pride: "pour faire regarder vos petits fronts"; their frenzied lives are compared to Mathurin's, which has still not been dramatized: "je vous demande [...] si tout cela vaut une vie calme." But all the possible discourses of imagined indignant readers are reduced to noise: "Accusez [...] parlez [...] dites encore une fois [...] rabâchez [...] chantez" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:221-222), as insults ("égoïsme," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:221) become fragmentary clichés ("devoir... morale... dévouement"), then unoriginal discourses ("dites encore une fois ce qu'on doit au pays") and finally meaningless systems ("chantez toujours cette magnifique trouvaille du plan de l'univers"). The "organisation multiple" of society is here linked to language itself, and all ideals and even world-views reduced to empty linguistic performance; all are, ultimately, mere melodious sounds ("chantez"); all disruptions of this

meaningless harmony are "bruit" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:222). The best thing to do is to retreat into silence ("eux, ils buvaient, ils dormaient," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:221), which is true wisdom: "vous n'empêcherez pas qu'il y ait des gens sages et des égoïstes, qui ont plus de bon sens avec leur ignoble vice que vous autres avec vos sublimes vertus" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:221-222). A revolution is not only noisy,[3] but unnecessary: one can find wisdom without even moving outside of one's own bourgeois class, since wisdom is the same as "bon sens" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:221-222). Although the "virtue" of the defenders of order is rejected because of its exaggerated pretension ("sublimes vertus," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:222), the "virtue" of the Revolutionaries is rejected through its position as the culmination of a series that does not support it: "bruit [...] chars de triomphe [...] fers [...] machines [...] charlatanisme [...] vertus." The defenders of order are ridiculous because they exaggerate their virtue; the Revolutionaries are not really virtuous at all. It is clear which side the narrator favors; after all, order supports peace and calm better than Revolution does. Thus becomes clear the essentially reactionary nature of the text's rejection of politics in the name of peaceful domestic comfort: "où l'on ne casse rien que des bouteilles, où il n'y a d'autre fumée que celle d'une pipe, d'autre dégoût que celui d'avoir trop mangé." But who is "on"? Who is it that will break, but only bottles; will feel rage, but will

instead smoke pipes; will feel disgust, but claim only to have eaten too much? Are Mathurin and his disciples really Romantic revolutionaries only playing at loving order? or really lovers of order keeping their revolutionary tendencies within safe bounds?

This uneasy shifting between identification with Revolutionary vandalism and orderly calm leads the text in the next paragraph to reject both alternatives in a clichéd image that calls up the central site of dispute in "Smarh," the sea: "le gouvernail de l'État était disputé entre des pirates et des ineptes, et [...] il se brisait dans la tempête." The defenders of order are here rejected not only because they love order, but because they are incompetent; disorder is attributed not to the revolutionaries, but to a natural disaster both are trying to contain. "Are there no storms where Mathurin lives?" the reader of "Smarh" can hear Satan asking. The text brackets the problem for a moment, though it will return to it, and turns instead to a series of paradoxes: "on assassinait et [...] on vivait [...] on faisait des livres sur la vertu et [...] l'État ne vivait que de vices splendides [...] on donnait des prix de morale et [...] il n'y avait de beau que les grands crimes." Official virtue undercut by secret vice that in fact sustains it: the idea is reminiscent of Sade,[4] who will soon be mentioned by name; the notion of the beauty of crime perhaps originated with him, but had become by 1839 a Romantic cliché. Sade's idea of the inherent

destructiveness of Nature will in fact close Mathurin's speech; but although the idea is implied here, the text contents itself with cutting off Mathurin's life from the ambivalence of Nature as it has cut it off from Culture: the problem of Nature's destructiveness is irrelevant to Mathurin's life: "le soleil pour eux faisait toujours mûrir leurs raisins [there are never clouds?], les arbres avaient tout autant de feuilles vertes [there is no winter?]" This "Nature" is not real; peace, for Mathurin, depends not just on separation of Culture, but on separation from Nature. Memories of Smarh's original image of Nature arise here, as if asserting themselves despite the text's denial: leaves, "la mousse des bois," water. The water is tamed: it has a cultural (and implicitly erotic) function: "ils [...] faisaient rafraîchir leur vin dans l'eau des lacs." But taming Nature with Culture has again led to a cliché, that of Lamartin's lac, whose very existence functions as a reminiscence of the poet. Thus Nature, fit for man, at least within Culture, is trapped in a calm space that denies both Nature and Culture. The multiply blocked and controlled sea will burst forth in a torrent at the end of Mathurin's speech.

The narrator claims that Mathurin lives in isolation of (almost) all forms of social discourse, which it calls "bruit": "une parole rapportée des villes aurait troublé le calme de leurs coeurs." Specifically mentioned as excluded are "ni livres, ni journaux, ni lettres [...] pas un bout de

politique, pas un fragment de controverse, de philosophie ou d'histoire," which are called "hochets," and ironically, "hochets sérieux." Actually, Mathurin's speech is full of political and historical references, and it is deeply philosophical: is discourse possible without response to the currents of one's time? The only texts allowed are Horace, Rabelais, and cookbooks ("toutes les éditions de Brillat-Savarin"): these, then, are the desired origin of this text; Byron has been excluded. The text defies the reader to add to the allowed topics of discussion:

> la nature et le vin, que fallait-il de plus? Indiquez-moi donc quelque chose qui surpasse la beauté d'une belle campagne illuminée soleil et la volupté d'une amphore pleine d'un vin limpide et pétillant? et d'abord, quelle qu'elle soit, la réponse que vous allez faire les aurait fait rire de pitié, je vous en préviens.

All positions other than the allowed ones are ridiculed in advance; but the narrative will be no more able to exclude Romanticism from Mathurin's text than it has from its own.

Mathurin now awakens, and his discourse begins: he asks for wine and glasses, and proposes another delay from his death: "Je suis malade, il n'y a plus de remède [...] mais avant j'ai soif, et très soif..." And this thirst is not metaphysical, although it is blasphemous (Byronic? Rabelaisian?): "Je n'ai aucune soif des secours de la religion ni aucune faim d'hostie." Thus lofty religious thoughts, which one might expect on the occasion of one's death, are brought into contact with the lower bodily element, as if to clear away their pretensions. Mathurin

proposes drinking as a sort of secular funeral, as a wake that he would prefer attending: "buvons donc pour nous dire adieu." Wine here displays signs of the erotic fusion with Nature: "le vin ruissela à flots" (emphasis added); it also displays a sign of Rabelaisian excess: "le vin ruissela à flots pendant vingt heures" (emphasis added). At first everything unfolds in Neoclassical calm, although the narrator indicates that this will not last: "D'abord ce fut une ivresse calme et logique" (emphasis added). For despite the narrator's rejection of history, he compares Mathurin's bathing his heart in wine to Seneca's suicidal bath in his own blood, carnivalized as a blasphemous comparison of the soul to a wine-skin: "son âme s'en alla droit au Seigneur, comme une outre pleine de bonheur et de liqueur." And in the midst of this joyfully chaotic noise of multiple cultural references, the narrator allows blasphemous transgression to open up a space of blissful silence: "un bain d'excellent vin [qui] baigna son coeur dans une béatitude qui n'a pas de nom," (emphasis added). Peace is not the opposite of chaos: one inexorably entails the other.

The narrator now draws a parallel between philosophy and drinking (despite his earlier assertion that philosophy is banned from Mathurin's dwelling): "Quand le soleil se fut baissé, ils avaient déjà bu, à trois, quinze bouteilles de beaune [...] et fait tout un cours de théodicée et de métaphysique." This image of Rabelaisian excess claims the goal of representing drunken thought, and all of Mathurin's

pronouncements must be taken in that spirit; which is to say that this speech flowing like wine must be read as a chaotic outpouring and not as a serious disquisition. The reader must pay attention to the apparently random transitions and contradictions; it is in the drunken slippage from thought to thought that the comic significance of the discourse is revealed.

But first, there is another delay. Mathurin looks at the night, and the narrator again embarks on a landscape description. Although a number of elements of the scene come directly from Pastoral ("Les troupeaux descendaient, et les clochettes des vaches sonnaient dans les clairières"), the rhythm of this sentence, through studied avoidance of parallelisms which would draw attention to it as an artificial construct, presents the illusion of a transparent language. But the scene is framed by Mathurin's consciousness of his own impending death: "Il vit l'astre s'abaisser pour toujours." Thus the images of animals going home to sleep, of flowers closing, of the setting sun, must be read as so many metaphors for death. The scene, in short, has a message: death is peaceful and natural like sleep. Likewise, the absence of synesthesia, of ambiguous pronouns, and of a vision that penetrates Nature,[5] represents Mathurin's passivity and his distance from this scene, as if he were already distant from life. After a semicolon, the scene itself becomes active, and a wave of images that were erotic signs of Man's fitness for Nature in

"Smarh" penetrate into the room to touch Mathurin's body: "la brise des nuits s'éleva, et les feuilles des vignes, à son souffle, battirent sur leur treillage, elle pénétra jusqu'à eux et rafraîchit leurs joues enflammées" (emphasis added). Here, like the lakes that cool the bottles of Mathurin and his disciples, Nature is invoked as a calming influence, as something peacefully erotic that can cool Rabelaisian drunkenness. But already Mathurin is pulling back from Nature as he reads meanings into it. And in any event, breezes often make fires burn hotter.

When Mathurin begins again to speak, his discourse displays what will be the final image of the work: a disappearance, and a flow: "adieu! demain, je ne verrai plus ce soleil, dont les rayons éclaireront mon tombeau, puis ses ruines, et sans jamais venir à moi. Les ondes couleront toujours [...]" The rays of the sun (reason) will not reach the primal chaos where he will be buried; even memorials to him will gradually dissipate as time moves on like a river, one of the images in Smarh's initial vision of Nature. In a parody of reason, death is mentioned in the same breath with life ("j'ai vécu, pourquoi ne pas mourir"): the image is Rabelaisian, carnivalesque. The destructive power of time is here envisioned as the image of all things flowing, so that life is envisioned not as an "organisation multiple" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:221) disputed between order and disorder and ending in a shipwreck, but as a flow which can be peaceful: "La vie est un fleuve, la mienne a coulé

entre des prairies pleines de fleurs, sous un ciel pur, loin des tempêtes et des nuages, je suis à l'embouchure, je me jette dans l'Océan, dans l'infini." The result of this view of structure as flow in time, however, is the image of the sea as telos. Flow, distant from order and unreason (tempêtes and nuages) leads nonetheless to the image of Nature as hostile to Man, here reread as the unimportance of the human: "Est-ce que l'homme est quelque chose de plus qu'un simple grain de sel de l'Océan," which is expanded to something subtly Rabelaisian and political: "ou qu'une bulle de mousse sur le tonneau de l'Électeur?" The proposed solution for overcoming the telos of destruction at the end of flow is unconsciousness, which in this text will come to mean drunkenness: "tout à l'heure, mêlé au tout immense et sans bornes, je n'aurai plus la conscience de mon néant." Although the notion of flow has the potential of overcoming the problem of structures breaking down to chaos, the text's fear that flow implies nothingness keeps it from seeing that chaotic breakdown is not inevitable. Thus Mathurin's discourse, which, as we will see, will imperfectly attempt to become pure flow, will end in a Byronic breakdown.

Mathurin's speech pulls back almost immediately from the image of fusion that it touched: rejecting the rustling breeze and its erotic charge ("Adieu donc, vents du soir, qui soufflez [...] sur les feuilles palpitantes"), because of time, because of death ("quand les ténèbres viennent"). Light-heartedness and calmness in the face of death is

pushed into the past: "Naguère [...] je passais, riant, près des cimetières [...] je jetais un oeil calme [...] c'était pour moi un autre monde." Already rigid structures are breaking the image of flow: life versus death breaks flow into a contrast, so that bits of life are mingled, but kept separate from, bits of death. This rigidification of structures into opposites breaks down the fusion that was occurring in previous nature descriptions, thus generating the Other of Pastoral as a macabre landscape: rustling leaves are present here, but they are those of the "orties qui croîtront sur [...] ma tombe" and of "cyprès [qui] murmuraient les soupirs des morts"; a bird is present, but it is a "hibou."[6] Even in the midst of this reversal of Pastoral, a few phrases preserve the memory of the possible unity of life and death: nettles growing on tombs; trees giving voice to the dead. But Mathurin is about to die, and his emotional rejection of death already threatens to become Byronic: "mes doigts tremblants touchent aux portes de cet autre monde [...] j'en remue le marteau d'un bras de colère."

Drunkenness will be the means to keep Byronism at bay; Mathurin will accept death, provided that he is unconscious: "Que la mort vienne [...]! elle me prendra tout endormi [...] sous l'herbe douce du printemps ou sous la neige des hivers, qu'importe! et mon dernier sourire sera pour elle, je lui donnerai des baisers pleins de vin, un coeur plein de vie et qui [...] ne bat plus." The flow of

wine will be one with the ceaseless flow of the seasons become indistinguishable, as spring and summer, love, happiness, and death fuse into one: "Les morts [...] il s'interrompit pour boire et continua: -- La vie [...]" And the link between death and life is not only drink, but his, and the text's, good-natured self-mockery: "A cette belle phrase graduée, il s'interrompit pour boire et continua: -- La vie est un festin."

And now the text's central experiment begins: can thought, becoming drunken, which is to say Rabelaisian but also Horatian, find a way out of Byronic despair? Mathurin first rereads Rabelaisian orgy from a point of view which is more or less that which saw calm flow as the highest value: at the feast of life, "les sages" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:223) are contrasted to those who gorge themselves, those who are violent, those who "étourdis des lumières, du bruit [...] gênés par la cohue" begin to cry. "Les sages," then, have moderate appetites, are peaceful, are not frightened by the noise; they "écartent les convives avides, les valets impudents qui les tiraillent," shunning those who are too eager, and those of the lower classes who, presumably, have some reason for bothering them, such as neglected duty; and they eat "longuement" and "lentement," then die. But is long, slow, methodic feasting in the midst of an orgy equivalent to flow? Earlier the text has insisted that total separation from disorder is necessary for Mathurin's happiness; placing Mathurin in the midst of chaos is not

enough: the text must find a way to incorporate disorder, yet remain calm.

The narrator attempts a possible solution: he describes Mathurin's voice as a flow, in fact as the flow of water from a Neoclassic fountain: "Comme l'eau limpide que la nymphe de marbre laisse tomber murmurante de sa conque d'albâtre, il continua ainsi longtemps de parler." Mathurin's voice is described as both serious and sensual ("grave et voluptueuse"), and mingling opposites ("pleine de cette mélancholie gaie"); that is, as Neoclassical in its form and as Rabelaisian/carnivalesque in its content; and his speech is said to be the outpouring of his soul, "comme l'eau limpide." Thus a circular structure encloses Mathurin's voice, which is his soul, creating an oasis of calm where Horace may enclose Rabelais, where sadness and joy might coexist. The narrator, in any event, can describe Mathurin's speech like this, as he has been able to describe Nature as peaceful.

The narrator now describes the night as Neoclassically "pure" and with "pas un bruit"; images from Smarh's first vision of Nature also appear: the night is "bleue" with "étoiles"; there is a "vent"; thus the night is not only pure, but "amoureuse." The calm space that has opened up in the middle of Mathurin's speech makes room for a description of the beauty of the room lit by candlelight. Yet something troubles the peace of the night: Mathurin's voice, here described as a "bruit." Mathurin's voice can be

envisioned as a limpid flow, or as a noise; as fused with Nature, or troubling it. The text wavers between the two.

The narrator now describes drunkenness in erotic terms, with parodic Neoclassical imagery. "Vienne donc cette molle langueur des sens [...]"; Mathurin, rocked gently as if in a boat on the waves of his drunken senses, is treated, according to the narrator's subjunctive desire, to the erotic imagery of actual nymphs, rising out of his "draps rougis," stained with blood or wine. This appearance of erotic desire in the midst of a death scene is carnivalesque; and this joyful mockery that conflates life and death, creation and destruction gives rise to the desire for Nature to become even more beautiful: "que le ciel se fasse plus étoilé [...] que des clartés d'azur viennent éclairer les joies de cette agonie, fassent le vent plus frais, plus embaumant." Ultimately, death becomes, in desire, an orgasm:[7] "pendant qu'il boit les dernières gouttes de la vie; que ses yeux fermés tressaillent comme sous le plus tendre embrassement"; happiness fuses with death, peace, and nothingness as the deathbed becomes a cradle, rocked gently on the flow of eternity: "que tout soit, pour cet homme, bonheur jusqu'à la mort, paix jusqu'au néant; que l'éternité ne soit qu'un lit pour le bercer dans les siècles!"

On one level, despite its comic force, this invocation of sex and death is very serious, as Rabelaisian sentiments and carnivalesque fusions meet in a space of

peace modeled on the Neoclassical. These parodic fusions with history can be as fertile as Mathurin's deathbed couplings with imaginary nymphs. But the wind is making Mathurin's teeth chatter; the window is closed, and the orgy begins again: "le vin tombe par terre, ils jurent, ils ricanent; cela va devenir horrible, ils vont se mordre." The threatened violence was a (rather sophomoric) trick the narrator was playing on the reader: "Ne craignez rien, ils mordent une poularde grasse." And Mathurin's speech begins again: "Mathurin parle politique."

"La démocratie est une bonne chose pour les gens pauvres et de mauvaise compagnie [...]" Mathurin is apparently against democracy, although for the excellent reason that the poor are no fun at parties. It is uncertain what is the object of satire here: the poor? democracy? elitism? the reader? Mathurin? Is it reactionary to like such humor? Is it <u>bête</u> to ask that question? Although humor can increase the meta-irony of the text, if it is not all-inclusive (and can it ever be?), it can seem to state implicitly that which it does not mock: "on parviendra peut-être un jour, hélas! à ce que tous les hommes puissent boire de la piquette. De ce jour-là, on ne boira plus de constance." Mathurin imagines the goal of democracy to be universal drinking; if drinking good wine ceases to be reserved for the elite, the motivation for drinking well will be lost. Although Mathurin may be poking fun at the elite as well as at the poor, he seems to identify with the

elite. This parodic identification with the forces of bourgeois reaction whose motivations are vulgar signals that we are in the realm of the Garçon.[8] We should expect, then, a rapid shifting of opinion among a variety of clichés; and since we are apparently also in the realm of Rabelais, we should expect constant undercutting of highflown rhetoric by references to food and drink. Thus a speech that apparently was going to attack (parodically? seriously?) the nobles: "Si les nobles, dont la tyrannie" is subverted by a distracting reminiscence: "(ils avaient de si bons cuisiniers!)" which causes Mathurin to lose his place: "j'en étais donc à la Révolution... Pauvres moines! ils cultivaient si bien la vigne!" Mathurin's reactionary tendencies are apparently inspired by the fact that the Revolution ruined a lot of good food and drink; and on principle! Robespierre had the most annoying habit of culinary and sexual restraint: "Oh! le drôle de corps, qui mangeait de la vache chez un menuisier, et qui est resté pur au pouvoir [...]" His bad reputation was "bien méritée!" If he had "ruiné l'État, entretenu des maitresses sur les fonds publics, bu du vin au lieu de répandre du sang, ce serait un homme justement, dignement vertueux..." Mathurin feels a common bond with all who enjoy life, even if they are politically corrupt, and even if their enjoyments involve things he has decided against for his own reasons: keeping mistresses, for example. Mathurin can even feel some sympathy with republicans: Fourier, after all, wrote

"un bien beau morceau sur l'art culinaire"; and it is always possible that Washington was a great man, and that Montyon was "quelque chose de surhumain, de divin, presque de sur-stupide." Thus Mathurin's language flies off into the realm of the ridiculous, apparently parodying its own apparent intent.

The problem of deciding the worth of a republican is at root a question of language: "il s'agirait de définir la vertu avant d'en décerner les prix." But applying clear language to the task of describing the human soul is difficult, if not impossible: anybody who could define virtue "aurait mérité un prix," according to Mathurin. But first, one must give "une bonne classification," having previously established it "avec des caractères tranchés, nettement exprimés, positifs": clarity in language demands previous clarity, and so on in a never-ending series; and clear language is only imperfectly applied to the murkiness of the human heart: "il lui aurait fallu déterminer jusqu'à quel point l'orgueil entre dans la grandeur, la niaiserie dans la bienfaisance, marquer la limite précise de l'intérêt et de la vanité." And abstract moral words, like "moralité, liberté, devoir," are often "incompréhensibles," and when used together in the same discourse, apt to lead to paradoxes: "il aurait fallu [...] montrer [...] comme les hommes sont libres tout en ayant des devoirs, comme ils peuvent avoir des devoirs puisqu'ils sont libres." The desire to write a clear moral discourse is undercut by the

intractability of language; nonetheless, one might try to cover up the inherent poverty of such an attempt through form ("on aurait pu enfermer ça dans une période savante"), or through the use of historical examples ("il aurait fallu citer des exemples [...] on soutiendrait [...] que [...] César [...] Rabelais, Byron, Napoléon et le marquis de Sade étaient des imbéciles, et que [...] Montyon, l'homme au manteau bleu [...] étaient des grands hommes, des grands génies, des Dieux, des êtres... Mathurin se mit à rire"). Now it would seem that Mathurin must seriously admire at least Rabelais; Byron and Napoleon were heroes of the young Flaubert. As we have seen, even in praising Montyon Mathurin has been unable to refrain from calling him "sur-stupide," and it is difficult to believe that he could consider Caesar other than great, or a nameless nonentity like "l'homme au manteau bleu" other than mediocre. This satire is universal in that it attacks language <u>per se</u>; but when it comes to history or politics, Mathurin is picking sides. Specifically, what he seems to be attacking is a discourse which bases itself on Revolution but tries to maintain stability, that is, a discourse that seeks to cover up a scandalous disjunction of liberty and duty through clear distinctions, learned periods, and lengthy historical discussions.[9] Mathurin's penetrating eye has cut to the cancer on the soul of this discourse; but he has done so claiming that clear distinctions are an illusion, because language is not an instrument capable of understanding human

motivation. Implicitly, he has undercut his own project.

In the midst of this dismembering of language a name has come up that was earlier implicit: the Marquis de Sade, whose name has floated over the comic reversals of vice and virtue and the erotic dissections. Here, the subtitles of Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu and Juliette, ou les prosperités du vice are ironically reversed: "il aurait fallu [...] s'étendre longuement [...] sur la vertu récompensée et le vice puni." It is uncertain whether Flaubert knew Sade in 1839 other than by reputation.[10] If he knew Sade, he might have known Sade's apology for universal destruction as natural: "[La nature] ne vit, elle ne s'entretient, elle ne se perpétue qu'à force de destructions."[11] In any event, Sade as the extreme of Byron will haunt Mathurin's speech; universal satire will become a vision of universal destruction.

Now, in the shadow of Sade and his heirs Melmoth and Byron, Mathurin's smile is called "diabolique," yet he is said to laugh "en éternuant." Laughter that is diabolical and bored is certainly not what the reader was promised: "Comme l'eau limpide [...] il continua [...] longtemps de parler." Yet Mathurin's speech is indeed water-like in its flow of endless sentences, swirling around topics and spreading in all directions, its surface flash masking murky depths. And it is also Rabelaisian, in its deflating of pious pretension through contact with the lower bodily element ("Vive la philanthropie! -- un verre de frappé!").

But the text is moving in a political direction very unlike that of "Rabelais," where Flaubert praised Rabelais's rebellion against "la vieille société [du moyen âge ...] avec ses tyrannies [...]; le seigneur était encore dans son donjon, le prêtre dans sa riche et grasse abbaye [...]" It was Rabelais's laughter which "avec Luther et 93, a abattu le moyen âge." However, the text of "Rabelais" blames the Revolution for having fostered the material progress that has contributed to the spiritual poverty of the nineteenth century: "je ris à mon aise à vos misérables sciences" ("Rabelais," 1:183). Flaubert in "Docteur Mathurin" has seemed to seek a rapprochement with the scientific spirit of calm observation; Mathurin himself is a sort of scientist. Neither Mathurin, nor the narrator, nor Flaubert seem to be against the rationalism of eighteenth-century thought, but rather against their desire to elevate the lower classes. This is the worst sort of reaction, and, as will be seen, it is this Byronic elitism which contributes to the crumbling of the project of universal satire at the end of Mathurin's speech.

Mathurin now turns to a parodic view of history as providential ("tout est pour le mieux," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:223) that could have been inspired by Voltaire. Even the most horrible massacres of history have resulted in some good, according to Mathurin; in fact, as he first notes, history is at root a continuous orgy of sex and violence: "l'histoire est un science morale par dessus tout, à peu

près comme la vue d'une maison de filles et celle d'un échafaud plein de sang". The slaughtered Hebrews produced psalms, which "nous admirons comme poésie lyrique"; the death of Christ produced "au bout de seize siècles, le sujet d'un beau tableau." The arrogance of the bourgeoisie which leads it to believe that the most deeply felt monuments of another culture's religious experience find their true destiny by being admired as decoration is surpassed only by its belief in the perfection of its own civilization: "les chrétiens, qu'on égorgeait, ne se doutaient pas qu'ils fondaient une poésie aussi, une société pure et sans tache." The list of great moments in French civilization ("les croisades, la Réforme, 93, la philosophie, la philanthropie qui nourrit les hommes avec des pommes de terre et les vaches avec des betteraves") is ridiculous not because all of the items on the list are ridiculous, but because earth-shaking historical events are claimed as mere precursors to modern agriculture: greatness is used to elevate the ordinary, which is to say, the current state of affairs, so that greatness need never be contemplated or understood. Likewise, the heterogeneous list that proves material progress: "la poudre à canon, la guillotine, les bateaux à vapeur et les tartes à la crème" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:223-224) is ridiculous because the description that ties them together ("des inventions utiles," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:224) applies to each in a different way and raises more questions than it answers. First, why is "usefulness" an

important criterion of value? Second, how can instruments of death like the guillotine be "useful"? What values presuppose the "usefulness" of gunpowder, or cream pies? Lumping together all inventions as "useful" begs the question of their actual purpose and value, and the bêtise that assimilates them to something that is not an invention at all, but a discovery, "le tonnerre," raises a larger question: in what way is it any more valid to limit the significance of a human artifact to a single, undisputed meaning than it is to include raw, natural forces within the same limiting concept? To put it another way, since Culture can never definitively explain itself, can Nature ever be meaningfully assimilated into Culture's arbitrary constructs? Rumbling on the horizon is a dimly-perceived image of the storm that made Smarh doubt Providence; what comes into view is an image of scientific dismemberment that calls into question the purpose of the human body itself: "ne pouvant plus marcher, on vous conduit à l'hôpital, où vous mourez [...], et votre cadavre sert encore après vous à faire dire des bêtises sur chaque fibre de votre corps et à nourrir de jeunes chiens qu'on élève pour des expériences." Bourgeois science, which seeks to make everything useful, loses sight of the difference between guillotines and cream pies, between execution and pleasure; having forgotten that the pleasures of the body are ends in themselves (a mistake that Mathurin is in no danger of making!), science has become its own end, using the body for the continued

accumulation of its own knowledge,[12] and when no more can be squeezed out of it, reducing it to mere meat to feed laboratory animals.

The discourse of usefulness that ignores any questioning of value or purpose is linked to the discourse of Providence: it is not necessary to understand it, merely to have "la ferme conviction" that there is one, and also to believe in "le sens commun des nations." Providence, usefulness, progress: the notions are linked to the notion of the immutability of things and their inexorable order; this is more a form of language than an inherent property of things themselves. Thus any content can be placed in their form; for example, that of food and wine: "Le bordeaux se chauffe toujours... l'ordre des comestibles est des plus substantiels aux plus légers, celui des boissons des plus tempérées aux plus fumeuses et aux plus parfumées..." The purpose of these discourses is coercion: if one desires the good (and the good is objective, no one may question it), one must act in a certain way: "si vous voulez qu'une alouette soit bonne, coupez par le milieu." This coercion takes the form of forcing verbal habits, patterns of thought ("vous l'avouerez [...] Ayez la ferme conviction [...]"). Language is not just empty; rather than an instrument of meaning, it is more about obfuscation and control.

But Mathurin does believe in Providence and progress, in his manner; which is to say, he believes in Providence and progress in food and drink: "Je crois que le

soleil fait mûrir le raisin, et qu'un gigot de chevreuil mariné est une bonne chose..." Belief for him, then, is based on pleasure. The parodic comparison between the two "sciences éternelles: la philosophie et la gastronomie" implicitly degrades the abstract science, which in its long phrase of vaguely defined terms comes to seem mere noise: "Il s'agit de savoir si l'âme va se réunir à l'essence universelle ou si elle reste à part comme individu, et où elle va," especially when one of its most undefined terms ("où": what exactly is the meaning of place when one is discussing immaterial objects?) is taken literally: "où elle va, dans quel pays..." The pause after this phrase (the ellipsis is in the original) leads one to (silent, empty) reverie... but the phrase does not continue in abstract speculation, it falls into the concrete: "dans quel pays... et comment on peut conserver longtemps du bourgogne." One of these "eternal sciences" is eternally undecidable, which is to say, very apt for the endless production of language; the other is eternally pleasurable, which is to say, very apt for the endless production of interest, and incidentally, wine. Here, "assis sur le bord de la tombe" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:223), Mathurin thinks of life, and of the beyond; and he opts for life. For he believes in progress, at least when it comes to pleasure: "Je crois qu'il y a encore une meilleure manière d'arranger le homard" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:224); as for people, "l'education ne perfectionne guère que les chiens quant au

côté moral." Mathurin's use of verbs of belief with inappropriate nouns taken from the realm of food and drink parodies belief as empty language and substitutes for it the more vibrant pursuit of pleasure: "J'ai cru longtemps à l'eau de Seltz [...] je suis convaincu maintenant de l'absinthe." Happiness comes not from finding the correct ideals, but from an attitude toward life that is based on light-hearted enjoyment and a healthy skepticism: "l'absinthe [...] est comme la vie: ceux qui ne savent pas la prendre font la grimace." Thus in response to great unanswerable questions like: "l'immortalité de l'âme [...] la récompense et le châtiment," Mathurin answers only "Un verre de vin! [...] Quelle saveur!" As for the largest, most abstract question, "Le plan de l'univers, qu'en pensez-vous?", Mathurin answers that its answer is unknowable: "Et toi, que penses-tu de l'étoile de Sirius?" Not only are these larger questions unanswerable, so are more modest ones, like the meaning of history: "l'histoire même est un mensonge réel." What exactly this paradoxical formulation might mean puzzles one of Mathurin's disciples; Mathurin informs him: "Cela veut dire que les faits mentent, qu'ils sont et qu'ils ne sont plus, que les hommes vivent et meurent, que l'être et le néant sont deux faussetés qui n'en font qu'une, qui est le <u>toujours</u>!" (emphasis in original). This image of ultimate reconciliation beyond all oppositions is reminiscent of Eastern thought, although whether Flaubert at this early date had read any Eastern philosophical works

or merely absorbed some of their ideas through Romantic sources is uncertain. In any event, this statement represents a culmination of the dissection of language that has developed in the text so far: language has been seen as based on arbitrary associations between words with no necessary relation to reality, as essentially empty, as coercive; now language is seen to be based on stable oppositions between categories undercut by the instability of objects in time. Which is to say that structure is seen as arbitrary because it takes no cognizance of the diachronic; or that categorical pronouncements are impossible in the face of death. The solution is the fusion of opposites, of passing beyond stable structural oppositions to the model of reality as flow,[13] which is to say, as continuity without stable form. It is the denial of flow that invents the image of destruction as the necessary counterpart of the fiction of stable form; facts lie because they come and go. Language is at its best when it is structured only by conformity to the unstable flow of reality.

Mathurin's discourse is a parody of normal speech. Its blatant discontinuities and moral ambivalence, its self-contradictions and pretenses, its misuse of words and inappropriate tone, reveal the actual workings of language, whose incoherencies are usually covered up by patterns whose familiarity lulls the mind to sleep. But lest these insights be taken too seriously, as the final word in the

text's dialogue, they are quickly relativized: "-- Je ne comprends pas, maître. -- Et moi, encore moins [...] -- Cela est bien profond, -- dit Jacques aux trois quarts ivre, -- et il y a sous ce dernier mot une grande finesse." Is the reminiscence of Pascalian language ("finesse") the reason for the mixture of Pascal and Descartes which follows?

> -- N'y a-t-il pas, entre moi et vous deux, entre un homme et un grain de sable, entre aujourd'hui et hier, [...] des espaces que la pensée ne peut mesurer [...]? [...] Ne crois-tu pas quelquefois que tu n'es plus [...]? [...] T'es-tu pris à douter de la nature, de la sensation elle-même? [...] Palpe-toi bien pour voir si tu existes [...] il y a là un infini que tu ne sonderas pas.

The image of Man's helplessness in nature, linked with that of the ocean: "tu roules dans un gouffre comme l'Ocean," is here read as an image of the unconsciousness of sleep: "Te sens-tu dormir?" Thus Mathurin's discourse, through its revelation of language as falsifying, has set off a reinvestment of the destructive power of the ocean that undercuts the notion of the beauty of uninvested perception. In "Smarh"'s tale of the child, "Souvent [l'enfant] prenait du sable plein les mains, il ouvrait les doigts, et il prenait plasir à voir les rayons de sable partir de différents côtés et disparaître en tourbillonant, en s'élevant" ("Smarh," 1:214). Sand, which was invested as an image of the beauty of meaningless flow which is a sign of the perfect adequation of the human and the natural, here is reinvested as a sign of the failure of understanding because

of matter's stubborn resistance to the penetration of vision: "Prends un grain de sable, il y a là un abîme à creuser pendant des siècles." The failure of language resolves itself as the image of blindness in the face of chaos, so that fusion with matter is seen as impossible. The discourse seems blind to the fact that it has only revealed that fusion with Nature is impossible if the medium for fusion must be a transparent language; if the opacity of language is not seen as a barrier, fusion is not impossible. It is possible to imagine silence producing calm; Mathurin has lost touch with the voice in the text that imagines limpid flow.

Mathurin's discourse makes an attempt to right itself by remembering its drunken audience, by reimagining blindness in Rabelaisian terms: "Cela veut dire que l'homme voit aussi clair en lui et autour de lui que si tu étais tombé ivre mort au fond d'une barrique de vin plus grande que l'Atlantique" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:224). But Rabelaisian joy has been lost; the images of oceans and alienated blindness thrust the discourse into a Byronic frenzy. The loss of faith in stable form causes a rupture in the flow of language; it is as if Mathurin and his followers, who "ne cass[ent] rien que des bouteilles" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:222), have bottled up their Romantic rebellion for too long, and it now spills forth in a torrent vast as the ocean, as Mathurin's penetrating vision is divested of all the calm that so many words have laboriously

built up: "ce que l'oeil peut saisir, c'est un horrible fracas d'une agonie éternelle. Regardez un peu la cataracte qui tombe [...]" The calm beauty that existed in the pastoral passages above is undercut by the "truth" of its opposite: "Soutenir ensuite qu'il y a quelque chose de beau dans la création [...] Quelle philosophie!" Thus "la beauté des fleurs" is as ridiculous as "louanges"; the passage ends in a Rabelaisian list that envisions Nature as universal destruction: "Regardez un peu la cataracte qui tombe de la montagne, comme son onde bouillonnante entraîne avec elle les débris de la prairie, le feuillage encore vert de la forêt cassé par les vents, la boue des ruisseaux, le sang répandu, les chars qui allaient; cela est beau et superbe." The unexplained leap from Nature to history ("sang [...] chars") is completed by a vision of time as an endless series of deaths: the further one penetrates, the more ruins one finds, and in each epoch "d'autres calamités, d'autres désastres, des ruines fumantes, du sang figé sur la terre, des ossements broyés sous les pas." This "agonie" is "sans nom," beyond language. But its emptiness is not viewed as peaceful; as Mathurin says, "quelle beauté! quelle horreur! quel abîme!"[14]

This extreme Byronism, which, as I have argued, is nearly Sadeian, is far from the calm that was promised; what is perhaps the most surprising thing about this cataclysm in Mathurin's speech is that the narrator tells us that Mathurin at this point is "calme," that "aucun sentiment

humain ne scintille de sa prunelle." It is difficult to imagine that this is possible, especially since Mathurin is also said to be "essoufflé." The narrator seems oblivious to the fact that Mathurin's discourse has been anything but calm despite the text's claims to the contrary; or perhaps he is oblivious to the fact that the reader can see through him.

But soon the narrator acknowledges a change: "Tout s'agite maintenant [...] Au calme heureux des premières libations succèdent la fièvre et ses chauds battements," (emphasis added). It is as if he were trying to recuperate his failure in discovering a discourse that is a universal satire, yet calm, by denying that failure and taking responsibility for the change; as if he were saying: "No, I know he seems frenzied, but trust me, he's calm. All right, now he's frenzied." From this point in the text until the death of Mathurin, the text is an unrelievedly satanic orgy.

The text gives an alternative description of Mathurin's discourse, now called the discourse of all three men:

> Si vous les aviez vus ainsi épuiser tout, tarir tout [no longer do they discover disease; they create stains], exprimer les saveurs des plus pures voluptés [? Mathurin was celibate], les parfums de la vertu et l'enivrement de toutes les chimères du coeur, et la politique, et la morale, la religion, tout passa devant eux et fut salué d'un rire grotesque et d'une grimace qui leur fit peur ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:225).

The discourse has fallen from the carnivalesque joy imagined by Flaubert in "Rabelais" to the minor Romantic genre of the

grotesque; and the joyful ambivalence of creation/destruction exemplified by Rabelais has here split in two: frenzied characters are being contemplated by their scandalized selves. It is as if the narrator has suddenly allowed figures based on the Romantic revolutionaries in Mathurin's political satires to displace the figure of Mathurin himself.

The narrator's defensiveness seems to indicate that he is aware he has failed in his promised depiction of Mathurin. He directly attacks the reader: "Et pourqoui pas? si cela vous scandalise, n'allez pas plus loin, je rapporte les faits." He has projected the reader as the scandalized bourgeois; presumably he has now taken on the role of the Romantic rebel, but in the mode of an objective reporter. He pretends that his failure to invent a calm laughter is the fault of his characters, as if he stood apart from them, merely reporting their behavior; but his characters are within him, and their failure is his. There is indeed something within the dynamic of the voices that he has created that causes them to veer off into Romantic cliché. But there is something within his voice, too, that leads to the production of cliché, although he denies it. When the punch that suddenly appears sets fire to the room, lending a fiery decor to the diabolic scene, the narrator defensively claims that this is not a cliché, or at least not as much of a cliché as it could have been: "Il n'y eut pas de sang avec le punch, comme il arrive dans les romans

de dernier ordre";[15] and for the first time clearly, fear of the cliché is revealed as intimately related to disdain for the people: "dans les romans de dernier ordre et dans les cabarets où l'on ne vend que de mauvais vin, et où le bon peuple va s'enivrer avec de l'eau-de-vie de cidre." And having lost sight of his project, the narrator is no longer able to invent a motivation for joy: "ils rient sans savoir pourquoi, le vin les fait rire."

Mathurin now calls for more drink in a speech that links it to diabolic flame: "faites brûler, que cela flambe et que cela soit chaud, bouillant... casse la bouteille, buvons à même!" Yet in the midst of this "fureur de démons ivres" calm returns, firmly embodied in Nature, and in sharp contrast to the scene in Mathurin's bedroom:

> une heure sonna, le temps était beau, la lune brillait au ciel entre le brouillard, la colline verte, argentée par ses clartés, était calme et dormeuse, tout dormait. Ils se remirent à boire et ce fut pis encore; c'était de la frénésie, c'était une fureur de démons ivres.

Fusion with calm Nature has been completely abjured; despite his isolation from Culture, Mathurin has completely fused with it, which is to say, with the cliché.

The final orgy is depicted in a rush of fragmented bodies, bottles, and wine: "leurs doigts [...] les jambes [...] la tête [...] le cou [...] les yeux [...] la bouche"; "le goulet [...] le vin." And Mathurin "boit encore" and willfully, "entré dans le cynisme, il y marchera de toute sa force, il s'y plonge et il y meurt." Shut off from Nature,

Mathurin has escaped from passivity. Yet at the same time, he has also lost his voice and his vision: "il remue les lèvres machinalement [...] sans articuler aucune parole [...] il ne distingue rien." Yet he has enough strength to throw a carafe of wine at the priest when he enters (exactly why a priest enters is unexplained: Mathurin has said that he does not want the last rites), staining the priest's white surplice and frightening the altar boy. Stains and outrage are all that Mathurin is still capable of; he utters "un hurlement de bête fauve; il tord son corps comme un serpent"; his voice, which the narrator has promised would flow like pure water, has become sheer wild stupidity, writhing like a demon. Yet, incredibly, the narrator assures the reader that Mathurin dies "doucement, heureux." Pastoral has been reduced to a mere label, a mere figure of speech, meaningless sounds cynically deployed to cover up the scandalous collapse of the project of finding a comic alternative to Byronism. The text will now move through a carnivalesque catharsis to a new kind of peace, the peace of the dissolution into meaningless flow.

CHAPTER 5: NATURE, LANGUAGE, AND SILENCE

Despite its promises, the text has found itself incapable of realizing its desire for a joyful universal satire. In the first part of the text, the narrator has moved between scenes of rape and dismemberment and scenes of pastoral calm, seeking a link through the image of wine and through Mathurin's penetrating gaze. Penetration convincingly elaborated itself as dissection, psychology, and dispassionate observation; in so doing, it attacked the prestige of artistic, political, religious, and philosophical discourses, and, by implication, that of language itself. The fragmenting gaze opened up a clear space for calm observation of the Other of language, which is to say, of Nature. But the rejection of language conventions led to a double bind. Nature descriptions found themselves incapable of escaping cliché, and the text itself seemed unable to function without giving meaning to what it was describing. The rejection of Culture in Mathurin's speech led to a smug superiority to lower social classes, so that the discourse, despite its claims to universal rejection, in fact reproduced the politics of the class to which Mathurin (and Flaubert) belonged. The desire to expand on the motif of emptiness led into concepts rehashed

from seventeenth-century philosophers and Romantics, as the weight of history rushed in to fill the gap. Nature has been transformed from a place fit for Man into a destructive chaos, seemingly against the text's aspirations. Why?

Talking about bricolage, Claude Levi-Strauss points out that "les éléments que collectionne et utilise le bricoleur sont 'précontraints' [...] la décision [to permute the set of elements in a particular way] dépend de la possibilité de permuter un autre élément dans la fonction vacante, si bien que chaque choix entraînera une réorganisation complète de la structure, qui ne sera jamais telle que celle vaguement rêvée, ni que telle autre, qui aurait pu lui être préférée" (29). Thus religion constantly recurs as an element in Mathurin's rejections, as a part of Culture when he is rejecting Culture, as something to be defiled when he is being diabolical; and yet something dimly desired when he is pressing up against the limits of the absolute: Mathurin and his disciples "cherchent la vérité au fond du verre [...] les yeux au ciel, le goulot dans la bouche" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:225). Heaven seems secondary to what is most important in this text (Nature, language); heaven must be present because it is a part of the structures that are being manipulated. Likewise emptiness breeds images of diabolical chaos not because there is a necessary link between them, but because emptiness is an element of a discourse Flaubert breathes, that of Romanticism, in which emptiness is diabolical. But

emptiness is also associated with other values, in other discourses: with the impersonality of the objective eye of science, for example. The whirlwind of contradictions these competing claims entail blows the solution beyond the edge of the page... for the moment.

Thus the attempt to capture Nature in the nets of Culture has resolved itself as the attempt to capture Nothingness in the nets of Language. The result is speechlessness and blindness. The impossibility of resolving the contradiction lies in the very way the problem has been posed.

Culture is a set of structures inherited from the past; the creation of a text necessarily involves the reordering of whatever has been inherited. By positing that there is an Other distinct from Culture, or an object distinct from the text, language locks itself in an impossible struggle to be what it is not: meaningless, without history, a transparent medium. On the other hand, by positing that it is something that is not a part of the natural world, Culture proposes for itself an endless task, that of finding the precise juncture where Nature stops: at the edge of the city? at the threshold of the house? where the mind leaves off and the body begins? just this side of the libido? at the border of rational consciousness? The imaginary duality of Nature and Culture proposes a problem that can be solved only by the rejection of the duality: there is nothing that is not Nature; or conversely, there is

nothing that is not Culture. Any line drawn anywhere threatens to revive the whole dilemma in all of its manifestations.[1]

Despite the narrator's claims that Mathurin is separate from the noise of the city and its controversies, it is evident that he is embedded in Culture: he philosophizes, he has written books, he (evidently) has read them. Mathurin carries the city in his mind. And he is evidently interwoven with the economic order of which the city is a part: his life of idleness is supported by servants and peasants, and the calm he enjoys could not exist were revolutionaries not controlled by the state's police. Mathurin rejects the social system that allows his existence, as he rejects the discourses that allow him to speak. But Culture is human nature: human beings speak naturally, and naturally they speak clichés. Thus the rejection of Culture is the rejection of Nature. In order for the orgy to proceed uninterrupted, Mathurin must close the window to block the wind. But the rejection of Nature this implies leads to an orgy drunk with Romantic clichés, and Mathurin becomes <u>bête</u>, which is to say that Nature reasserts itself, but as Culture.

An insight of Mathurin's might provide a way out of this circular dilemma. He knows he will die, so he <u>wills</u> it. By <u>choosing</u> the mortality of the body, Mathurin erases the illusory line between will and matter, life and death. Were the text able to <u>choose</u> as a singular, original act the

fact that it is always already riddled with other discourse, with the discourse of the Other; were it willing to enter the discourse that surrounds it and to leave itself open to all influences without repugnance; were it able to let all the voices of its time "résonne[r] dans son âme [...] vaste" ("Rabelais," 1:181); it would perhaps find that it had lost its anguish without losing its own voice.

Perhaps Mathurin's discourse fails precisely because it is invented by a character in a fiction, with a given personality, from a given background. Mathurin is a doctor; hence he is bourgeois. He has left his practice to move to the country, where he lives a life of idleness. Thus he is apparently no longer interested in serving humanity; hence he is likely to reject philanthropy. His existence depends on the maintenance of the social order; hence he is likely to support order and reject Revolution. If the new Rabelais wants to write a universal satire, he may not be able to do so as a lyrical outpouring from a fictional character.

On the other hand, the narrator's discourse, because of its greater anonymity, its freedom from personality, class, and personal history, is potentially more able to open itself up to a multiplicity of influences. In fact, not only has the narrator's discourse explored cultural tendencies as unlike each other as diabolical Romanticism and pastoral Neoclassicism, it has explored the dissolution of the distinctions between genders and between leisured observers and working-class objects of observation. And

unsurprisingly, the narrator has been able to give the reader insights into the failure of Mathurin's discourse that read against Mathurin's own self-interpretation: for instance, the insight that Mathurin's drunkenness can be seen as a failed quest for God.

And so the narrator survives Mathurin. Once Mathurin is dead, and silent, the narrator can find a use for his body; not to interpret every fiber of his being (although others will try), but perhaps to feed young dogs. For the narrator has not found what he was seeking: a way to represent death that is unanguished; or, to put it another way, a way to fuse emptiness with beauty. And so he starts a new tale:

The disciples take Mathurin's corpse "dans ses draps rouges" out of his home and into what Bakhtin calls the "free and familiar contact" (Dostoevsky, 160) of the carnival square, which is life ("La vie est un festin," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:222): "C'était [...] un jour de fête, une belle soirée" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:225), and "tout le monde" has gathered in the streets. The corpse is paraded down the highway to town, barely being missed by the traffic ("il fallut se garer [...] des charrettes, des voitures, des chevaux"). The image of a silent corpse in the midst of a busy street, surrounded by a noisy crowd of mixed social classes ("la cohue de canailles et d'honnêtes gens qui formaient le convoi de Mathurin") is that of a momento mori, the skeleton brought into the feast to reveal the feast's

vanity. But this corpse reveals vanity by being presented as a brute fact without explanation: it elicits a number of discourses from speakers which are incorrect interpretations of its presence. Which is not to say that no correct interpretation can be given; in fact, the reader's privileged information about Mathurin's death is what makes the spectator's questions and speculations so ridiculous.

This is what death is: an unassimilable absurdity that interrupts the well-oiled structures of which we make our lives; it is "that which always exceeds the interpretations which it provokes."[2] The performance presented to the town by Mathurin's disciples, which was scripted by Mathurin himself ("il meurt [...] après leur avoir fait connaître ses suprêmes volontés et ses caprices par delà le tombeau. Ils obéirent"), presents the spectators with an unreadable object;[3] in their readings of it, they reveal themselves: "les uns étaient scandalisés, rouges de colère, furieux; il y en avait aussi qui riaient."

Suddenly the crowd stops, although "on ne sut pourquoi," as if during a religious procession when "le prêtre stationne à un reposoir"; in fact "ils venaient d'entrer dans un cabaret." The text moves the reader through the wondering of the crowd ("on ne sut [...]") to a proposed explanation ("comme vous la voyez dans les processions lorsque le prêtre [...]") that seems to communicate directly to the reader over the heads of the crowd; although it is uncertain whether this is to be taken

as a humorously blasphemous analogy made by the narrator or as a ridiculous speculation made by someone in the crowd and reported by the narrator. The reader's curiosity is piqued and led astray before it is satisfied ("comme vous la voyez dans les processions [...] ils venaient d'entrer dans un cabaret"); the text plays with the reader as the disciples do with the crowd. A question is posed: "Est-ce que le mort, par hasard, venait de ressusciter [...]?" which could have originated with the crowd, with the narrator, or in the mind of the fictional reader.

This carnival confusion of speaker, point-of-view, meaning and intention is a strategy Flaubert will develop as the style indirect libre. Here, it functions as an ambivalent elevation of Mathurin's funeral procession to the parody of a religious service. Yet parody of ritual may have its ritual aspect; according to Bakhtin, in "ritual laughter" the most sacred things are "put to shame in order to force them to renew themselves." "Everything has its parody, that is, its laughing aspect, for everything is reborn and renewed through death." This mocking was a part of Roman funerals, and of festivals relating to "crises in the life of the sun" (Dostoevsky, 126-127, emphasis in original): Mathurin's speech takes place from dusk to dawn, as does the funeral parade through the town. Thus the parading of the corpse through the "bouchons, cabarets, cafés" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:125) is in a sense what Bakhtin calls a "decrowning" ritual (Dostoevsky, 127): death

itself is degraded, purged of its meaning so that it can find a new meaning.

The ceremony at each stop in the procession is a parody of communion and baptism, but also of the drinking party that preceded it: "les philosophes buvaient un petit verre, et un troisième fut répandu sur la tête de Mathurin." The whole scene is like a ritual passage through the cacophony of hell on the road to the peace of silence. The presence of the corpse causes the breakdown of social exchange ("les voitures ne peuvent plus circuler") and of the distinction between people and bêtes ("on marche sur les pattes des chiens... et sur les cors des citoyens"). Eventually the disciples begin pouring wine into Mathurin's mouth, to which the corpse reacts like an automaton: "On les voit ouvrir ses lèvres et passer du liquide dans sa bouche, la mâchoire se referme, les dents tombent les unes sur les autres et claquent à vide, le gosier avale, et ils continuent," ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:226). Mathurin has become matter.[4]

The corpse now gives rise to a series of questions that try to place it within a normalizing narrative: if only the cause of death is known, the fact is less disturbing (one is reminded of the earlier endless circulation of the text's discourse on the reasons for Mathurin's death: variously, it was willed; it was caused by disease; it was chosen; he submitted to it; he was tired of living; he was on a diet). "Avait-il été écrasé? s'était-il suicidé?

était-ce un martyr du gouvernement? la victime d'un assassinat? s'était-il noyé? asphyxié? était-il mort d'amour ou d'indigestion?" This last was one of the "true" reasons given by the narrator, as if the "truth" itself were merely another in a series of idle, ignorant speculations.

The text now enters into a series of satires of specific types: in a Sadeian reversal of virtue and vice, "Un homme tendre ouvrit de suite une souscription, et garda l'argent." Next, "un moraliste fit une dissertation sur les funérailles," and his dissertation is supremely bête: it argues that human beings ought to be buried because moles are: "il parla au nom de la morale outragée." The blind ridiculousness of his outrage is matched by the blind bêtes of his example. The crowd is titillated at first by the fact that he "commençait par des injures"; finally only a deaf man listens to him. The trickery and foolishness of public leaders and the shallowness of public response is matched by those cowardly champions of the people, the republicans: manufacturing evidence that furthers his agenda, "un républicain proposa d'ameuter le peuple contre le roi, parce que le pain était trop cher et que cet homme venait de mourir de faim; il le proposa si bas que personne ne l'entendit." The barriers between people and animals are again broken down: "ameuter."

The disciples now enter a café of "amateurs," and refusing to answer any questions ("d'où viennent-ils? qu'est-ce donc? pourquoi? -- point de réponse"), they lay

the corpse out on a gaming table ("on le coucha sur une table de marbre, avec des dominos"), thus linking it with chance, the operation of fate: "Alors c'est un pari." In a sense, the corpse is a game of "justice, fate, and chance,"[5] a sort of Rorschach blot that judges each character as it reveals his or her deepest meaning. Thus it is not surprising that speculations leap from betting to religions: "ce sont des prêtres." But what the corpse reveals about learned discourse is that it is arbitrary and ignorant as popular discourse, as it strives to fill in the meaning of the corpse with particulars for which it has no evidence: "ce sont des prêtres indiens, et c'est comme cela qu'ils enterrent leurs gens." The unassimilable becomes the oriental Other, a site of learned but ignorant invention and controversy: "-- Vous vous trompez, ce sont des Turcs! -- Mais ils boivent du vin. -- Quel est donc ce rite-là?" The text suggests a reading of the funeral procession as religious (wine poured like baptismal water, silent solemnity), but it is a religious ritual that is profoundly empty; and that is its deepest significance. The lack of respect for death evidenced by bringing the corpse into contact with low characters and situations elicits howls of protest, even from unbelievers: "Quelle profanation! quelle horreur! dit un athée." But the spectators' own lives undercut their claims for lofty judgement: "Un valet de bourreau trouva que c'était dégoûtant et un voleur soutint que c'était immoral." Mathurin's corpse not only brings the

lofty to the level of the bête, but the wicked to the level of judges: the comic breakdown of social categories caused by its presence results in a chaos that is political, intellectual, and moral.

For the presence of the corpse interrupts the normal flow of traffic, of discourse ("un cordonnier interrompit sa dissertation sur l'éducation"), and of consumption ("beaucoup furent furieux, car les garçons tardaient à apporter leurs plateaux"). It also sets off flurries of discourse, all empty because generated by nothing; from single words ("un poète élégiaque [...] osa hasarder le mot 'ignoble'") to torrents:

> Vingt journaux s'en emparèrent, et chacun fit là-dessus quinze articles à huit colonnes avec des suppléments, on en placarda sur les murs, ils les applaudissaient, ils les critiquaient, faisaient la critique de leur critique et des louanges de leur louange; on en revint à l'évangile, à la morale et à la religion, sans avoir lu le premier, pratiqué la seconde ni cru à la dernière; ce fut pour eux une bonne fortune, car ils avaient eu le courage de dire, à douze, des sottises à deux, et un d'eux, même, alla jusqu'à donner un soufflet à un mort. Quel dithyrambe sur la littérature, sur la corruption des romans, sur la décadence du goût, l'immoralité des pauvres poètes qui ont du succès! Quel bonheur pour tout le monde, qu'une aventure pareille, puisqu'on en tira tant de belles choses, et, de plus, un vaudeville et un mélodrame, un conte moral et un roman fantastique!

This discourse is clearly being satirized ("sottises"), in part because of its commercialism ("fortune") and hypocrisy ("sans avoir [...] pratiqué"), but also because of its ridiculous expansion ("à douze, des sottises à deux"). This Rabelaisian flood of endless self-generated language bears

resemblance to the discourse of Yuk ("des calomnies, des mensonges, des poésies, des chimères, des religions, des parodies," "Smarh," 1:202); and indeed to the fertile chaotic profusion of Mathurin. The text is in the process of rejecting such profusion, finding that a universal satire is better embodied in a discourse whose sources are multiple and anonymous, and silent about its own positions and desires, a discourse that offers itself as a mute fact, as a corpse in the midst of the festival. Which is not to say that mute presence is ever possible for language: earlier experiments in "Docteur Mathurin" with language devoid of significance suggest that it is impossible. The text has paraded the corpse through the hell of bêtise to purge it of significance: even the most courageous reader, the text hopes, is now afraid to interpret it, for fear of uttering a bêtise. The text now moves the meaningless corpse out of the "multiple organization" of the city in search of a language that can present reality naked.

The solution chosen is that of flow: not the flow of public opinion or of enraged satire, but the flow of human motion through the flow of Nature itself. The text describes the dawn, a new beginning after the chaos of the city. The description mingles pale light ("blancheurs [...] pâle [...] gris"), coolness ("fraîcheur du matin") and sweet odors ("parfum des foins"), as the disciples enter a path flowing like a river ("un sentier serpentant comme l'eau"). This image of a serpent implicitly pacifies Mathurin's

agony: he too writhed like a serpent, but in agony; the gentle curves of the path, the trace of a gentle human interaction with Nature, replace his writhings. The river like a serpent reflects "Smarh"'s nature descriptions, as do the images of moss, trembling leaves, and birds. But here, the specific details are mere synecdoches of the landscape, with little or no cultural resonance: "bouleaux [...] tremble [...] peupliers [...]" The gold of the first nature description of "Docteur Mathurin" has been replaced by silver, a metal associated with the moon ("la lune devint pale") and feminine reflectiveness, rather than the penetrating aggressiveness associated with the gold of the sun; but also, merely the real color of real aspens in the pale sunlight of dawn: "le tremble agitait son feuillage d'argent." Significance and artistic order are here muted, as if arising naturally and unobtrusively from the scene observed.

The noise of human activity ("un vague bruit de chariot dans les chemins creux [...] les pas [...] sur les herbes foulées") is mingled with Nature and reduced to sounds, sensory fragments only dimly endowed with a past or a purpose or with any other human meaning; even the words used to name them speak of absence: "vague [...] creux [...] pas." The central image of the text is integrated with the river's flow: "des îles [...] leurs bords tapissés de vignobles descendant jusqu'au rivage, que les flots venaient baiser avec cette lenteur harmonieuse des ondes qui

coulent." The language of this passage, with its long, slow phrases, which trail out in lengthened harmonious vowels, reflects the calm flow of Nature: at least for the space of a sentence, a language has been found which puts Rabelaisian profusion within Neoclassic calm; a flow has been discovered which is beautiful, but meaningless. The achievement has taken place within nature description; the text now attempts to integrate human activity within its form.

The disciples now stop where Mathurin will be buried: "entre la forêt et le courant, dans la prairie," equidistant from dark terror and endless flow, on level ground, "non loin de la treille [Rabelais] qui jaunissait [death] au soleil [Horace] et de l'onde [flow] qui murmurait [meaningless sound] sur le sable caillouteux [dissolution; matter] de la rive [at the edge of flow]." Now the final act of Mathurin's funeral takes place, accompanied by the harmonious flowing together of the human and the natural. Fishermen pass, floating with the current of the river; their collective voice is harmonious but free of specific meaning ("ils chantaient, et leur voix allait, portée le long de l'eau"); it is integrated with the flowing waters, which carry it, as it echoes along the banks ("et l'écho en frappait les coteaux voisins"). The disciples also sing a "hymne," for this ceremony <u>is</u> religious, although not in any traditional way; they sing not to a deity, but to all the mingled values of the preceding discourse: "au vin, à la nature, au bonheur, à la mort." Their voices also flow with

Nature: "Le vent emportait leurs paroles," and their bodies are passively integrated with that of their friend and with the trees (or the grapevine): "les feuilles venaient tomber sur le cadavre de Mathurin ou sur les cheveux de ses amis." The grave is not deep and there appears to be no coffin; Mathurin's body will flow out gradually and merge with the elements.[6] The only monument placed on his grave is that of "quelques planches d'une barrique cassée," fragments of past joy, which can never be reconstructed into a whole, but will themselves gradually enter the flow of Nature, a process they have already begun, given their fragmentation and random emplacement: "quelques planches [...] qui se trouvaient là, par hasard."

And the disciples drink again, breaking wine bottles on the grave, so that the flow of drunkenness and destruction merges with the earth and unites them with Mathurin's corpse: "Le vin tomba en bouillons rouges sur la terre, la terre le but vite et alla porter jusqu'à Mathurin le souvenir des dernières saveurs de son existence et réchauffer sa tête couchée sous la terre" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:227). These broken bottles are Mathurin's final monument: remembrances of happiness, and, as the text's last word has it, signifying emptiness: "elles rappelaient des joies, et montraient un vide."

CHAPTER 6: THE OEUVRE

"Les Funérailles du docteur Mathurin" has not solved all of the problems it has posed, but its successes have been substantial: it has recast the goal of "Rabelais" in a way that will be endlessly reworked in Flaubert's mature works. The new Rabelais must emulate Rabelais's universal satire without falling into the trap of Byronic depression; the mark of Rabelais's greatness, as Flaubert will say in 1853, is "calme" (à Louise Colet, [26 août 1853]; Corr. II:417). Pursuing Rabelais's skepticism leads to the danger, so well documented here, of merely repeating Byronic clichés and veering off into frenzy. An antidote for Romantic agony is sought in emulation of the Neoclassic tradition; Flaubert will continue to struggle with this solution throughout his life. For example, in a letter to Louise Colet of 1852, Flaubert says that the talent for universal creation of great writers like Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare and Hugo is often expressed in very bad style: "Ils n'ont pas besoin de faire du style [...] ils sont forts en dépit de toutes les fautes, et à cause d'elles." Having internalized their vision (including the "fantaisie [...] monstrueuse" of Rabelais), "il faut s'en séparer pour toujours" and learn "l'art de la forme [...]

chez les seconds (Horace, La Bruyère, etc.)" (à Louise Colet, [25 septembre 1852]; Corr. II:164). In the same letter, Flaubert praises Gautier over Musset for having "raclé des cordes plus neuves (moins byroniennes)" (Corr. II:163). Thus form as a way of controlling excess lyricism, which was a preoccupation during the writing of Madame Bovary, is posed explicitly in 1852 as it was worked out implicitly in 1839: Rabelais, purged of Byron, controlled by Horace and the Neoclassics.

The emulation of Horace has led to pastoral nature descriptions whose calm space has been used as a contrast to Rabelaisian excess, but not really fused with them; their more obvious ornaments (such as nymphs) are as ripe for satire as are the specific characteristics of any other discourse, so that sometimes Horace, in Flaubert's text, has been dominated by Rabelais. And although Mathurin's discourse has been called calm and limpid, its dissection of pretension has ended up being anything but calm.

As I have argued above, the problems in Mathurin's discourse are political: fusion with Nature in isolation from Culture is impossible; the discovery of a language free of the weight of history is impossible; separation from politics is impossible, since the mandarin-like existence led by Mathurin (or by Flaubert at Croisset) can exist only through the continuation of existing political dominations. Fusion with Nature in language implies fusion with language, and language is always rife with allusions both personal and

cultural; cultural meanings are always clichés. Flaubert has sketched out an image of fusion that overcomes contempt for the lower classes, although his text has not convincingly done so. His carnivalesque representation of people trying to make sense of Mathurin's corpse has implicitly leveled animals ("chiens"), commoners ("canaille"), and the upper classes ("citoyens"); it has shown that the discourses of the people and of the learned are different, but equally bête; and it has shown that the most heartfelt lyricism of Mathurin's disciples is no more or less beautiful than any other human sound when viewed as meaningless melody ("Des pêcheurs [...] chantaient [...] Eux aussi [les disciples] se mirent à chanter," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:226). Yet his very use of terms like "canaille" and his contempt for republicans undercuts any possible fusion with popular discourse.

The text's comic fusion with its sources, as it alternatively emulates and mocks, admires and attacks them, has already been tentatively extended as a comic fusion with its characters, as the text experimented with the style indirect libre when reporting the questions asked about Mathurin's corpse; likewise, fusions of narrator, character, and reader, operated through "vous" and "on," have created ambiguous spaces of mingling and reversal, notably, of gender confusion in erotic images of Mathurin's penetrating gaze and the fusion of the leisured viewer and the working-class observed in pastoral description.

The desire for fusion with Nature has opened up the problem of spirituality, although Flaubert seems very ambivalent about this. In "Rabelais," religion was part of the old world that had needed to be swept away, yet that sweeping away had resulted in spiritual poverty. In "Smarh," the monk and Satan were both defeated by the laughter of Yuk, although Smarh talked of "cette vaste harmonie qu'on nomme nature, poésie, Dieu" ("Smarh," 1:215). In "Docteur Mathurin," religion (or at least Catholicism) seems of interest mainly as the source of images of comic degradation; yet, as I have shown, drunkenness is at least once linked to spiritual longing, and although interpretations of the meaning of Mathurin's funeral procession according to particular religions are satirized in the text, nonetheless the procession <u>is</u> rather like a religious procession: it degrades something before its sanctification by means of a ritual that involves a song explicitly called a hymn. For Flaubert, spiritual longing, expressed as dissolution into nature, will continue to be an obsession.

Flaubert's desire for fusion with Nature seems, according to Bart,[1] to have passed through three phases: before 1845, tenderness toward Nature, tinged with pantheism; from roughly 1845 to 1870, embarrassment over his feelings of tenderness and the claim that he prefers art;[2] after 1870 until his death in 1880, an acknowledgement of tenderness, sometimes becoming almost openly erotic. We

have seen numerous examples of the tender, erotic regard for Nature in "Smarh" and "Docteur Mathurin," although even in 1839 this tenderness is already unstable. As Flaubert becomes more and more embarrassed about his love of Nature, he occasionally still refers to it, but only in a self-deprecating manner, such as this, written from Paris in 1862: "Croirais-tu que je m'ennuie de la campagne et que j'ai envie de voir de la verdure et des fleurs? J'en rougis de honte. Voilà la première fois de ma vie que ce sentiment épicier surgit dans mon âme" (à sa nièce Caroline, [6 mai 1862]; Corr. III:214). Note the association of the feeling of longing for Nature with a despised social class: the problem with expressing tenderness for Nature is that one runs the risk of becoming bête. It was during the 1870's that Flaubert noted with astonishment that he had been moved by Nature: "Tu n'imagines pas comme je deviens 'amant de la nature.' Je regarde le ciel, les arbres et la verdure avec un plaisir que je n'ai jamais eu. Je voudrais être vache pour manger de l'herbe" (à sa nièce Caroline, 31 décembre 1876; Conard vii:383-384), and by a Christmas eve ceremony: "J'ai été cette nuit à la messe, à Sainte Barbe, chez les bonnes religieuses, où j'ai conduit Noémie et Mme Chevalier. Voilà! N'est-ce pas d'un beau romantisme? Et je m'y suis plu beaucoup, pour dire le vrai!..." (à sa nièce Caroline, [25 décembre 1876]; Conard vii:380).

Flaubert's ambivalence with respect to both Nature and religion which, as we have seen, was present already in

1839, and, as the above passages show, continued in an attenuated form even in the 1870's ("je voudrais être vache"), ("N'est-ce pas d'un beau romantisme?") reflected in a comedy which alternatively identifies with and mocks its sources, characters, objects, and even the writer himself. Bart's construction of Flaubert's life into discrete phases is not exactly accurate; Flaubert's relationship to Nature is better expressed as the shifting relationships between a number of voices in conflict, in which various voices have the upper hand in various texts, whether these texts be literary works, letters, or Flaubert's own self-image. Throughout his life, Flaubert's longed-for fusion with the Other of language continues to circle around an embarrassment with bêtise.

Flaubert's quest for a transparent language, then, is a part of a larger comic dynamic that operates through reversals, travesties, decrownings, and fluid indeterminacy. What keeps Flaubert's comedy from "liberating one from fear" is his fear of allowing his texts to be seen clearly as a "great common performance," as the space where the "free and familiar contact" of all social classes brings about "joy at change" (Dostoevsky, 160). It is not until the writing of "La Légende de saint Julien l'Hospitalier" that Flaubert felt free to openly fuse with a popular source, thus overcoming his hatred for the bête. A brief examination of some of the most important scenes and themes from some of the works usually considered to be important parts of

Flaubert's oeuvre can show how, in the light of insights gained from my reading of "Rabelais," "Smarh," and "Docteur Mathurin," they can meaningfully be reread as comic.

For most of "Novembre," a single character speaks. Although this character ardently desires fusion with both Nature and women, he is by nature passive: "au milieu de tout je restais sans mouvement [...] aussi inerte qu'une statue entourée d'un essaim de mouches [...] qui courent sur son marbre," ("Novembre," 1:254), and he feels superior to the raging chaos of the world: "En vain [...] l'orage casse les arbres, les torrents roulent avec les sanglots [...] j'ai vécu dans une aire élevée [...] Il me vint bien vite un dégout pour les choses d'ici-bas," ("Novembre," 1:252). But because of his passivity he is acted on by Nature ("le soleil [...] dorait mes doigts," "Novembre," 1:253; "L'odeur des vagues montait jusqu'à moi," "Novembre," 1:256), and penetrated by the eyes of women ("Comme leurs regards [des femmes] nous pénètrent," "Novembre," 1:251). Unsurprisingly, his passivity leads him to be swept away by torrents of Romantic cliché ("Rêver l'amour, c'est tout rêver," "Novembre," 1:257; "Alors la mort m'apparut belle," "Novembre," 1:255) of whose banality he is unaware: when he imagines that all children contemplate suicide (not just all children reading too many Romantic poets), he universalizes and eroticizes the thought: "l'homme [...] aime la mort d'un amour dévorant" ("Novembre," 1:255). He believes that "C'est une des plus belles choses des amants que les cheveux

donnés et échangés," yet is aware that this is far from original: "Que de belles mains, depuis qu'il y a des nuits, ont passé à travers les balcons et donné des tresses noires" ("Novembre," 1:263). Ultimately the torrents of Romantic cliché are literalized: "Emportez-moi, tempêtes du Nouveau Monde, qui déracinez les chênes séculaires et tourmentez les lacs où les serpents se jouent dans les flots!" ("Novembre," 1:272); the manuscript is finished by another voice who concludes that the first text stops because its narrator "n'aura plus rien trouvé à dire," and tells us that the first narrator died torn between desire for Nature and love of the city.

In "Novembre," the first narrator seeks authenticity and cannot find it: his "superiority," which is a cliché, leads to his drowning in banality. This is profoundly comic,[3] as is the entire event that makes up the core of his text: the philosophizing in the bedroom of the prostitute, who is strangely able to speak the same Romantic clichés he is: "Souvent j'ai eu envie de me tuer" ("Novembre," 1:264). Born innocent in the country, she was rather precociously (at ten years old, it seems) erotically aroused by the naked Christ hanging on a crucifix: "À l'église, je regardais l'Homme nu étalé sur la croix [...] de sensuels frémissements me couraient sur la peau" ("Novembre," 1:265). The woman in "Smarh" was sexually experienced by the age of nine ("Smarh," 1:188). The prostitute's favorite readings are Paul et Virginie, but also les Crimes des Reines

("Novembre," 1:265). The narrator is like her: "Tu as donc souffert quelque chose de semblable?... est-ce que tu es comme moi?" ("Novembre," 1:269). Ehrhart Linsen points out that Marie is not only <u>like</u> the narrator: in a sense, she <u>is</u> the narrator: "Le narrateur [...] n'a pas aimé Marie, l'autre, mais seulement son propre moi incarné en elle."[4] Michal Peled Ginsburg notes a similar fusion between the principal narrator and the second narrator who completes the tale, as, for example, in the following passage:

> Il [the first narrator] pensait sérieusement qu'il y moins de mal à tuer un homme qu'à faire un enfant: au premier vous ôtez la vie [...] mais envers le second, disait-il, n'êtes-vous pas responsable de toutes les larmes qu'il versera depuis son berceau jusqu'à sa tombe? sans vous, il ne serait pas né, et il naît, pourquoi cela? pour votre amusement, non pour le sien à coup sûr; pour porter votre nom, le nom d'un sot, <u>je</u> parie? autant vaudrait l'écrire sur un mur ("Novembre," 1:273, emphasis added).

Who is "je"? For that matter, who is "vous"? The second narrator? The reader? As Ginsburg points out, "it is symptomatic that the fusion between narrator and character occurs in a discussion of birth and murder, creation and destruction [. . .]"[5] I would add: and of cliché; for the multiple travesties and inversions of "Novembre," as elsewhere in Flaubert's <u>oeuvre</u>, participate in the carnivalesque, but also in the fear of banality. Thus the fertile chaos that on the one hand leaps joyfully forth toward a "plurality without limit, without end,"[6] on the other hand pulls back in an embarrassed awareness that the dissolution of boundaries implies loss of distinction.

Yet for much of the "Novembre," Flaubert limits himself to a single, coherent voice, that of the first narrator, who is open only to Romantic ideas and modes of perception and is thus unable to see either his own limitations or the absurdity of his encounter. Indeed, Flaubert has here attempted a comedy so subtle that it is easy to miss. This is probably why critics have so often spoken of "Novembre" as a work characterized by careful, nuanced description and the nostalgic expression of the author's own memories. In the absence of a clear understanding of the relationship between observation, cliché, and parody in certain of Flaubert's other juvenilia, it is all too easy to react merely to the surface of "Novembre," and to take its claims to authenticity at face value. This is, of course, a valid reading of "Novembre" in isolation, or in the context of Flaubert's oeuvre as it is usually constructed; I have tried to increase the number of texts that are taken as canonical in Flaubert's oeuvre specifically to make such readings impossible.

All of Flaubert's works published during his lifetime show elements that are clearly Rabelaisian, usually in a dynamic relation to Byronic agony, unually half-hidden under a veneer of Neoclassic calm, usually engaged in a struggle for a transparent language free of bêtise. In Madame Bovary, perhaps the most canonical of all of Flaubert's works, Emma is unaware of the clichés that rule her life as much as was the principal narrator of

"Novembre"; but the carnivalesque interplay of the extravagant and the banal, the (dead) cultural and the (living) carnal is here much more visible to the reader, perhaps because of the text's openness to a multiplicity of influences and voices. The greatest achievement of the novel is the generalization of the style indirect libre: the complex fusion of the narrator with Emma allows a simultaneous degradation and elevation of her consciousness;[7] the reader aches for her and laughs at her at the same time. The Rabelaisian profusion in the descriptions of Charles's hat and of the Norman wedding feast sets the scene for the carnivalesque mixture of comedy and tragedy in the depiction of Emma, or the carnivalesque intercutting of discourses in scenes like that of the comices agricoles, which assimilates prize farm animals to faithful servants and political hot air to love-smitten sighs, thus allowing the reader clear awareness of Emma's bêtise, but also disgust at her victimization. The calm space of Nature is set as a background to Emma's textual excesses, but it is never completely free of her Romantic imaginings. After the first time she has sex with Rudolphe, she contemplates the forest: "quelque chose de doux semblait sortir des arbres..." She drinks in the peaceful beauty of the scene, but not in detail; and what she does see is immediately transformed by imagination: the sunlight coming through the trees produces "des taches lumineuses" on the leaves and on the ground; Emma imagines that they look

as if "des colibris, en volant, eussent éparpillé leurs plumes" (Madame Bovary, 1:629). In the reverie set off by the effect of low-angle lighting, Emma hears a Romantic cry in the distance. That is all, no other perception, no other openness. Perhaps it is significant that, just before the seduction, "les feuilles ne remuaient pas" (Madame Bovary, 1:628): for Emma, Nature does not speak, only language does; her eye does not penetrate, she is blind. When her Romantic suicide becomes, to her chagrin, a painful medical ordeal, she commits sacrilege, a fact the narrator lets us see, although she is probably unaware of it: "Collant ses lèvres sur le corps de l'Homme-Dieu, elle y déposa de toute sa force expirante le plus grand baiser d'amour qu'elle eût jamais donné"; and she dies laughing "d'un rire atroce, frénétique, désespéré" (Madame Bovary, 1:684). Emma can be blind, because the narrator can let us see her.

After Emma's death, Homais and Bournisien continue the battle of texts that has preoccupied them throughout the book: "-- Lisez Voltaire! disait l'un, lisez d'Holbach, lisez l'Encyclopédie! -- Lisez les Lettres de quelques juifs portugais! disait l'autre; lisez la Raison du Christianisme, par Nicolas, ancien magistrat!" (Madame Bovary, 1:686). Scientific rationalism, the last degraded heir of the Rabelaisian spirit which has "abattu le moyen âge" ("Rabelais," 1:183), is here locked in battle with the spiritual poverty which masks itself as reason. "Le monde matériel est pour le mieux [...] Mais l'autre? -- [Le

nouveau Rabelais] aurait beau jeu" ("Rabelais," 1:184).

From this point on, Flaubert would construct his texts as just such a battle of empty language; indeed, at one point during the composition of Madame Bovary, he had already dreamed of writing "un livre sur rien" (à Louise Colet, [16 janvier 1852]; Corr. II:31). Turning his back on Nature, Flaubert now plunges into Culture, carefully constructing complex texts like Salammbô, L'Éducation sentimentale, La Tentation de saint Antoine, or Bouvard et Pécuchet, into which his own voice does not directly enter, but which maximize cliché in a vertiginous erasure of sources, what Herschberg-Pierrot calls a "dérision de la citation" (61). The work of maximizing cliché maximizes bêtise, as in the scene at Fontainebleau in L'Éducation sentimentale: "tout ce coin de la forêt a quelque chose d'étouffé [...] on pense aux ermites, compagnons des grands cerfs portant une croix de feu entre leurs cornes, et qui recevait avec de paternels sourires les bons rois de France, agenouillés devant leur grotte" (L'Éducation sentimentale, 2:126); "Quelques-uns [des arbes ...] avaient des airs de patriarches et d'empereurs, ou [...] formaient [...] des arcs de triomphe, d'autres [...] semblaient des colonnes près de tomber" (L'Éducation sentimentale, 2:126). Nature can only be seen as culture, and ultimately, as politics; Nature is incapable of opening up a calm space outside of the noise of the city. The awareness of the impossibility of describing Nature in transparent language has been

undercut by the the description of the Seine in the first pages of the book, with its objects and anonymous people melting together on the steamship floating along the river that flows past the banks which "filèrent comme deux rubans" (L'Éducation sentimentale, 2:8). The seamless circulation of natural and cultural images ("rivière [...] grèves [...] trains [...] vagues [...] bateau [...] homme [...] brumes [...]," L'Éducation sentimentale, 2:9) is made more fluid by the repeated imperfects: "arrivaient [...] gênaient [...] répondaient [...] se heurtait [...] montaient [...]" (L'Éducation sentimentale, 2:8). In fact, the whole project of the book is the revelation of history itself as an empty flow: "C'était le peuple. Il se précipita dans l'escalier, en secouant à flots vertigineux des têtes nues, des casques, des bonnets rouges, des baïonettes et des épaules [...] comme un fleuve [...] avec un long mugissement, sous une impulsion irrésistible" (L'Éducation sentimentale, 2:113). This image of fragmented body parts and objects floating on a river whose voice does not communicate, but makes noise like an animal, is carnivalesque; but the text's contempt for the people ("le peuple [...] brisa, lacera les glaces et les rideaux [...] Puisqu'on était victorieux, ne fallait-il pas s'amuser! La canaille s'affubla ironiquement de dentelles et de cachemires," L'Éducation sentimentale, 2:113, emphasis added) keeps the potential joyful relativity of this scene of decrowning and degradation from realizing itself. Since the text's generalization of style indirect

libre makes the attribution of any opinion uncertain, the question arises of who has contempt for the people. Frédéric, who is viewing the scene? Hussonet, who satirizes the text itself by saying " -- Quel mythe! [...] Voilà le peuple souverain!" when they see "sur le trône [...] un proletaire à barbe noir [...] l'air hilaire et stupide [...]"? Who thinks the people are stupid? Would Rabelais disapprove of their antics?

The undecidability of these questions is a function of the fluidity of the text. The fact that Flaubert appropriated these hackneyed images and insults from sources which included popular histories and newspaper accounts[8] only displaces the question: did Flaubert feel more contempt for his popular sources, or for the people itself? The fusions in this text between author and character, consciousness and the thing observed, history and fiction reveal a profoundly comic vision of time itself as a series of fragmented texts. But running through it like the cry of Byron is an agony over the bêtise of those texts.

It is only in "La Légende de saint Julien l'Hospitalier," perhaps, where fusion most unambiguously and joyously takes place. The text is an ironic retelling of a medieval legend,[9] in which Rabelaisian excesses of slaughter undercut the pious tale; Biasi calls it:

> une vie de saint qui n'est que massacres et bains de sang, abattis insensés de bêtes innocentes, exterminations guerrières, et qui suit pas à pas la biographie d'un héros pervers depuis la plus tendre enfance, dont la plus éclatante action sera

> finalement d'assassiner au couteau son père et sa mère; la rédemption n'intervenant, comme on le sait, qu'à l'occasion d'une étreinte plus que douteuse où le futur Saint doit s'étaler sur la purulente nudité d'un Lépreux qui lui demande pour cela de se déshabiller, et qui peut alors, in extremis -- miracle --, prendre les traits rassurants du Sauveur (Biasi, 78).

Biasi points out that Flaubert wrote the text during a period of his life when his contempt for the party of order ("La politique devient de plus en plus abrutissante. Généralement on est exaspéré par l'Ordre moral," à Émile Zola, 5 octobre [1877]; Conard viii:83; "Quoique sceptique en cette matière, je trouve que c'est trop fort! L'Ordre moral [...] arrive à des degrés fantastiques d'ineptie [...] Je tâcherai de vomir mon venin dans mon livre. Cet espoir me soulage," à Edmond de Goncourt, [9 octobre 1877]; Conard viii:84-85) led him to an even greater contempt for the political role of the Church: "Je suis de plus en plus dégoûté de ce qu'on appelle la religion [...] Quel néant! et quel aplomb!" (à Mme des Genettes, [mi-février 1879]; Conard viii:203), which was resulting in the repression of thought: "Au Havre, on a interdit une conférence sur la géologie! Et à Dieppe une autre sur Rabelais! Ce sont là des crimes" (à Mme des Genettes, [18 septembre 1877]; Conard viii:76); "Tant qu'on ne s'inclinera pas devant les Mandarins, tant que l'Académie des Sciences ne sera pas le remplaçant du Pape, la politique tout entière, et la société jusque dans ses racines, ne sera qu'un ramassis de blagues écoeurantes" (à George Sand, 8 septembre [1871]; Conard

vi:281, emphasis in original). In short, "Les mots religion ou catholicisme d'une part, progrès, fraternité, démocratie de l'autre, ne répondent plus aux exigences spirituelles du moment" (à George Sand, [décembre 1875, après le 20]; Conard vii:282). Flaubert sees the reaction of the Church against Science as the revival of a voice long since dead, of "tout un moyen âge sombre et terrible [...] avec ses tyrannies pour les corps, ses entraves pour la pensée [...]" ("Rabelais," 1:183), in short, as a reaction against the spirit of Rabelais; what better way to fight the repression than to write a secretly Rabelaisian comic tale that would nonetheless be accepted even by the Church as pious: "les Trois contes de 'ce bon M. Flaubert' sont recommandés sur la catalogue d'une librairie catholique, comme pouvant circuler 'dans les Familles'" (à Mme Brainne, août 1877; Conard siv:24). Like "Smarh," "La mère en permettra la lecture à sa fille" ("Smarh," 1:186). The joke is played more or less according to the textual dynamic of "Docteur Mathurin": Rabelaisian excess, tinged here with Romantic medievalism ("ma petite historiette [religioso-pohêtique (sic) et moyenâgeusement rococo]," à Mme Brainne, 5 janvier 1876; Conard siii:234) is controlled by a calm Neoclassic style: during the composition of "Saint Julien," Flaubert was reading Voltaire; and also Sade (Biasi, 77). It is as if the images that poured out of the forest of Fontainebleau were organized into a text whose calm order only disguised the fertile disorder of its conception.

The text, then, is played out as a complex relationship to the Romanticism of Flaubert's youth, so that the bêtise of his sources is undercut by a subtle rewriting that exaggerates violence under a calm veneer. Yet by choosing to rewrite a sublimely bête legend in which a saint is a murderer, Flaubert, like a secret Garçon, fuses with what he is mocking. Julien's destructiveness links him to the Byronic/Sadeian universal destroyer, the embodiment of the universal destructiveness associated in "Docteur Mathurin" with Nature, but also with Mathurin's iconoclastic discourse: Nature and Culture here circulate in a destructive chaos in which they become interchangeable. Yet Julien becomes passive in relation to Nature like the first narrator of "Novembre": in the scene just before he murders his parents, seemingly supernatural animals that cannot be killed look at Julien with the penetrating eye of Mathurin: "Une ironie perçait dans leurs allures sournoises. Tout en l'observant au coin de leurs prunelles, ils semblaient méditer un plan de vengeance" ("Saint Julien," 2:184). Julien, penetrated by Nature, has become impotent, stripped of his exaggerated murderous talents; a cliché motivated by hatred for bêtes, he has been ironically penetrated by the bêtes' desire for vengeance. The text has become aware of what was already dimly present in "Docteur Mathurin": the rejection of bêtise is the elaboration of a Romantic cliché; destruction of bêtise backfires.

Bart[10] has argued convincingly that the ultimate

source for the image of the animals looking at Julien is a dream from Flaubert's youth, in which monkeys surrounded him: "Je ne sais jamais si c'est moi qui regarde le singe ou le singe qui me regarde [...] Ils me regardaient tous." One tried to touch him; he shot at it and wounded it; his mother scolded him: "'Pourquoi le blesses-tu, ton ami, qu'est-ce qu'il t'a fait? ne vois-tu pas qu'il t'aime? Comme il te ressemble!' Et le singe me regardait. Cela m'a déchiré l'âme et je me suis réveillé... me sentant de la même nature que les animaux et fraternisant avec eux d'une communion toute panthéistique et tendre" ("Voyage en Italie et en Suisse," 2:460). Bart argues that the embrace with the leper at the end of "Saint Julien" should be read as "a tender, fraternal, pantheistic communion with creation" (Bart, "Julien," 341), an embrace of the sexual beast of which one is the brother; I would argue that one should not lose sight of the comic nature of this communion: Flaubert was well aware in the 1870's that although he really loved Nature, his love of Nature was really a cliché. His fusion with cliché is played out as the fusion with a <u>bête</u> source; for his own latent Romanticism makes him, too, <u>bête</u>. And yet, and yet... the comic fusion with a source need not entail the destruction of the self. As Biasi has shown, Flaubert's rewriting of Langlois's description of the stained-glass window in the Rouen cathedral completely reverses a fundamental image: the devil in the window has become Flaubert's leper/Christ who no longer goes to bed

with Julien's wife, but with Julien himself. The scene reverses good and evil and confuses gender in a quasi-sexual embrace in which Julien must overcome his repugnance for the Other, and which echoes the Savage's muderous embrace of his prey in "Smarh": "-- Déshabille-toi, pour que j'aie la chaleur de ton corps! [...] il sentait contre sa cuisse la peau du Lépreux, plus froide qu'un serpent et rude comme une lime [...] Julien s'étala dessus complètement, bouche contre bouche, poitrine contre poitrine [...] et Julien monta vers les espaces bleus, face à face avec Notre Seigneur Jésus, qui l'emportait dans le ciel" ("Saint Julien," 2:187). Flaubert has operated a comic restructuring of a saint's life; his bricolage of its elements has allowed him his own voice. A tale about hospitality has become a complex parable of the embrace of the bête beyond repugnance. It is the textual exemplum of a fusion with Culture that is also a fusion with Nature, a transformation of destruction into the endless creation of new forms:

> le pouvoir de détruire n'est pas accordé à l'homme, il a tout au plus celui de varier des formes, mais il n'a pas celui de les anéantir ; or toute forme est égale aux yeux de la nature, rien ne se perd dans le creuset immense où ses variations s'exécutent, toutes les portions de matière qui s'y jettent se renouvellent incessamment sous d'autres formes et quelles que soient nos actions en ce genre, aucune ne l'offense directement, aucune ne saurait l'outrager; nos destructions raniment son pouvoir, elles entretiennent son énergie mais aucune ne l'atténue.[11]

The text ends with a stained-glass window: "Et voilà

l'histoire de saint Julien l'Hospitalier, telle à peu près qu'on la trouve, sur un vitrail d'église, dans mon pays" ("Saint Julien," 2:187). The window has been broken, as surely as the wine-bottles on Mathurin's grave or the windows in the crumbling cathedral in "Smarh." Yet Flaubert, finally, has owned it ("mon pays"): it shows not only a void, but a void which has been filled.

CONCLUSION

My "strategic intervention in the discourse about Flaubert" (above, 13) has moved far beyond its original project of reversing the unstable hierarchy of comedy and tragedy in Flaubert's texts, arriving at the vision of a fusion beyond opposition that is much more than "une neutralisation [...] au-delà des oppositions [...] dans la simple forme du ni/ni" (Derrida, 57, emphasis in original). My desire to write "as close[ly] as possible to the reading process" (above, 16) has led me to identify a number of voices I had not foreseen, and to see meanings that extend far beyond the simple reversal I had intended. I had envisioned bringing to the surface two voices, those of Byron and of Rabelais. But as I wrote, the text's plurality spread out nearly uncontrollably, with numerous echoes suggesting themselves in texts previous to, contemporary with, and subsequent to the texts I was reading.

Roland Barthes in S/Z has shown how a similar sort of reading can produce a plural in a text that tries to present itself as unified:

> Interpréter un texte, ce n'est pas lui donner un sens (plus ou moins fondé, plus ou moins libre), c'est au contraire apprécier de quel pluriel il est fait [...] Dans ce texte idéal, les réseaux sont multiples et jouent entre eux [...] ce texte est une

> galaxie de signifiants, non une structure de signifiés; il n'a pas de commencement; il est reversible; on y accède par plusieurs entrées dont aucune ne peut être à coup sûr déclarée principale; les codes qu'il mobilise se profilent à perte de vue, ils sont indécidables (le sens n'y est jamais soumis à un principe de décision, sinon par coup de dès)" (S/Z, 11-12, emphasis in original).

Interpretation can produce revolution in a text that tries to produce the illusion of stability; conversely, according to Bakhtin, interpretation can produce the illusion of unity and closure in a text that is open-ended and multiple:

> Monologization [attempts] to squeeze the artist's [. . .] plurality of consciousness into the systematically monologic framework of a single worldview [. . . Critics] surgically remov[e] ideological theses, which they either arrang[e] in a dynamic dialectical series or juxtapos[e] to one another as absolute and irreducible antinomies. The interaction of several [voices is] replaced by an interrelationship of ideas, thoughts, and attitudes gravitating toward a single consciousness (Dostoevsky, 9).

Despite the fact that Flaubert's texts are "a polyphony of battling and internally divided voices,"[1] numerous critics have been content to monologize them. Already in 1908, E. W. Fischer claimed that "Les Funérailles, like the other juvenilia, merely "donne encore une fois la preuve d'un profond scepticisme"[2]; Shanks read the broken bottles on Mathurin's grave as symbolizing "the ruins he had acclaimed" (3); more recently, Antoine Naaman has asserted that "[les Funérailles] prêch[e] la sérénité devant la mort, ce long sommeil."[3] As I have shown, Mathurin preached skepticism, as well as destruction, as well as peace; although fragments could be picked out of the

text to support Fischer's, Shanks's, Naaman's, or any number of other theses, I have been content to let the voices audible in Flaubert's texts multiply, even if their fertile profusion pushed into ground unforeseen in my original project.

My complete reading of the text of "Rabelais" has shown that the Rabelaisian voice in Flaubert's works was struggling as early as 1838 to become distinct from Romantic, Byronic voices: there are Byronic statements in "Rabelais," but there are also Rabelaisian emulations, and ultimately a call for a new voice that can surpass Byron to become a Rabelais for the nineteenth century. A careful reading of "Smarh" has shown the struggle between Byronic and Rabelaisian voices which take place on the level of language, as each tries to invest images with its own meaning. My reading of "Les Funérailles" has shown the dynamic relationship in this text between a variety of Romantic, Neoclassical, and Rabelaisian voices in conflict as the implied author, narrator, and main character parodically perform inherited discourses in an ambivalent carnivalesque travesty.

Since my reading has been an intervention in an existing discourse with existing rules, I have to my dismay found myself required to participate too often in practices I deplore: extensive quotations from the correspondence, as if it contained the "truth" about Flaubert; texts dismembered to supply quotations; authorities cited as if

their status were different from that of any other text. Perhaps this aspect of my method has failed because there was a contradiction within my project: interventions must operate according to the conventions of the system they are disrupting; the conventions of the present system do not normally allow one to read texts whole and polyphonically, without hierarchies or authorities.

Yet maybe a complex and contradictory method was completely appropriate. By putting a text as multiple as "Les Funérailles" at the center of my reading of Flaubert, then letting the text suggest as many routes as possible into the surrounding discourse and following these routes no matter how much they meandered, I have perhaps increased the number of voices audible in Flaubert's other texts, even texts as allegedly "autobiographical" (i.e. expressive, truthful, transparent) as "Novembre." Rather than revealing, as I had hoped, as simple a thing as the "comic" in Flaubert, I have found an abyss within his texts whose chaotic complexity cannot be summarized in a brief formula. Yet perhaps this is appropriate for an author who had so much respect for complexity that he felt contempt for the desire to conclude.

Nonetheless, I shall "pay homage to the generic expectation of closure" (Clark and Holquist, 348) by appropriating Bakhtin's closing lines from the last article he ever wrote, appropriated by Clark and Holquist to end their book on Bakhtin; let this parodic multiplication of

closures stand as a comic monument to the uncontrollable expansion of new meaning in which death and life merge into the ever fertile silence of the next blank page:

> There is neither a first word nor a last word. The contexts of dialogue are without limit. They extend into the deepest past and the most distant future. Even meanings born in dialogues of the remotest past will never be finally grasped once and for all, for they will always be renewed in later dialogue. At any present moment of the dialogue there are great masses of forgotten meanings, but these will be recalled again at a given moment in the dialogue's later course when it will be given new life. For nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will someday have its homecoming festival.[4]

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: WRITING CLOSE TO READING: DIALOGIC CRITICISM

[1] "The easiest thing to do would be to make believe that half of Flaubert did not exist" (Lawrence R. Schehr, "Salammbô as the Novel of Alterity," Nineteenth-Century French Studies 17.3-4 [1988-9]: 352).

[2] Ginsburg has made a similar point: "The traditional studies of Flaubert's work are basically of two kinds: one deals with the entire oeuvre in order to show Flaubert's growth as a writer; the other kind aims to show the thematic unity of the corpus as a whole [. . . Critics who produce the former kind of studies] always shape their concept of development according to a certain aesthetic criterion [. . . Those who produce the latter see] the unity of the oeuvre in terms of a set of ideas that receive a more complete and satisfactory expression from one work to the next" (Michal Peled Ginsburg, Flaubert Writing: A Study in Narrative Strategies [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986], 3-4. Further references to this work will be in the form Ginsburg, Flaubert Writing, page.

[3] Maurice Nadeau, Gustave Flaubert Écrivain (Paris: Denoël, 1969), 39.

[4] I do not believe, however, that author's statements are authoritative as regards interpretations of works: I shall treat this question later in this chapter.

[5] Shoshana Felman, "Gustave Flaubert: folie et cliché," in her La Folie et la chose littéraire (Paris: Seuil, 1976), 157-216.

[6] Answering questions after his presentation, "Le Nouveau roman existe-t-il?" at the Colloque de Cerisy in 1971, Jean Ricardou admitted that: "Vous avez raison de souligner que le roman moderne n'est guère un bloc monolithique. Il y a lieu de marquer des clivages. C'est ainsi, pour fixer les idées, que je proposerai un rapide schéma":

Âge classique	Âge romantique	Âge moderne
Rhétorique	Expression Représentation	Production

(Jean Ricardou, "Le Nouveau roman existe-t-il?" in Nouveau roman: Hier, aujourd'hui, ed. Jean Ricardou and Françoise Rossum-Guyon, 2 vols. [Paris: 10/18, 1972], 22). Alain Robbe-Grillet made similar claims about the history of the novel: "C'est donc tout le langage littéraire qui devrait changer, qui déjà change [...] l'adjectif optique [...] montre probablement le chemin difficile d'un nouveau art romanesque" (Alain Robbe-Grillet, "Une voie pour le roman futur [1956]," in his Pour un nouveau roman [Paris: Minuit, 1963], 23). The temptation to construct a meta-narrative haunts even the theoreticians of the postmodern, sometimes at the very moment that they are critiquing the notion: "On tient pour 'postmoderne' l'incrédulité à l'égard des métarécits. Celle-ci est sans doute un effet du progrès des sciences" (Jean-François Lyotard, La Condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir [Paris: Minuit, 1979], 7.

[7] "Men [sic] may live more truly and fully in reading Plato and Shakespeare than at any other time, because they are participating in essential being [. . .] Objective beauty [is] still there [. . .] Human nature [. . .] remains the same [. . .]" (Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987], 380); "[In deconstruction and other forms of contemporary literary criticism,] the notion of enduring ethical standards has been rendered antiquated [. . .] Yet what is the goal of liberal education if not the pursuit of truth? If education cannot teach us to separate truth from falsehood, beauty from vulgarity, and right from wrong, then what can it teach us worth knowing?" (Dinesh D'Souza, Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus [New York: Macmillan, 1991], 179).

[8] Douglas Davis, "Artpolitics: Thoughts Against the Prevailing Fantasies," in his Artculture: Essays on the Postmodern (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 24.

[9] These essays may be found in M[ikhaïl] M. Bakhtin, Speech Genres and Other Late Essays, tr. Vern W. Moelle (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986). Further references to these essays and others printed in the same volume are noted in the text as Genres. It may seem here as elsewhere that I am using Bakhtin as an authority, thus undercutting my project. Let me say in my defense that quotations from authorities are expected in the present

genre; that my ideas were sharpened and focused by my reading of Bakhtin and Flaubert rather than generated by them; and that my construction of Bakhtin may have given his texts a meaning they were never intended to possess. My experience of reading Bakhtin is that of having hidden corners of my mind illuminated and given form; it is very likely that this is a projection of my mind's process in illuminating and giving form to obscure corners of Bakhtin's texts.

[10] I acknowledge that I am constructing a Bakhtin that is not quite the same as Clark and Holquist's (in Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, Mikhaïl Bakhtin [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984]) or Todorov's (in Tzvetan Todorov, Mikhaïl Bakhtin: le principe dialogique [Paris: Seuil, 1981]). This is partly because I privilege the late texts collected in Speech Genres (see note 5) and the chapter on Menippean satire added to the second edition of Bakhtin's Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, ed. and tr. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984; further references to this work will be in the form Dostoevsky, page). Perhaps because these texts were written after Bakhtin's rehabilitation, they are more direct and baldfaced in their opposition to normal critical preconceptions, and thus I find them more penetrating and provocative. In any event, my ideas about comedy and about strong reading and values have developed in contact with these late texts, and I find it difficult to give them form without having recourse to Bakhtin's name. Following his lead, I have tried to construct a reading that is a rejoinder, productive of further rereadings of his texts and others.

[11] Rainer Warning ("Irony and the 'Order of Discourse' in Flaubert," tr. Michael Morton, New Literary History 13.2 [1981-2]: 235-286) argues that Flaubert created a new ironic readership that has taken almost a century to develop; Pierre Bourdieu ("Flaubert's Point of View," tr. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, Critical Inquiry 14.3 [1987-8]: 539-562) prefers to see Flaubert as the creator of a position neither Romantic nor Realist that created a new sociological form of the art world. The task still confronting literary criticism is to find the reading methods appropriate for Flaubert's joyful nihilism, to find other than a tragic way to read Flaubert's irony.

[12] Cf.: "L'auteur, dans son oeuvre, doit être comme Dieu dans son univers, présent partout, et visible nulle part" (Gustave Flaubert, Correspondance, ed. Jean Bruneau, [3] vols. [4 vols. planned]. [Paris: Gallimard, 1973-(1991)], 2:204). All references to Flaubert's correspondence before 1869 are to this edition; they will be noted in the form Corr. Vol.:page. References to the

correspondence after 1868 are to the Conard edition (Gustave Flaubert, Correspondance: nouvelle édition augmentée. [Paris: Conard, 1926-1954]); they will be noted in the form Conard vol.:page. In references to volumes of the Conard Supplément an "s" will be inserted before the volume number, for example: Conard siii:23.

Using the correspondence at all would seem to stand in contradiction to the project of liberating the moment of reading from the control of hierarchically structured external texts; in my defense, let it be said that I have always tried to use references to the correspondence either to argue against hierarchy or to complicate the structure of the intertext of Flaubert's work and hence to destabilize meaning. The present text is an attempt to disrupt the system that assigns meaning to Flaubert; an unfortunate, if inevitable, byproduct of that attempt is the continual reactivation of the modes and systems of meaning-production that I am trying to surpass. By using the structures of the present against themselves, one may perhaps cause a local collapse that makes way for the future.

[13] My position here is similar to that of Ross Chambers: "Discourse always has the potential, realized by reading, to mean other than what it says (it is always open to interpretation); but also, the act of reading that produces discourse, in this sense, as ironic, has the power similarly to produce, within the socially constructed identity of the reader, an equivalent emergence of otherness that shifts the nature of readerly desire" (Ross Chambers, Room for Maneuver [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991], 235, emphasis in original).

[14] Given my background in the sciences, the similarity to the scientific method (hypothesis, observation, conclusion) is undoubtedly not fortuitous. It would be possible to link this sort of reading to the Enlightenment project of direct observation without textual authority, perhaps via Foucault on Kant, but such a task lies outside the scope of the present work.

[15] By "comic" I mean "the victory of summer over winter [. . . of] our own desires [over] the stumbling and blinded follies of the world of experience [. . . through] visualizing the world of desire, not as an escape from 'reality,' but as the genuine form of the world" (Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957], 183-184); by "tragic" I mean the sense that "merely to exist is to disturb the balance of nature," that "every birth provokes the return of an avenging death [. . .] when the wheel of fortune begins its inevitable cyclical movement downward" (Frye, 213). Life and death exist together; comedy celebrates the triumph of rebirth, tragedy the inevitability of death. As will be

seen, in Flaubert's juvenilia the forces of comedy and tragedy interact in the form of a struggle for dominance bewteen Rabelais and Byron. I will argue that in Flaubert's juvenilia, spring triumphs by revealing as empty the tragic opposition of the human and the natural; the triumph operates through what Frye calls "intellectual satire," a type of irony which "break[s] up the lumber of stereotypes, fossilized beliefs [. . .] and all other things that impede the movement [. . .] of society" (233). In Flaubert, comedy wields irony against tragedy.

Both the comic and the tragic world views are ways of envisioning death. Tragedy celebrates the death of the individual as a way of reasserting the "immutable" order of the world; comedy celebrates death as the scene of rebirth and the relativization of all possible orders. I call "tragic," then, the prevalent view of Flaubert's destruction of certainty as a loss, rather than as the opening up of a space for the creation of new forms.

The view that Flaubert is comic is a minority position, although other critics have advocated it: see, for example, Girdler B. Fitch's "The Comic Sense of Flaubert in the Light of Bergson's Le Rire," dating from 1940 (PMLA 55 [1940]: 511-530), and Suzanne Hélein-Kloss's more recent articles "Le Discours textuel du rire dans Salammbô de Flaubert" (Symposium 39.3 [1985-6], 177-194) and "Discours ironique et ironie romantique dans Salammbô de Gustave Flaubert" (Symposium 40.1 [1986-7]: 16-40). Édouard Maynial finds elements in even the most agonized of Flaubert's juvenilia (such as "Smarh," "Agonies," and "Les Mémoires d'un fou") that parody Romanticism (see Édouard Maynial, La Jeunesse de Flaubert [Paris: Mercure de France, 1913], 299-303). The majority of critics, like Nadeau (cited above on page 2) emphasize the blocking of desire by the "blinded follies of the world" (Frye, 183). I cite, almost at random: "Petitesses, misères, prétentions, bêtise, routine, monotonie et ennui" (Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, "Madame Bovary par M. Gustave Flaubert," in his Causeries du lundi, 16 vols. [Paris: Garnier, n.d.], 13:348); "le pessimiste qui fut l'auteur de Madame Bovary" (Louis Bertrand, Gustave Flaubert [Paris: Mercure de France, 1912], i); "L'impossibilité de l'amour comme l'échec de la révolution de 1848 [...] l'écroulement des rêves, des ambitions" (Jean-Pierre Duquette, Flaubert, ou l'architecture du vide: Une lecture de l'Éducation sentimentale [Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1972], 127, 176). I don't wish to prolong the echoes of the chorus of critics who bewail the loss of what Flaubert liberates us from; I prefer to celebrate the liberation.

[16] Jacques Derrida, Positions (Paris: Minuit, 1972), 56-57, emphasis in original.

[17] The examination of a work as non-canonical as "Les

Funérailles du docteur Mathurin" perhaps needs some justification. As Shoshana Felman states in regard to her examination of "Les Mémoires d'un fou," "N'est-il pas temps de tâcher de lire [...] ces débauches d'ébauches où l'écriture, en marge de l'oeuvre publique, se débat, s'organise comme travail [...] où l'oeuvre se fait éclater?" (170, emphasis in original). "Les Funérailles" is fragmentary, tentative; yet it is precisely here, in a "chaos [...] hors normes," perhaps deliberately "l'anti-texte d'un système canonique" (Claude Duchet, "L'Écriture de jeunesse dans le texte flaubertien," Nineteenth Century French Studies 12.3 [1983-4]: 301; Duchet is here talking about Flaubert's juvenilia in general), that one can see "ce qui s'est tu, ce qui s'est tué chez Flaubert pour que les grands oeuvres se fassent" (Leyla Perrone-Moisés, "L'autre Flaubert: 'Quidquid volueris': l'éducation scripturale," Poétique 53 [1983]: 110). What Perrone-Moisés finds buried in "Quidquid volueris" is Romanticism; but what is buried in "Les Funérailles" is not only Romanticismn and not only, as I will argue, Rabelais and Neoclassicism, but also that very fertile chaos of free-floating fragments that will be buried under the massive and well-wrought silence of Flaubert's mature style. In "Les Funérailles," the fragments are exposed, revealing patterns of conflict that can still be dimly discerned beneath the surfaces of more canonical works.

CHAPTER 1: A NEW RABELAIS

[1] I am indebted for the following references to H. Patry's article "Rabelais et Flaubert" (Revue des études rabelaisiennes 2[1904]: 27-39), which as far as I have been able to discern is the only thorough treatment of the subject.

[2] Also René Dumesnil: see his Gustave Flaubert, l'homme et l'oeuvre, 3e éd. (Paris: Desclée et Brouwer, 1947), 90: "Le Garçon est une abstraction rabelaisienne," emphasis in original.

[3] The Garçon was a humorous character invented by Flaubert and his friends in the 1830's, and played by them sporadically throughout Flaubert's life. The Garçon was the embodiment of bourgeois bêtise, but also the rowdy, vulgar disrupter of bourgeois propriety. Flaubert's ambiguous identification with and rejection of the Garçon is typical of his relationship to his characters, as is the ambiguous valuation of the Garçon's pompous stupidity and gleeful destructiveness.

[4] Jean Bruneau, Les Débuts littéraires de Gustave Flaubert: 1831-1845 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1962), 151.

Henceforth abbreviated Débuts.

[5] Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, Journal, ed. Robert Ricatte (Monaco: Éditions de l'Imprimerie Nationale, 1956), 3:247-8. Quoted in Débuts, 152.

[6] But are they? Both are foundations of bourgeois consciousness.

[7] I am referring to the famous "Madame Bovary, c'est moi -- D'après moi," reported by René Descharmes in his Flaubert: sa vie, son caractère, ses idées avant 1857 (Paris: Ferroud, 1909), 103.

[8] Perhaps the love-folly of "Memoires d'un fou" and its heirs is to be seen as a comic display of tragic signs.

[9] But also, of course, of fear; as Ernest Seillière reminds us: "Le 'Garçon', ce fut pour nos collégiens rouennais une systématisation des tendances bourgeoises foncières qui parlaient en eux la voix de leur hérédité et de leur éducation première [...] Le Garçon, ce fut cet ensemble d'idées traditionnelles et bourgeoises, personnifié par les amis de Gustave et conçu par eux tantôt comme purement odieux et grotesque, tantôt comme menaçant peut-être, comme prêt à les ressaisir à la dérobée" (Ernest Seillière, Le Romantisme des réalistes [Paris: Plon, 1914], 116-117).

[10] Gustave Flaubert, "Rabelais," in his Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Bernard Masson, 2 vols. (Paris: Seuil, 1964), 1:180-184. Unless noted otherwise, all further references to Flaubert's works will be from this edition; they will be noted in the form Title, volume:page. In close readings, page numbers will be noted only when the page changes.

[11] Algernon Coleman, "Some Sources of Flaubert's Smarh," Modern Language Notes 40 (1925): 205-215).

[12] Lewis Piaget Shanks, Flaubert's Youth: 1821-1845 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1927).

[13] The connection of truth to violence is what will lead to the long frustration of Flaubert's Rabelaisian tendencies; only when Flaubert learns to stop demanding a language transparent enough to represent reality without distortion will he be able to reveal his own voice. As I will argue, Flaubert's greatest achievement as an artist was his ability to slip into the clichéd voices of others in parodic insincerity.

[14] And perhaps an awakening of the senses: the sadistic eroticism of the process of interpretation will be

signalled later, in the discussion of "Smarh."

[15] "Ici commence une analyse profonde, délicate, serrée; une dissection cruelle s'entame et ne cessera plus. Nous entrons dans le coeur de Madame Bovary" (Sainte-Beuve, 13:352). Compare the contemporary caricature by Lemot, "Flaubert disséquant Madame Bovary," in which Flaubert holds aloft some internal organ or other on what appears to be a straight razor. The caricature, which appeared originally in la Parodie in 1869, has been reproduced, among other places, in René Dumesnil's Flaubert: l'homme et l'oeuvre, 3e éd., after p. 224. Flaubert's view of himself as a dissector will be discussed later.

[16] I will discuss the meaning of corpses for Flaubert when I talk about "Les Funérailles"; I think my remarks here are supported by the text, although I have certainly been influenced by Michel Foucault's discussion of the medical gaze in La Naissance de la clinique: "L'oeil [...] a le pouvoir de faire venir au jour une vérité qu'il ne reçoit que dans la mesure où il lui a donné le jour [...] le solide, l'obscur, la densité des choses closes sur elles-mêmes ont des pouvoirs de vérité qu'ils n'empruntent pas à la lumière, mais à la lenteur du regard qui les parcourt, les contourne et peu à peu les pénètre" (Michel Foucault, La Naissance de la clinique [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963], ix-x). This quasi-sexual ("faiblement érotisé," x) encounter between a passive body and the physician's penetrating gaze is: "[l]'ouverture, première dans l'histoire occidentale, de l'individu concret au langage de la rationalité" (xi). Flaubert's quasi-sexual embrace of his characters takes the form of an interpenetration of their gaze and his; but whereas medicine claims to be able to make the truth of the body speak, Flaubert problematizes the process of the penetrating gaze, ultimately leaving ambiguous the exact location and nature of the "truth" about his characters and their world. The development of Flaubert's literary process follows the pattern that Foucault describes for the historical development of clinical observation: "1. L'alternance des moments parlés et des moments perçus dans une observation (112, emphasis in original)." This alternation between expression and observation, at first followed rigorously in "Smarh," will gradually interpenetrate in the mature works as the relation between speech and external reality is increasingly problematized; as Foucault puts it, the next stage is: "2. L'effort pour définir une forme statuaire de corrélation entre le regard et le langage (113, emphasis in original). The ideal is one of a perfect adequation of language and the thing described, what Foucault calls: "3. L'idéal d'une description exhaustive [...] Au dessus de tous ces efforts de la pensée clinique pour définir ses méthodes et ses normes scientifiques, plane le grand mythe

d'un pur Regard qui serait pur Langage: oeil qui parlerait" (114-115, emphasis in original). As will be seen, this quest, for Flaubert as much as for the medical profession, will be lived out as the dismembering of human bodies; but Flaubert, far from believing naïvely in the perfect adequation of language and the observed object, will explore the ambiguities inherent in that project, ambiguities caused by the opaque nature of language as well as by the flowing indeterminacies of matter and experience themselves.

[17] Edmond Estève, Byron et le romantisme française, 2e éd. (Paris: Boivin, n.d.); see especially chapter 5: "Le Déclin (1835-1850)" (247-295).

[18] Alphonse de Lamartine, "Destinées de la poésie," in his Oeuvres choisies, ed. Maurice Levaillant (Paris: Hatier, 1925), 557-558.

[19] See Estève, 270-271.

[20] See Théophile Gautier, Les Jeunes-France (Bruxelles: Briard, 1886), xvi.

[21] According to the Conard edition: see Gustave Flaubert, "Rabelais," in his Oeuvres complètes, 22 vols. (Paris: Conard, 1910), 17 (Oeuvres de jeunesse inédites, 2): 149.

[22] And of "Smarh": I will later analyze at length the difference between their techniques for orchestrating various philosophical voices.

[23] The notion of a carefully worked style, mentioned earlier in the essay, has been omitted at this point in order to emphasize Rabelais's triviality and grossness. Yet it is this notion of style that will prove to be Flaubert's way out of Byronism. "Smarh," which includes Rabelaisian content in a form and style that is almost never Rabelaisian, fails as a producer of new work in a way that "Les Funérailles," which invents a form of writing I have earlier called drunken thought, does not. This drunken thought is a part of the most fertile experiment attempted in the text, that of seamless flow. Later, Flaubert's broad satire will become seamless on the level of style as it incorporates multifarious sources into a fluid mass of unattributable points of view.

[24] Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, tr. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968). Henceforth abbreviated Rabelais.

[25] In his discussion of comedy as spring, Northrop Frye invokes Saturnalia in a way reminiscent of Bakhtin's

theory of carnival as utopia: "the hero's society is a Saturnalia, a reversal of social standards which recalls a golden age" (Frye, 171).

[26] Although Bakhtin is certainly right that the Romantic grotesque reduced the fertile, creative aspect of carnival, he is not right in asserting that this aspect was completely eliminated by the Romantics: "laughter was cut down to [. . .] irony" (Rabelais, 38) certainly; but in the view of Friedrich Schlegel, who is usually credited with inventing what is now called Romantic irony, the destructiveness of irony is "a vital step for [. . .] subsequent re-creation" (Lilian R. Furst, Fictions of Romantic Irony [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984], 28). The ambivalent creativeness/destructiveness of Romantic irony is signalled also by Lloyd Bishop: "By playfully de-creating the forms and myths he has just created and then re-creating ever new forms and myths, [the Romantic ironist] is involved in a process of exer-expanding consciousness" (Lloyd Bishop, Romantic Irony in French Literature from Diderot to Beckett [Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1989], 9); he or she is thus a creative participant in a universe viewed as "infinite, as a dynamic and creative process of change, becoming, and organic growth" (Bishop, 15). Ultimately, Romantic irony is utopian, according to Furst: "the 'open ideology', nurtured by the rising young generation of Romantics, tolerated -- indeed welcomed -- disorder, flux, mystery, and fragmentariness as the elements of that creative chaos from which a better new world could be shaped" (Furst, 37). Bishop rightly points out that Bakhtin's view of the novel is very similar to Schlegel's: "just as it was for Schlegel, the novel, for Bakhtin, is not a fully developed, finished, or completed genre [. . .] With its infectious spirit of renovation the novel's novelization of the other genres over which it has become dominant makes them freer and more flexible in form as they become permeated with laughter, irony, humor, and self-parody" (Bishop, 206). Granted, French Romantics tended to hold a negative, destructive view of this chaos: "French authors of the Romantic period [. . .] used romantic irony in large measure for its negative charge" (Bishop, 9); nonetheless, "French romantic irony [. . .] is a rejection of the tragic mode" (Bishop, 10). Flaubert, in "Smarh" and "Les Funérailles," reinterprets Romanticism's fertile chaos through the lens of Rabelais, hence resurrecting the joyful, creative forces buried in it; yet the destructive side of Romanticism's ambivalent attitude toward chaos continually reasserts itself, threatening to swallow up what has been wrenched from it. It is not necessary to accept, with Bakhtin and so many others, Romanticism's view of this constant struggle against dissolution as agony; one can insist on seeing it as a continuously joyful creation. "Il faut imaginer Sisyphe

heureux" (Albert Camus, Le Mythe de Sisyphe, in his Essais, ed. Roger Quillot and Louis Faucon [Paris: Gallimard, 1965], 198).

[27] Eric Gans argues that Flaubert's juvenilia even before 1838 can be characterized as "the emptying out of [. . .] Romantic forms" (Eric Gans, The Discovery of Illusion: Flaubert's Early Works, 1835-1837 [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971], v), as "a process of negation whereby the Romantic world view, at first accepted unquestioningly, is eventually discredited and repudiated" (3). The Romantic rejection of all roles in society entails also that of the Romantic poet, who "begins to appear not superior, but actually inferior, to the youthful writer" (9, emphasis in original).

Gans does not discuss Rabelais at any length, but then he is writing about only those works composed between 1835 and 1837. Although the epigraph of "Un secret de Philippe le Prudent" is from Rabelais, Shanks claims that the first of Flaubert's works to be importantly influenced by Rabelais is "Ivre et Mort" of 1838 (see Shanks, 53-56). Indeed, the epigraph from Rabelais is so cynical it could have come from a Byronic imitation: "Si on cognoissoit tout ce qui se passe chez les roys, l'on verrait de bien sales choses et moult couardises" ("Un secret de Philippe le Prudent," 1:70); and despite Shanks's claims, the drunken orgy in "Ivre et Mort" is unrelievedly frenzied and Byronic: "On dirait que Satan les pousse [...] après la passion, la frénésie, une frénésie cruelle, effrayante d'atrocité et de cynisme [...] C'est une orgie [...] sombre, sans cris, sans femmes, sans clartés" ("Ivre et Mort," 1:178). As I have said above, it is my opinion that "Les Funérailles," also from 1838, is the first of Flaubert's juvenilia to come fully to grips with Rabelais's joyful laughter.

CHAPTER 2: "SMARH"

[1] Bruneau analyzes the various sources and influences and concludes that "L'influence de Byron [...] est fondamentale [...], aussi bien du point de vue philosophique que du point de vue technique [...] Le Faust de Goethe semble avoir joué un role moins important" (Débuts, 205). This seems to me entirely accurate.

[2] Shanks states categorically that "Yuk is the Garçon" (87).

[3] Mario Praz, in The Romantic Agony, tr. Angus Davidson (Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Co., 1956) argues that the Byronic persona was modeled on the mixture of rebellion and despair that characterizes Milton's Satan, as well as on the cruelty of Sade's heroes. Both elements

in turn combine in the figure of Satan as found in French Romanticism, and in fact influence the whole development of that movement. Praz's contention that Flaubert reworked the Byronic/Sadeian tradition and transformed it will be of further interest in the next chapter; in "Smarh" the figure of Satan seems wholly conventional, with only that of Yuk bearing seeds of transformation.

[4] Shanks thinks that "Yuk corrupts [the woman] by defining [. . .] her half-conscious desires" (79). Indeed, in Catholic theology, temptation operates "only in conjunction with [one's] nature," when an "external stimulus meets with an internal resonance." This resonance is ultimately traceable to original sin, but it is given a particular shape due to each person's nature (R. H. Springer, "Temptation," New Catholic Encyclopedia, 18 vols. [New York: McGraw Hill, 1967], 13:1002). Yet it remains to be seen whether temptation is always injurious, or whether it can lead us to break out of outmoded forms and become more truly ourselves. As Gide says in Prétextes, "les influences agissent par ressemblance. On les a comparés à des sortes de miroirs qui nous montreraient, non point ce que nous sommes déjà effectivement, mais ce que nous sommes d'une façon latante." They reveal to us "une partie de [nous] inconnue à [nous]-même[s]" (André Gide, Prétextes, suivi de Nouveaux prétextes [Paris: Mercure de France, 1963], 12). Whether this awakening is considered to be good or bad depends on one's view of the forms of the present; I view such upheavals as salutary renewals.

[5] Most fully developed in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," in which the murder of an albatross by the Mariner leads to a season of penance and an ultimate redemption. The albatross is variously interpreted as an image of the poet, misunderstood by a hostile world (see Walter Jackson Bate, Coleridge [New York: Macmillan, 1968], 58; Bate attributes this reading to David Perkins) or as the representative of a pantheistic Nature: "The Mariner violates the bond of communion between man and the natural world, a bond restored, or partly restored, when the Mariner is able to bless the water-snakes" (Bate, 58). There is a possible relationship to "Saint Julien," especially since Coleridge's preface of 1800 identifies the crime as killing the bird "cruelly and in contempt of the laws of hospitality" (Samuel Taylor Coleridge, The Complete Poetical Works, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 2 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon, 1912], 1:186). Bate traces the figure of the Mariner to Romantic heroes like Byron and Faust, "who by violating laws acquire a depth of experience that others lack" (57). The image of a Nature, free, unrestrained, and unattainable, that represents a projection of the ideal Self that can only be owned through the violation of a taboo, is an image of Flaubert's problematic relationship to language:

he seeks a language wholly adequate to its object (hence "natural" or transparent), yet free of cliché (hence his, owned, original) as of bêtise (hence not breaking the rules of logic, syntax, semantics, etc.). To recognize the ideal Self in the Other is a problem for any writer (indeed, any user of language), since language is always inherited; that the solution is fusion with the Other at the risk of the loss of the independent self was apparently not clearly seen by Flaubert until the period of the writing of the Trois Contes, although it is dimly visible already in the processes at work in "Smarh."

[6] Ginsburg has had a similar insight: "[Flaubert] trusts in the capacity of language to express his subjectivity and therefore posits an adequacy between the subject and his language" (Michal Peled Ginsburg, "Representational Strategies and the Early Works of Flaubert," Modern Language Notes 98.5 [1983]: 1253; further references to this work are in the form Ginsburg, "Representational Strategies," page). This "trust" is not unproblematic, however; Ginsburg has more recently described Flaubert's textual practice as an overcoming of resistance to the representation of the self, an overcoming expressed as the gradually dawning awareness that "the self does not exist prior to its (re)presentation in language" (Ginsburg, Flaubert Writing, 7). To this I would add: neither does the world. Raymonde Debray-Genette, analyzing Flaubert's descriptions in Par les champs et par les grèves, notes that "le 'je' descripteur [...] ne doit jamais s'exclure de son énonciation"; not, however, because of any inherent impossibility, but "pour perpétuer le bonheur." For her, the result of this willed presence of the self in language is a fusion of subject and object: "Le sujet s'absorbe dans l'objet, sans jamais se résorber, puisqu'il est tout entier passé dans l'écriture" (Raymonde Debray-Genette, "L'Empire de la description," Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France 81.4-5 [1981]: 584). Implicit in Debray-Genette's analysis is the view of language, self, and object as originally separate. As I will show in my reading of Les Funérailles, the overcoming of the separation between the subject and the object in language is not a matter of will, but of the realization that language, world, and self are always already coextensive, however many versions can be given of their mutual separation and containment. This is the greatly more complicated awareness that Flaubert's texts repeatedly approach, flee from, and nonetheless always already embody.

[7] By "investment" I mean the creation of resonances in a particular word or image. These resonances may be emotional, evaluative, or metaphoric. After a discourse has set up these resonances, they are dimly felt every time an image or word is reinvoked. In a conversation, the meaning

of these invested images or words is disputed; the battle may involve all sorts of assertions, concessions or capitulations. The invested words or images may be invoked to elicit solidarity or alienation, or to manipulate. I have been inspired in a general way by Bakhtin's account of Dostoevsky's dialogism in Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, especially ch. 5, "Discourse in Dostoevsky" (181-269); but I invented the term and its content gradually evolved during the writing of this essay.

[8] Cf. Saint Julien's embrace with the leper.

[9] Or imaginative.

[10] This, it seems to me, is an answer to Smarh's description of Nature after his awareness of lust was awakened: Smarh claimed no longer to smell Nature's perfume. Yuk suggests the new perfume of lust, the answer he also gave for the woman's dissatisfaction with her husband at the beginning of the text.

[11] Madame Bovary comes much closer to the ideal of a laughter that liberates: we are aware from the beginning of the eroticism underlying Emma's Romanticism, so that we read her as foolish rather than as inexplicable. Thus we come to understand the power of Romanticism, and its danger, in a detailed, nuanced way that dispels the power of the illusion without manipulating us into despair; rather, it empowers us to resist manipulative illusions.

[12] Flaubert was aware of the cliché linking Byron to revolution as early as 1835: "Byron ne trouvait rien de beau comme la liberté [... Il voulait] relever le char de la Liberté de la fange où l'avaient enfoncé les tyrans" ("Portrait de Lord Byron," 1:49).

[13] Louis Goudall in Le Figaro (24 février 1856), quoted in Charles Baudelaire, Oeuvres complètes, ed. Claude Pichois, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 1:1081.

[14] Joseph de Maistre, Considérations sur la France, in his Oeuvres complètes, 14 vols. (Lyon: Vitte et Perrussel, 1884-1886), 1:55.

[15] Joseph de Maistre, Essai sur le principe générateur des constitutions politiques, in his Oeuvres complètes, 1:303, emphasis in original.

[16] Charles Baudelaire, Les Fleurs du mal, ed. Antoine Adam (Paris: Garnier, 1961), 418.

[17] "Puissé-je user du glaive et périr par le glaive!/ Saint-Pierre a renié Jésus... il a bien fait!" (Charles

Baudelaire, "Le Reniement de saint Pierre," in his Oeuvres complètes, 1:123); "Race de Caïn, tes entrailles/ Hurlent le faim comme un vieux chien [...] / Race de Caïn, au ciel monte,/ Et sur la terre jette Dieu!" (Charles Baudelaire, "Abel et Caïn," in his Oeuvres complètes, 1:123); "Toi qui, pour consoler l'homme frêle qui souffre,/ Nous appris à mêler le salpêtre et le soufre,/ Ô Satan, prends pitié de ma longue misère!" (Charles Baudelaire, "Les Litanies de Satan," in his Oeuvres complètes, 1:125). This section was specifically mentioned in the obscenity trial against Baudelaire as offending "la morale religieuse" ("Requisitoire d'Ernest Pinard," reprinted in Charles Baudelaire, Oeuvres complètes, 1:1207); Antoine Adam sees it as proposing a "révolte contre l'ordre social sous la forme d'une protestation contre Dieu et sa loi" (notes to Charles Baudelaire, Les Fleurs du Mal, 422).

[18] In this poem, the poet is inspired by "une voix que je reconnus bien [...] celle d'un bon Ange, ou d'un bon Démon" to beat a decrepit beggar, thus teaching him that "'celui-là seul est légal d'un autre, qui le prouve, et celui-là seul est digne de la liberté, qui sait la conquérir,'" a theory the poet sees verified when the beggar revolts against his treatment and beats him in return "dru comme plâtre" (Baudelaire, Oeuvres complètes, I:358-359). By leaving the inspiration for Revolution ambiguously either divine or diabolical, although unambiguously beneficial, and by making the results both liberating for the beggar and painful for his bourgeois tempter, Baudelaire carnivalizes the Romantic cliché; in the episode of the beggar in "Smarh," what is left ambiguous is the appropriate reaction toward the plight of the poor and, ultimately, toward the moral value of Revolution itself.

[19] Seillière argues that conservative political opinions expressed even in Flaubert's correspondence are in fact performed in the voice of the Garçon (Seillière, 105-107). It is the ambiguous attraction/repulsion for bourgeois opinions, which Seillière sees as integral to the performance of the Garçon, that makes it difficult to pinpoint Flaubert's attitude toward class politics. This ambiguity will trouble my analysis of Mathurin's discourse in Les Funérailles: the anti-bourgeois attitude that entails rejection of the cliché of bourgeois order also entails the rejection of the cliché of philanthropy and hence of sympathy for the people (further blocked by the people's association with bêtise). As I will show, it is precisely this rejection of sympathy as bête that will long keep Flaubert from consummating a vision of the fusion of Nature and Culture that is already present in "Les Funérailles."

[20] It is perhaps significant that the disappearance of the ego is manifested in the image of disappearing birds:

earlier images of birds seem to resonate with an ambivalent location of the ideal Self in the Other, perhaps because of an investment inherited from Coleridge: see note 5 of this chapter.

[21] I am using the term "multiple reinvestment" to refer to the reinvestment of an image by two or more points of view, so that the image is no longer monovalent, which is to say that it can no longer be judged monologically. The result of this process is the internal dialogicization of the image. Bakhtin calls this double-voicedness (Dostoevsky, 185-204).

[22] Max Milner cites the very passage I am analyzing here as proof that Yuk's laughter is cynical and sarcastic; his failure to see the fertile, creative aspects of this laughter is significant for our understanding of the recurrent negative evaluation of Flaubert's comedy. Milner, in his two-volume study on the Devil in French literature (Max Milner, Le Diable dans la littérature française de Cazotte à Baudelaire [1772-1861], 2 vols. [Paris: Corti, 1960]), interprets the figure of Yuk as deriving from earlier versions of Satan: "Dédoublé en deux personnages, Satan lui-même et Yuk, [...] le Tentateur présente des ressemblances évidentes avec Méphistophélès" (2:219); he specifically mentions "le dénigrement, le cynisme, [...] le rire sarcastique" (2:223) of Yuk as deriving from this figure. Blinded by the sources he recognizes, he fails to see the Rabelaisian elements that also lie behind Yuk, and indeed, behind the sardonic laughter of Romantic irony itself. Breaking up the description of Yuk's laughter as I have can reveal bursts of joy escaping from despair; Milner quotes the description whole (see 2:223), apparently not noticing details like "inextinguible" or "indestructible" ("Smarh," 1:202). In any event, Milner quite paradoxically adduces the connection of Yuk to the Garçon as evidence of Flaubert's belief in "le malheur fondamental [de] l'existence" (2:224). Using pieces of texts as examples to prove one's thesis promotes (selective) blindness; fragmenting the pieces and reading them end to end can provide a new version of the whole.

[23] And contains in germ a number of key elements of "Les Funérailles."

[24] As Richard says, "On mange beaucoup dans les romans de Flaubert" (Jean-Pierre Richard, Littérature et sensation [Paris: Seuil, 1954], 119). Richard links Flaubert's appetite for images, food, texts ("Percevoir, penser [...] c'est donc d'une certaine façon dévorer," 122) to his love of Rabelais: "Corps énorme, cousin de ces héros rabélaisiens qu'il aimait tant, Flaubert est devant les choses comme un géant attablé" (120); Richard interprets

this as a desire for fusion with the world ("L'objet se tient là, devant nous [...] pour le rendre nôtre il faudra le faire entrer en nous, nous pénétrer en lui," 122), an idea to which I will return in my discussion of the final passage of "Les Funérailles."

CHAPTER 3: BRICOLAGE AND PENETRATING VISION: VOICES IN "LES FUNÉRAILLES DU DOCTEUR MATHURIN"

[1] Dick Hebdige, Subculture: the Meaning of Style (London: Methuen, 1979), 104.

[2] Claude Levi-Strauss, La Pensée sauvage (Paris: Plon, 1962), 28.

[3] John Clarke, "Style," in Resistance through Rituals, ed. Stuart Hall and Terry Jefferson (London: Hutchinson, 1976), 177.

[4] See Hebdige (102-112) for examples in youth culture.

[5] Michael Riffaterre, Fictional Truth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1990), 91.

[6] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in his The Dialogic Imagination, tr. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 273. Further references to this article will be in the form Bakhtin, "Discourse," page.

[7] Julia Kristeva, Le Texte du roman (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), 139-176. Further references to this work will be in the form Kristeva, Texte, page. According to Gérard Genette, Kristeva invented the concept of intertextuality (see Gérard Genette, Palimpsestes [Paris: Seuil, 1982], 8).

[8] Julia Kristeva, La Révolution du langage poétique (Paris: Seuil, 1974), 340, emphasis in original. Further references to this work will be in the form Kristeva, Révolution, page.

[9] Kristeva, Texte, 197. Both Dostoevsky and Rabelais are listed, in Russian.

[10] Genette, 7, n. 2. In the English edition of La Révolution du langage poétique, Kristeva herself (or her translator, Margaret Waller) proposes replacing the term: "Intertextuality denotes [the] transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another, but since this term has often been understood in the banal sense of 'study of

sources,' we prefer the term transposition because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation" (Julia Kristeva, Revolution in Poetic Language, tr. Margaret Waller [New York: Columbia University Press, 1984], 59-60, emphasis in original).

[11] Compare Flaubert's statement that "La bêtise consiste à vouloir conclure" (à Louis Bouilhet, 4 septembre 1850; Corr. I:680).

[12] And at the level of the word as sound, but that is beyond the scope of this paper.

[13] Bruneau says Horace was on the reading list for the seconde, for Flaubert 1837-1838 (Corr. I:865, n. 5).

[14] Or so he said in a letter of 1839 to Ernest Chevalier: "Vivent les poètes [...] il y a plus de vérité dans une scène de Shakespeare, dans une ode d'Horace ou d'Hugo, que dans tout Michelet, tout Montesquieu, tout Robertson" (à Ernest Chevalier, [31 mai 1839]; Corr. I:45).

[15] Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Idiot de la famille: Gustave Flaubert de 1821 à 1857, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1971-1972), 3:63.

[16] She nonetheless foresees "rich rewards for future scholars brave enough to use [Sartre's literary-historical method in the first part of the third volume of L'Idiot]." Her defense of Sartre hinges on her assertion that "one may feel (I do myself) that whatever the reality behind the fact, this is the way in which the literary tradition appealed to Flaubert. There is at no period of Flaubert's life any evidence that he was interested in the socialistic ideas of Rousseau" (Hazel E. Barnes, Sartre and Flaubert [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981], 267). Arguing from feelings and lack of evidence does not give firm ground to an opinion.

[17] See Gustave Flaubert, Carnets de travail, ed. Pierre-Marc de Biasi (Paris: Balland, 1988), 953. Biasi reproduces a list of books in Flaubert's personal library at Croisset made shortly after his death.

[18] Jules Janin, L'Âne mort et la femme guillotinée (Paris: Flammarion, 1973), 33.

[19] See, for example, the letter to Louis Bouilhet of [20 mars 1860] (Corr. III:82).

[20] See, for example, the edition of the Carnets de travail mentioned above in n. 10, and Ann

Hershberg-Pierrot's analysis of a scene from L'Éducation sentimentale ("Le Travail des stéréotypes dans les brouillons de la 'prise des Tuileries': L'Éducation sentimentale, III, 1," in Histoire et langage dans l'Éducation sentimentale, ed. Maurice Agulhon [Paris: Société d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1981], 43-61), which show how Flaubert painfully documented himself, then laboriously constructed an anonymous amalgam of his sources.

[21] A few other voices are quoted in passing by the narrator, but these are either historical figures ("Grégoire VII [...] Jésus-Christ," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:220) or characters who speak only once and have no existence beyond their words and a brief epithet ("une historien [...] un athée [...]," or merely "on," "Docteur Mathurin," 1:226); for this reason, I don't consider them substantially different from the half-formed voices and echoes that flow through the narrator's text. The voices of Mathurin's disciples are obvious exceptions, but they speak very few words and are, in fact, nearly indistinguishable: both are given names only after Mathurin's death, from which point they are silent except for a song whose words are not reported. Other than the narrator, Mathurin is the only figure who has a fully-developed voice.

[22] The French translation of Melmoth misspelled the author's name as "Mathurin": see Milner, 1:291, n. 12. Milner posits the influence of Melmoth on Flaubert's "Rêve d'enfer" of 1837 (2:216-217); he does not analyze "Les Funérailles."

[23] See Nilo Idman, Charles Robert Maturin, His Life and Works (Helsingfors: Helsingfors Centraltryckeri, 1923), 267.

[24] Honoré de Balzac, "Melmoth réconcilié," in his La Comédie humaine, ed. Pierre-Georges Castex, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 9:267-310.

[25] Charles Baudelaire, "De l'essence du rire," in his Oeuvres complètes, 2:531.

[26] Charles Robert Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 23.

[27] Ann Radcliffe, The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 35.

[28] Although Shanks (93) is sure that Melmoth is the source of Dr. Mathurin.

[29] "L'origine des sources d'un écrivain tel que

Flaubert est certes d'un grand intérêt mais d'un intérêt moindre cependant que l'usage qu'il fit de ces sources" (G. M. Mason, Les Écrits de jeunesse de Flaubert [Paris: Nizet, 1961), 113.

[30] See, for example, the letter to Louise Colet of [7 juillet 1853]; Corr. II:376.

[31] Albert Thibaudet, Gustave Flaubert, 1821-1880: sa vie, ses romans, son style (Paris: Gallimard, 1935), 118.

[32] Benjamin Bart, Flaubert (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1967), 307. Further references to this biography will be listed as Bart, Flaubert, page.

[33] Caroline Commanville, "Souvenirs intimes," Conard 1:xiv.

[34] Jonathan Culler, Flaubert: The Uses of Uncertainty (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974), 204.

[35] Roland Barthes, S/Z (Paris: Seuil, 1970), 146.

[36] Bruneau, reading Mathurin's reverence for Nature and his last wishes, talks about his "épicurisme" (Débuts, 186).

[37] "Fieschi (Guiseppe), conspirateur corse [...] trahit à deux reprises Murat, roi de Naples [...] condamné [...] pour vol et escroquerie, il s'évada et vint à Paris, où il fut agent secret de la police, puis s'avisa [...] de faire éclater une 'machine infernale' [pour assassiner] Louis-Philippe [...] Il y eut de nombreuses victimes." He was beheaded; he had been pushed into the act by republican friends, but was not himself a republican (Grand Larousse encyclopédique, 10 vols. [Paris: Larousse, 1961], 4: n. pag.).

[38] Writing to Louise Colet about his Dictionnaire des idées reçues, Flaubert hopes that "une fois qu'on l'aurait lu on n'osât plus parler, de peur de dire naturellement une des phrases qui s'y trouvent" (à Louise Colet, [16 décembre 1852]; Corr. II:208-209).

[39] Homoeroticism is only briefly touched in this text; but "vous" could indeed be Alfred Le Poittevin, official destinataire of the text: "Prends [ces pages] donc comme venant de deux choses qui sont à toi: et l'espirit qui les a conçues, et la main qui les a écrites" ("Docteur Mathurin," 1:220). I have decided not to delve into this aspect of the text because Le Poittevin's relationship to Flaubert will remain obscure as long as their correspondence remains as censored as it is even in Bruneau's edition ("The

tone of these letters [of Le Poittevin to Flaubert] and the matters discussed are such that very little of them can ever be published" [Bart, Flaubert, 752, n. 17]; "Fallait-il [publier] les lettres d'Alfred Le Poittevin à Flaubert? Il ne me l'a pas semblé, car ces lettres apportent bien peu à la connaissance de Flaubert, sauf en ce qui concerne ses 'écarts de conduite' à Paris, avant les premières attaques de la maladie nerveuse" [Jean Bruneau, Préface, Corr. I:xx]). But this is specifically why they are of interest.

[40] Dennis Porter notes the frequent occurrence of sadistic dismemberment connected with the male gaze in Flaubert; he links this with irony: "To see and to know all there is to know about a woman is to see the 'reality' of mutilation and future decay beneath the lure of the flesh. The ironist's 'N'est-ce que ça?' masks the satisfaction of the sadistic as well as the scopic drives" (Dennis Porter, "The Perverse Traveler: Flaubert's Voyage en Orient," L'Esprit Créateur 29.1 [1989]: 33). Porter notes that this often gives rise to images that "captur[e] the oppositions of youth and age, female and male, aggression and passivity, sex and death in a single complex image" (35). However, he completely misses the joyful, creative aspects of such images, calling them instead those of a mere "demoraliser" (35). In his case this appears to be related to his reading of "the categories of voyeurism and exhibitionism, sadism and masochism" as well as "homosexuality" and "fetishism" as "pathological structure[s] of the adult human being that [result] from the unsatisfactory overcoming of the Oedipus complex under the threat of castration [in which] preliminary acts are preferred to the normal [sic] sex act" (25-26). This is, of course, an oversimplification of Freudian theory typical of American psychoanalysis; Freud himself often blamed such tendentious pronouncements on American puritanism in his letters to his more moralistic disciples (see Henry Abelove, "Freud, Male Homosexuality, and the Americans," in The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin [New York: Routledge, 1993], 381-393). Naomi Schor is guilty of a similar oversimplification when she calls for a divorce between the undecideability of irony and the "exclusively male perversion that is fetishism" (Naomi Schor, "Fetishism and its Ironies," Nineteenth Century French Studies 17.1 [1988]: 96, emphasis added). Irony is indeed related to the ambivalent acceptance/denial of dismemberment; but fetishistic fantasies of an absent/present phallus are not an exclusively male obsession. As Sue-Ellen Case argues about lesbian butch-femme sexuality, "the butch proudly displays the possession of the penis [. . .] to a woman [the femme] who is playing the role of compensatory castration" through fetishistic womanly masquerade. Thus two women are displaying fetishes to each other: "This raises the question of 'penis, penis,

who's got the penis,' because there is no referent in sight; rather the fictions of penis and castration become ironized and 'camped up'" (Sue-Ellen Case, "Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic," in The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin [New York: Routledge, 1993], 300). Fetishism is potentially everywhere because the phallus is nowhere, which is to say that as a fetish it can belong to anyone. Like drag, butch-femme "put[s] into question the categories of 'female' and 'male,' whether they are considered essential or constructed, biological or cultural"; it is "a way of describing a space of possibility" (Marjorie Garber, Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety [New York: Routledge, 1992], 10-11). Ironic dismembemberment is feedom, a place with no boundaries, the carnivalesque space of endless possibilities, precisely because it puts into question the authority of the father, whether this is seen as seriousness, or the weight of history, or the reign of mutually exclusive dualisms. Previous to the Oedipus conflict are always already the endless possibilities of the polymorphous perverse. The ironic generalization of dismemberment leads to the eruption of a free and indeterminate space previous to all constructions which I will later call flow.

CHAPTER 4: NATURE AND CULTURE: THE DEATH OF MATHURIN

[1] Perrone-Moisés points out that already in "Quidquid volueris" Flaubert shows an awareness of the problem of clichés adhering to descriptive elements. For instance, near the beginning of the tale, when the narrator describes: "la lune, à travers les grands ormes, que leurs branches entr'écartées laissaient apparaître limpide et calme," he (or another narrator) complains: "Encore la lune!"; however, he then ironically justifies the appearance of the cliché: "mais elle doit nécessairement jouer un grand rôle, c'est le sine qua non de tout oeuvre lugubre [...] mais enfin, ce jour-là, il y avait une lune. Pourquoi me l'ôter, ma pauvre lune? Ô ma lune, je t'aime! tu reluis bien sur le toit escarpé du château, tu fais du lac une large bande d'argent [...]" Having (perhaps purposefully) gone too far in his lyric effusion, he breaks it off: "Ceci est bien vieux! mais coupons là et revenons à nos moutons, comme dit Panurge" ("Quidquid volueris," 1:103). The incapacity of the narrator to avoid cliché in descriptions shows, according to Perrone-Moisés, that "le cliché, la bêtise ne sont pas les autres de la littérature, mais intègrent sa matière même [...] L'écriture se nourrit des zones mortes de l'individualité et des débris de la 'littérature,' cette superbe momie" (Perrone-Moisés, 121-122). I would add that the struggle between various voices in this passage and the reference to Rabelais earn it a

place as a precursor to "Les Funérailles": its comic play with dead literature is a celebration of the creative act, not a failure.

[2] Marie Diamond apparently thinks it is quite possible: she claims that Jules's "rejection of the romantic deformation of reality" in La Première Éducation sentimentale leads him also to reject the belief "that language is inadequate to portray reality"; she sees the episode of the dog as the trigger for Jules's renewed insight into the unity of the human and the natural (Marie Diamond, Flaubert: The Problem of Aesthetic Discontinuity [Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1975], 88-89). I agree with her that there is a link, at least in Flaubert, between the belief in the unity of Man and Nature and the dream of a transparent language, but I do not believe that "distortion" is ever avoidable, nor that the inadequacy of language to "portray" language is problematic. The dynamic relationship between language, bêtise, Nature and Culture is complex and multidimensional; its ultimate resolution is the realization that language, whether or not it is transparent, is a natural part of being human.

[3] This is a typical Romantic pose: "Qu'est-ce qu'une révolution? [...] cela casse beaucoup de carreaux" (Théophile Gautier, Les Jeune-France, xiv).

[4] Flaubert makes a great show of admiring Sade in the correspondence, although it is unclear whether and when he actually read him. Flaubert mentions Sade in a letter to Ernest Chevalier (15 juillet 1839; Corr. I:48) which was discussed above in connection with Flaubert's opinion of Jules Janin. In that letter, Flaubert asks Chevalier for a copy of a work by Sade. Yet Flaubert had already used an epigraph from Sade for "Smarh": "La mère en permettra la lecture à sa fille" ("Smarh," 1:186; see Bruneau, Débuts, 38, n. 118); the words of the epigraph also appear in slightly altered form ("la mère ne permettra pas...") in a letter to Ernest Chevalier ([18 mars 1836]; Corr. I:40).

[5] The scene is not structured along an axis that moves from inside to out, as in the earlier pastoral description when Mathurin was sleeping.

[6] Philippe Ariès traces the image of the cemetery as a place of contact with Nature back to the English preromantics like Thomas Gray, through French nineteenth-century poets like Delille (whom, it will be remembered, Flaubert intended to imitate, according to "Smarh"). The cemetery in this tradition is "un lieu de sérénité et d'apaisement" associated with the theme "de l'aurea mediocritas [...] pour exalter les valeurs d'une destinée obscure, d'un égal éloignement des grandes actions et des

crimes" (Philippe Ariès, L'homme devant la mort, 2 vols. [Paris: Seuil, 1977], 2:233-234). Here, the peacefulness of the cemetery is quietly invaded by terror through subtle reversals of images of Nature invested as calm in Pastoral, thus prefiguring the subversion of the Neoclassic golden mean by Byronism that will occur later in the text.

[7] The image is a Renaissance one: "les danses macabres [...] créées au XVI^{e} siècle sont à la fois violentes et érotiques [...] la mort [...] est animée d'un désir de jouissance, elle est à la fois mort et volupté" (Ariès, 2:79). I would specify, following Bakhtin, that such an image is carnivalesque.

[8] In fact, the only possible mention of "Docteur Mathurin" in the correspondence is the following: "J'ai écrit il y a une quinzaine de jours un conte bachique assez cocasse, que j'ai donné à Alfred"; this may be the same work Flaubert is referring to when he says later in the same letter that "le Garçon, cette belle création si curieuse à observer sous le point de vue de la philosophie de l'histoire, a subi une addition superbe c'est la maison de campagne du Garçon..." (à Ernest Chevalier, [13 septembre 1839]; Corr. I:51-52). I have already noted the possibility that all reactionary statements made by Flaubert can be taken as parodic pronouncements in the name of the Garçon; if this remark in the correspondence indeed refers to "Les Funérailles," Mathurin's reactionary politics need not be taken seriously. However in "Les Funérailles," as I have already said, the desire for stability implicit in the emulation of Horace implies anti-revolutionary sentiments, and the rejection of Byronic agony leads to the rejection of Byronic rebellion. Reaction is implied by the logic of the bricolage; that this solution is taken seriously by at least one voice in the text although it is far from satisfactory may be the reason Byronism keeps resurfacing.

[9] Flaubert would later attack democracy because of its pretense at having reached a conclusion: "La démocratie n'est pas plus [le] dernier mot [de l'humanité], que l'esclavage ne l'a été, que la féodalité ne l'a été, que la monarchie ne l'a été [...] Le meilleur, pour moi, c'est celui qui agonise, parce qu'il va faire place à un autre" (à Mlle Leroyer de Chantepie, 18 mai [1857]; Corr. II:719).

[10] See note 2 of this chapter.

[11] Donatien Alphonse François de Sade, La Nouvelle Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu, suivie de l'Histoire de Juliette, sa soeur, ou les prospérités du vice, in his Oeuvres complètes, ed. Gilbert Lely, 16 vols. (Paris: Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1966), 6:208.

[12] Foucault discusses medicine as a political formation that uses the observation of the body as one of the means of the State's control of the individual: "l'espace médical [...] coïncid[e] avec l'espace social [...] On commence à concevoir une présence généralisée des médecins dont les regards croisés forment réseau et exercent en tout point de l'espace, en tout moment du temps, une surveillance constante [...] liée à chaque existence individuelle, mais aussi à la vie collective de la nation (Foucault, 30-31); "la santé remplace le salut" (Foucault, 201). Awareness of medicine as the arm of the state has most recently emerged within AIDS activism: "the social role categories which defined how to be an expert, [. . .] or a person living with HIV/AIDS [. . .] tended to silence people speaking out of character. These silencing effects are grounded in the political commitments which cordon off the knowledge of science into an unbreachable, unquestionable domain [. . .] However, activists gained medical competence [. . .] This incursion into the protected domain of science resulted in [. . .] the rise of research subjects able to speak about their conditions rather than simply serving as agar plates" (Cindy Patton, Inventing AIDS [New York: Routledge, 1990], 51). The usurpation of the right to speak about disease in AIDS activism is paralleled in Flaubert's practice in "Les Funérailles," where what is usurped is the medical gaze itself. However, in AIDS activism, the enemy is AIDS, and only secondarily the political formation that sustains the discourse about AIDS; in Mathurin's discourse, the enemy is discourse itself: quite paradoxically, the weapons of medicine (reason, dissection) that reduce the body to silent matter are used in Mathurin's speech against medicine itself, dismembering it and reducing it to bêtise. Yet in Mathurin's final wishes (to be discussed in the next chapter), the results of the medical gaze (silence, matter) are reclaimed as desirable goals for the body. The imagined reversals of the structures of power in "Les Funérailles" are more complex than anything that could be realized in practical politics; one could call their ludic irresponsability "meta-politics."

[13] Jean-Pierre Richard develops the notion of the fluidity of Flaubert's texts in his Littérature et sensation, but his notion is significantly different from mine. My most important disagreement with Richard is that he sees the loss of self in flow as negative ("Eaux délicieuses, eaux dangereuses: tout bain présente un risque de noyade," 140); he links fluidity with weakness: "la faiblesse, la mollesse de l'être flaubertien" (148). Aouicha Hilliard pushes Richard's reading to the point of exaggeration when she interprets the theme of fluidity in "Smarh," La Tentation, and L'Éducation sentimentale as evidence of Flaubert's pathology, which she calls masochism

(Aouicha E. Hilliard, "Le Rythme de 'Smarh': deux modes contrastés du voeu de désintégration chez Gustave Flaubert," Romanic Review 77.1 [1986]: 58, n. 4) and schizophrenia (59ff). Richard sees "[la] volonté," "la Force" (emphasis in original), and domination ("le pouvoir qui dominera l'âme") as the sources of Flaubert's greatest achievement, which is "la vérité" (219); I think Flaubert's greatest achievement is his ability to slip into the flow of Culture in order to subvert the very notion of authenticity.

[14] Vaheed Ramazani, in "Historical Cliché: Irony and the Sublime in L'Éducation sentimentale" (PMLA 108.1 [1993]: 121-132), argues that the cliché in Flaubert tends to the sublime, which, following Kant, he defines as having two parts: "an initial affect -- anxiety, terror, or melancholy -- gives rise to compensatory energies such as exultation or rapture" (122). Awe at the power of the stupid collectivity "can approach sublimity through the motif of meaninglessness. In other words [. . .], the omnipresent specter of senseless violence and, more profoundly, of death ratifies the absurdity of history" (124). In the Fontainebleau episode, the "sublime representations of 'la nature éternelle' might well belong to a hackneyed Romantic topos" (127). My difference with Ramazani is that I see the tendency toward the sublime to be the tendency of the (clichéd) Byronic voice in Flaubert, whose triumph (when it occurs) is the failure of the project to be the new Rabelais. At the end of "Rabelais," Flaubert argued that "si le poète pouvait cacher ses larmes et se mettre à rire," despite the fact that he will have stripped himself ("se dépouiller") "de toute colère, de toute haine, de toute douleur," his book "sera le plus terrible et le plus sublime qu'on ait fait" ("Rabelais," 1:184). Perhaps "sublime" in this case just means excellent; but for the sake of argument, I will concede that "terrible" and "sublime" are to be taken, as Ramazani says, "straight" ("a straight reading of the sublime is [. . .] not only possible but necessary," 130); if this is the case, it is likely that Flaubert's destruction of cliché is intended to terrify the reader as would a force of Nature. But as I am trying to show in my reading of "Docteur Mathurin," this tendency toward destruction is countered by other, more orderly forces which tend toward an alternative view of change as not cataclysm, but flow; and in any event, at least in "Rabelais" and "Docteur Mathurin," destruction is the limit/subversion of an impulse that is in its inception joyous. Ramazani's reading is faulty because it totalizes one voice in Flaubert at the expense of all others.

[15] The Romantic cliché of death as the culmination of an orgy is parodied in "Le Bol de punch," by Gautier: "Faisons une orgie! [...] Rien n'est plus à la mode que l'orgie. Chaque roman qui paraît a son orgie [...] une

orgie folle, échevelée, hurlante, comme la Peau de M. de Balzac, comme dans le Barnave de M. Janin, comme dans le Divorce du bibliophile Jacob [...] comme dans la Danse Macabre du même! [...] vous êtes les aristocrates de l'orgie, et nous vous guillotinerons à la fin, entre la poire et le fromage" (Théophile Gautier, "Un Bol de punch," in his Les Jeune-France, 190-193); "Un bol de punch fut déposés sur la table [...] Des reflets verdâtres et faux couraient sur ces figures déjà palies, hébétées par l'ivresse, et leur donnaient un air morbide et cadavereux. Vous les eussiez pris pour des noyés à la Morgue" (Théophile Gautier, "Un Bol de punch," 212).

CHAPTER 5: NATURE, LANGUAGE, AND SILENCE

[1] This concept was inspired in a general way by Alan W. Watts's Nature, Man, and Woman (New York: Vintage, 1970): "Nature is not necessarily arranged in accordance with the system of mutually exclusive alternatives which characterize our language and logic" (6); "It is impossible to consider man apart from nature" (4); "Man is one with nature in a seamless unity" (5); "The knower is what he knows" (20).

[2] Which is what Culler says of the dog in La Première Éducation sentimentale (Culler, 65). The dog, also, is repeatedly interpreted, but escapes all interpretation. Culler says that the dog does not necessarily represent death, a statement with which I agree; but death fulfills the same role in life as does the dog in La Première Éducation sentimentale.

[3] According to Eugenio Donato, "The corpse [. . .] will always remain in a relationship of absolute Otherness to [any representational system . . .] the corpse destabilizes all the oppositions necessary to maintain the economy of the dialectical operation [between life and death]"; he claims that the corpse has a "subversive role in relation to any operation that aims at recapturing the lost object in a belated rememoration" (Eugenio Donato, The Script of Decadence [New York: Oxford University Press, 1993], 199-200). The corpse causes death to escape any meaning we give it.

[4] This was the desire of Saint Antoine: "Je voudrais... être la matière!" (La Tentation de saint Antoine, version définitive, 1:571).

[5] Huizinga, J[ohan]. Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-element in Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), 81. "Zeus holds the divine decrees of fate and justice in the same balance" (81).

[6] According to Philippe Ariès, the image of death as a "dissolution commune dans le travail perpetuel de la nature [...] dans un flux perpetuel" (Ariès, 2:155) was a cliché of British and North American Romanticism, although it was common in France only during the late Enlightenment. In France it was associated with the "mythe Rousseauiste de la ville corrompue opposée à la campagne proche de la nature," where there was "une tradition de famialiarité avec la mort" (Ariès, 2:120). On the other hand, Romanticism in France tended toward "grands deuils [...] dramatiques mises en scène [...] une sorte d'apothéose baroque, qu'aucun auteur baroque n'aurait inventé" (Ariès, 2:120-121).

At the extreme limit of the Enlightenment idea of death as dissolution into the flow of Nature stands the will of the Marquis de Sade, who asked that his corpse be carried on a wood merchant's cart "au bois de ma terre [...] où je veux qu'il soit placé sans aucune cérémonie, dans le premier taillis fourré qui se trouve à droite." The tomb was to be dug by a farmer; the wood merchant was to watch until the corpse was covered over, accompanied by any of Sade's friends or family who wished to participate "dans cette cérémonie [...] sans aucune espèce d'appareil." The tomb was to be sown with acorns, so that "les traces de ma tombe disparaissent de dessus la terre, comme je me flatte que ma mémoire s'effacera de l'esprit des hommes" (see Gilbert Lely, Sade: Études sur sa vie et sur son oeuvre [Paris: Gallimard, 1967], 350-352).

Fusion with Nature's endless creation of new forms that is also a destruction of the old, marked only by a gradual disappearance into silence: Sade's will is similar in many ways to Mathurin's last wishes. It is of course nearly impossible that Sade's will could have been a "source" for Mathurin. Perhaps Flaubert knew a distant cousin of the will: similar ideas were not uncommon in literature produced around 1800 (Ariès, 2:62), and reduced forms of the notion appeared in later French Romantic literature: "un héros fait pousser d'excellents petits pois" (Gautier, Les Jeune-France, xiv). In any event, Sade seems to be everywhere secretly present as a dimly desired ancestor in this work; the extreme development of his perversion of Enlightenment ideas of Nature have perhaps arisen spontaneously in "Les Funérailles" as the child of the interaction of the voices of Sade's heir (Byron) and his ancestor (Rabelais) with the distant source (Horace) of his contemporary adversaries (the Neoclassics). In any event, Flaubert's complex bricolage has unveiled a problematic far richer and more suggestive than anything in Sade's labored polemic.

CHAPTER 6: THE OEUVRE

[1] Benjamin Bart, "Psyche into Myth: Humanity and Animality in Flaubert's 'Saint Julien'" (Kentucky Review Quarterly 20.3 [1973]: 317-342), see especially pp. 336-338.

[2] Terdiman explains the withdrawal of Flaubert from the desire for fusion in another way in his analysis of Flaubert's attempted penetration of the cultural Other during his trip to the Orient in 1849-51. Flaubert found that the Orient, like Marie in "Novembre" or Nature itself, had already been penetrated and appropriated, so that all that could be found there was the already-said, like the European graffiti carved into Egyptian monuments or the clichés he found himself writing: "since the Orient which Flaubert could visit was already objectively penetrated, his account of it opens itself to the ineluctable discourse of Europe" (Richard Terdiman, Discourse/ Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France [Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985], 243). Terdiman sees this trip as the decisive moment when Flaubert withdrew from the quest for Romantic otherness to begin in earnest his subversive work on language itself. I am not convinced that Flaubert's life can be periodized so neatly. In any event the relationship in Flaubert between Nature and Culture, penetration and withdrawal, the exotic and the banal needs to be more thoroughly explored in the context to Flaubert's pansexual frolics in Egypt: see Joseph A. Boone, "Mappings of Male Desire in Durrell's Alexandria Quartet," in Displacing Homophobia: Gay Male Perspectives in Literature and Culture, ed. Ronald R. Butters, John M. Clum, and Michael Moon (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), especially 80-83.

[3] Shoshana Felman argues that Flaubert's project in "Novembre" is a deconstruction of the cliché: "travaillant dans le cliché [...] l'écriture se détermine, et s'appréhende, non plus comme une précipitation aveugle vers la signification, un rapport naïf at précritique au signifié, mais comme une relation complexe, critique, au signifiant" (198). According to Felman, Flaubert's insight is that "le seul réel indiscutable [...] c'est la puissance toute linguistique de l'illusion référentielle [...] commune [...] au réalisme et au romantisme: l'un croit à la représentation de la société, et l'autre à celle de la subjectivité" (212). It would seem, then, that despite Felman's insight that "toute pratique linguistique répétitive véhicule une puissance d'hypnose, qui induit l'individu à des comportements sociaux et mentaux stéréotypés dans lequel il abdique sa subjectivité (164; Felman is analyzing "Un coeur simple"), she believes that such abdication is impossible to avoid. The terrifying vision she evokes, of mankind trapped in a linguistic order

that forever alienates it from itself and from the natural world, is indeed present in Flaubert; but there is also present a playful delight in parody, a comic mocking of tragic masks, a drunken delight in the multifarious complexity of inherited culture. To be fair, Felman admits that her project of attacking the readability of the literary text ("la chose littéraire [...] est précisément la spécificité même de sa résistance à notre lecture") is a means of opening up the space for an "interpretation à venir" (350, emphasis in original). But her description of Flaubert's texts could have included the joy of new birth that is everywhere also present in Flaubert's joyfully ambivalent destruction.

Victor Brombert has also emphasized the role of cliché in "Novembre", asserting, for example, that "l'inventaire des thèmes se joue ironiquement de conventions fatiguées" (Victor Brombert, "Usure et rupture chez Flaubert: L'exemple de "Novembre," in Essais sur Flaubert en l'honneur du professeur Don Demorest, ed. Charles Carlut [Paris: Nizet, 1979], but like Felman he fails to see the humor that underlies the posturing.

[4] Erhart Linsen, "Le narcissisme dans les oeuvres de jeunesse de Gustave Flaubert," Romantistische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte 12.3-4 (1988): 384.7

[5] Ginsburg, "Representational Strategies," 1258.

[6] Ginsburg, Flaubert Writing, 184.

[7] Flaubert in 1854 defined "le sens comique" as "le dédain et la compréhension mêlées" (à Louise Colet, [2 mars 1854]; Corr. II:529).

[8] Herschberg-Pierrot lists as the primary sources of the episode "notations personnelles [...] notes de Du Camp, souvenirs de témoins, récits des mémorialistes [...] journaux de 1848, et le 'on dit' de 1848, dont les stéréotypes marquent l'insertion" (Herschberg-Pierrot, 45).

[9] Flaubert's medieval and Romantic sources for the tale are exhaustively explored in Benjamin Bart and Francis Cook, The Legendary Sources of Flaubert's "Saint Julien" (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); further references to this work are in the form Bart, "Julien," page. Biasi convincingly demonstrates that the major source is E. H. Langlois's Essai historique et descriptif sur la peinture sur verre, etc. (Rouen: Édouard, 1832): see Pierre-Marc de Biasi, "Le Palimpseste hagiographique: l'appropriation ludique des sources édifantes dans la rédaction de 'La Légende de saint Julien l'Hospitalier'" (Revue des Lettres Modernes 777-781 [1986]: 69-124). Further references to this article are in the form Biasi,

page.

[10] See note 1 of this chapter.

[11] Donatien Alphonse François de Sade, Les Infortunes de la vertu (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1969), 86.

CONCLUSION

[1] Bakhtin, Dostoevsky, 250. Bakhtin is talking about Dostoevsky; I think I have shown that the words can also meaningfully be applied to Flaubert.

[2] E. W. Fischer, Études sur Flaubert inédit, tr. Benjamin Ortler, Caroline Franklin-Grout, and François d'Aiguy (Leipzig: Julius Zeitler, 1908), 3.

[3] Antoine Youssef Naaman, Les Débuts de Gustave Flaubert et sa technique de la description (Paris: Nizet, 1962), 133.

[4] M[ixail] M. Baxtin, "K metodologii gumanitarnyx nauk," Èstetika slovesnogo tvorčetva (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1979), 373, quoted in translation in Clark and Holquist, 348-350.

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--------. "La Légende de saint Julien l'Hospitalier." Oeuvres complètes. Ed. Masson. 2: 178-187.

--------. Madame Bovary. Oeuvres complètes. Ed. Masson. 1: 573-694.

--------. "Novembre." Oeuvres complètes. Ed. Masson. 1: 247-276.

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