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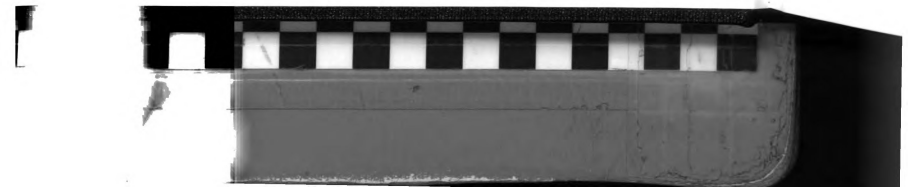

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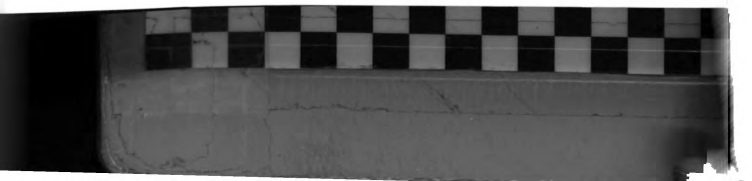

FEMALE PYGMALION FIGURES IN FRENCH LITERATURE

by

Vicki Lee DeVries

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ABSTRACT

FEMALE PYGMALION FIGURES IN FRENCH LITERATURE

By

Vicki Lee DeVries

Ovid's Pygmalion in *Metamorphoses* X creates a lover without the faults of the women of his society. Throughout French literature, female Pygmalion figures have sought to do the same. Antoine de la Sale's *Petit Jehan de Saintré*, Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* 26, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*, Honoré de Balzac's *Lys dans la Vallée*, George Sand's *François le Champi*, Rachilde's *Monsieur Vénus*, and Colette's *Chéri* and *Fin de Chéri* examine gender-reversed Pygmalion-Galatea relationships. The problems to be circumvented and the lover's consequent form vary as the story moves from one historical setting to another. Because these female sculptors are working not in marble but in the medium of another human being, French and Raven's seminal 1959 study on the bases of power in interpersonal relationships serves as a valuable tool for critical analysis of these texts.

Antoine de la Sale's Madame des Belles Cousines profits from her status as a wealthy widow to exercise an impressive array of bases of power to turn a naive page into one of France's greatest knights. However, as he gains experience and prestige, he counterbalances his mentor's power, prompting her to reject him in favor of an abbot who cannot threaten her independence.

Marguerite de Navarre and Honoré de Balzac tell tales of virtuous women who attempt to form lovers who will adore them without the expectation of physical intimacy. The success of these projects would enable them to pursue relationships with men they

love while preserving their chastity. Both the lady of Pamplona and Henriette de Mortsauf make significant progress in their undertakings, but the final transformation is completed only through their deaths.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Madame de Warens and George Sand's Madeleine Blanchet represent maternal Pygmalion figures and focus attention on the question of incest in such relationships. The power imbalance in Rousseau's relationship with his Maman renders it exploitative, while George Sand's careful differentiation of the mother-son relationship from the love between a woman and a man permits the only happy resolution in this study.

Rachilde and Colette portray female Pygmalion figures who create and destroy their Galateas. Raoule de Vénérande attempts the formation of a beautiful, gender-flexible lover who mirrors her own androgynous tendencies, but kills him when he attempts a homosexual infidelity. Léa de Lonval maintains her physically perfect lover in a state of perpetual adolescence, reflecting back her own desirability even as she approaches the age of fifty. Once Léa recognizes and accepts her aging, demonstrated to her by Chéri's gaze, she releases him, successfully negotiating the transition to old age. However, Chéri cannot find happiness without her, finally committing suicide.

These female Pygmalion figures wrestle with many of the same issues despite the differences in period and the author's gender. A comparison of texts by male and female authors demonstrates a shift from male adolescent fantasizing to a real attempt to confront the issues women face in their relationships with men. The application of French and Raven's theory demonstrates the important of the balance of power in any successful relationship.

To E.K. and E.C.,
who did not see the end of this project,
but who always believed I could finish it.

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Introduction

Love's Formative Power

The story of Pygmalion has long captured the imagination of both readers and writers. The fantasy of creating or shaping another individual to fit one's exact specifications is a powerful one, inspiring works ranging in period, style, and quality from Jean de Meung's retelling as an episode in the *Roman de la Rose* to Shaw's *Pygmalion* to the films *Educating Rita* and *Weird Science*. In the earliest known version of Pygmalion, a version known only through references made by Clement of Alexandria and Arnobius, Philostephanus tells the story of a man, the king of Cyprus by one account, who falls in love with a statue of Venus (J.M. Miller 205). Ovid retains Cyprus as the setting, but transforms Pygmalion into the sculptor of his love object in the best-known and oldest extant version of the myth.

Orpheus, whose own story begins book ten, is the inscribed narrator of Pygmalion's tale. A victim of love himself, he relates stories that show the consequences of winning Venus's favor or inciting her wrath. After relating the story of the Propoetides, women who, Ovid tells us, denied the divinity of Venus and were turned to stone as a reflection of their hard-heartedness, Orpheus begins the story of Pygmalion. Disgusted by the immorality of the women he sees around him, Pygmalion resolves not to marry. Instead, he directs his energies into the sculpting of a maiden more beautiful than any woman ever born, a reference Jane Miller takes to be suggestive of the link in identity between Galatea and Venus herself (206). When the statue is completed, Pygmalion falls hopelessly in love with her, bringing her gifts, dressing her in clothing, and taking her to bed with him. He kisses her and touches her, unwilling to believe that

she is indeed made of ivory, but she remains cool beneath his touch. Only when he makes an offering to Venus is his impossible wish fulfilled and his creation transformed into a living woman.

This curious relationship between creator and creation has left its mark on Western literature, both in the new, original works it has inspired and in literary criticism. The motif surfaces in authors as diverse as Shakespeare, Steinbeck, Chaucer, Hoffman, Poe, and Diderot. Although Dörrie argues that the Pygmalion story is not an archetype, due to the changing responses it has elicited from different generations (J.M. Miller 208), its recurrence in Western literature suggests that this story strikes a chord that continues to resonate. Many versions of Pygmalion occur in French literature. Jean de Meung retells the story of Pygmalion in the *Roman de la Rose*, it appears in *Ovide moralisé* in the 14th century, and becomes a dramatic sketch by Rousseau. Many other works, while they do not retell the story itself, keep the motifs of attraction and transformation. A subset of these looser interpretations retains the central figures of the Pygmalion myth but reverses their gender, resulting in a female Pygmalion who shapes and desires a male Galatea. While these texts were not likely written expressly as versions of the Pygmalion myth in the same way that Shaw wrote his *Pygmalion*, the Pygmalion story serves as another lens through which to view some classic texts.

G.S. Kirk points out that one of the key aspects of the mythical imagination is that it involves fantasy (268). Pygmalion's story describes the fulfillment of two powerful fantasies. First, he creates his own ideal lover, who is everything he wants her to be and nothing he does not. She in no way resembles the women he sees around him, and in fact, is their antithesis. The first "action" she takes is that of blushing, the capacity

for which the Propoetides had lost, an indicator of their utter immorality. Secondly, Pygmalion has the good fortune to have his fondest and most impossible wish magically fulfilled by a benevolent deity. This desire for something unattainable, though in most cases the object of desire remains beyond reach rather than being bestowed supernaturally upon the protagonist, is reflected in many of the texts to be examined in this project. A particular impossible desire reflected obliquely in Pygmalion, but noted by J. Hillis Miller among others is the narcissictic quality of falling in love with one's own creation (4, 5). This quality is clearly seen in works like E.T.A. Hoffman's "The Sandman", Germaine de Staël's *Le Mannequin*, and *Eve future* by Villiers de L'Isle Adam. In the first two works, the male protagonists find the women they choose, an automaton and a dummy, respectively, to be captivating precisely because they do nothing more than reflect back the ideas and opinions of their suitors. Thus, the problem of narcissism in the relationships to be examined will be an important one.

Incest is another issue raised by Pygmalion's story. The language used to describe Galatea's awakening is the same to describe the birth of a child. She sees the sky and her lover, instead of her mother, at the same time. As the one who brought her into the world, Pygmalion is usurping the role of mother, an important turn of events that we will return to shortly. By wedding his "child", Pygmalion commits incest. He himself escapes the consequences of this act, but his great granddaughter, Myrrah, pays the price for his sin. She falls passionately in love with her father, Cinyras, and refuses to take another man as her husband. The only way she sees out of her crime is suicide, but she is stopped in the attempt by her nurse, who helps her trick her father into sleeping with her. When Cinyras discovers what she has done, she flees for her life, pregnant with

her father's child. After Myrrah is transformed into a tree, Adonis is born, the man who will unwittingly avenge the criminal passion his mother felt. Accidentally grazed by Cupid's arrow, Venus falls in love with Adonis, a child so beautiful that he looked just like her own son, minus the quiver. Adonis's death brings grief to Venus, and thus she pays for Myrrah's suffering.

The relationships to follow are most often between an older woman and a younger man. Because, like Pygmalion, the female protagonist shapes her protégé, making him in the image she desires for him, the suggestion of incest has to be considered. In some cases, the older woman is clearly viewed as a maternal figure, bringing the problem of incest to the fore, while in others it remains subtler.

The problems of incest, unattainable desire, and narcissism are found in varying degrees in the texts to be examined. But the common thread running through all of them is that of transformation. Ovid chose *Metamorphoses* as his title as it is this motif that unites all his tales. Pygmalion's story is unusual in that it relates a metamorphosis from lifelessness to living, rather than from human form to an intermediate stage between life and death (J.H. Miller 3). So, too, the versions of Pygmalion created by later writers all involve transformation. Unlike Pygmalion, the protagonists in these stories do not literally sculpt their love interests from ivory, but instead use influence to effect the changes they desire.

To achieve their ends, female Pygmalion figures must exert significant influence over the young men they are involved with. The discipline of social psychology can clarify the projects dramatized but not explicitly interpreted by reverse Pygmalion stories. Since the 1950's, social psychology has studied the ways one person influences another.

Early studies examine interactions between strangers or colleagues (Kelman, 1952; French and Raven, 1959), but more recently, researchers have been examining the methods of influence used and the motivations for accepting the influence of another in close relationships (Oriña, Wood and Simpson, 2002; Drigotas, Rusbult, Wieselquist, and Whitton, 1999).

In his analysis of influence tactics in five plays, social psychologist David Kipnis suggests that a connection between literature and the social sciences may benefit both areas of study. Not that social psychology will illumine any and every text. In a seminal study of Shakespeare, Stanley Fish warns against the dangers of distorting literary analysis with misapplied social science theories. However, as in his own use of Speech Act theory to analyze Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, social pychology's insight into influence strategies fits the Pygmalion motif. Just as *Coriolanus* is *about* speech acts, so Pygmalion stories are *about* the influence of one individual on another. Social psychology will not answer all the questions raised by these texts, but it should make an important contribution toward understanding how influence operates as coercive and consenting parties interact.

French and Raven's 1959 study on the bases of social power identified five: reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert power. Raven later identified a sixth basis, informational power. Building on or reacting to this classic study, researchers have gone on to examine the actual implementation of the power an individual holds by identifying several tactics or strategies of influence. Kipnis groups influence tactics into three categories: strong, weak, and rational, a grouping that has proved useful in the analysis of influence strategies (Howard et al.). Strong tactics include claims to superior

knowledge, direct assertion of authority, insistence, and threats. Weak tactics include flattery, manipulation, hinting, pleading, and crying. Rational tactics are characterized by simple, direct requests, the use of reason, and compromise. In his analysis of five plays, Kipnis discusses not only types of tactics, but also identifies two reasons for exerting influence. First, proactive reasons are influence attempts to satisfy a need or want by causing a new action in others. Reactive reasons, conversely, are attempts to stop others from bothering the protagonist. By analyzing the number of influence attempts, the reason for influence, and the nature of the attempt, Kipnis makes insightful observations into the literary texts he examines. By applying a similar method, I hope to do the same.

Much research in interpersonal influence has noted gender differences in the bases of power and the strategies used, though much has been made of the fact that differences could stem primarily from the power differences between men and women rather than from explicit gender differences. In reverse Pygmalion texts, the women necessarily hold more power than the men, whether it is power based on higher social standing, greater wealth, independence, or knowledge. Given this situation, many researchers would hypothesize that when rational influence attempts fail, these women should be more likely to use strong tactics rather than weak. Whether this proves to be the case or whether these strong women rely on weak tactics in spite of their higher relative power could provide important insights into the bases of power available to women, as well as the legitimacy of that power.

If Pygmalion is, in a sense, usurping a woman's role as the giver of life and the principal influence on a young child, why employ a double reversal to hold together the texts in question? Why not just undo Pygmalion's inversion and go back to the original?

There is some merit to this suggestion, and another mythical tradition to draw on. Part of the role these female protagonists play has much in common with that of the goddess Natura, a tradition rooted in the Middle Ages. While this figure does not capture the important element of falling in love with one's own creation, she does bear examination.

In *The Goddess Natura in Medieval Literature*, George Economou traces the development of Natura from her roots in classical philosophy and poetry into the Middle Ages. For the philosophers, who include Plato and Artistotle, Nature is an intermediary between the world-soul and matter. She rules the sublunary world, ensuring the continuity and preservation of life through procreation, and is directly subordinate to the mind and will of God. For the Roman poets, Natura remains an intermediary between the heavens and earth, acting as an ordering, creative principle, but her role reamins fairly undefined in comparison to what she becomes with the medieval poets.

Bernard Silvestris did much to illuminate Natura's character in his *De mundi universitate*, but the author who contributed most to the development of Natura in the Middle Ages was Alain de Lille (Economou 72). She is the central figure in his two most famous literary works, *De Planctu Naturae* and *Anticlaudianus*. The *Anticlaudianus* is of particular interest in our case because in it, Natura takes on the task of creating a New Man, one who is perfect in every way and who will thus atone for Natura's earlier, flawed creations.

The *Anticlaudianus* is a Christian philosophical epic, with Phronesis as its hero. Natura decides, with the agreement of her sisters, the Virtues, to create a New Man. While all the Virtues agree that this is a worthy project and agree to participate in any way they can, Phronesis points out that, while Natura and the Virtues can create a

physical form for the New Man, they cannot create a soul. She hesitates to begin a project that may not be completed. But Reason convinces the group that if they ask God's help by sending an ambassador to him to ask for a soul, he will grant their request. After some hesitation, Prudence agrees to the will of her sisters and begins the journey to heaven to ask God for a soul to complete the New Man. She completes her quest with the successive aid of Reason and the senses, Theology, and Faith, returning to Natura with the soul God has created expressly for their project. At this point, Natura forms the body for the New Man out of the best matter has to offer. Concord unites the soul sent from God to the body created by Natura, and then each of the Virtues in turn grants her gifts to the New Man. The teachings offered cover everything from how to keep his hair and how to walk to how to be a good, faithful friend and leader. The tone of this passage lends weight to Wilk's hypothesis that the *Anticlaudianus* was written for Philip II of France, thus serving as a text for princely education and a political allegory as well as a religious and philosophical one. Once the New Man is created, he battles Allecto and her band of Vices, ultimately defeating them and restoring Natura's realm to her.

This work resembles the Pygmalion story and the rest of the works to be studied in several important ways. First, Natura cannot create the New Man ex nihilo, but must work with existing matter, just as Pygmalion begins with a piece of ivory and the female Pygmalions begin a step further away from creation with a living, breathing human being. For Natura and Pygmalion, divine intervention is required to complete the creation. The work of the female protagonists of later writers resembles more closely that of the Virtues, who, rather than shaping his physical form, shape his character. However, the focus of the *Anticlaudianus* is not on the relationship between the creator(s)

and this particular creation, but on the epic quest for knowledge and the redemption of Natura's work as a whole. Natura and the Virtues are female models of creative power that could influence later texts in addition to the Pygmalion motif.

The element the Pygmalion myth adds to Alain de Lille's creation myth is the attraction between the artist and his or her work. This attraction manifests itself later in medieval French literature, along with an individualized rather than allegorical female Pygmalion in Antoine de la Sale's *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré*, written in 1459. In this text, a young widow transforms a boy into a respected knight. After careful observation of all the boys in the king's court, she chooses Jehan as her project, apparently undertaken primarily to occupy herself. She is successful and happy until Saintré demonstrates his independence by undertaking a quest of his own choosing. The lady, realizing she has lost her absolute power over him, abandons the game and rejects Saintré.

For the lady of Pampelune in Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* 26 (1558) virtue is the quality to be nurtured in the young Seigneur d'Avannes, with whom she is smitten. Cultivating virtue in her protégé is the only means available to this virtuous woman to keep him close to her. Her fidelity to her husband is unshakeable, but by turning d'Avannes away from his growing taste for other, less virtuous women, she can continue and deepen their relationship. Honoré de Balzac expands and retells Marguerite's story in his *Lys dans la Vallée* (1837). Félix de Vandenesse never succeeds in seducing Mme de Mortsauf, but they relate to each other on two levels. Henriette loves Félix and confides in him as she would a lover, but her commitment to her virtue as a means of insulation from her husband's irrational behavior prevents her from acting on

her feelings. By attempting to foster this same virtue in Félix, she keeps him close without allowing him to threaten her virtue.

The male Galatea figures in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* (1770) and George Sand's *François le champi* (1847, 8) both grew up with absent or distant mothers. In their cases, part of the attraction to the female Pygmalion who shapes and changes them is her appeal as the warm, caring mother they never had. While the problem of incest is raised already in Ovid's version by Pygmalion's great granddaughter, the relationships between the maternal figures of Mme de Warens and Madeleine Blanchet and their respective"sons" bring it more clearly into focus. Rousseau refers to Mme de Warens as Maman and he is her Petit. When their relationship becomes sexual, he himself admits to feeling as though he were committing incest. Motherly love prevents Madeleine Blanchet from seeing François's romantic love for her. When she finally realizes how he feels, she blushes and is left speechless. Sand's careful treatment of her characters and their situation permits a happy and virtuous resolution, yet the elements of incestuous desire remain. Both of these relationships thus blend maternal and filial love with erotic love in such a way that the question of incest cannot be ignored.

Rachilde's *Monsieur Vénus* differs significantly from the previous texts because it depicts the consequences of transformation as intensely negative for the young man, who becomes its victim. Raoule de Vénérande rescues Jacques Silvert from poverty, but her influence eventually robs him of his masculinity and then, consequently, his life. For Jacques, the original story's path of transformation from statue to animate being is reversed. He begins as a living human being but ends as a mechanical doll, the result of influence that is ultimately destructive. Raoule illustrates that female Pygmalions are not

always intent on the improvement of their Galateas, but can use them in ways that serve their own decadent ends.

Colette's *Chéri* tells a somewhat similar story of a relationship undertaken with the primary goal of pleasure. However, the harm Léa inflicts is not intentional. Léa attains her goal of bringing pleasure to them both, but when Chéri marries and their relationship ends, she realizes that she has indeed harmed him. Instead of thinking of his future and preparing him for manhood, she has reveled in the present and kept him too long. At twenty-five, Chéri is frivolous, spoiled, and unprepared for the responsibilities of marriage and fatherhood. While Léa resembles other female Pygmalions in her influence on Chéri, she can be categorized as neither a saint nor a devil. By moving away from traditional female roles of a knight's lady, a reservoir of virtue, a loving mother, or a femme fatale, Colette renders Léa the most human of the female Pygmalion figures.

The recurrence of relationships between a female Pygmalion and a male Galatea across eight centuries suggests that this story raises issues of importance not only to the writers and readers of earlier times, but also to us today, notably the balance of power in relationships. In Western culture, males are assigned the role of subject and females the role of object by default. Female Pygmalion figures challenge this assumption, opening explorations into what happens when power shifts from male to female. The degree, permanence, and outcomes of such shifts illuminate society's underlying attitudes toward the consequences of women's power.

Women playing the role of subject focus attention on the expression of female desire. The socially acceptable means of expressing desire that are available to a female

subject, the adequacy of those means, and the consequences of stepping beyond them will be explored, as well as the changes that occur in the literary responses to each of these issues as we move from the Middle Ages to the present. This study examines changing perceptions of women's roles and capacities in general, as well as the authors' commentaries on and critiques of these roles.

Chapter 1

Le Petit Jehan de Saintré: Pygmalion's Power Won and Lost

Stories about the creation of a new being rarely end well. Texts ranging from the Genesis account of the garden of Eden to Frankenstein and his monster to *2001 A Space Odyssey* relate the careful dedication of the creator to the work of creation and the ensuing disaster when the creation slips from the creator's control and asserts its independence, forcing either a dissolution or redefinition of the relationship between creator and creation. *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré* by Antoine de la Sale relates such a story. Although the "belle dame des Belles Cousines" does not create new life, she transforms a young page into "le plus vaillant chevalier de France" through careful attention, education, and social promotion. Unlike many creators, however, she falls in love with her creation. This element aligns Madame des Belles Cousines with another famous creator, Pygmalion.

The parallels between *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré* and the Pygmalion story have been cited by Clifton Cherpack as a means to reconcile the seemingly disjointed parts of the text, a question that sparked earlier critical debate.[1] Critics largely agree now that the joining of the two parts does not constitute an artistic flaw, but a hybridization of genres that reflects the literary and social changes of the fifteenth century. Whether the text is serious or satirical remains open to discussion.[2]

But viewing Madame des Belles Cousines as a Pygmalion figure has more to offer than a unifying framework. The importance of power and control in the relationship between Madame des Belles Cousines and Saintré comes to the forefront as the parallels between the two stories are examined. In the Pygmalion myth, the question

of control is key. When Pygmalion looks at the women around him, the Propoetides, he sees women who are out of control. They lack morality and have become completely shameless. As Ovid writes, the metamorphosis they undergo, changing from flesh to stone, is not a large one. Because of these uncontrolled women, Pygmalion vows never to marry, and directs his energies instead to his new statue. Here, he is in complete control. He shapes the ivory until he achieves exactly what he wants. But Pygmalion's own skill betrays him, "ars adeo latet arte sua"(X.252), blurring the line between art and life. The statue is so perfectly beautiful that she escapes his control and, though she is inanimate, controls him as he becomes obsessed with his creation. When Pygmalion prays to Venus, he is praying not only for the fulfillment of a wish so dear he dares not express it directly, but also for a restoration of his own power. If the statue is transformed into a woman, a metamorphosis that figuratively undoes that of the Propoetides, Pygamlion will no longer be controlled by a truly insatiable desire. He will take his ivory maid as his wife, touch her, kiss her, and make love to her, and she will respond, fulfilling both his erotic desire and his desire for control. But the control that Pygmalion exerts over Galatea extends beyond that of the average Roman husband over his wife, for he is not only her husband, but her creator (Miller 208).

A similar dynamic of shifting control plays out in *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré.* However, since the medium in which Madame des Belles Cousines works is not ivory, but the character of a human being, the control she exerts initially is not a given. The field of social psychology, particularly theories on influence strategies and bases of power, provides a framework for a detailed analysis of Madame des Belles Cousine's power over Saintré and how that power changes as their relationship develops.

For an agent to influence the behavior of another, the target, the agent must hold the power necessary to effect change. In 1959, French and Raven outlined a taxonomy identifying five bases of social power. A sixth was added in 1965. Coercive power , or the threat of punishment, can be either impersonal, such as the threat of losing one's job, or personal, in that the agent will dislike the target or impose other personal sanctions. Reward power stems from the ability to promise compensation if the target conforms to the agent's request. Legitimate power is drawn from one's right to influence. In 1992 and 1993, Raven fine-tuned this basis of power, dividing it into 4 subcategories. In an organizational setting, legitimate power is often the power of legitimate position, in which the agent's power is based on his or her higher rank with respect to the target. Legitimate power also manifests itself as legitimate reciprocity. In this case, the agent can expect the target to comply with his or her wishes because the agent has helped the target in the past. Legitimate equity is closely related. Here, the agent expects the target to comply in order to compensate the agent either for the agent's hard work, or for damage done to the agent by the target. Finally, the power of legitimate dependence, also known as the power of the powerless, dervies from the agent's right to expect to be taken care of by the target.

The three remaining bases of power are expert, referent, and informational power. Expert power derives from the agent's superior knowledge. Referent power is based on the target's desire to achieve or maintain a close relationship with the agent. Informational power, added in 1965, has also been termed persuasiveness or rational persuasion by other researchers. Informational power is derived from the ability to offer any perspective or knowledge that may change the behavior of a target.

As we examine the relationship between Madame des Belles Cousines and Saintré in light of this taxonomy, it becomes clear that she wields a great deal of power over Jehan. The first basis of power she invokes is that of legitimate position. Madame des Belles Cousines is of royal blood and the constant companion of the queen. Saintré, though noble as well, is the son of a vassal to the royal family. In addition to his somewhat lesser nobility, he is only thirteen, old enough only to serve as a page. Rules of courtly conduct would therefore demand that he obey any orders from any lady. Madame des Belles Cousines augments this power with coercive power, threatening Saintré with humiliation and loss of face as she ridicules his ignorance of love.

However, Madame des Belles Cousines quickly balances these fairly negative powers by demonstrating to Saintré her power to reward him for his compliance. In her long didactic monologue, she enumerates the benefits that come to a true lover who seeks to please his lady. She begins with spiritual benefits, demonstrating how serving a lady well will protect the lover from the seven deadly sins. But, she points out, there are corporeal benefits as well, stemming from the fact that a true lady will see to it that all of her *serviteur*'s needs are met. Madame des Belles Cousines has hinted at this aspect of love before. When Saintré, under duress, names Matheline de Coursy as his lady, Madame des Belles Cousines scoffs, not because Matheline is unworthy due to her rank or beauty, but because she is ten years old, and not in a position to benefit Saintré. She explains, "Sire, devez vous choisir dame qui soit de hault et noble sang, saige, et qui ait de quoy vous aidier, et mectre sus à voz besoings" (16). If the young man in question happens to be a knight or squire by profession, he stands to gain additional physical

benefits, as the true lover who seeks to please his lady will never go into battle unprepared, but will be well-conditioned and have the best arms.

When Saintré says he is willing to serve her, Madame des Belles Cousines upholds the responsibilities she has told Saintré a lady has, promising him not only the fairly distant and abstract rewards she has discussed before, but by rewarding him more immediately and concretely with a silk purse containing twelve *écus*. She promises more to follow if he handles this first sum wisely. Saintré's reaction demonstrates the sway this particular basis of power holds over him. "[L]ors tira la boursse de sa manche et la desveloppa et regarda. Et quant il la vist si belle, et les xij escus dedens, n'est pas à doubter se il en fut content ; lors commenca en son cuer la joye telle qu'il ne pensoit pas estre mains riche que le roy" (51). Intentionally or inadvertently, Madame des Belles Cousines has discovered the most effective reward for Saintré at this stage of his development. He is not filled with joy at the prospect of serving one of the noblest ladies in Jehan and Belle's court, but by the small silk purse filled with her money.

Madame des Belles Cousines has more to offer than the financial resources necessary to meet Saintré's needs. Like the hypothetical lady she suggested to Saintré, she is "de hault et noble sang, [et] saige". These qualities endow her with expert power in addition to the legitimate position, coercive, and reward powers she already possesses. Being of royal blood, Madame des Belles Cousines is well-connected at court. She knows everyone, and uses her knowledge of their characters to both Saintré's and her own advantage. She masterfully manipulates the court gossips, Jehan de Soussy et Thibault de Roussy, in order to avoid any suspicion that she and Saintré are involved. As she prepares to amuse herself once again by interrogating Saintré about his lady, she

invites them to join her. Once again she lambastes Saintré for not having chosen a lady to serve, though this time Saintré is playing along. She harasses him so mercilessly that when everyone leaves, Soussy and Roussy praise Saintré and complain about Madame des Belles Cousines's harshness. Then, just as she anticipated, they spread the news of the encounter everywhere, dispelling any suspicion that may otherwise arise : "Et par ainsin demoura ceste loyale et bonne amour secrete jusques a ce que Fortune, par sa variableté leur voult le doz tourner..." (64). Madame des Belles Cousines also manipulates the ladies of her entourage in a similar fashion and regularly piques the queen's curiosity in order to safely satisfy her own.

Some critics have regarded Madame des Belles Cousines's manipulation of those around her as deceitful, proof that the decadent, lusty woman we see in the second part of the text has not changed her spots, just stopped camouflaging them so well[3]. But the narrator, as can be seen in the citation above, does not pass judgment on Madame des Belles Cousines for her desire to keep her love a secret. This desire motivates all her deceptions and manipulations in the first part of the text, and for this she should not be criticized. Secrecy is one of the conditions of courtly love. Madame des Belles Cousines swears Saintré to absolute secrecy, as do the Châtelaine de Vergy and the lady in Christine de Pisan's *Duc des Vrais Amants* with their prospective lovers. In this context, dissimulation is not a fault, but a virtue. Madame des Belles Cousines's later affair with Damp Abbé supports this view. Her lack of effort to hide their relationship, whether from her ladies, the queen's messenger, or Saintré himself, underscores its decidedly uncourtly nature.

Madame des Belles Cousines's expert power extends beyond her knowledge of the character of specific individuals. Her insights into the workings of the court prove useful to Saintré as well. As he gains favor with the king and queen, Madame des Belles Cousines quickly takes steps to prevent his undermining by "le faulz parler des envieux" (71). She grants Saintré a reward power of his own, financing the gifts she recommends he give to everyone, "Et par ainsin, au regart de vostre largesse, honneur, grace et amour de chascun seront avecques vous" (72).

She further strenghtens her expertise with extensive knowlege of both the Bible and classical authors. Her didactic treatise is filled with citations from Socrates, Seneca, Epicurus, Plato and several classical historians, as well as from saints Augustine and Bernard. Biblical passages round out the authority on which this facet of her expert power rests. As noted by Karl Uitti, the voice of the *précepteur* to the sons of princes is undoubtedly heard here, especially when one considers that the work is dedicated to Jehan d'Anjou, one of Antoine de la Sale's former pupils (138). La Sale's choice of Madame des Belles Cousines as his mouthpiece places her firmly in a position parallel to his own, a position which underlines the expert power she exercises over her pupil, Saintré.

Madame des Belles Cousines's expert, reward, coercive, and legitimate position powers are tangible from the beginning of the relationship. As their relationship develops, however, Madame des Belles Cousines relies less on these harder bases of power and draws the strength to mold Saintré from what social psychologists consider to be softer bases, legitimate reciprocity and referent power.

Saintré himself frequently acknowledges the power of legitimate reciprocity Madame des Belles Cousines exerts. Each time she sets a new task before him, he complies, always making reference to the great debt he owes her. When she instructs him on using gifts to prevent jealousy in the court, he responds in typical fashion.

> Jehan de Saintré, qui voit et congnoist les grans biens et les honneurs que Madame lui fait et pourchasse, ainsin josne qu'il est, a genoulz tres humblement la remercia disant: « A! ma tresredoubtee dame, la plus parfaite en tous biens et en tous honneurs qui au monde soit, las! et comment vous pourray je jamais servir a la milesme partie de ce que vous suis tenu ? (73)

Because she has been so generous and helpful, Saintré professes to both need and want to repay her in every way he can.

Finally, Madame des Belles Cousines holds referent power over Saintré. By this point in their relationship, Saintré has internalized her lessons and is motivated to behave in a way that will please her, not because he is looking for another gold-filled silk purse or because he fears she will reject him, but because he wishes to identify himself with her and to maintain and strengthen their relationship. Referent power works much more subtly than Madame des Belles Cousines's other forms of power and results from an internalization of the values she has inculcated. French and Raven explain that the target can in some cases be unaware of the referent power an agent exercises(162). Ironically, Saintré's motivations for his last *emprise*, the act that leads to the destruction of his relationship with Madame des Belles Cousines, most clearly demonstrate the referent power she holds over him. He says to himself, "Oncques par toy aucun bien d'armes ne

fut emprins que ta tresnoble et doulce deesse ne te y ait mis. Ores, vraiement, je me concluz et delibere que pour l'amour d'elle je veul faire aucun bien." (228) Saintré does not mention his desire to repay Madame des Belles Cousines for her generosity, or to earn her favor. He is spurred to action "pour l'amour d'elle". Whether his love for Madame des Belles Cousines is his only motivation remains to be seen, but her referent power clearly plays a role in Saintré's decision.

Thus Madame des Belles Cousines unquestionably holds the power necessary to achieve her goal to "faire d'aucun josne chevalier ou escuier, un homme renommé" (6), and proves to have chosen well her piece of ivory from which to sculpt the perfect knight. Saintré is a quick study, absorbing her lessons and following them to the letter. She thus completes the first phase of Saintré's formation, having made of him "un homme de bien" and feels confident that he is ready to begin the second, to become "renommé". Madame des Belles Cousines marks the beginning of this second phase by sending Saintré out on his first *emprise*. After carrying out her instructions perfectly in the procurement of the bracelet he will wear as a symbol of his challenge, she puts it on him, telling him that he is indeed worthy of her prayers and asceticism on his behalf because "vous estes tel que je veul" (85).

His conduct justifies her confidence. When Saintré first enters Madame des Belles Cousines's service, she tells him that when he is older and undertakes feats of arms, he should recite the traditional blessing of the people of Israel while making the sign of the cross. He should also hear mass each day before doing anything else. His behavior in Barcelona reflects her teachings. "quant il fut a cheval sur son destrier il demanda sa bannerole et en fist un grant signe de la croiz en disant sadicte beneisson que

Madame lui avoit enseignie" (114). "Saintré, avant que nulle chose feist, eust sa messe du Sainct Esperit oÿe, ou il se fist donner sa beneisson" (122). He also carries out her specific instructions on the prizes to be awarded and the gifts to be given, both to his challenger and to the court where he is a guest.

Saintré's first *emprise* is an unqualified victory, both in the outcome of the tournament and in the honor and respect he earns from this foreign court for his conduct. But the tournament in Barcelona is only the beginning. By her careful selection of adventures to undertake, Madame des Belles Cousines builds Saintré's résumé. Having procured recognition for him within the court of France, as well as in Spain, Madame des Belles Cousines arranges for him to take on Loisellench, a Polish challenger who arrives at Jean's court. She sends him to the English so that they will know and honor him as well. Next on the list are two Italians, also defeated by Saintré and his friend Bouciquault. Saintré completes all of these challenges in perfect knightly fashion, winning, and occasionally losing, graciously and guarding continuously against the pride Madame des Belles Cousines has warned him of. His honorable conduct contributes as much to his reputation as do his knightly feats. In fact, Saintré's conduct is the primary success that he and Madame des Belles Cousines can call their own. Some of the challenges Saintré faces are reminiscent of David and Goliath. Madame des Belles Cousines, the narrator, and later the king all recognize that much of his success is due to the grace of God, an attribution underlined by the manner in which he sometimes wins.[4]

Saintré's list of knightly accomplishments is now nearly complete. Only one feat remains: a crusade. By now, the page has grown into a young man and, with the death of his father, has become the *seigneur de Saintré*. He is, however, still a squire. Saintré had

expressed his wish to become a knight only in the service of the king against the Saracens. When a trip to Prussia arises, Madame des Belles Cousines sees the opportunity to complete her work. She sends Saintré out one last time to complete his honor and achieve her goal. He is knighted and once again returns victorious. Upon his return, their happiness lasts for fifteen months. Madame des Belles Cousines has successfully completed her project.

But their happiness is short-lived. Saintré, now a successful, well-favored knight, takes on a project of his own. Following the example Madame des Belles Cousines set for him in the undertaking of his first *emprise*, Saintré makes arrangements to set off again. He designs the banners, clothing, and gage himself, carrying out his plan in the utmost secrecy. He then gathers the knights and squires who are to accompany him, tells them his plan, and sends each of them to his lady to ask her leave. But Saintré's education is not quite as complete as he and his lady thought, for he has failed to grasp the vital difference between the *emprise* Madame des Belles Cousines designed for him and the one he has prepared himself. A knight must act in the service of his suzerain, a role fulfilled for Saintré both by his lady and the king. He has failed to ask leave of either of them until his project is so far underway that he cannot honorably abandon it. In the case of the first *emprise*, Saintré goes to the king on the first of May. He has the bracelet ready, but all the other preparations have yet to be made, preparations which fill the time from May 1 to July 15, when he finally leaves for Spain. But Saintré realizes his error too late. He is so unaware of the consequences of his omission that he does not know whether Madame des Belles Cousines's powerful reaction to his announcement stems from joy or anger (233). His only chance for redemption in her eyes would have been to

follow the last command she gives him, "Alez bien tost rompre votre emprinse a voz compaignons" (234). As a result of his refusal, Madame des Belles Cousines ultimately holds true to her word, "Jamais tant que je vive de bon cuer ne vous ameray" (233).

Madame des Belles Cousines' reaction may come as a shock to Saintré as well as to the reader, but Saintré's self-determination is likely nearly as shocking to her. This young man who has always done exactly as she commanded has now not only proposed an idea of his own, but carried it out without asking her permission or even hinting at his project. While Saintré may have failed to grasp the importance of his role in service of his lady and king, Madame des Belles Cousines has failed to see how her careful advancement and elevation of Saintré has eroded the bases of power from which she draws her authority.

Over the course of their relationship, Saintré has evolved from a thirteen-year-old page to a 29-year-old knight and lord. Madame des Belles Cousines has worked tirelessly to ensure the favor of the king for Saintré and to build him an impeccable reputation within the court, in France, and in the rest of Christendom. Her success is complete, but as Saintré has climbed the social ladder, gaining prestige and standing, the gap between them has narrowed. Madame des Belles Cousines is still a member of the extended royal family, but Saintré, both by birth and by merit, has gained considerable status, and is no longer obligated to acquiesce to her whims or commands. She herself is not unaware of the change, which is notable in the changing manner in which she addresses him as the story progresses. However, she fails to recognize the implications.

During their first encounter, she calls him *maistre*, a term Taylor notes as highly derogatory (260), or *sire*, which when addressed to a thirteen-year-old can only be ironic,

and issues series of commands in the imperative. "Or ça, maistre, passez et vous mectez devant" (6). Once she has taken Saintré into her service and begins his formal education, all her requirements of him are prefaced by the phrase, "je veul et vous commande" or by a close variant. The twelve-page passage where Madame des Belles Cousines lays out her expectations of Saintré now that he has become her *serviteur*, contains 25 instances of this phrase. This passage, in contrast with the passages containing advice that Madame des Belles Cousines dispensed before she revealed her intentions to Saintré, highlights the position power that she draws from being Saintré's lady, in addition to the position power granted by her status in the court. In the previous passages, she addresses him as "mon amy", and speaks of the requirements of the "vray amoureux" in third person. Only when he accepts this role does her tone become authoritative. Saintré is thus obliged to listen by Madame des Belles Cousines's social power, but obliged to obey by the power she holds in their relationship.

After three years of faithful service, Madame des Belles Cousines's tone has changed. Although she still makes frequent use of the imperative, the impersonal and distant "maistre" and "sire" have become "mon tres loyal desir", "mon seul amy et ma tres doulce pensée". Accompanying this change of tone is a change in status. Saintré becomes the king's *varlet trenchant*, and earns the respect of the squire he served under as page.

Four or five years later, when Madame des Belles Cousines prepares to send Saintré out on his first *emprise*, the imperative has vanished. She uses similar terms of endearment, but requests rather than demands: "je me suis appensee que vous estes desormais assez homme pour faire en armes nommees quelque bien...je veul que pour

l'amour de moy vous portez un bracelet d'or esmaillié a noz devises... " (79). Note also that the *devises* have become " nos" rather than " mes". At this point Madame des Belles Cousines recognizes that she has completed the first phase of Saintré's formation. She tells him, "vous estes tel que je veul" (85).

When Saintré returns from Prussia, he has earned enough power and respect to influence the behavior of the king. He convinces the king to spend the night with the queen, thus freeing himself to spend the night with Madame des Belles Cousines. The shift in their relationship is underlined by Saintré's role as the one who manipulates others to assure that their meeting will be undetected and prolonged. Saintré thus demonstrates that he has learned her lessons well, but his taking the initiative in their relationship foreshadows the break that follows. Saintré is no longer a frightened adolescent trying to avoid the displeasure of his mistress, but a strong, self-confident young man who sees himself as Madame des Belles Cousines' partner.

Saintré's success has thus eroded Madame des Belles Cousines' power of legitimate position. Saintré still loves and respects her, and is deeply grateful for all she has done for him, but this describes a softer basis of power, that of legitimate reciprocity. Coupled with Madame des Belles Cousines' diminished legitimate position power is Saintré's increasing power of legitimate equity. He has served her faithfully for more than fourteen years, doing all that she has asked of him and never revealing their love. Thus the power balance between them is reaching equilibrium.

Madame des Belles Cousines's decreasing reward power and expert power contribute to the equalizing trend. Saintré is no longer dependent on Madame des Belles Cousines's financial backing. His father's death would have granted him not only the

title, but also the family resources. In addition to his family wealth, he likely brought back spoils of war from his crusade in Prussia (Taylor 258). Aside from his own personal resources, he can count on the king's backing. In fact, when he leaves for Prussia, the king is the only benefactor mentioned. No mention is made of any contributions Madame des Belles Cousines may have made. This financial independence is another key ingredient in the *emprise* Saintré undertakes independently. He designs the clothing and emblems they will wear, buys the horses, and makes all the necessary preparations himself. He also tells his companions that he will secure the king's financial backing, making no mention of financial support from his lady (231). All he expects of her is her leave.

Madame des Belles Cousines can no longer reward Saintré with greater prestige or fame, because he has reached the top. The only reward she can still offer is that of her affections. While Saintré still wants her love, this is a decidedly softer basis of power. Saintré has become first a knight, and second a lover, as evidenced by his refusal to abandon his project at her orders, even when she withdraws the reward in question, telling him she will never love him again. His honor and duty toward his companions outweighs his will to obey his lady and seek her favor. This is especially evident when one considers that when he goes to her, his companions are the only ones who know of the adventure. He would lose face with them, but the court and the general public are still unaware of his plans.

Madame des Belles Cousines's expert power has decreased only because she has imparted her expertise to Saintré. He has learned all the lessons, from how to dress and how to conduct himself at a tournament to the finer workings of the court and how to

manipulate them to his own advantage. Coupled with the information and advice he has received from Madame des Belles Cousines, Saintré now possesses a great deal of experience. He has traveled to Spain, to the border with English territory, and to Prussia. He has defeated visiting knights from Poland and Italy. He has also worked his way through the ranks of the court, learning its intricacies at every level, guided by Madame des Belles Cousines, but making his own observations along the way as well. Thus the student has equaled, if not surpassed, his teacher.

The only powers Madame des Belles Cousines still holds are legitimate equity and referent power. As we have already seen, Madame des Belles Cousines's referent power over Saintré is one of the principal motivations for his undertaking of the final *emprise*. Saintré is no longer limited to blind obedience. Rather, having become independent of the stronger forms of power Madame des Belles Cousines exercised over him, he is free to devise his own means of attempting to please her. Saintré's plan should, in principle, please Madame des Belles Cousines, but she is so taken aback by the independence it indicates that one can easily imagine her scarcely hearing a word he says.

Thus it becomes clear that Madame des Belles Cousines has been only too successful in her transformation of a young page into a knight, just as Pygmalion was when he created his ivory maiden. Both of them pushed their art too far, Pygmalion making Galatea too beautiful, and Madame des Belles Cousines creating a knight who is too knightly. Saintré is strong and valiant, noble both in blood and in character, and has earned the respect of the entire court. But Madame des Belles Cousines suffers from the unexpected consequences of her transformational project. As a knight, Saintré bears a dual allegiance, both to his lord and to his lady. For most of her educational project,

Madame des Belles Cousines has given Saintré assignments that allow him to advance in his pursuit of both war and love as his knightly conquests increase his standing in the court and in her eyes. And so there is no conflict between Saintré's pursuit of Venus and his pursuit of Diana. But when Madame des Belles Cousines declares Saintré's hunt for glory and prowess complete, Saintré's coincidental desires are forced into a competition where love is ultimately the loser.

Madame des Belles Cousines has created a warrior who is most likely bored by court life. Fifteen months after his return from Prussia, he needs something to occupy himself. Indeed, the queen's prediction when Saintré asked her permission for his first *emprise* has come true. She observes, "se Dieu le ramaint en bon point, il me semble qu'il ne vouldra faire autre chose, puis que si josne s'i va bouter" (87). Saintré realizes that if he is to embark on any more adventures, they will have to be of his own design, since Madame des Belles Cousines has already told him she will not send him out again. His desire to continue his conquests sets him apart from knights like Chrétien's Yvain, whose devotion to his lady sapped him not only of his desire to continue his career as a knight, but also, for a time, of his reason. Saintré does not fall into this trap. By designing his own *emprise*, Saintré sees a means both of demonstrating the skills he has acquired during his time in Madame des Belles Cousines's service as a tribute to her love and guidance and a way to find some excitement.

Madame des Belles Cousines's violently negative reaction to Saintré's announcement of his *emprise* is surprising. Saintré's undertaking demonstrates how successful she has been. He has become everything she wanted him to be. She has, however, failed to impress upon him the importance of asking leave, both of one's lady

and of one's lord. Saintré's error in this area is clear not just in Madame des Belles Cousines's reaction, but in the king's as well. He is concerned that Saintré is seeking glory, tempting both Fortune and God, who have been so good to him in the past, and who might change their treatment of him. The king raises these rational objections to Saintré, in addition to underlining his error of not asking leave. He tells Saintré and his companions, "Mes amis, vous faites comme cellui qui espouse sa cousine, puis en demande dispensacion. C'est à tous chose mal faite de entreprendre, et pis de executer, sans licence de son seigneur ou de cellui qui a son pouoir et sa charge" (237).

But the king forgives Saintré for his error. Despite Saintré's pleading, Madamedes Belles Cousines refuses to do the same. Like Pygmalion, she has fallen in love with her creation. While her obsession does not appear to be as all-consuming as Pygmalion's, everything she does revolves around his development and advancement. Her involvement quickly moves beyond fascination with an interesting diversion and the requisite love in exchange for faithful service. Madame des Belles Cousines's love for Saintré slips from her control as well. At his first tournament, she faints, and cannot watch for fear of betraying her feelings for him. When she hears that he will soon return from Spain, she cannot sleep because she is so eager to see him. And when she sees Loisellench's enormous size only after sending Saintré to meet his challenge, she berates herself, "Hé! lasse moy doulante, et que as tu fait, ne que pensoies tu quant tu conseillas et mis en voye de telz perilz cellui que en ce monde plus amoys et que sur tous et toutes l'en devoie desmouvoir?" (149), followed by fervent prayers for his protection.

In many ways, Madame des Belles Cousines serves as a maternal figure for Saintré, a role highlighted by Saintré's initial reponses to her questions about the lady he

loves most, and then by his fibs to others to protect Madame des Belles Cousines's identity. When asked who gave him the money to purchase his clothes, shoes, and horses, he replied that his mother had sent him the money. Madame des Belles Cousines's desire to see Saintré succeed and her intense concern for his safety conform to this maternal role. But, as in the Pygmalion myth, the dangers of incest and narcissism arise. Pygmalion himself escapes punishment for his incestuous relationship, but his descendants pay the price. In a healthy mother-child relationship, Madame des Belles Cousines should be proud of Saintré's independence. She would interpret his undertaking as he intended, rather than as a betrayal. As suggested by Taylor, Saintré's undertaking of his own *emprise* and his break with Madame des Belles Cousines constitute the final step in his becoming a knight (260). He has to cut the apron strings to fully achieve the status of the greatest knight of France. But because Madame des Belles Cousines is involved in an erotic relationship with him that is based on a balance of power heavily weighted in her favor, she cannot let him move outside her sphere of influence and still continue the relationship of subordination.[5] As long as Saintré carries out her wishes, heeds her advice, and obeys her every command, he reflects back to Madame des Belles Cousines her own chivalric ideal. When he exerts his independence, the image is distorted, and there is no way for Madame des Belles Cousines to regain control and restore her image.

When Pygmalion lost control of Galatea, her metamorphosis into a living woman brought her back under his control. The full weight of societal convention granted Pygmalion, as her husband, a position of power over her, rescuing him from the status of a loved-crazed artist ridiculously obsessed with one of his statues. For Madame des

Belles Cousines, there is no possible return to her former power. Her concern for her own independence is suggested in the narrator's opening description. She is a young widow with many suitors, but has decided never to remarry. The narrator refuses to explain why, but offers examples of virtuous Roman widows who never remarried for love of their husbands.

Lest we associate Madame des Belles Cousines with these loyal, chaste women, the narrator quickly undermines his hypothesis that viture is the reason behind her refusal to remarry. The narrator cites Dido as an example of one of these exemplary widows. In his version of Virgil's story, Aeneas is so deeply in love with Dido that he is dying from his passion, but Dido cannot accept his love because she remains committed to the memory of her husband. Interestingly, the outcome of Virgil's own version bears a striking similarity to the ending of the relationship between Saintré and Madame des Belles Cousines. Having been rescued after a shipwreck by Dido, spending time in her court, and falling in love with his benefactress, Aeneas is faced with a choice between love and adventure, in this case the fulfillment of his destiny as the founder of Rome. Aeneas opts for duty, leaving his lover so wounded and empty that she commits suicide. Saintré confronts a similar choice, though on a less epic scale, choosing his self-appointed destiny over his continued attachment to his own benefactress, and Madame des Belles Cousines reacts in a similar fashion, committing social suicide as a parallel to Dido's taking her life.

By distorting a story that shares many elements with the one he is about to tell, the narrator suggests to his readers that there is more to Madame des Belles Cousines' refusal to remarry than a virtuous devotion to her dead husband, just as there is more to

the relationship between Dido and Aeneas. The narrator follows this story with three anecdotes taken from the writings of Saint Jerome. Two of the stories are what we would expect, describing young widows who refused to marry and vowed to continue mourning or live alone until death. But the third tells the story of a woman who married and outlived twenty-two husbands. Her twenty-third husband has had twenty wives, and all of Rome waits to see which one of them will survive. When the wife dies, the husband is widely celebrated, recognized as a victorious hero for outliving the woman who outlived twenty-two men.

This final story perhaps hints at Madame des Belles Cousines's motivation for remaining unmarried. She has outlived one husband and regained her indepedence, and may be unwilling remarry for fear that she may not outlive the next one. Widowhood was the most independent state available to a woman in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance. Her father's property until she married and her husband's afterwards, a woman could only exercise some control over her own life as a widow (Cholakian 192). Rather than restoring control as it did for Pygmalion, marriage would only further upset the balance, increasing Saintré's power and weakening her own. Madame des Belles Cousines's status as a woman makes a satisfactory resolution impossible: there is no socially acceptable way for her to maintain a relationship with Saintré that would allow even an equal distribution of power between them.

Madame des Belles Cousines's recognition of the untenability of such a relationship may explain her choice of The Abbot. Unable to retain her independence within the system of the court, Madame des Belles Cousines attempts to opt out. By retreating to the countryside, to her own lands, she escapes the rules and power structure

of society, at least temporarily. She finds a new companion in the Abbot. As Mermier notes, there is no question of ever marrying him (479). As the benefactor of his abbey, she also exerts legitimate position power and reward power over him. It is in the Abbot's best interests to please her, and he does so, not by leaving her behind as he sets off in search of glory and adventure, but by keeping her at the abbey, preparing lavish meals, and accompanying her on hunting outings. Away from the restrictions of court life, Madame des Belles Cousines does not feel obligated to construct secret systems of communication in order to steal a few forbidden moments, but conducts her affair freely and openly. Her relationship with the Abbot is, in short, the reverse of her relationship with Saintré. Instead of coaxing along a shy, slender boy, Madame des Belles Cousines is actively pursued by a robust and very forward man. This sounds like the very situation she was initially trying to avoid, but this time Madame des Belles Cousines has chosen a man who cannot threaten her independence.

What she gambles and loses is her reputation, but her behavior leading up to Saintré's revelation of their relationship and her subsequent conduct leads one to question her continued concern for it. She fraternizes openly with the Abbot, much to the consternation of her entourage and the other monks at the abbey. She puts off her return to court with little concern about what the queen might think, and makes no effort to hide her relationship with the abbot even from the queen's messenger. When Saintré returns, her conduct is no different. The narrator attributes this change to her lust for the abbot, ending her part of the story with a warning to all women not to follow the example of "ceste si tres noble dame oiseuse qui par druerie se perdist" (307). This overt condemnation of Madame des Belles Cousines's behavior departs radically from the

manner in which the narrator has treated her up to this point. Beginning with the initial discussion of her motivations for remaining unmarried, the narrator has refrained from judging her behavior. Even when Madame des Belles Cousines mocks and humiliates Saintré when he returns from his last *emprise*, the only editorial comment the narrator permits himself is a reference to Jehan as the "pouvre seigneur de Saintré" (283). That he would choose to condemn her now seems out of character, but he links her behavior to a proverb that echoes Madame des Belles Cousines's own teaching, "Oncques ne fut feu sans fumee, tant fust il en terre parfont" (307). Thus, it appears that the reason lust is to be avoided is not that it is intrinsically evil, but that it is impossible to conceal from the rest of society.

Madame des Belles Cousines's apparent lack of concern for her reputation, a lack which could admittedly be the result of her lust, but which seems unlikely given the dissimulative skill she has demonstrated in her relationship with Saintré, suggests another interpretation of her behavior. Her treatment of Saintré is indefensible, but it demonstrates the extent of her disenchantment with courtly life and its constant dissimulation and artifice. Little is said about her reaction to Saintré's revelation of her conduct, other than that she was "bien honteuse" (307), but if her reputation means as little to her as her conduct suggests, one wonders how long her shame lasted and whether her life ended miserably because of it. Madame des Belles Cousines has learned through the outcome of her relationship with Saintré that there is no place in courtly society for a woman who wishes to maintain both her independence and an intimate relationship. She cannot restore the power balance between herself and Saintré, and is unwilling to submit to the authority society would grant him.

The failure of their relationship leads to the destruction of Madame des Belles Cousines's remaining bases of power. Because of her refusal to acknowledge Saintré's claims of legitimate equity, he no longer feels subject to her power of legitimate reciprocity. And in destroying their relationship, Madame des Belles Cousines destroys her referent power. In the final scene, the power shift is complete. After Saintré tells their story before the court, concealing the characters' true identities, he asks Madame des Belles Cousines to comment on the lady's behavior. She defers, unwilling to speak, just as Saintré was when asked about his lady sixteen years earlier. This time, Saintré, as the holder of her secret, wields the power, and it is he who laughs at her expense. Stripped of her honor and social standing, she has become powerless.

The construct of courtly love, or *fin' amours*, purports to place the woman in a position of power, but the outcome of Madame des Belles Cousines's relationship with Saintré emphasizes that the young man derives the greatest benefit. Saintré has become exactly what Madame des Belles Cousines set out to make of him, "un homme renommé" while she is cast out of a society that has no place for her. Even if their relationship had not taken the dramatic, disastrous turn it did, there never seems to have been any prospect of lasting happiness and fulfillment. Madame des Belles Cousines's power slowly erodes as Saintré's grows, leaving her a choice between submission and solitude. Even her attempt to opt out is denied. Madame des Belles Cousines's creation has escaped her control, leaving her with nothing and underlining the obstacles to female power in the courtly society of the late Middle Ages.

Chapter 2

Transformation through self-sacrifice: *Heptaméron* 26 and the *Lys dans la vallée*

The twenty-sixth novella of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* and Honoré de Balzac's *Lys dans la Vallée* tell stories of women who die of broken hearts like many heroines of literature. One need only think of Echo and Narcissus or Tristan and Iseut. What sets Marguerite's and Balzac's heroines apart from so many others is their attempt, before succumbing to the power of unfulfilled desire, to create a new kind of lover who will fulfill their need for love without compromising their virtue. To accomplish this goal, their Pygmalion projects will be more tightly focused than the transformation attempted by Madame des Belles Cousines in Antoine de la Sale's *Petit Jehan de Saintré*. They will attend more to matters of character than to fame and social success. Their exercise of the bases of social power, first elaborated by French and Raven, will vary accordingly.

Marguerite wrote her story sometime between 1546 and 1549. The sixteenth century had brought with it the rise of humanism and, key to understanding Marguerite's works, an increase in religious tensions. Marguerite's sympathy toward the reformers is clear in her association with the group at Meaux, and her protection of Reformers and Protestant writers such as Lefèvre d'Etaples, Clément Marot, and John Calvin. It is also evident in her own writing. She repeatedly demonstrates a greater concern with personal spirituality than with the rites and public performance of the Catholic church.[1] Marguerite also writes from a position of privilege. As Francis I's sister and consort, as well as queen of Navarre, she benefited from a classical education and exercised an

influence not commonly accorded to women of her day. Pierre Jourda details her education and position in French society, noting the careful attention Marguerite's mother paid to the education her children received and to the position of privilege Marguerite occupied next to her brother. Yet even she is not free, caught in the bind of patriarchy. *Heptaméron* 26 reveals a woman's vision of the consequences of female desire in the context of her society.

To better understand the lady of Pampelune's Pygmalion project it is helpful to situate the 26th nouvelle in the context of the *Heptaméron* itself. Like Boccacio's *Decameron* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the *Heptaméron* is a framed narrative. Ten members of the nobility, five men and five women, find themselves trapped at a monastery while waiting for flood waters to recede, a situation similar to the one in which Marguerite found herself in September of 1546 (Déjean 310). To pass the time, they agree to take turns telling stories. Although the topics of the stories vary, the majority discuss the nature of love. No clear conclusions emerge. In his essay, "Modular Narrative and the Crisis of Interpretation", Michel Jeanneret concludes, "This is how the Heptameron is: The storytellers can reason and moralize about love, about psychology, about the genders, and outline numerous appropriate and useful thoughts. But the picture is never finished. One never stops finding variations, exceptions, and the need for revised conclusions" (101).

Along with the exploration of a philosophy of love, the closely-tied question of honor, especially the differing conceptions of male and female honor, is one of the most frequently debated topics in the text. Men achieve honor through conquest. However, the *Heptaméron* tells very few tales of men winning honor by military exploit.[2] Rather,

like the admiral Bonnivet, men gain the admiration of their peers through the successful seduction of virtuous women.[3]

Male honor thus linked to sexual conquest brings it into direct conflict with the conception of female honor, which is based on chastity and marital fidelity. This construction of a woman's honor ensures the legitimacy of the father's offspring and the longevity of the family name, ultimately serving male interests. The best woman from this perspective, therefore, is one without desire (Cholakian 13). Yet the male storytellers complain constantly of women who will not give in to their natural desires, remaining "cold" and "cruel". Hircan's contribution to the discussion following the 26th novella represents their argument:

"Aussi, que leurs robbes sont si longues et si bien tissues de dissimulation, que l' on ne peult congnoistre ce qui est dessoubz, car, si leur honneur n' en estoit non plus taché que le nostre, vous trouveriez que Nature n' a rien oblyé en elles non plus que en nous; et, pour la contraincte que elles se font de n' oser prendre le plaisir qu' elles desirent, ont changé ce vice en ung plus grand qu' elles tiennent plus honneste. c' est une gloire et cruaulté, par qui elles esperent acquerir nom d' immortalité, et ainsy se gloriffians de resister au vice de la loy de Nature (si Nature est vicieuse), se font non seullement semblables aux bestes inhumaines et cruelles, mais aux diables, desquelz elles prenent l' orgueil et la malice" (914).

Such a statement is not, however, an offer to women to share in the sexual freedom men enjoy. Men invite them to follow nature and accede to their desires not for their own pleasure or good, but for men's enjoyment and satisfaction (Cholakian 131). In so doing, as Gary Ferguson points out, they are speaking to women as mistresses rather

than wives (145). The woman who accepts will ruin her reputation, while the woman who refuses will be labeled a hypocrite. The code of feminine virtue frustrates male desire, and renders the satisfaction of female desire within the patriarchal system nearly impossible.

Colette Winn suggests that Marguerite de Navarre seeks a resolution to this conundrum by promoting a rehabilitation of marriage in which the chaste, but not virgin, female body can find fulfillment of desire without staining honor (106). While marriage offers a logically appealing solution to the double bind of female honor, it is not a solution supported by the historical context or the text itself. Marriage in Marguerite's day served to satisfy the desire for political gain, conflict resolution, or financial security rather than the need for human companionship, mutual love and respect, and the satisfaction of physical desires. Marguerite's own marriage to the Duke of Alençon was arranged to end a long-standing legal dispute (Jourda 19). Jean-Luc Déjean concludes that, in Marguerite's eyes, marriage remained "un mal nécessaire" (322).

In the *Heptaméron*, love, even in its purest and most virtuous forms, is frequently seen as an obstacle to the perfect love of God. In novella 70, Mme du Verger, a widow who has engaged in what Oisille describes as a chaste relationship, offers this dying lament after the promise to keep her love secret has been broken. "Helas! Ma pauvre ame, qui, par trop avoir adoré la creature, avez oblié le Createur, il fault retourner entre les mains de Celluy duquel l' amour vaine vous avoit ravie" (1103).[4] Of all the *Heptaméron* tales that deal with love, stories ending in the death of one or both lovers far outnumber stories in which the two lovers live happily ever after.[5]

So what happens when women desire? There are several tales of women who ignore the demands of virtue and, as Hircan urges, follow the law of Nature. Most of these tales are told to amuse, and tend to involve bourgeois or working-class women who find clever ways to trick their husbands and hide their affairs with monks or young neighbors. Noble women who act on their desires without regard for their virtue tend to draw sharp criticism.[6] The stories that most seriously investigate the problem of female honor and desire center on women who attempt to satisfy the demands of both.

Rolandine, of story 21, has reached the age of thirty without being allowed to marry. Her stingy father and the bitter queen to whom she is related have turned away all suitors. Unable to operate within the acceptable power structure, Rolandine acts independently, forming an alliance with a bastard of noble birth who finds himself in a similar situation. He cannot marry because of his dubious pedigree and his lack of good looks to compensate. These qualities certainly exclude him from marrying anyone of royal blood. The queen's efforts to keep them apart force the pair to great lengths to remain in contact, feigning illness, pretending to go on pilgrimages, and sending messages through elaborate networks. They finally marry secretly, though they agree not to consummate the marriage until Rolandine's father has consented. Thus Rolandine seeks to resolve her dilemma while remaining within the bounds of chastity. Ultimately, the plan fails. The marriage is discovered, Rolandine is locked in a tower, the bastard flees, only to marry a rich German woman, and her marriage is annulled. Nonetheless, all ends well for Rolandine, who is finally married off properly. Her miserly father and greedy brother both die, leaving her the family inheritance and a chance to live happily in a marriage approved by both parental and royal authority.

Story 43, one of the best-known stories of the *Heptaméron*, tells the tale of Jambique, a woman with an imposing reputation for virtue who creates a space where she can satisfy her desire. Keeping her identity secret, she sends a message to the object of her gaze, asking him to meet her in a dark gallery. She arrives, wearing a mask over her eyes and her hood pulled down over her face. In a low whisper, she confesses her love and promises her faithfulness as long he agrees not to seek her identity. The gentleman agrees, and the affair continues. As La Guardia observes, "what Marguerite de Navarre offers us here is a feminist desire that is outside of language, that refuses to present the feminine body as the symbolic object of a narcissistic masculine desire, and that concentrates its satisfaction within the tactile realm" (143,4). Jambique's alternative space cannot last, however. Her lover cannot imagine a woman who "ne voulût être vue et aimée", and so, overcome by curiosity, he marks her shoulder with chalk. Having identified his mistress, he confronts her, thinking that their love can only grow. Jambique, however, true to her word, denies everything and uses her influence with the mistress of the household to have the young man sent away.

Rolandine and Jambique, in an attempt to satisfy their desires, disregard social conventions, whether of parental and royal authority, or of morality. They seek happiness outside the patriarchal system of marriage, and both ultimately fail. Rolandine finds happiness only when she re-enters the system, marrying a man her father approves of. In Jambique's case, the gentleman is sent away, preserving Jambique's reputation, but destroying the space she had created to express and fulfill her desire.

Throughout the *Heptaméron,* a woman's power is more effectively asserted in a social context by substituting linguistic for sexual intercourse. When the members of the

company stranded at Notre-Dame de Sarrance discuss ways to stave off the boredom that is becoming unbearable, Hircan's first choice of activities is rejected by his wife, who responds, "laissons là les passetemps ou deux seullement peuvent avoir part et parlons de celluy qui doibt estre commun à tous" (709). Parlamente follows this reprimand with the suggestion that they pass the time telling stories. This substitution of text for desire noted by Robert Cottrell recurs in novella 26 as well as throughout the text (14). This linguistic sublimation moves desire into a realm largely controlled by women. As LaGuardia notes in his analyses of novellas 10, 21, and 43, access to the networks of communication in the *Heptaméron* is controlled by female authority figures (139). In the sphere of language, as determined from the outset of the game, all players are equal, regardless of relative social status or gender. This rule set by the storytellers plays out in the tales as well. Thus, by drawing her young protégé into a relationship characterized by discourse, the protagonist of novella 26 has the best chance of controlling it. The bases of power accessible to her are bases that function primarily in the sphere of language, those of expert power, conveyed by lessons, and referent power, the importance of the relationship between them.

Saffredent, a defender, like Hircan, of the "follow your natural drives" point of view, narrates *Heptaméron 26*, the story of two women, "une folle et une sage". The latter, a young lady from Pampelune, seeks the same goal as Jambique and Rolandine: the satisfaction of her desire without the sacrifice of her honor. Unlike Jambique and Rolandine, however, she makes her attempt entirely within the patriarchal system of acceptable relationships between men and women. She does not mask her desire through darkness and disguise, nor does she flout parental or royal authority. Rather, she takes on

the role of Pygmalion, intending to shape a new kind of lover who will devote himself to her on her terms.

The scope of the transformation the lady of Pampelune wishes to effect is much more limited than that undertaken by Madame des Belles Cousines in *le Petit Jehan de Saintré*. Rather than attempting to sculpt an entire social being to her specifications, the lady seeks instead to cultivate virtue and weed out desire, a task perhaps no less difficult though less broad. The bases of power she has at her disposal and chooses to draw upon are much more limited than those of Saintré's benefactress, a situation partly accounted for by their relative social status. D'Avannes is the king's brother, while *la sage* is a member either of the upper bourgeoisie or the lower aristocracy (Cazauran 43).

At the beginning of the story, the seigneur d'Avannes, like Saintré, is very young, but already "tant beau et tant plain de toute bonne grace, qu' il sembloit n' estre faict que pour estre aymé et regardé; ce qu' il estoit de tous ceulx qui le voyoient, et, plus que de nul autre, d' une dame demorant en la ville de Pampelune en Navarre" (902). Unlike Madamedes Belles Cousines who formulated her project and then chose the raw material, the lady of Pampelune is inspired to undertake her transforming work by the qualities d'Avannes possesses at the outset. This highlights an important difference between Madamedes Belles Cousines and "la sage". Madameseeks a distraction and so steps boldly and purposefully beyond the boundaries of social acceptability. Marguerite keeps the lady of Pampelune within the bounds of virtue by making the initiation of the relationship her husband's responsibility. She is charmed by d'Avannes, but it is unlikely that she would have ever pursued him had her husband's actions not placed them in

frequent proximity. She takes advantage of an opportunity, seeking to shape their relationship into something safe and fulfilling at the same time.

The lady of Pampelune is twenty-three years old, and married to a wealthy man who is nearly fifty. The age difference between them, however, does not occasion infidelity or frivolity on her part. She lives honestly, dresses modestly, and consequently has her husband's complete faith. At a relative's wedding, the lady's husband asks d'Avannes to dance with his wife, which he does willingly, not because the lady is beautiful, but because he loves dancing. His partner, meanwhile, "regardoit plus la grace et beaulté du dict seigneur d' Avannes, que la dance où elle estoit, combien que, par sa grande prudence, elle n' en fit ung seul semblant" (903). By describing d'Avannes as the passive, unwitting object of the lady's gaze, the narrator underlines the reversed direction of desire in this novella, a reversal that becomes problematic because female desire must operate within the patriarchal structure (Freccero 132).

After the wedding, the lady's husband accompanies d'Avannes home. Out of gratitude for the honor d'Avannes has shown to him and his family, and because he has no children of his own, he offers d'Avannes a regular source of spending money, knowing that the higher nobility can be stingy. D'Avannes happily accepts, laying the foundation for a relationship with the gentleman and his wife.

D'Avannes visits his benefactors regularly, eating and drinking with his "père par alliance", and spending time with his wife, who not only sees to his requests when her husband is away, but also takes the opportunity to advise d'Avannes to be wise and virtuous. Her kindness, generosity, and wisdom inspire both his love and fearful respect: "...il la craingnoit et aymoit plus que toutes les femmes de ce monde" (904). Reward and

expert power are the operative bases of power used to influence d'Avannes's behavior at this stage of the story. The promise of financial support from the husband creates the opportunity for a relationship to develop between d'Avannes and the lady, though this is not the direct reward power Madamedes Belles Cousines wields. Continued support is not contingent on d'Avannes's following a set of instructions to his benefactors' specifications. Rather, rewards become part of a relationship of mutual gratitude. One could speculate that the couple's generosity motivates d'Avannes to listen politely to the lady's advice on virtue, but the text gives no indication that he does so because he feels obligated, but rather because of the soundness of the teaching.

The lady's lessons gain credibility because she lives what she teaches, shoring up her expert power. She is a model of virtue, enjoying both an impeccable social reputation, as seen in the narrator's initial description of her, and the admiration, respect and trust of her husband. Her husband's trust in her is so complete that he puts the administration of the household under her control. His confidence in her contrasts sharply with the situation of the other woman in the story, the "folle", kept under constant watch by both her husband and her parents.

The lady's reward and expert power build her most powerful means of influence, her referent power. D'Avannes places a high value on maintaining and strengthening their relationship. When he turns seventeen and starts noticing women, the narrator explains, "Et, combien qu' il eust plus voluntiers aymé la saige dame que nulle, si est-ce que la paour qu' il avoit de perdre son amityé, si elle entendoit telz propos, le feit taire et se amuser ailleurs" (904). The lady's referent power repeatedly prompts d'Avannes to modify his behavior as he progresses toward her goal.

At this early stage in his moral formation, d'Avannes uses virtue precisely as La Guardia has noted, as a mask for desire (114). Ironically, he doesn't wear a mask of virtue for the lady he is seducing, but for the lady he truly loves and does not wish to disappoint. The object of his pursuit, a substitute for the true object of his desire, is recognized even by her parents as "belle et legiere". From the exchanges they have had at the parties and balls d'Avannes has held to please this young woman, encounters kept brief because of the watchful eyes of her parents and husband, d'Avannes has recognized that he only needs opportunity to ensure a successful conquest. But to create this opportunity, he will be absent from the home of the virtuous lady and her husband. He masks his desire with a virtuous explanation, a pilgrimage to Montserrat.[7] When the lady sees through his story and warns him to look after his health, his blush tells the truth of the situation, but he continues with his plan. D'Avannes thus demonstrates that, although he has listened to her lessons, he has not begun to internalize the values his lady is teaching.

D'Avannes's plan unfolds exactly as they both expect. Disguising himself as a stable boy, another mask, this time for his conquest's husband, d'Avannes sells two horses to the *folle*'s husband, and succeeds in getting hired as the head of the stables. Having gained access to the household, he needs only to make his presence known and the lady takes care of the rest. Before long, however, his double life of groom by day and lover by night takes its toll on his health, just as the wise woman had warned him. Too sick to be of any use to his mistress, d'Avannes is sent home until he has regained his strength.

D'Avannes returns to the house of his father "par alliance" and his wife. The narrator tells us that her love for him has not diminished, but that she sees immediately that she was right about his "pilgrimage". She admonishes him, and d'Avannes, both angry and embarrassed, responds.

This is the first time in the text that d'Avannes speaks in direct discourse, marking a turning point in both d'Avannes's and the plot's development. In the context of their relationship, d'Avannes has been passive. He was admired by the lady of Pampelune for his grace and beauty, asked by her husband to dance with her, offered financial aid, advised and encouraged to be virtuous, and now admonished because he was not. His response in his own voice marks a shift from this largely passive role to a new, more active one. He replies, "Madame, j' ay aultresfois ouy dire que la repentence suyt le peché; et, maintenant je l' esprouve à mes despens, vous priant excuser ma jeunesse, qui ne se peut chastier que par experimenter du mal qu' elle ne veult croire" (907). From this point on, d'Avannes will no longer be an empty receptacle to be filled with wise words, but will actively explore the implications of choosing virtue, testing its limits and ultimately achieving his lady's goal for him, total devotion to her in a perfectly chaste relationship.

This point parallels Saintré's undertaking of his *emprise*, and both mirror the moment of Galatea's animation.[8] As noted earlier, marriage offered a means for Pygmalion to retain control of his creation after she came to life, but no such solution presents itself for his female counterparts. Madame des Belles Cousines rejects Saintré when she finds her bases of power have eroded, but the lady of Pampelune sees d'Avannes's repentance as a step closer to the completion of her Pygmalion project,

which is now explicitly presented for the first time "...elle esperoit tousjours que, après avoir passé ses premiers jours en follies, il se retireroit et contraindroit d' aymer honnestement, et, par ce moien, seroit en tout à elle" (908). This passage reflects the Neo-Platonic thread that runs through the Heptaméron, a philosophy of love often advocated by Parlamente. Jules Gelernt summarizes, "love manifests itself first as desire for earthly objects, and only gradually can man reach the understanding that his desire is nothing other than his soul's yearning to return to its heavenly home" (144). The lady of Pampelune has her sights set on a middle rung of this ladder. Despite her hopes, this new, active d'Avannes proves much more dangerous to her virtue and her very existence than was the boy who loved and feared her.

The lady profits from d'Avannes' two-week convalescence to exercise her expert power again. She speaks to him so wisely on loving virtue that "il commencea avoir horreur de la follye qu' il avoit faicte" (908). But his sin is not the only thing d'Avannes recognizes. He also realizes that the wise lady surpasses the foolish one both in beauty and in grace. Thus, she secures her place as the object of his desire, an integral step in bringing her project to completion. However, she has not yet succeeded in convincing d'Avannes of the merits of "aimer honnêtement", demonstrated by the seduction attempt that follows.

D'Avannes waits for a dark day, "chassant toute craincte dehors" to make his move, cloaking his seduction attempt in the language of virtue.[9] He sets the bait, telling *la sage* that he has decided to devote his heart entirely to the love of virtue, and asking her if she is willing to help in any way she can. The lady, "fort joyeuse", agrees.[10] D'Avannes then attempts to spring the trap. Citing Christ's incarnation as a means to

bring mankind to the love of God, d'Avannes requests that his lady serve as an incarnation of Virtue, "parquoy , je vous recongnois et confesse non seullement vertueuse, mais la seulle vertu; et, moy, qui la voys reluire soubz le vele du plus parfaict corps qui oncques fut, la veulx servir et honnorer toute ma vie, laissant pour elle toute autre amour vaine et vicieuse" (908).

Gary Ferguson identifies d'Avannes's rhetorical strategy as a reversal of Neoplatonic ideology. Rather than seek a shift from the physical to the abstract spiritual, d'Avannes requests a physical representation of Virtue in the person of the "sage" (147). While d'Avannes' choice of rhetorical strategy could be, and has been, interpreted as a skillful attempt at manipulation, expertly tailored to his target, Nicole Cazauran sees d'Avannes's modified attempt as progress.[11] Whether his strategy displays progress toward his lady's goal or not, her referent power prompts this masking of his real desires. Although she sees through his attempt, she is pleased, and hopes to bring about a convergence of the language he uses to please her and the true desires of his heart. To encourage him in this direction, she exercises a combination of reward and referent power. She tells him that, despite her inability to incarnate Virtue for him, she does feel for him an affection as great as her fear of God and concern for her honor will allow. But she places conditions on the declaration of her love: "Mais ceste affection ne sera declarée jusques ad ce que vostre cueur soit susceptible de la patience que l' amour vertueux commande" (909). Displaying a complete lack of understanding of what he has just heard, d'Avannes begs for a kiss as a guarantee of her word, a sensuous rather than chaste response (Regosin 83). When she refuses, he once again employs his manipulative skills to get what he wants. He begs the lady's husband to consider him his son, and asks

to kiss him as a sign of his affection. He then asks permission to kiss his wife, d'Avannes's new "mother". The gentleman agrees, and kisses are exchanged, with no sign from the lady whether she wants to kiss him or not.[12]

The kiss further fans the flames of d'Avannes's desire. When he discovers that his brother, the king, is moving his court, he decides to make one final effort to succeed. The figurative flames become literal as d'Avannes sets fire to his own house in order to manipulate his way into his lady's bed. He deludes himself into thinking that, like the *folle*, the lady really only needs opportunity to change her mind about their relationship. Her husband, hearing that d'Avannes' house is burning, rushes to the site, wraps d'Avannes in his own robe, and brings him home to his wife, who is still in bed. He issues her singular instructions: "traictez-le comme moy-mesmes" (910). D'Avannes, as the narrator notes, would like nothing better, and hops into bed. To his chagrin, his lady hops just as quickly out the other side, threatening him with an end to their relationship. "Croiez que ainsy que l' or s' esprouve en la fournaise, aussy ung cueur chaste au millieu des tentations s' y trouve plus fort et vertueux, et se refroidit, tant plus il est assailly de son contraire... si vous voulez que je continue l' affection que je vous porte, ostez non seullement la volunté, mais la pensée de jamais, pour chose que seussiez faire, me treuver aultre que je suis" (910). In response to d'Avannes's overt assault on her honor, the lady of Pampelune exercises one of the most potent bases of power, coercive power. Here, coercive power takes the form of a personal sanction, a threat to end their relationship.[13] As a result of the threat, d'Avannes spends the night unable to eat or sleep, so great is his fear that he has damaged their relationship. But the next morning he sees in her eyes more pity than anger, which only augments his passion.

Separation of the female Pygmalion figure and her creation is a constant.[14] Saintré left Madamedes Belles Cousines in order to carry out his *emprise*, and d'Avannes leaves for Taffares with his brother's royal court. Both women have similar initial reactions, becoming gravely ill. Saintré's lady, however, regains her health by replacing the object of her desire with a new, less threatening one. But the lady of Pampelune remains stolidly within the bounds of a woman's honor. We learn that she has been able to check her desire through regular contact, seeing and talking to d'Avannes. Deprived of this outlet, "la guerre que l'amour et l'honneur faisaient en son cœur" becomes unbearable. As she weakens and nears death, her husband sends a letter to d'Avannes begging him to come in the hopes that his visit will do his wife good. D'Avannes returns immediately, arriving just in time for the lady to complete her transforming work. Near as she is to death, she can at last reveal the passion she has felt for d'Avannes without risk to her honor. D'Avannes is left speechless, stunned perhaps by her commitment to God, her husband, and her honor. But he is the one for whom she is dying. "Car entendez, Monseigneur, que Dieu et mon honneur ne m' ont jamais permis de vous declarer [ma grande affection], craingnant d'adjouster en vous ce que je desiroys de diminuer" (912). Death serves as both a witness to and a release from love (Regosin 86). In her dying declaration, she thus adds to her referent and expert powers the power of legitimate equity, the necessary tool to complete her work. The revelation that her commitment to honor and virtue and her desire to foster their growth in d'Avannes is so great that she will sacrifice her life to preserve and encourage them achieves d'Avannes' transformation. He is, after this experience, "en tout à elle". He leaves Pampelune and returns to his brother's court, where "il demeura beaucoup d' années, sans vouloir ne

veoir ne parler à femme du monde, pour le regret qu' il avoit de sa dame; et porta plus de dix ans le noir" (913).

Thus the lady of Pampelune, like Madame des Belles Cousines, is ultimately successful in her Pygamalion project. She has cultivated virtue and weeded out desire in the young man she loves. But she has achieved her goal only by sacrificing her own life. And so we arrive at another dead end in the search for a resolution to the struggle between desire and honor. Madame des Belles Cousines chooses desire and pays with the sacrifice of her reputation, her social status, indeed her public existence. The lady of Pampelune chooses honor, dissimulating her desire. In her "death before dishonor" approach, she follows the example of Lucretia and other martyrs for virtue, some of which can be found in the *Heptaméron* itself.[15] But no one can argue that this is a positive outcome. While her joyous death is, according to Robert Cottrell, a sure sign of salvation in the *Heptameron*, the situation in which the patriarchal code of honor places women who desire renders life impossible (19).

The discussion at the end of novella 26 between the male and female storytellers focuses on a woman's honor. Tetel notes the role of the conversations between storytellers in promoting ambiguity (149). Saffredent, the tale's narrator, does not disappoint. He opens the discussion by undermining the distinction he made between his two female characters. One breath after recounting the glorious death of his supremely virtuous heroine, he suggests that perhaps it is she who deserves the label "folle". From a lover's point of view, as expressed by Hircan, women's commitment to chastity is only a mask for pride. Not acting on the desire they feel is merely hypocrisy. The women argue that self-control merits some recognition and that if they do fall prey to the sin of pride, at

least their sin does not injure any third parties, as does the killing of others in war or the dishonoring of women in love.

Both sides, however, fail to comment on what the lady of Pampelune was attempting. She did not simply deny her desire. Instead, she tried to reshape its expression and mold its object into a lover that could share a new kind of relationship with her. Discourse substitutes for intercourse, *affection* for *feu*. She opens the possibility of confessing her love, but only when he is ready. Doing so too early will doom her project, encouraging his advances and putting her honor at greater risk. Dissimulation is thus portrayed less as a sign of hypocrisy than as a necessity for success. Regular contact provides a release valve that keeps the fire from burning out of control and suggests that, had d'Avannes not left for Taffares with his brother, she could have continued their relationship. This is not a perfect solution, as Cazauran justly notes. Even if the relationship were successful, it remains merely a passable substitution for what both parties really want. Seeing and talking to d'Avannes only enables "la sage" to keep her desire in check. It does not sublimate or erase the physical desire she feels (241, 2). But it does represent an attempt at resolving an untenable situation.

The question remains whether d'Avannes's conversion to "parfaict amour" could have been completed without the death of his lady. After his third seduction attempt, d'Avannes spends a sleepless night fearing that he has lost the "privauté" he enjoyed. When he sees in her eyes the next morning that she feels more pity than anger, "[ce] fut ung charbon adjousté davantaige à son amour" (911). The lady's exercise of referent and coercive power are able to produce only short term modifications of his behavior. Only the power of legitimate equity, the desire to atone for harm or pain one has caused, can

complete the task the lady of Pampelune set for herself. D'Avannes' transformation requires the sacrifice of her life, leaving her dream of a lover she can enjoy without threat to her honor firmly beyond her grasp.

Viewing the lady of Pampelune as a female Pygmalion figure underscores the impossibility of resolving the conflict between human desire and social convention for women in the sixteenth century. Her role as sculptor of her ideal should give her a much greater chance of success than her counterparts who play the role of desired object. If ever a woman had a chance to be happy in love, it was she. She chose her lover early, before the notion of desire entered his mind. She cultivated a relationship of respect, love, and even holy fear. She did everything within her power to ensure success, and had she succeeded, she would have established a space in which she could love while remaining within the bounds of virtue. But in creatively circumventing social norms, she is confronted with an even more basic reality, that of human nature. In this sense, the Pygmalion theme is particularly apt. D'Avannes is very much like a statue from ancient Greece, beautifully sculpted, but missing limbs because the artist conceived it in bronze, but executed it in marble. Despite her careful efforts and dedication to her work, the lady of Pampelune cannot overcome the inherent limitations of her medium. As long as she possesses a body, d'Avannes will desire it.

In telling this tale, along with several others, Marguerite sketches the impossible situation in which women who desire find themselves. She gives examples of women who attempt various means to resolve their dilemmas, but none is satisfactory. Jeanneret continues his description of modular narrative, "The modular collection never uses up all the material and never settles the questions" (101). Marguerite's tales are not

prescriptive. How can they be when told by ten storytellers with ten different perspectives on love and human relationships? The discussions that follow often serve to further embroil the issues under consideration. Which of the two women was really the wiser? Can natural drives really be equated with vice? Was dying from unrequited passion the best way to handle the situation? While Marguerite does not answer these questions definitively, nor resolve the larger issue of the impossible tension between desire and virtue, she does bring the issue to the forefront. She is deeply embedded in her aristocratic, patriarchal milieu, having been used as political currency herself not once, but twice, and having watched her daughter undergo the same experience.[16] While she cannot use her position to change women's status, she can give voice to their problems and create a space where they can discussed and debated.

The story of a virtuous woman attempting to create a lover who will not threaten her honor reappears in Honoré de Balzac's *Lys dans la vallée*. Herbert Hunt notes that the theme of tension between spiritual and fleshly love so carefully explored in the *Heptaméron* occurs frequently in nineteenth-century literature. Sand, Sainte-Beuve, and Balzac investigate the ties between love and spirituality (107). In *Le Lys dans la vallée*, Balzac retells Marguerite's tale from Galatea's point of view.[17]

In the nearly three hundred years since Marguerite told her tale, women's status in society did not improve. In her introduction to *French Feminism in the 19th Century*, Claire Goldberg Moses summarizes the historical changes that occurred after the Middle Ages, when women benefited from a somewhat ambiguous status (2). The codification of laws in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries increasingly excluded women from power, while the increasing complexity of society rendered their traditional exclusion from

universities a greater disadvantage (3). Women gained some power and social standing, as well as access to an informal education, in the milieu of the 17th and 18th century salon. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, however, attacked this involvement of women in public life.[18] James McMillan notes that the idea of separate spheres for men and women was nothing new, but the 19th century saw a much wider propagation of the doctrine (*Housewife* 9). It was a position adopted by both clericals and non-clericals, the Right and the Left. Men were to be citizens, women wives and mothers. From their place in the home, women were to be the dominant moral influence, not only in the lives of their children, but, by extension, on society as a whole (*France and Women* 51). The traditional double standard of morality is only strengthened by the assignation of women to the sphere of the home. A woman's chastity and fidelity are integral to the preservation of the purity of the family, while a man's sexual activity has little consequence for the sanctity of his own hearth (*Housewife* 16). The woman in Romantic literature reflects this ideal. She is cast in the role of angel, saint, or Madonna, an ingenue in need of protection. She is childlike, self-sacrificing, and subordinate to men's needs and interests (George 18). In 1804, the Napoleonic Code furthered this role by barring women from citizenship. George summarizes the essence of the code's definition of men's and women's roles. Husbands owe protection to their wives, wives obedience to their husbands (20). Balzac does little to challenge the predominant attitudes toward women. Brinda J. Mehta describes the ideal women of Balzac's fictional universe. "La vraie femme était celle qui ne possédait pas vraiment de sexualité; ainsi, elle ne pouvait pas menacer la fragilité de la psyché masculine, trop avide de maintenir sa maîtrise (sur la femme, bien sûr)" (5). The

question raised by Marguerite about the consequences of a woman's desire thus remains unresolved three centuries later.

The similarities between Marguerite's and Balzac's stories are pronounced. Both have a central pair of a virtuous woman and the younger man she loves. The women are married to men who place the responsibilities of running their households in their wives' hands. The young men displace their desire for the virtuous women who remain above their grasp onto an overtly sexual, blatantly unchaste substitute. Both repent and return, only to be separated by courtly duties calling them away. For the women, the separation is deadly. Both become ill, their fevers a physical manifestation of the passion they have repressed. They confess their passion only from the safety of imminent death, and both deaths achieve their goals. In addition to the similarities in plot, the two texts are framed narratives forming parts of larger texts, the *Heptaméron* and the *Comédie Humaine*, and include the narratee's reaction and interpretation of the text. However, our interest in the comparison of these two texts lies in their differences, differences that certainly arise from a shift in historical context and the differences that exist between authors, but which may also be attributed to a change from a female author to a male.

Each of the similarities noted above disguises important differences. Both women are married to older men, who place household management responsibilities in their wives' hands. However, these responsibilities are a mark of complete trust and confidence on the part of the *sage*'s husband, while Henriette de Mortsauf has to take them on because her husband is incapacitated. Both women profess to love their husbands, but the lady of Pampelune's husband is a good, honest man who loves and honors his wife, while Monsieur de Mortsauf is jealous, prone to fits of anger, and

verbally abusive. The wives' motivations to remain virtuous reflect these character differences in their husbands. The motivation for the *sage* comes from her love of God and her husband. She wishes to remain faithful to both, and thus refuses to compromise her virtue with d'Avannes. Henriette uses her virtue as a shield from her husband's jealous rages and irrational accusations. She tells Félix, "Eh, mon ami, songez donc en quel enfer je tomberais si je donnais à cet être sans pitié, comme le sont tous les gens faibles, le droit de me mépriser ? Je ne supporterais pas un soupçon. La pureté de ma conduite fait ma force." (169).

Henriette and the *sage* first encounter their protégés at celebrations—a ball for the Duke of Angoulême (a nod to Marguerite?) and a family wedding. In Marguerite's text, the *sage*'s role as desiring subject is underlined, but Félix initiates contact with Madame de Mortsauf. She happens to sit near him at the ball, where Félix, so taken with her beauty, modesty, and purity, throws himself into her back, kissing her white shoulders. Henriette thus begins her role in the story as a desired object. Félix's first encounter with passion leaves him seemingly ill, so his family sends him to Touraine. There, Félix senses her presence, then glimpses her in a white dress standing on the terrace of her home in the bottom of the valley. His interest in her home provokes his host to note, "Vous sentez de loin une jolie femme comme un chien flaire le gibier" (46). The objectifying metaphors continue: Félix talks of stalking the prey of pleasure, refers to her as a "pomme délicieuse", and is curious to meet Monsieur de Mortsauf, "le possesseur de ce trésor".

Félix retains his role of subject even as Madame de Mortsauf undertakes her project, a two-fold transformation, resembling more closely that of Madamedes Belles

Cousines in scope. She undertakes a broader project because she needs more from Félix than the *sage* needs from d'Avannes. Both women are awakened to passion by the presence of these young men, and both attempt to channel their passion into acceptable forms. But Madame de Mortsauf gains much more from Félix's presence, casting him into all the unfilled roles in her life. When Félix comes dangerously close to professing love for her, she lays out the ground rules for their relationship, describing what he must become for her. "Je croyais à de pures amitiés, à des fraternités volontaires... Je voulais un ami qui ne fût pas un juge, un ami pour m'écouter en ces moments de faiblesse où la voix qui gronde est une voix meurtrière, un ami saint avec qui je n'eusse rien à craindre...j'ai cru que j'aurais une âme qui serait à moi seule comme un prêtre est à tous, un coeur où je pourrais épancher mes douleurs quand elles surabondent, crier quand mes cris sont irrésistibles, et m'étoufferaient si je continuais à les dévorer " (109).

Neither Madamedes Belles Cousines nor the lady of Pampelune elaborates so clearly her project to the young man she intends to transform. Henriette's revelation effects a shift in the nature of the project that more closely balances the power between them. Now aware of Madame de Mortsauf's plans for him, Félix replies, "J'accepte ce contrat qui doit se résoudre en souffrances pour moi. Je me donne à vous sans arrière-pensée, et serai ce que vous voudrez que je sois" (110). Though still the target of referent and coercive power, Félix's explicit acceptance of Henriette's expectations elevates him to the status of partner in the relationship, giving him a level of agency his counterparts lack.

The first two roles Henriette gives Félix to fill are those of her confessor and her aunt. Like a confessor, she wants Félix to be "moins qu'un amant, mais plus qu'un frère"

(135). She also seeks to restore the affection she lost when her aunt died. When Félix asks her how she wants him to love her, she replies, "Aimez-moi comme m'aimait ma tante." (118). She permits Félix to call her Henriette, the name by which only her aunt had called her. When Félix returns to Clochegourde after an absence, she gives him her aunt's former bedroom to underline the chaste, affectionate nature of their relationship.

In another attempt to denature her feelings, she casts Félix in the role of her oldest child (145). Félix provides hope for the future of her own children, both as an example of survival and as a source of support for them in the future. The second part of Henriette's project springs from this role in which she has cast Félix, one that is more superficial, yet more successful. Here, she takes a sickly, timid, unloved adolescent who still looks like a little boy and transforms him into a confident, capable man who can successfully navigate the pitfalls of Parisian society. This neglected youngest son wins the favor of Louis XVIII, earning his confidence as well as a secret position working directly for him. Madame de Mortsauf helps him establish connections with the most important women in Paris, older women who can help him advance in society. With their backing, as well as the king's favor, Félix rises to the top of the Parisian social and political scene.

Given six months' leave, he returns to Clochegourde unannounced, eager, like Saintré, to show his lady how much he has accomplished as the result of her teaching. Félix describes himself on his return: " Pour la première fois, j'allais me montrer à celle que j'aimais, non seulement un peu moins niais, mais encore dans l'appareil d'un jeune homme élégant dont les manières avaient été formées par les salons les plus polis, dont l'éducation avait été achevée par les femmes les plus gracieuses, qui avait enfin recueilli

le prix de ses souffrances, et qui avait mis en usage l'expérience du plus bel ange que le ciel ait commis à la garde d'un enfant" (212). The changes wrought in him result from Henriette's exercise of her expert power in the form of the letters she writes, and of her referent power, which is clearly visible in Félix's desire to please her.

As is the case with Madamedes Belles Cousines and the lady of Pampelune, the success of Madame de Mortsauf's project increases the threat the creation poses to its creator. Michael Lastinger discusses the blending of gender traits in many of Balzac's characters in *Le Lys dans la vallée*, and Félix is not exempt. When he arrives at Clochegourde, he does not know if he is male or female, adult or child (240). Henriette maintains his confusion and her control by asking him to play multiple roles: her aunt, her confessor, her friend, her child, her protector. When Félix goes to Paris, he begins to resolve this identity crisis and returns more sure of who he is. "Quand Henriette vit le jeune homme là où elle n'avait jamais vu qu'un enfant, elle abaissa son regard... je la trouvai pâle" (213). Félix's strength and independence threaten Henriette's hold on him and on herself. Her fears provoke her to remind Félix of their contract:

"...m'aimez-vous saintement?

-- Saintement.

-- À jamais?

-- À jamais.

-- Comme une vierge Marie, qui doit rester dans ses voiles et sous sa couronne blanche?

-- Comme une vierge Marie visible.

-- Comme une soeur?

-- Comme une soeur trop aimée.

-- Comme une mère?

-- Comme une mère secrètement désirée.

-- Chevaleresquement, sans espoir?

-- Chevaleresquement, mais avec espoir.

-- Enfin, comme si vous n'aviez encore que vingt ans, et que vous portiez votre méchant habit bleu du bal?

-- Oh ! mieux. Je vous aime ainsi, et je vous aime encore comme...

Elle me regarda dans une vive appréhension...

-- Comme vous aimait votre tante." (214)

She finishes the exchange with a word of advice: "Je résisterai toujours à la force de l'homme; mais que refuserais-je à l'enfant? Rien : il ne peut rien vouloir que je ne puisse accorder" (215). Viewing Félix as a child rather than a man enables Henriette to continue to channel her feelings for him away from a woman's passion toward a mother's affection. Far more than Marguerite's, Balzac's text emphasizes the mask of maternal love. D'Avannes uses this disguise for his feelings only as a ruse to get the kiss he so desperately desires from his lady. She never attempts to cast her feelings into a maternal mold. In the *Lys*, Henriette is the one who adopts this model, not only to hide the nature of her feelings from her husband, but also from Félix and even herself. This attempted self-deception differentiates her from the lady of Pampelune, whose dissimulation implies recognition of her desire in spite of her unwillingness to make it known. Félix, as is clear from the passage cited above, rejects a maternal interpretation of the nature of their relationship. Each of Henriette's attempts to purge their relationship of desire are met with his own insistence on its existence. Her invocation of the Virgin is met with an

emphasis on Mary's physicality, recalling d'Avannes's request that his lady incarnate Virtue for him so that he can better pursue it. Félix's agreements to love her as a sister, a mother, and a noble lady all cross the line of her expectations of chastity. While Félix may agree not to act on his desire, he will not deny that he feels it.

Henriette's insistence on the chastity of their relationship pushes Félix, like it did d'Avannes, to "s'amuser ailleurs". D'Avannes sought out his *folle*, organizing parties and balls to gain access to her, and eventually disguising himself as a stable boy to provide an opportunity for success. Balzac shifts the blame for Félix's infidelity to Lady Dudley, who pursues and eventually seduces him. He explains himself, writing to Natalie, "Un homme a moins de ressources pour résister à une femme. Nous vous laissons le monopole de la modestie pour que vous ayez le privilège [d'accorder] des faveurs ; mais invertissez les rôles, l'homme succombe sous la moquerie."(255, 6).

Here is Balzac's version of the *folle* and the *sage*, Arabelle and Henriette, *amour charnel* and *amour divin* (60), *la maîtresse du corps* and *l'épouse de l'âme* (61). Pierre Barbéris identifies this pair of the siren and the angel as a recurring feature of Balzacien myth (143). The importance of the Romantic ideal could not be more evident. Madame de Mortsauf is everything a woman should be. Balzac wrote to Eve Hanska, "Je prépare... une grande et belle oeuvre, une figure de femme charmante, pleine de coeur, ayant un mari maussade, et vertueuse. Ce sera, sous la forme purement humaine, la perfection terrestre comme Séraphita est la perfection céleste" (*Hanska* 11 mars 1835). Her sphere is home and family. She is devoted to her husband and her children, channeling all her efforts into activities that will nurture, sustain, and provide for them. She sacrifices her own dreams and desires for their benefit.

Arabelle is the antithesis of this ideal. She spends most of her time in the public sphere, moving in the same social circles Félix does. Félix's description of her home as cold and impersonal demonstrates Arabelle's dissociation from it. Henriette decries Lady Dudley's violation of her maternal responsibilities as she sacrifices her reputation and thus the purity of her family name to pursue Félix. Arabelle's desire certainly excludes her from the category of the virtuous and, in Henriette's eyes, from the category of woman. This depiction of a desiring woman supports Mehta's observation that, in Balzac's novels, "...chaque femme devient coupable lorsqu'elle possède une sexualité."(5). Arabelle's final sin is her survival. The perfect woman dies when she thinks her love has been betrayed. The siren uses a man and then rejects him (Barbéris 144). When Félix sees Arabelle after their break, she barely acknowledges his presence. "Quant à notre intimité, à cette passion éternelle, à ces serments de mourir si je cessais de l'aimer, ... tout avait disparu comme un rêve" (364). His role as her lover has been returned to de Marsay, one of her husband's natural sons, another corruption of the private sphere to which a woman should limit herself.

For spiritual love to triumph over fleshly love, the male Galatea figure must leave his "maîtresse du corps" and devote himself to his "épouse de l'âme". This proves much more complicated for Félix than for D'Avannes. The latter is forced to leave the *folle*'s household because the insatiability of her sexual appetite has weakened him to the point of illness. Once he returns to the *sage*, he never goes back. Félix maintains a double existence. He is in Paris with Arabelle, but continues to write to Henriette as if nothing has changed. When he goes back to see her, he allows Arabelle to accompany him, leading to a meeting of the beast and the angel that never occurs in Marguerite's text.

While this certainly creates a dramatic moment in the text, it also serves a healthy portion of male ego-stroking, to which Félix himself confesses. "[J]e surpris dans mon âme un mouvement d'orgueil de me savoir l'arbitre de deux destinées si belles; d'être la gloire, à des titres si différents, de deux femmes si supérieures, et d'avoir inspiré de si grandes passions, que de chaque côté la mort arriverait si je leur manquais"(309). Félix does not break with Arabelle until Henriette's death is imminent. D'Avannes' renunciation of his behavior is brought on by the teachings of the *sage*, while Félix's only comes about as a guilty reaction to the pain he has caused the woman to whom he is truly devoted. Thus, the lady of Pampelune is able to change d'Avannes's behavior with her expert power, while Henriette can use only the powers of legitimate equity and legitimate dependence.

Overall, Félix's relationship with Arabelle plays a more important role in the text than does d'Avannes' with the *folle*. The *sage* regards d'Avannes's pilgrimage as a necessary youthful indiscretion from which he can advance to total devotion to her. Félix's relationship with Arabelle occurs later, after he has professed a pure and holy love for Henriette, and benefited enormously from her advice and connections. Henriette, then, is deeply wounded by Félix's relationship with another woman, which can truly be seen as a betrayal. Her illness and death are much more attributable to his infidelity than to his absence.

Whether dying as a result of separation or of betrayal and jealousy, both the lady of Pampelune and Henriette at last confess their desire. Their confessions differ in ways that extend beyond the precise cause of their deaths. Marguerite's heroine offers no regrets. She made the decision to conceal her love both to protect her own honor and to complete d'Avannes'. Revealing her love would only have undone what she had started.

Her confidence in her decision enables her to reveal her desire face to face. Henriette, on the other hand, makes her confession in a letter that is to remain sealed until after her death. She is tormented with doubts about the wisdom of her choice. At one point, in her feverish delirium, she says she cannot die because she has not lived. She resolves to be like Lady Dudley and run off to Italy with Félix. Heinz Weinmann details Henriette's taking on of Arabelle's qualities. The fire associated with Arabelle dries up the water Félix has associated with Madame de Mortsauf (140). Even in her confessional letter, presumably written in a period of lucidity, she admits to dying of jealousy as well as pent-up passion.[19] Henriette, then, internalizes the debate of Marguerite's storytellers, remaining unresolved as to which path, hers or Arabelle's, was the wiser. She finishes her posthumous letter, "moi, j'arrive au lieu du repos, immolée au devoir, et, ce qui me fait frémir, non sans regret !" (358).

In both stories, the power of legitimate equity is the final tool needed to complete the transformation. Both young men are changed as they are confronted with the sacrifices the women they loved have made, and find themselves obligated to become what their creators wanted them to be. Both avoid women for a long time, devoting themselves to the memory of the one who died to make them what they are. We know of d'Avannes only that he wore black for ten years, but we see that Félix remains emotionally crippled by his experiences. As he tells Natalie at the beginning of his letter, he is haunted by a ghost, a ghost that Natalie decides not to compete with. She finds his dream of Arabelle and Henriette united in a single woman unrealistic, and refuses to attempt to embody this expectation.

The cumulative effect of these differences between Balzac's and Marguerite's text is to shift the balance of power between Pygmalion and Galatea. Both women exercise reward power, though the lady of Pampelune, along with her husband, offers financial rewards for a continuation of d'Avannes's association with her family, while Henriette's rewards consist of tender or grateful glances, or the offer of her hand for Félix to kiss, the value of which she may be unaware. Expert power determines much of the shape the young man is to assume. The *sage* focuses exclusively on cultivating virtue, while Madame de Mortsauf adds advice on political and social success. The power of legitimate reciprocity comes into play as well. The lady of Pampelune cares for d'Avannes when he returns weak and sick from his adventure with the *folle*, and Madame de Mortsauf provides invaluable advice to Félix, which earns him remarkable success in Parisian society. Both young men are indebted.

For both women, however, the bulk of their influence derives from their referent power and its corollary, coercive power in the form of threats to end the relationship. D'Avannes and Félix value these relationships above all else, and are willing to modify their behavior to preserve them. However, the power of legitimate equity is required to effect the necessary changes of the heart. Félix and d'Avannes are able to move beyond their desire only when they see the suffering and sacrifice that their loves have endured for them. They are, of course, aided by the lifelessness of the body they desire. Both young men leave their physical desires behind in a last, formerly impermissible gesture. D'Avannes throws himself onto the *sage*, kissing and embracing her until he is forcibly removed from her body. Félix kisses Henriette's forehead "avec tout l'amour qu'elle ne

m'avait jamais permis d'exprimer" (346). Félix's kiss on Henriette's forehead does however symbolically preserve the chaste intellectuality of their relationship.

The power that only Madame de Mortsauf exercises is that of legitimate dependence. Henriette needs him. Implicit in Henriette's reliance on him is an acknowledgement that Félix, too, exercises power in this relationship, the power of legitimate reciprocity. He replaces her aunt as a source of affection and love in a life otherwise devoid of it, and serves as a buffer between Henriette and Monsieur de Mortsauf, helping her deal with her husband's illnesses and tantrums. He offers the promise of a mentor for her son Jacques when he reaches maturity and perhaps a husband for her daughter Madeleine. None of the other Galatea figures examined thus far, including Ovid's, have such a power at his or her disposal. The hold each of the others has on the life of his or her creator is the result of the creator's own efforts. Galatea's beauty is Pygmalion's handiwork. While this is true in many ways of Félix as well, his necessity to Henriette extends beyond the qualities she has created in him.

Corresponding to Félix's increased power is a decrease in Madame de Mortsauf's. She begins and ends as an object, the star Félix chose as his companion during his difficult and lonely childhood. After his passionate kiss at the ball, he reflects, "Tombée des steppes bleues où je l'admirais, ma chère étoile s'était donc fait femme en conservant sa clarté, ses scintillements et sa fraîcheur"(40). At her death, she reclaims her astral form. The abbé de Dominis prepares Félix for seeing Henriette on her death bed. "Vous l'avez laissée fleur encore...mais vous la retrouverez consumée, purifée dans le feu des douleurs, et pure comme un diamant encore enfui dans les cendres. Oui, ce brillant esprit, étoile angélique, sortira splendide de ses nuages pour aller dans le royaume de

lumière" (325,6). Jean Gaudon identifies this passage as cyclical. He explains, "... l'incarnation de l'étoile en femme était une chute...il importait de l'y faire remonter, pour que Mme de Mortsauf ne soit plus, selon sa propre expression, 'qu'une lueur élevée, scintillante et froide, mais inaltérable'"(73).

The female Pygmalion figure suffers when depicted by her Galatea. Her status in Marguerite's text was already problematic, but Félix undermines her power and independence by elevating himself. More unsettling is the erosion of her virtue, the quality that defines both her and the lady of Pampelune. Peter Brooks explains that the nature of virtue itself has changed in *Le Lys dans la vallée*. It is no longer tied to the sacred, but has become a sentiment rather than a moral imperative (152). Thus, Madame de Mortsauf needs the additional anchor of her children, with her concern for their reputation and her need to attend to their illnesses, to safeguard her from infidelity, though they cannot help her overcome her regrets, which mark the most dramatic departure from Marguerite's text.[20] Marie-Jeanne Durry points out the troubling effect the expression of Madame de Mortsauf's regrets. Félix attributes them to her illness, telling himself "Ce n'est plus elle". But he cannot deny the reality of the regrets she expresses in her letter. Her victory over desire is experienced as a disaster, leaving her to say "Tout a été mensonge dans ma vie" (222, 3).

A stronger Galatea coupled with a weaker, less virtuous Pygmalion would seem to add up to a rather derogatory underlying view of women and their ability to exercise power. If *Le Lys dans la vallée* consisted only of Félix's letter to Natalie, one could support this claim. Madame de Mortsauf remains admirable, but Balzac's "perfection terrestre" is less perfect than Marguerite's, although perhaps more human. Her position

as wife and mother bar her from earthly happiness with Félix and her regrets cut her off from perfect assurance of her salvation. She writes to Félix, "Le Seigneur me verra tout aussi tremblante que si j'avais succombé [aux séductions qui m'ont environnée]" (358). In contrast, the lady of Pampelune tells d'Avannes, "Je ne vous prierai point de prier Dieu pour moi, car je sais que la porte de paradis n'est point refusée aux vrais amants, et qu'amour est un feu qui punit si bien les amoureux en cette vie qu'ils sont exempts de l'âpre tourment de purgatoire" (269).

But, true to his sixteenth-century model, Balzac undermines the story his principal narrator tells, first in Henriette's letter to Félix and then in Natalie's response, leaving us with an ambiguous picture of the status of women in Balzac's fictional universe. What Madame de Mortsauf's and Natalie's letters make clear is that Félix has been playing at Pygmalion as well. He has sculpted his representation of Henriette into his own image of perfection, attributing her transgressive expressions of desire and regret to her illness. Henriette's letter, presumably written while she was still lucid, undermines his attempt to discount the reality of her passion and breaks down the barrier Félix has constructed between her nature and Arabelle's. She writes, "J'étais aussi une de ces filles de la race déchue que les hommes aiment tant" (355) . Natalie further deconstructs Félix's view of women. She rejects not only his *ange/ sirène* dichotomy, but his proposal of a third term, a combination of both in one woman, as well. She sides with both Henriette and Arabelle in pointing out to Félix his injustice in playing them against each other, and in attempting to hold Natalie to both standards. "Vous ne connaissez donc les femmes? Elles sont ce qu'elles sont, elles doivent avoir les défauts de leur qualités. Vous avez rencontré lady Dudley trop tôt pour pouvoir l'apprécier, et le mal que vous en dites me semble une

vengeance de votre vanité blessée; vous avez compris madame de Mortsauf trop tard, vous avez puni l'une de ne pas être l'autre; que va-t-il m'arriver à moi qui ne suis ni l'une ni l'autre?"(369,70). Her advice to Félix, intended to complete the education Madame de Mortsauf began, is to renounce love altogether or, if he cannot, to hide his past.

What Natalie and Henriette's letters do that Marguerite's storytellers do not is indict the creation for his role in his creator's destruction. With increased power comes increased responsibility. Henriette is not the victim of circumstance like the lady of Pamplona, but of Félix's willful disobedience. His involvement with Lady Dudley was not a youthful indiscretion, but infidelity, excused by an appeal to the double standard discussed by Marguerite's storytellers three hundred years earlier. But when we view Henriette as a Pygmalion figure, part of the blame redescends on her. Henriette's project to bring Félix social and political advancement succeeds, but her desire to create a lover "en tout à elle" is left unfulfilled. Her failure to convince him of the merits of spiritual love coupled with her own wavering faith in it leads to her destruction.

Marcel Tetel's concluding remarks on the *Heptameron* could easily have been written about *Le Lys dans la vallée* as well. "True to the Renaissance spirit, it refutes absolutes in the face of a multitude of equally valid choices... The tragic essence distilled from the novellas is the impossibility of determining the exact nature of vice, virtue; truth, falsehood; guilt, innocence; spiritual and physiological desires" (207). Despite the ambiguity of both texts, the danger of the Pygmalion project is clear. Exercising power in an attempt to transform another leads paradoxically to a loss of self-control. Pygmalion benefited from divine intervention to restore the balance of power between creator and creation, but female Pygmalion figures who challenge patriarchal power

structures in asserting a woman's control over a man can only appeal to God the Father. They are saved not by bringing to life their creations, but by their own deaths. Their destruction restores patriarchal order.

Chapter 3

Pygmalion's Fall and Redemption: Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* and George Sand's *François le champi*

The Pygmalion story mythologizes many aspects of human life, including the relationship between an artist and his or her work and the tendency toward self-love and idealization. It also functions as a displaced myth of parenting, a facet of the myth that explains our discomfort at the sexual aspect of the Pygmalion-Galatea relationship. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* expose the incestuous overtones of the tale as do the texts examined in previous chapters. However, the relationships between Madamedes Belles Cousines and Jehan de Saintré, the lady of Pamplona and the seigneur d'Avannes, and Henriette de Mortsauf and Félix de Vandenesse cannot truly be characterized as mother-son relationships. In *le Petit Jehan de Saintré* the situation itself is the primary source of the maternal flavor of the relationship. Saintré is young and far from home and his mother; Madamedes Belles Cousines has no children of her own. The seigneur d'Avannes uses the parent-child relationship proposed by his lady's husband as a tool to secure the kiss he so passionately desires in Marguerite de Navarre's 26th tale of the *Heptaméron.* Mme de Mortsauf attempts the same transposition of desire in order to mask the true nature of her feelings for Félix de Vandenesse, but maternity never accurately characterizes their bond.

To examine this dynamic in its full expression, and its effects on the exercise of power, we turn to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions* and George Sand's *François le champi.* Rousseau's mother died in childbirth and François's mother abandoned him at an orphanage, leaving both of them searching for someone to fill the void. They find their mother figures in the women who take them in.[1] Mme de Warens and Madeleine

Blanchet quickly take responsibility for their young protégés, providing them with food, lodging, and love. Once these needs are met, both women focus on the future of their adopted sons, setting them on the path to independence. In addition to these external marks of a mother-son relationship, the internal dynamics of the relationship resemble a parent-child relationship as well. Mme de Warens and Rousseau quickly fall into the habit of calling each other "Maman" and "Petit". Madeleine grows to love François nearly as much as she does her son, Jeannie, and when François complains that she doesn't kiss and caress him as mothers do their children, Madeleine recognizes her omission and, from then on, treats him like her own son (68).

There are, of course, fundamental differences between these two texts. Rousseau's is confessional, written with the goal of defending himself from his critics and justifying himself to his readers. This agenda, despite protestations of candor, colors his narration, both by his selection of events and the light in which he places them. Sand's text is fictional, depicting life in rural nineteenth-century France. Rousseau's text is unique in this study as the only work of non-fiction; Sand's is unique as the only one that leads to a happy ending. Whether as a deliberate move on her part or not, Sand echoes many aspects of the relationship between Mme de Warens and Rousseau in her tale of Madeleine and François while filtering out their flaws. What emerges is the story Rousseau might have liked to live.

We will begin with the story he did live, a story that revolves around women, as noted by Sarah Herbold ("Dance" 342). From his first loves, Mademoiselle de Vulson and Mademoiselle Goton, to his passion for Sophie d'Houdetot and his comfortable companionship with Thérèse Levasseur, his relationships and infatuations with women

mark every phase of his life. But one is pivotal. Mme de Warens towers above her more than twenty rivals for the most important place in Rousseau's memory, dividing both his life and his text into two halves (Herbold "Genre" 85). Rousseau credits her with enabling him to grow, mature, and recognize his own nature. Their relationship passes through several phases, reflected in the bases of power available to Mme de Warens as she works to influence her protégé.

To understand the nature of Mme de Warens' project better, we must investigate her character. Supplementing Rousseau's own depiction with the historical research conducted by his biographers, we can sketch a portrait of this woman to whom Rousseau attributed such an enormous influence. Rousseau describes her at their first meeting. Expecting to find an excessively pious old woman, he sees "un visage pétri de grâces, de beaux yeux bleus pleins de douceur, un teint éblouissant, le contour d'une gorge enchanteresse" (87). Her beauty combines with her intelligence and grace to render Mme de Warens an exceptional woman in Rousseau's eyes. Intermingled with her physical description are snippets of her history. Rousseau tells us she was from an old noble family in Vevey, had married young, but not happily, and as a result, had thrown herself at the feet of King Victor Amadeus during a visit to Evian, thus abandoning her husband, family, country, and religion.

Rousseau biographers Matthew Josephson and Maurice Cranston largely agree with Rousseau's description. They evoke an ambitious young woman with an active mind, a generous heart, and an idiosyncratic sense of virtue. Her religious mentor, François Magny, emphasized religious experience and piety over the form, ritual, and dogma of organized religion. She also studied chemistry and physics, an unusual

education for a young woman of her time. She married into a wealthy and prestigious family at the age of fourteen, and quickly developed a reputation as a wonderful entertainer (Josephson 46). She also experimented in medicine and alchemy, activities Rousseau witnessed and was often forced to participate in. Mme de Warens was a businesswoman as well, "attempting single-handed to introduce the Industrial Revolution to the canton of Vaud" (Cranston 71). She built factories to produce soap and stockings, as well as other items, but was not successful at keeping them running. Her failed entrepreneurship eventually brought about her husband's financial ruin.

Mme de Warens also sought to escape the boredom of her married life by taking on various lovers. Her first was the Colonel de Tavel, no doubt aided in his conquest by the individual sense of virtue François Magny had taught her. As Rousseau tells us, M. de Tavel convinced her that there was no sin in adultery, only in the scandal it could bring about (235). Her practice of forming attachments with those who served her by becoming sexually intimate with them demonstrates the influence of Tavel's philosophy.

Josephson and Cranston fill in the details of her departure from the Vaud as well. She did not arrive in Evian empty-handed, but with many valuable household items as well as significant capital from her factories. Her conversion to Catholicism as well as her personal charm assured her monthly pensions from the Bishop of Bernex and the King of Sardinia. Because as a married woman she could not become a nun, she was set up in Annecy with the unofficial function of receiving converts leaving Switzerland and sending them on to Turin to complete their conversion. Cranston and Josephson agree that part of her pension was payment for her services as an agent of the Sardinian throne, sent from time to time on secret, semi-diplomatic missions. Her sudden departure for

Paris while Rousseau was accompanying Le Maistre to Lyon was most likely necessitated by one of these missions.

While Josephson and Cranston agree with Rousseau that Mme de Warens was an exceptional woman, Jean Guéhenno debunks Rousseau's portrait of her in the same way that he critiques the rest of Rousseau's autobiography. He presents a largely unremarkable woman—less pretty than Rousseau would have us believe, a little vain, something of a schemer, neither entirely good nor entirely bad, in short, ordinary. In Guéhenno's depiction, the only characteristic that stands out is her kindness and gentle patience (23). Nonetheless, Guéhenno's objective assessment cannot diminish the importance Rousseau placed on the role Mme de Warens played in shaping his character and direction in life. He shows her to us through his eyes. Of course, his perspective changes, and one catches notes of the bitterness he must have felt at having been replaced, but other moments are told through the eyes of the young man experiencing them. This is certainly the case when he describes their first meeting. The reality he faced, compared with the pious old *dévote* he had pictured, could place her in only a favorable light.

The relationship between Rousseau and his *Maman* progresses through several phases, truth being more complicated than fiction. As her goals change, the dynamics of their relationship shift, as do the bases of power Madame de Warens uses to influence Jean-Jacques. We must keep in mind, however, that as Rousseau recounts their relationship and testifies to the influence his Maman had on him, he often fictionalizes. As the sculptor of his own history, Rousseau fashions his image of Mme de Warens as he wishes, alternately interpreting events to her advantage or her detriment, whichever best

serves his cause. As Felicity Baker points out, Rousseau's portrait of Mme de Warens is not objective because he knows her only in relation to himself (173). His portrayal is further complicated by the dual nature of the self he describes Maman in relation to, sometimes the boy she is shaping, and sometimes the man who is writing.

Madame de Warens' first goal is straightforward. Her relationship to Sardinia and the Catholic Church determines the goal of her first encounter with Rousseau. She has little choice but to work for his conversion from the "Genevan heresy" to Catholicism. Even though this meeting is brief, Madame de Warens cements her primary basis of power the moment Rousseau sees her. "Rien n'échappa au rapide coup d'oeil du jeune prosélyte; car je devins à l'instant le sien, sûr qu'une religion prêchée par de tels missionnaires ne pouvait manquer de mener en paradis" (87). Ironically, her referent power is so great that it prevents Rousseau from doing what she thinks is best for him: going home. Her position prevents her from directly advising the sixteen-year-old Jean-Jacques to return home to Protestant Geneva, but she makes her thoughts clear. Rousseau explains his reaction. "...plus je la trouvais éloquente, persuasive, plus ses discours m'allaient au cœur, et moins je pouvais me résoudre à me détacher d'elle. Je sentais que retourner à Genève était mettre entre elle et moi une barrière presque insurmontable..."(91). Rousseau describes the immediate bond between them, an example of "la sympathie des âmes", an instant experience of "la paix du cœur, le calme, la sérénité, la sécurité, l'assurance" (89, 90). His emphasis on Mme de Warens' reluctance to send him on suggests that she shared this experience but needed to let him go due to circumstances beyond her control. The unseemliness of a woman her age taking in a boy of his age, the involvement of her dinner guest in making the plans, and

her obligations to the king and the bishop combine to make his staying impossible, no matter how strong their immediate bond.

Rousseau's thoughts as he sets off to Turin clearly express the effects of referent power as experienced by its target. He explains, "partant pour obéir à Mme de Warens, je me regardais comme vivant toujours sous sa direction; c'était plus que de vivre à son voisinage" (92). "Je me regardais comme l'ouvrage, l'élève, l'ami, presque l'amant de Mme de Warens" (95). Thus, even though their encounter is brief, Rousseau is firmly under Mme de Warens' influence, an influence that can undoubtedly be credited with his "conversion" at the Hospice of the Catechumens and that eventually motivates him to leave Turin, despite his having secured an enviable position in the Solar household. When his friend Bâcle suggests they move on, Rousseau leaves without hesitation. He explains his rash decision much later, in the Tenth Promenade: "Tout me rappelait à elle, il y fallut revenir" (136).

Rousseau's return marks the beginning of the second phase of their relationship. Mme de Warens decides that because he has come back to her, she will not send him away again despite what others may say. And so the relationship for which Rousseau had sensed the potential blossoms. They quickly fall into the habit of addressing each other as "Petit" and "Maman". Rousseau explains, "Je trouve que ces deux noms rendent à merveille l'idée de notre ton, la simplicité de nos manières, et surtout la relation de nos cœurs" (144). The boy who "coût[a] la vie à [sa] mère" has finally found a mother. Rousseau, as he is wont to do, insists on the singularity of their relationship, intensely passionate, yet without sexual desire[2]. "...je voyais toujours en elle une tendre mère, une sœur chérie, une délicieuse amie, et rien de plus....Son image, toujours présente à mon

cœur, n'y laissait place à nulle autre; elle était pour moi la seule femme qui fût au monde; et l'extrême douceur des sentiments qu'elle m'inspirait, ne laissant pas à mes sens le temps de s'éveiller pour d'autres, me garantissait d'elle et de tout son sexe. En un mot, j'étais sage parce que je l'aimais. Sur ces effets, que je rends mal, dise qui pourra de quelle espèce était mon attachement pour elle" (147).

An objective examination of their relationship would suggest the exercise of at least three bases of power, legitimate position, legitimate reciprocity, and referent. As a woman with connections to the Bishop and the King of Sardinia, Mme de Warens could exercise legitimate position power over the son of a craftsman who has been effectively abandoned by his family with no skills or resources. Because Mme de Warens has taken him in and is supporting him, legitimate reciprocity might also be a reasonable basis from which to draw power. But Rousseau acknowledges neither of these, insisting, "j'étais sage parce que je l'aimais". Any sense of obligation or servitude would corrupt the idyllic picture he paints. Only a relationship based on referent power can permit Rousseau to live his dream of transparency. Jean Starobinski describes it. "Car pour que l'accueil soit pur, il ne doit comporter aucun lien matériel, il ne doit entraîner aucun devoir de reconnaissance. Il doit signifier l'union immédiate des âmes, qui se savent supérieurs et qui ont reconnu leur ressemblance" (156). The introduction of other bases of power in later stages of their relationship signal, therefore, its deterioration. At this point, Rousseau depicts himself engaging in activities he does not like while enjoying himself immensely. He participates in Maman's botany experiments, tastes her medicines, and tolerates her steady stream of visitors. He explains, "Rien de ce qui se

faisait autour de moi, rien de tout ce qu'on me faisait faire, n'était selon mon goût, mais tout était selon mon coeur" (148).

Maman's knowledge of literature and the court does grant her a degree of informational power, but this soft basis does not impinge on the perfection of their relationship, serving rather to meet Rousseau's needs and to enable his growth. Their book discussions delighted Jean-Jacques and encouraged him to read carefully and reflectively. She also instructed him on the rules and practices of the court, "et c'était précisément, vu mes idées chimériques, la sorte d'instruction dont j'avais le plus grand besoin" (149).

Thus Rousseau experienced, in a condensed version, an ideal childhood. But boys must grow up, and Rousseau's need to support himself inspires Mme de Warens' second project for him: a career. She studies him carefully, but, blinded by her affection for him, has difficulty choosing the best direction for him. So she sends him to her relative, M. d'Aubonne, who judges him fit for little else than a career as a village priest. Evidently, either Mme de Warens' observations were not as insightful as one would expect from such a singular relationship, or she did not place much stock in them. Rousseau describes the results of his Latin studies: "...je n'ai jamais pu rien apprendre avec des maîtres, excepté mon père et M. Lambercier...Mon esprit veut marcher à son heure, il ne peut se soumettre à celle d'autrui" (156). Of course, Rousseau has already demonstrated himself to be considerably less passive than Saintré, for example, and certainly capable of sabotaging a project he is unenthusiastic about. His enrollment in the seminary separates him from Mme de Warens both in the present and in prospects for the future. Thus her referent power works against her, undermining the project.

Maman next decides to make him a musician. This time, her referent power does not interfere, because Rousseau is only "à vingt pas de la maison de Maman" (159). Music is also closely associated with Mme de Warens in Rousseau's mind and memory as something they often created and enjoyed together. This promising arrangement ends abruptly when M. Le Maître runs afoul of church leaders and decides to flee to Lyon. Mme de Warens sends Jean-Jacques with him[3]. After Rousseau abandons Le Maître, his only thought is to return to Maman. Referent power was never expressed more clearly: "Rien ne me flattait, rien ne me tentait, je n'avais de désir pour rien que pour retourner auprès de Maman. La tendresse et la vérité de mon attachement pour elle avaient déraciné de mon cœur tous les projets imaginaires, toutes les folies de l'ambition. Je ne voyais plus d'autre bonheur que celui de vivre auprès d'elle, et je ne faisais pas un pas sans sentir que je m'éloignais de ce bonheur" (167).

He returns to Annecy only to find that Mme de Warens is gone and has left no word on where she might be found. Without her, Rousseau wanders aimlessly, waiting first in Annecy, then traveling around Switzerland, to Paris, and back to Lyon, where he finally gets word she is in Chambéry. This time, she places Rousseau as a secretary in the office of the royal survey.[4] Though Rousseau misses the bucolic surroundings he has come to associate with Maman, he spends the next eight or nine years peacefully. He reads, teaches himself math, learns to draw, and develops his taste for music. He tells us that this "vie simple et douce" was just what he needed to finish growing up.

The potential for conflict arises when Rousseau's interest in music and his distaste for his work in the survey office combine. He wants to quit his job and devote himself to music, an idea unpopular with Mme de Warens. She has bigger plans for him, though

Rousseau never tells us what those may have been, and she does not see music as a way to achieve them. But like a persistent child, Rousseau wins her over. "Enfin, j'extorquai son consentement plus à force d'importunités et de caresses que de raisons dont elle se contentât" (226).

This negotiation of plans contrasts sharply with the other Pygmalion-Galatea relationships examined and highlights the parent-child character of the bond between Rousseau and Mme de Warens. Madamedes Belles Cousines, Mme de Mortsauf, and the lady of Pamplona undertook their projects without ever consulting their young men about their preferences, nor did any of the latter express contradictory wishes. As Maman and her Petit discuss his future, she takes into account not only her desires for his future, but her understanding of his nature and his tastes. Realizing that if Jean-Jacques does not quit, he may be fired because he is unable to discipline himself to work hard at a job he does not enjoy, she decides that it will be in his best interests to pursue another line of work. Nevertheless, she maintains control. Rousseau never considers acting on his own against her wishes though he is now in his mid-twenties. From a cynical point of view, Rousseau's deference could be simple self-preservation. If he defied his protector, his standard of living would drop considerably and he would lose his contacts with Chambéry society. If these factors had influenced Rousseau's behavior, Madame de Warens would have exercised reward and legitimate position power . But Rousseau makes no mention of any such consideration. He depicts his deference to her will as the result of her referent power alone. He loved her and so he obeyed. There is not even the glimmer of coercive power in the form of a threat to end the relationship in the face of non-compliance, a threat we have seen in all the preceding relationships examined. This

absence further underlines the maternal nature of their relationship. This is not a tie that can be broken off at will or easily outgrown.

The salience of the maternal characteristics of their relationship, recounted in such close proximity to the beginning of its third phase, renders the trauma of Rousseau's sexual initiation more vivid. When he quits the survey office, Rousseau gives music lessons as a means of earning a living, a change he finds completely satisfying. In the process, he attracts attention from some of his students' mothers. Mme Lard in particular makes repeated advances which Rousseau is too naïve to recognize. Mme de Menthon, a rival of Mme de Warens, takes a similar interest in Jean-Jacques. To prevent these women from instructing her student, Mme de Warens decides it is time to treat Jean-Jacques like a man.

Rousseau's view of their relationship, that of mother and son, presents him with serious reservations about this new phase of their relationship. After two pages of rumination and explanation, he arrives at the conclusion that it is the filial nature of his feelings that prevents him from looking forward to his initiation. When he first met Mme de Warens in Annecy, there was a sensual element in his feelings for her, but "[l]a longue habitude de vivre ensemble et d'y vivre innocemment, loin d'affaiblir mes sentiments pour elle, les avait renforcés, mais leur avait en même temps donné une autre tournure qui les rendaient plus affectueux, plus tendres peut-être, mains moins sensuels. A force de l'appeler Maman, à force d'user avec elle de la familiarité d'un fils, je m'étais accoutumé à me regarder comme tel"(234). This instance of conflict between Maman's decision to have a sexual relationship with Jean-Jacques and his unwillingness to do so provides fertile ground in which to examine the bases of power Mme de Warens draws

on to achieve Rousseau's compliance. For the first time, we see her bases of power broaden, but this broadening of powers implies the corruption of Rousseau's ideal of transparency, a perfect relationship that can admit the exercise of referent power only and is purest when desire is absent. [5] It is necessary, however, because Rousseau finds himself in a new situation. In the context of his life with Maman, he has had to participate in activities not to his liking, including botanical experiments and seemingly endless social visits from streams of visitors. But his distaste for these activities has always been compensated by the pleasure he takes in being near Mme de Warens. Now, the source of his discomfort comes from within the relationship itself.

Rousseau gives two reasons for not telling her that his sexual initiation is unnecessary, "premièrement parce que ce n'était pas une chose à dire, et puis parce qu'au fond je sentais que cela n'était pas vrai, et qu'en effet il n'y avait qu'une femme qui pût me garantir des autres femmes et me mettre à l'épreuve des tentations. Sans désirer de la posséder, j'étais bien aise qu'elle m'ôtat le désir d'en posséder d'autres; tant je regardais tout ce qui pouvait me distraire d'elle comme un malheur" (234). His second reason explicitly reveals the functioning of expert and reward power. Mme de Warens is the only one with the knowledge and skill, both in matters of love and in her protégé's character, who can provide him with the experience he needs to attain the reward she offers, the reward of protection from distraction in the form of other women.[6] Thus, her power is compounded as she offers not only the reward, but also the means to achieve it, both of which lead back to her most stable basis of power, her referent power. This brings us back to his first reason, "ce n'était pas une chose à dire". While social expectation may play a role in his unwillingness to say no, more importantly, a refusal of

Maman's offer would call her expert power into question and jeopardize the spiritual intimacy of their relationship. He is right to fear such an outcome. When Rousseau returns from Montpellier and finds that Wintzenreid has taken his place, his refusal to sleep with Mme de Warens results in the isolation he wanted to avoid. He explains, "La privation que je m'étais imposée et qu'elle avait fait semblant d'approuver est une de ces choses que les femmes ne pardonnent point... Dès lors je cessai de trouver en elle cette intimité des cœurs qui fit toujours la plus douce jouissance du mien" (303).

The bases of power Mme de Warens does not draw on reveal aspects of their relationship as well. She continues to make no use of coercive power, nor does she draw on the power of legitimate reciprocity, a basis of power that is certainly available to her given all she has done for Rousseau. But Rousseau's insistence on the selflessness of this act and the absence of her desire underline her unwillingness to exercise this power. Her lack of desire marked her relationships with the Colonel de Tavel, Claude Anet, and later, Rousseau's successor, Wintzenreid as well. Due to this lack, Rousseau preserves his image of her as an example of a unique brand of feminine virtue. Her heart is chaste, though her reason was corrupted by her first lover (235). One sees glimmers here of Rousseau's attacks on the *salonnières*, the danger of too much intelligence and wit in a woman, and the importance of a good and simple heart as seen in his characterization of Sophie, Émile's ideal woman. Mme de Warens was, in Rousseau's estimation, the victim of the corrupting influence of the wrong kind of education. Though his readers may judge her unfavorably for her liberality with her sexual favors, Rousseau insists that she was never motivated to dispense them merely for her own sexual pleasure, but rather for

the emotional and spiritual joy of bringing the men she loved into greater intimacy and devotion.

In his relationship with Mme de Warens, Rousseau is powerless, so when she decides to initiate him sexually, he cannot refuse despite his apprehensions. In order to avoid portraying himself as a victim, Rousseau rationalizes his acceptance of her "offer", laying forth an argument for why he should be anticipating the consummation of their relationship. His adolescent male sex drive, his desire for sexual initiation, his adoration of Mme de Warens, and her lasting beauty and desirability should result in eager anticipation, but he fails to convince himself. He asks himself and his reader, "Comment, au lieu des délices qui devaient m'enivrer, sentais-je presque de la répugnance et des craintes? Il n'y point à douter que, si j'avais pu me dérober à mon bonheur avec bienséance, je ne l'eusse fait de tout mon cœur" (233). Rousseau labels his reaction a "bizzarrerie", but given the mother-son dynamic of their relationship coupled with Rousseau's nearly complete lack of power within it, his apprehensions are completely understandable.

Nevertheless, the initiation occurs, leaving Rousseau feeling "comme si j'avais commis un inceste" (235). Afterwards, woven into accounts of the deepening of his relationship with Mme de Warens and the ensuing *ménage à trois* that includes Claude Anet, Rousseau begins to show signs of psychological distress brought on by the exploitative sexual relationship in which he is involved. He attempts to escape the physical aspect of their relationship by putting physical distance between them. Unable to control Mme de Warens' spending after Claude Anet's death, Rousseau's solution to provide for her entails leaving Chambéry for Besançon.[7] When his plan fails, Rousseau

finds reprieve in two and three day errands for Mme de Warens. He also escapes into fantasy. He explains, "J'avais une tendre mère, une amie chérie; mais il me fallait une maîtresse. Je me la figurais à sa place; je me la créais de mille façons pour me donner le change à moi-même. Si j'avais cru tenir Maman dans mes bras quand je l'y tenais, mes étreintes n'auraient pas été moins vives, mais tous mes désirs se seraient éteints, j'aurais sangloté de tendresse, mais je n'aurais pas joui " (255).

Rousseau's escapism does not successfully insulate him from the damage this relationship is inflicting. He finds himself constantly on edge, a state he attributes to Maman's financial situation and fear of the separation it may eventually bring, but that could also be explained by their continued sexual relationship. Rousseau begins to manifest signs of depression, a frequent consequence of molestation. He describes his emotional state: "Me sentant affaiblir, je devins plus tranquille et perdis un peu la fureur des voyages. Plus sédentaire, je fus pris non de l'ennui, mais de la mélancolie; les vapeurs succédèrent aux passions; ma langueur devint tristesse; je pleurais et soupirais à propos de rien; je sentais la vie m'échapper sans l'avoir goûtée..." (257).

Rousseau then becomes ill, discovering the only basis of power available to him: legitimate dependence, the power of the powerless. His illness improves both situations in which he was experiencing impotence, first in the nature of his relationship with Mme de Warens, and second, in his inability to resolve her financial problems. "Elle me soigna comme jamais mère n'a soigné son enfant, et cela lui fit du bien à elle-même, en faisant diversion aux projets et tenant écartés les projeteurs" (258). His illness pushes Maman out of the role of sex partner into a maternal role and distracts her from the people and projects that are hastening her financial ruin. He uses its lingering effects to

convince her to move to les Charmettes for the summer, where he experiences "le court bonheur de [s]a vie". Rousseau's power of legitimate dependence does little to even the balance of power between them, and so he undergoes a series of illnesses to maintain what little power he has. A new illness provides a reason for an extended absence from a situation that may have been becoming intolerable. Wintzenreid's presence, although not mentioned until Rousseau returns, but noted by his biographers as beginning well before his departure, may have been the cause of the illness that sent Rousseau to Montpellier. When his symptoms fail to produce the sympathy and nurturing they had in the past, Rousseau employs them as a new excuse to travel, his original means of escape. His forgetting his illness when he meets Mme de Lanarge emphasizes the psychosomatic nature of this problem, and, very likely, of those that preceded it. While Rousseau claims that his need for a mistress was responsible for his health problems, chances are equally good that the one he had was making him sick.

The type of power imbalance we see between Rousseau and Mme de Warens may be appropriate to a relationship between parent and child, but not between lovers. Its aberrant nature is difficult to recognize because Rousseau works so hard to camouflage it. Rousseau's affection, attachment, and gratitude toward Mme de Warens are real, demonstrated by his return to them in the last published piece he wrote before his death. In the tenth promenade, he still longs for the "transparence des âmes" that he shared with her, and recognizes the critical role she played in shaping his life and allowing him to become the man he is. He has nothing to gain by blaming her for the damage she has done, and may not even realize it himself, although his failure to form and maintain an intimate relationship with any woman who approaches equality with him on any level

may reveal its extent. As a result, Rousseau devotes much of his narrative energy, not only in the Tenth Promenade, but in the *Confessions* as well, to praising Mme de Warens' beauty, generosity, openness, charm, wit, and grace, hardly the portrait of a child molester.

The context of their relationship also shields Mme de Warens from blame. Before he recounts his sexual relationship with his adoptive mother, Rousseau has already shocked readers with confessions first of his enjoyment of spankings from Mlle Lambercier, and then his exhibitionism, masturbation, fetishistic fixation on Mme de Warens' possessions, and homosexual close calls. After this list of behaviors that fall decidedly outside the norm of what people are willing to talk about, if not participate in, a borderline incestuous relationship simply follows an established pattern of abnormality. At least it involves a consenting other. The important point here is that Rousseau himself does not consent, but to recognize this requires readers to stop viewing Rousseau as a deviant and start viewing him as the victim of a woman he has painted in warm, glowing colors, a difficult transition to make.

Rousseau then absolves his benefactress of any vestige of guilt by insisting on her lack of desire. As he tries to come to terms with this change in their relationship during the week between the offer and its consummation, he analyzes her motives. "Je connaissais trop son cœur chaste et son tempérament de glace pour croire un moment que le plaisir des sens eût aucune part à cet abandon d'elle-même: j'étais parfaitement sûr que le seul soin de m'arracher à des dangers autrement presque inévitables, et de me conserver tout entier à moi et à mes devoirs, lui en faisait enfreindre un qu'elle ne regardait pas du même œil que les autres femmes..." (234). His apology for her behavior

continues after his narration of their liaison with a portrayal of her own victimization at the hands of the colonel de Tavel from whom she adopted the principle that infidelity is wrong only when it causes scandal. Rousseau goes on to recognize that, despite the harm Tavel did to his young protégée by his instruction on this point, his teaching benefited Mme de Warens "sur mille autres" (236). By placing her in Tavel's role in her relationship to Rousseau, he forgives her the error of pushing him into sexual relations in light of the tremendous benefits she bestows and a purity of intentions intensified by her lack of physical desire. "Par combien de vertus ne rachetait-elle pas ses faiblesses, si l'on peut appeler de ce nom des erreurs où les sens avaient si peu de part!...Ses motifs étaient louables jusque dans ses fautes; en s'abusant elle pouvait mal faire, mais elle ne pouvait vouloir rien qui fût mal" (236). [8] Thus Rousseau recognizes that his Maman damaged him, but stops short of fully blaming her. James O'Rourke analyzes Rousseau's estimation of Mme de Warens's responsibility for the wrong she did him as a failure to understand the effects of the attachments she created and the responsibility she carried in wielding the power they granted her (59).

Rousseau furthers his attempt to minimize the harm done by his sexual relationship with Mme de Warens by emphasizing positive changes that occurred in their relationship soon after his sexual initiation. Rousseau is pleased to discover that Mme de Warens now treats him like a man in more ways than just in her bed. "Elle m'avait jusqu'alors parlé de moi seul comme à un enfant. Elle commença de me traiter en homme, et me parla d'elle" (237). This greater intimacy opens the door to a third project of transformation. Mme de Warens has converted Rousseau to Catholicism, given him a safe environment in which to mature, and tried setting him on four different career paths.

Now she undertakes a new phase in his education. "L'intimité dans laquelle je vivais avec elle l'ayant mise à portée de m'apprécier plus avantageusement qu'elle n'avait fait, elle jugea que, malgré mon air gauche, je valais la peine d'être cultivé pour le monde, et que, si je m'y montrais un jour sur un certain pied, je serais en état d'y faire mon chemin. Sur cette idée, elle s'attachait non seulement à former mon jugement, mais mon extérieur, mes manières, à me rendre aimable autant qu'estimable" (237).

To this project, Mme de Warens brings her considerable expert power. "Car Mme de Warens connaissait les hommes et savait supérieurement l'art de traiter avec eux sans mensonge et sans imprudence, sans les tromper et sans les fâcher" (238). Nonetheless, it is doomed to failure, not because of Jean-Jacques's resistance, but because of his lack of aptitude. "Mais cet art était dans son caractère bien plus que dans ses leçons; ... et j'étais l'homme du monde le moins propre à l'apprendre" (238). The lessons in dance and arms did not fare any better. Despite Rousseau's dismal assessment of his progress in this area, Cranston notes that Jean-Jacques must have had some success because he felt accepted and at ease in Chambéry society (111).

Though Mme de Warens' project to make Rousseau fit for society met with limited success, the greater intimacy between them gives her a new basis of power, one she will continue to exercise even after Rousseau leaves her home. For the first time, Rousseau expresses a desire to make Maman happy, a reflection of her power of legitimate reciprocity. He describes himself as "[l]ivré tout entier au désir de rendre à Maman la vie heureuse..." (238). Rousseau's desire to take responsibility for Mme de Warens demonstrates his growing maturity, a maturity necessary for Maman's power of legitimate reciprocity to become effective. His desire to provide for Mme de Warens

motivates his decision to go to Besançon to become a composer as well as his departure for Paris to present his new system of musical notation. The power of legitimate reciprocity is also responsible for his return from Montpellier and his bypassing of Mme de Lanarge.

Though Rousseau's sexual initiation marks the beginning of a new phase in their relationship, it also marks the beginning of its end, an end foreshadowed by the introduction of bases of power other than referent. This end is hastened by Claude Anet's death. Despite Rousseau's insistence on the singularity of their *ménage à trois* and Madame de Warens' ability to inspire love for each other among the people she loved, Rousseau's biographers speculate that Anet was not as content with the situation as Rousseau liked to pretend, and that the "accident" that took his life was really a second, successful suicide attempt (Cranston 110). Losing Anet constituted the loss not only of a lover, but also of a household manager who kept Mme de Warens' finances from complete disaster. After his death, Rousseau takes on this role, but without the same success. He does not have the bases of power needed to control Maman's spending and the household quickly descends into financial ruin. He is also uneasy in his role as Maman's lover. He attributes his increased travel after Anet's death to unwillingness to watch Mme de Warens' financial ruin, but in nearly the same breath, he reiterates his discomfort with the sexual aspect of their relationship and his need for a mistress (256).

Rousseau blames the brevity of his happiness on Maman, though we can see why this Pygmalion may be ready to abandon her project. In Balzac's *Lys dans la vallée*, Félix fills all the empty roles in Henriette's life: son, companion, confidant, and confessor. Jean-Jacques limits his part to that of child, and is unable to meet any of Mme

de Warens' other needs. He is an incompetent household manager, and is unwilling to satisfy her sexually. Despite Rousseau's insistence that she is without passion, his abstinence is clearly a sore subject. As tension between them increases, Rousseau once again falls ill.

Although Rousseau and Mme de Warens have been separated before when she sent him to Turin and Lyon, his departure for Montpellier to seek a cure most closely parallels the "rite of passage" separation seen in previous gender-reversed Pygmalion-Galatea relationships. The lukewarm success Mme de Warens has had with her protégé is demonstrated by Rousseau's failure to metamorphose. He has not acquired knowledge to apply or skills to hone that will transform him from an insecure adolescent into a successful man. Saintré's successive quests take him from timid page to decorated knight. When Félix returns from Paris to the Touraine, the confident young man who has replaced the needy boy she first met takes Mme de Mortsauf aback. These transformations are the direct result of the training the young men received from their mentors. Rousseau manages to find the mistress he had been wanting, but even this small success is tempered by the passive role he plays in it. Not only does his affair come about as the result of Mme de Lanarge's persistent pursuit, but he engages in it while role-playing. Mr. Dudding is bold enough to respond to the obvious advances of his admirer, but we doubt whether Jean-Jacques would be. Rousseau's only achievement while he was away is one he has to hide from Mme de Warens. He has done nothing to make her proud.

In this light, Rousseau's narration of his decision to return to Maman instead of going to see Mme de Lanarge appears as an attempt to salvage what has otherwise been

an unsuccessful trip. Overcome with guilt at abandoning his kind, generous, and debt-ridden Maman, he invents a series of reasons for not visiting Mme de Lanarge: fear of being exposed as a fraud (an Englishman who has never been to England and speaks no English), fear of mistreatment or resentment from her family, fear of falling in love with her daughter, whom he has never met, and bringing discord, dishonor, and scandal to the household. Peter France points out the unlikelihood of this scenario given Rousseau's previous timidity in matters of love, judging Rousseau's casting of the incident in this light as an attempt to portray heroic self-denial (92). He heads for home with an entirely new sensation: "Je mérite ma propre estime: je sais préférer mon devoir à mon plaisir" (298). He admits pride may have played a role in his decision, but concludes, "si cet orgueil n'est pas la vertu même, il a des effets si semblables, qu'il est pardonnable de s'y tromper". Thus, he returns to les Charmettes a new man, at least in his own eyes. "Sitôt que j'eus pris ma résolution je devins un autre homme, ou plutôt je redevins celui que j'étais auparavant, et que ce moment d'ivresse avait fait disparaître. Plein de bons sentiments et de bonnes résolutions, je continuai ma route dans la bonne intention d'expier ma faute, ne pensant qu'à régler désormais ma conduite sur les lois de la vertu, à me consacrer sans réserve au service de la meilleure des mères, à lui vouer autant de fidélité que j'avais d'attachement pour elle, et à n'écouter plus d'autre amour que celui de mes devoirs" (298). These resolutions result from Mme de Warens' exercise of power, even from a distance. Rousseau's use of the adjectives "bonne" and "généreuse" in his description of Maman indicate his desire to compensate her kindness with his loyalty, the result of the power of legitimate reciprocity. This soft basis of power, springing as it does from his own desire to give back to the woman who has given him so much, could

find a place in Rousseau's conception of an ideal relationship. But he recalls her precarious financial situation and acknowledges his role in it even as he spends money on his travels, travels that have included infidelity. His desire to "expier [sa] faute" stems from Mme de Warens' power of legitimate equity. Rousseau has wronged her and now holds himself responsible for damages. Though Rousseau has not revealed to his readers that Maman has replaced him with another man, we can already read in his sense of obligation and in his recourse to love of duty a fall from the paradise described in the Tenth Promenade, a code of behavior he summarizes, "j'étais sage parce que je l'aimais".

Despite the diminished transparency that Jean-Jacques's newfound sense of virtue and loyalty imply, Rousseau emphasizes them to heighten the betrayal that follows. Like Saintré, he returns ready to take his place beside his lady only to find that a rival he considers inferior has replaced him. Rousseau does not give up immediately, but attempts to rejoin their society, hoping to mentor Wintzenreid as Anet had mentored him. This relationship proves impossible because he has no power to exert over the young man he would like to make his protégé. He has no wealth or social standing to endow him with reward or legitimate position power, no knowledge Wintzenreid is interested in to provide him expert or informational power, and no meaningful relationship that Wintzenreid wants to build or maintain to serve as the basis for referent power. Anet, on the other hand, exercised legitimate position power as manager of the household, both over Rousseau and Maman.[9] He also exercised a transitive referent power. Maman was closely tied to Anet, Rousseau to Maman, and therefore, Rousseau to Anet. He explains how this came to be: "Comme elle savait que je ne pensais, ne sentais, ne respirais que par elle, elle me montrait combien elle l'aimait, afin que je l'aimasse de même, et elle

appuyait encore moins sur son amitié pour lui que sur son estime, parce que c'était le sentiment que je pouvais partager le plus pleinement" (239).

As we have seen, Rousseau's unwillingness to share Maman offends her, dealing a further blow to their weakened relationship. As a result, the closeness they shared evaporates. Unable to play a secondary role in a household where he had once been everything, Rousseau decides to leave.[10] After spending a year away, he returns once more, hoping to re-establish their relationship, but Rousseau is forced to realize that the transparency of souls he once experienced will never be restored. Despite their separation, Mme de Warens continues to exercise power over Rousseau, but the two main bases of power she draws on betray her weakened status. Her referent power having evaporated with their relationship, she is left with the legitimate powers of reciprocity, equity, and dependence, the same powers aging mothers often exercise over their adult children. The desire to provide for his Maman becomes Jean-Jacques's primary motivation to succeed. In the Tenth Promenade, he explains, "Je pensai qu'une provision de talents était la plus sûre ressource contre la misère, et je résolus d'employer mes loisirs à me mettre en état, s'il était possible, de rendre un jour à la meilleure des femmes l'assistance que j'en avais reçue" (137).

This Pygmalion-Galatea relationship ends with a whimper. There are no deathbed confessions of concealed love, no dramatic revelations of secret liaisons. They simply part ways, maintaining a spotty correspondence over the years until Mme de Warens' death. Thus Mme de Warens is the first female Pygmalion figure to emerge from the relationship alive and intact. In fact, the effects of the relationship on her appear to be relatively few. Rousseau depicts her replacing him with Wintzenreid as easily as she

might replace a household servant. She viewed the change as purely practical, since Rousseau did not manage the household well and was gone frequently. She suffered economic hardships that worsened after Rousseau's departure, but these resulted from spending habits that had been in place before Rousseau knew her. Her encouragement of Rousseau's musical talents paid off in at least a limited fashion, since Rousseau used his income to help support her. The largest impact was on her reputation. By writing her, Rousseau reversed the Pygmalion process, transforming an ordinary woman into an immortal work of art. Yet many condemned his portrait, accusing him of destroying her reputation. Raymond Trousson recounts the criticisms lodged by the public prosecutor Servan in the years following the publication of the *Confessions*. He cites Mme de Warens as an example of those injured by his revelations, arguing that Rousseau's praise of her goodness and generosity cannot make up for the damage done to her honor and modesty (63). In the century that followed, George Sand wrote in her own autobiography, perhaps thinking of her relationship with Musset, "Qui peut lui pardonner d'avoir confessé madame de Warens en même temps que lui?" (13). Honoré de Balzac, who found his own maternal Pygmalion in Mme de Berny, criticized Rousseau for his ungratefulness to the woman who had given him so much (Maurois 86). However, Mme de Warens never experienced the damage to her reputation that her defenders decried. Rousseau did not begin writing the *Confessions* until 1762, the year of her death. He did not submit a manuscript until five years later, and did not read them publicly until 1770. Compared to Madamedes Belles Cousines, the lady of Pamplona, and Mme de Mortsauf, she ended her relationship to Rousseau with relatively few consequences.

Rousseau cannot say enough about the impact Mme de Warens had on his life, but the real effects of their relationship are difficult to measure. Rousseau credits her with forming his reason and judgment, and giving him room to discover his true nature, yet these outcomes are only loosely related to the actual projects she forms and attempts to implement. He does succeed as a musician, a pursuit she encouraged, but her other attempts at occupational counseling as well as her efforts to make him fit for society meet with failure. The primary reason for her limited success is that she never demands that Rousseau comply. Saintré bows to reward and legitimate position power, and Félix de Vandenesse and d'Avannes both modify their behavior due to coercive power in the form of a threat to end the relationship. Maman never takes recourse to these hard bases of power and never effects the changes she undertakes. She does not devote herself single-mindedly to the task of shaping her protégé as do her counterparts, but adds Rousseau to her list of projects and activities, which explains her frequent distractions and the apparent ease with which she replaces him. Mme de Warens has a history of abandoning unsuccessful enterprises, so when Rousseau fails to live up to her expectations, she moves on, but not without leaving a lasting impression on Jean-Jacques. Their relationship becomes the mark by which he will measure all others.

None of Rousseau's later relationships meet this standard, but this ideal of freedom within the bonds of a relationship, "j'étais sage parce que je l'aimais," translates into his educational philosophy. Emile should never feel his education imposed on him, but rather as a means to satisfy his natural curiosity. When he reaches adolescence, a time when children become difficult, his tutor will maintain control because of Emile's attachment to him, a "bridle of affection" (521). For Rousseau, control solely through the

exercise of referent power is the resolution to the tension between natural man's freedom and society's bonds.

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Rousseau credits Mme de Warens with a key role in shaping the man he became. Rousseau, in turn, influenced many of the writers and thinkers who followed him, whether they adopted his principles or reacted against them. George Sand did both. Her initial reaction to his writing, recorded in her *Histoire de ma vie*, was one of unadulterated admiration for his ideas, tempered with a distaste for his personal character. She found reading Rousseau to be a revelation, inspiring new ideas and insights (1060,61). She follows in his footsteps as she writes her autobiography, acknowledging his influence, but she is careful to distinguish between his *Confessions* and her *Histoire*. As we have seen, she is particularly critical of Rousseau's confessing others while baring his own soul, especially as he casts aspersions on Mme de Warens' character. "On aimerait que Rousseau se fût laissé accuser de légèreté et d'ingratitude envers madame de Warens, plutôt que d'apprendre par lui des détails qui souillent l'image de sa bienfaitrice" (II, 113). Rousseau influenced much more than her autobiographical project. Janet Hiddleston notes that in Rousseau's combination of true religious feeling and optimistic belief in humanity, Sand found a kindred spirit. Once she finished her autobiography, she returned to her initial enthusiasm, even making a pilgrimage to Les Charmettes, where she wrote, "je lui reste fidèle comme au père qui m'aurait engendré". (Didier 255). In addition to her autobiography and her political and religious thought, Rousseau's ideas influenced Sand's fiction. Helynne H. Hansen examines the progression of Sand's heroines from women who vainly seek Rousseau-style love to those who specifically

protest and ultimately reject the restrictions his ideas place on them (189). Indiana and Lélia fall into this first category as they, like Rousseau's Julie, fail to integrate passion and marriage. Hansen identifies *Mauprat* as the turning point in Sand's writing. Edmée refers specifically to Julie and rejects her fate. Rather than accepting a false choice between passion and marriage, Edmée shapes Bernard into the man she wants, refusing to marry him until he proves himself worthy and capable of integrating romantic love and enduring companionship. *Isidora* goes one step further, offering two routes to happiness: the first, followed by Alice, integrates passion and marriage, while Isidora follows a second path, rejecting men completely and building a relationship with her daughter. This heroine speaks specifically about her feelings for Rousseau, telling a friend that he did not understand women, their needs, or their rightful place in society. Hansen concludes, "The struggle to free herself and her heroines from the bonds of Rousseau's idealized, but oppressive Clarens was a long and difficult one for Sand. However, her perceptions of Rousseau grew clearer and her expression bolder, as she created heroines who were less and less willing to accept the lot of Julie. With the development of Isidora, Sand's metamorphosis is achieved, as her heroine not only breaks away from Rousseau's long-dominant but destructive female stereotype, but also boldly denounces it by name as an unrealistic and cruel attitude towards women " (195).

Sand's *Jacques*, whose protagonist is identified by Octave as "une mauvaise copie de M. de Wolmar" continues her interaction with Rousseau's ideas. Jacinta Wright discusses its plot inversion of Rousseau's *Julie* in detail. Fernande rejects her husband, the older Jacques, in favor of the younger Octave precisely because his admirable masculine qualities of bravery, strength, and self-control prevent their happiness in

marriage. Jacques then commits suicide to free Fernande to happily marry his rival. Sand thus undermines patriarchal conventions of masculinity and posits her own definition of an ideal man (201).

Through these novels, we see Sand in dialogue with her mentor, a dialogue that continues in *François le champi*. Already in the introduction, the author's companion and reader, R, tells her, "Je voudrais être paysan... je serais aussi heureux que l'homme primitif rêvé par Jean-Jacques" (13). Sand's novel illustrates many of Rousseau's dearest causes: a love of country life, a deep admiration for the hardworking virtue of the peasant class, an emphasis on the importance of women in the nurturing and education of children, and a recognition of the importance of "la transparence des âmes" in meaningful relationships. But this story is not just a novelized *Émile*. While Rousseau admired the peasant class and found it a good source of valuable skills and life lessons in the education of his noble student, Sand makes her hero a true member of the peasant class, and of its lowest rung.[11]

Rousseau's philosophical writings are not the only intertext here. Many elements of Sand's novel evoke Rousseau's own life story, particularly his relationship with Mme de Warens. In *François*, she demonstrates that although she disagrees with Rousseau's confessing of Mme de Warens, she believes that the type of relationship Jean-Jacques and his Maman shared can be successful. Its failure was not due to the intrinsic nature of their bond, but to mistakes they both made. This is not to say that *François le champi* is a deliberate fictional rewriting of Rousseau's story. The issues Sand deals with and her approaches to them in this novel are in no way foreign to her work as a whole, as we would expect due to the influence Rousseau had on Sand's thought and writing.

However, there are enough similarities between the two narratives to justify a side-by-side comparison, and to read their points of difference as Sand's critique of Rousseau's relationship with his maternal Pygmalion figure.

Both François and Jean-Jacques are young boys without anyone to properly care for them. François has la Zabelle and Rousseau has his father, but neither of these guardians is entirely fit. François's status as a *champi* may be Sand's first implied criticism of Rousseau, the father of no fewer than five children whom he, like François's mother, left at orphanages. Both have the good fortune to encounter lovely, compassionate benefactresses. Madeleine embodies Mme de Warens' qualities of generosity, kindness, and nurturing without her "flaws" of hypersociability and her unfeminine love for science and politics. Madeleine's maternal responsibilities fulfill her, supplemented by her charity toward those around her. Like Mme de Warens' "adoption" of Rousseau, Madeleine's responsibility for François passes through two stages. She first helps la Zabelle and François as a pair, an arrangement in which la Zabelle retains the responsibility of caring for François. This distant involvement parallels Mme de Warens' role in sending Rousseau to Turin. But when Madeleine's mother-in-law convinces la Zabelle to send François away, Madeleine intervenes. She gives la Zabelle the money mère Blanchet had promised and takes François as her own, a full acceptance like that granted Rousseau on his return to Annecy.

Sand idealizes not only the mother figure, but also the setting. She amplifies Rousseau's appreciation of the green space outside his window in Annecy into an entirely rural setting, far from the corrupting influence of city life. In this ideal setting develops a relationship of Rousseauistic perfection. François finds in Madeleine the mother he

never had. His only complaint is that she does not kiss him as other mothers do their sons, and as Madeleine herself does Jeannie, a complaint Madeleine quickly resolves (67,8). Like Rousseau and Mme de Warens, they share a transparency of thought and feeling, first seen in Madeleine's recognition of a kindred spirit in François, and later in François's willingness to talk to Madeleine more openly than with anyone else (42, 70). Their relationship progresses along the same path as Rousseau's. Madeleine begins by meeting François's basic needs, first for food and shelter, and then for affection. Once Madeleine has established her responsibility for François, she undertakes his education, teaching him to read. As they use the lives of saints as their reader, Madeleine shares her simple, honest faith. Her success in these endeavors is quickly reflected in François's teaching Jeannie to read and the celebration of his first communion. At the same time, François finds his place in society. Given the rural setting, this is not as complicated a task as that which befell Mme de Warens. There are no choices to be made between the priesthood, a music career, or a position with connections to powerful people. François simply enters paid service at the Blanchet mill. To reach her goals for her protégé, Madeleine, like Mme de Warens, relies almost exclusively on referent power. Her position as his adoptive mother and her meeting of his needs would suggest the availability of the legitimate powers of position and reciprocity, but there is no evidence that she ever needed to exercise either. "J'étais sage parce que je l'aimais" could be François's description of his behavior just as easily as it is Rousseau's.

As with Rousseau, the advent of François's maturity forces a shift in the relationship between adoptive mother and son. For Mme de Warens, the attention her protégé began receiving from other women forced her to act, leading her to initiate sexual

relations between them. Other people force a change in the relationship between François and Madeleine as well. The first glimmer of social disapproval arises in Catherine's criticism of Madeleine, who thinks François is too old for kisses from his mother. Sand emphasizes François's innocence, a reflection of Rousseau's philosophy, in her depiction of his complete lack of comprehension of this censure. He stops expecting kisses only to save Madeleine from criticism. Despite this minor setback in the relationship, they continue to be close, and Madeleine continues to wield impressive referent power, shaping and reinforcing his character as she does when François sees Madeleine's sacrifices to help those around her and follows suit, refusing most of his wages for his work at the mill.

La Sévère, Blanchet's mistress, causes the major disruption in their relationship. Like Mme de Menthon and Mme Lard, she notices this "diablement beau garçon", and is further encouraged by his cleanliness, a trait instilled by her rival, Madeleine. François, like Rousseau, is completely oblivious to her designs on him and interprets her actions as mockery rather than flirtation, more evidence of his innocence. Out of revenge for his lack of interest, La Sévère tells Blanchet that François tried to seduce her and intimates that he should worry about Madeleine as well. This leads to a confrontation between Blanchet and his wife in which Sand further emphasizes the chasteness of the relationship between Madeleine and François. Blanchet's recognition of his wife's virtue manifests itself in the embarrassment he feels as he begins his accusation, further underlined by Madeleine's initial incomprehension of his suggestion. François displays a similar lack of understanding, although, unlike Madeleine, he never understands why he has to leave. Madeleine, too ashamed of her husband's suspicions, cannot bring herself to explain,

simply relying on the maternal nature of relationship. "Tous les enfants quittent leur mère pour aller travailler" (113). François finally accepts, but asks for a last kiss, the kind of request that might raise eyebrows. However, the narrators, mère Monique and the *chanvreur*, both intrude to emphasize the spirit of religious devotion in which it is given (117).

Sand could not be clearer on the absence of any sexual undertones to their relationship, her determined avoidance of any suggestion of incest clearly differentiating this relationship from that of Rousseau and Mme de Warens. For François, the passage to manhood consists of taking on the adult responsibilities of earning a living and caring for others. No sexual initiation occurs, either before his departure, during his absence, or after his return. Rather, he displays his virtue and maturity by avoiding entanglements with both la Sévère and Mariette, the mistress and the coquette. When Mme de Warens tells Rousseau the time has come for her to treat him like a man ("me traiter en homme"), she refers exclusively to the opening of sexual relations between them. While this leads to a deepening of their relationship and a willingness to treat Jean-Jacques as more of an equal and less of a child, this shift occurs only in their interpersonal dynamics. There is no indication that Rousseau assumed any new responsibilities that would reflect his adult status. By contrasting these two rites of passage, Sand challenges the commonly held belief that, for a young man, sexual experience is an indispensable step toward manhood. François does not need to sow his wild oats, as did Marguerite's d'Avannes and Balzac's Félix de Vandenesse. Rousseau's sexual rights divorced from adult responsibilities ultimately proved fatal to the relationship and to his happiness, while François's ability to

support himself, manage property, and right injustices enables him to return to a relationship with Madeleine as an equal partner rather than as a semi-willing victim.[12]

To demonstrate that he is ready to live up to the standards Madeleine has set, François must leave home. Blanchet's jealousy provides the impetus for his departure, which provides another glimpse into the power dynamics of the relationship between François and Madeleine. She refuses to explain to François why he must leave and so draws on her own bases of power to effect his departure, bases of referent and veiled coercive power that closely resemble those employed by the lady of Pamplona and Henriette de Mortsauf. She tells him that he is grown up and that leaving home to enter the wider world is the next natural step. François fails to yield to this invocation of reason, so Madeleine makes it personal, drawing on François's valuing of their relationship. She tells him, "Si vous n'avez pas non plus de volonté et de soumission qu'un enfant... vous ne méritez pas l'amitié que j'ai pour vous..." (110). The observation that he may not deserve her friendship carries with it the threat that it may be withdrawn and so François, who had told her earlier, "si je vous perdais, je n'aurais plus personne sur la terre", acquiesces (85).

Separation results in illness, not just for Madeleine, which has been the result of separation for all the female Pygmalion figures studied thus far except Mme de Warens, but also for François, a phenomenon seen previously only in Rousseau. Illness functions very differently in *François le champi* and the *Confessions*, however. François falls ill for the same reason as the female protagonists in these texts, as a reflection of the emotional pain separation causes. In contrast, Rousseau's illnesses result not from geographical distance between him and his Maman, but from a need to open psychic

space in a relationship he cannot admit to finding oppressive. He repeatedly uses poor health as a means to opt out of sexual relations while reinforcing his role as the recipient of Mme de Warens' maternal affection. As their relationship deteriorates and Wintzenreid appears at les Charmettes, the search for a cure to yet another inexplicable illness furnishes a legitimate reason for separation that is convenient for both Jean-Jacques and Maman. Thus, for Rousseau, physical illness does not express grief and loss, but is a basis of power. Like the Romantic heroes examined in Margaret Waller's *The Male Malady*, Rousseau learns "to take advantage of the 'powers of the weak' (silence, withdrawal, and refusal), which are traditionally associated with women, as underhanded means of reempowerment" (3). In his weakness, Jean-Jacques exercises the power of legitimate dependence, the only power available to him in this power-imbalanced relationship.

Whether illness is the cause or the effect of the separation, distance from their sculptors gives François and Jean-Jacques the opportunity to demonstrate the success of Pygmalion's project. While Rousseau's success is limited, François's is complete.[13] In the three years he spends in the Aigurande he makes his employer's farm very successful. Vertaud is appreciative, recognizing that François's heart is as good as his head and his hands (129). His respect for him is so great that, despite François's openness about his status as a *champi*, he wants him to marry his daughter, a match Jeannette accepts as well. This marriage offer confirms the success of Madeleine's project, but disconcerts François, who remains devoted to his adoptive mother.

François's response to the suggestion of a replacement love object provides another point of contrast with Rousseau. On his trip to Montpellier, Jean-Jacques has an

affair with Mme de Lanarge, a substitute love object and, outside a relationship in which he is essentially powerless, experiences sexual pleasure for the first time. On his return from Montpellier, Rousseau presents his dilemma at whether to make the visit he had promised to Mme de Lanarge or to return to Mme de Warens. After much internal debate, he resolves to return home to Maman, a decision he regards as a triumph of his own virtue and sense of duty over his impulse to pleasure. Rousseau's self-depiction as an active decision maker willing to put Maman's interests before his own is another attempt, like his illness, to establish a sense of agency in their relationship. If he can convince first himself and then Maman of his sacrifice for her, he enables himself to exercise the power of legitimate reciprocity. Mme de Warens exercises this power over him because she has provided for him, but if he can point to his own sacrifices made for her, he will be able to share in this basis of power and take a step closer to the status of equal partner rather than remaining a charity case.

Sand places François in direct opposition to Jean-Jacques. First, Jeannette Vertaud is an eligible choice of love object. When Rousseau bypasses Mme de Lanarge, he is giving up a temporary fling with a woman who already has a husband and family, while François, in turning down marriage to Jeannette, sacrifices stability as a member of a respectable family, prosperity in his eventual ownership of the Vertaud property, and contentment in his relationship with a kind and virtuous woman. While Rousseau fears the animosity of Mme de Lanarge's family, François is embraced by Jeannette's father, who initiates the idea of marriage and persists in it even after François tells him about his *champiage*. Jeannette, although initially disconcerted by the information, remains enthusiastic about their possible marriage. By contrast, Rousseau's true identity is

another source of concern. Mme de Lanarge knows him as Mr. Dudding, an assumed persona that would be immediately revealed as a hoax by anyone who had ever been to England or spoke even a word of English. Thus, fear of embarrassment and family tension motivates Rousseau's "sacrifice" at least as much as his professed devotion. His claims of undying faithfulness fall under greater suspicion when we consider evidence that Rousseau knew that Wintzenreid had replaced him before he left for Montpellier and that correspondence with Mme de Warens during his absence confirmed that her ties to Wintzenreid continued [14]. Given these considerations, Rousseau's relinquishment of Mme de Lanarge pales beside François's refusal of Jeannette Vertaud. Despite the very real benefits marriage to Jeannette would bring, benefits he acknowledges, François remains devoted to Madeleine. Without knowing if she will ever need him or if he will ever be able to return, he makes the decision to remain free without a moment's hesitation. He tells Vertaud in response to his general question about marriage, "de femmes... il n'y en a qu'une pour moi et c'est ma mère Madeleine" (135).

François's conversation with Jeannette reinforces the filial nature of his devotion, evidenced by his use of "ma mère". Curious about her rival, she asks François how old Madeleine is and if she is pretty. François knows the answer to neither of these questions, replying "C'était pour moi comme ma mère, et je ne regardais pas à ses ans" (138). As long as the balance of power between them remains lopsided, François and Madeleine's feelings for each other must remain those of a devoted son and nurturing mother or risk violating the incest taboo.[15] If Madeleine is to become a legitimate partner, François needs the opportunity to level the playing field. This opportunity presents itself in two stages. The first is the shadowy reappearance of François's

biological mother who contacts him through the village priest. Nicole Mozet notes that this multiplicity of mother figures around François contributes to preserving the innocence of his relationship with Madeleine (95). Though François has left Madeleine's home and is successfully earning an independent living, the monetary gift he receives from his mother will give him the resources necessary to return Madeleine's generosity. So François's mother's presence lays the groundwork for a leveling of power between them.

News of Blanchet's death and the resulting difficulties Madeleine faces allows François to put his resources to use. Madeleine's widowhood has the obvious effect of freeing her to remarry, but this is not an option considered by either at this point. After taking leave of Vertaud and Jeannette, François arrives to find the mill in bad shape and Madeleine seriously ill from the effort of caring for her husband. He immediately steps in to help care for her, nurturing her back to health and beginning to counterbalance Madeleine's power of legitimate reciprocity over him that resulted from her taking him in as a child. She brought him back to consciousness after the shock of la Zabelle's rejection and he restores her to health after the trauma of her husband's death.

With Madeleine on the road to recovery, François sets about righting the other problems the family faces. Like Mme de Warens, Madeleine finds herself in financial difficulty, though her problems are not the result of chronic overspending, but of her husband's mismanagement of their resources and la Sévère's fraud. Unlike Rousseau, François has the skills, resources, and authority to right the situation. He begins by getting the mill going again, restoring the income it brought to the family. His hard work and management abilities contrast directly with Rousseau's inability to manage the

property at les Charmettes, an inability that led Mme de Warens to take on Wintzenreid. François turns next to Blanchet's papers, where he discovers la Sévère's malicious intentions and formulates a plan to return Madeleine's land to her. Sand demonstrates François's authority first by Catherine's reaction to him – she treats him as if he were master of the house—and second by François's perception of what he is doing. As he plans to restore Madeleine's property, he tells Catherine, "La poule peut bien essayer de tirer une plume à l'oiseau méchant qui lui a plumé ses poussins" (134). François regards himself as the responsible party, taking the role of the mother hen protecting her chicks, Madeleine and Jeannie. This role moves beyond perception as François implements his plan, making use of his insight into human nature and the financial resources his mother provided him to restore Madeleine's property and erase the bogus debts that la Sévère claimed Blanchet had incurred. Rescuing Madeleine from imminent financial ruin cements François's power of legitimate equity. In fact, although François does not consider his debt to Madeleine repaid, she insists that she now owes him, and promises to pay him back.

François's ability to build his own bases of power creates the potential for their relationship to move from that of mother and son to wife and husband. François does not need to earn Madeleine's maternal affection, but by demonstrating his manhood through the assumption of adult responsibilities, François proves himself worthy of a woman's love and respect. Rousseau, however, never succeeds in making this transition. Although he wants to provide for Mme de Warens, to rescue her from her bleak financial situation, he does not have the resources to do so. He exercises no power over her whatsoever, and so is unable to change her self-destructive spending habits. He also

possesses no real marketable skills that would guarantee him an income large enough to support Maman and cover her financial missteps. Jean-Jacques, like François, receives money from his biological mother, or, more precisely, her estate, but rather than actively employing it to permanently resolve the financial difficulties Mme de Warens faces, he submissively lays it at her feet, allowing it to be misspent like her other income. Although Rousseau claims his desire to meet her needs as the impetus that drove him out into the world and toward his eventual success, he is unable to assume any adult responsibilities within the context of their relationship and so never reaches manhood in Mme de Warens' eyes.

The question of responsibility for the success or failure of this transition from son to partner necessarily arises as we view Madeleine and Mme de Warens as maternal Pygmalion figures. Our thesis is that François and Jean-Jacques are, to a significant extent, what their sculptors have made them. They must, therefore, take some credit or bear some blame for the outcome of their projects. François succeeds because Madeleine has given him a valid definition of manhood. A man is honest, hardworking, compassionate, charitable, and responsible not only for himself, but for those who depend on him. More accurately, this definition is not a gendered one. The author who wrote to her friend Flaubert that there is only one sex has created an ideal man by giving him a woman as his role model. The qualities describing François above describe Madeleine with equal accuracy.[16] In attaining the standards she has set, François is able to leave home, earn the respect of his society, and finally demonstrate his worthiness of Madeleine's love. Mme de Warens defines manhood primarily as sexual activity. Consequently, Rousseau's foray into the broader world focuses on his affair with

Madame de Lanarge. He has no means of rectifying the power imbalance between Maman and himself and so no hope of establishing a long-term partnership with her. He has nothing to offer, no means to "suff[ire] à son cœur comme elle suffisait au mien" (Tenth promenade).

Rousseau drew criticism from his contemporaries and followers, including George Sand, for his treatment of Mme de Warens in his *Confessions*, and the blame for the disintegration of their relationship nearly always falls on him. Even Jean Guéhenno, who, of Rousseau's biographers, provides the harshest portrait of Mme de Warens, concludes that she was poorly rewarded for her generosity. However, when we compare Rousseau's relationship with François's, its inappropriateness emerges. Between François and Madeleine, a sexual relationship is out of the question until François has left her home, established himself independently, and returned to rescue her, consequently building his own bases of power and enabling him to enter into a marital (i.e. sexual) relationship with Madeleine as an equal partner. Although their history may still make readers squeamish despite Sand's concerted effort to demonstrate the innocence of the relationship and the distinct passage from filial and maternal love to passion, the decision to marry is clearly made by two consenting adults.

Whereas Mme de Warens' alleged lack of desire mitigates her culpability, Sand maintains Madeleine's innocence by compartmentalizing her desire. Sand is emphatic about the exclusively maternal nature of Madeleine's love for François, as we have seen in her willingness to kiss him, her slowness to understand the rumors, and her husband's embarrassment in confronting her over her relationship with François. Sand presents more testimony in the time that elapses between Francois's change of heart and

Madeleine's. When François first considers marrying, she cannot see that she is the one he wants, and persists in trying to match him with Mariette. In response to François's explanation of the rumors that Mariette and la Sévère have been circulating about them, she insists that only the devil would say that she looks at him in any way other than as her son (227), and upon meeting Jeannette, whom she thinks François wants to marry, she is not the least bit jealous, "car elle n'avait jamais songé à François que comme à l'enfant qu'elle aurait mis au monde" (239). She can hardly believe Jeannette's explanation of François's feelings, thinking that he merely wishes to continue to serve her, preserving her reputation and preventing her from feeling the need to repay him the money he used to restore her property. Her refusal to accept a relationship based on duty reveals Sand's respect for the importance of passion in love.[17] Madeleine wants more for François, and Sand wants more for Madeleine. Unlike Rousseau, who paints Mme de Warens as frigid, Sand touches Madeleine with a *coup de foudre* of her own. Desire has a place in Madeleine and François's relationship, but it cannot be ignited until the balance of power between them reaches equilibrium. Madeleine's fears that François is marrying her out of duty may also be fears of losing her own power in the relationship.[18] If François were to sacrifice his potential happiness to keep her from public scandal, he would exercise considerable powers of legitimate equity and reciprocity. But his desire reinforces her referent power, permitting a relationship between equal partners and the expression of her own passion in return.

Margaret Gray criticizes Sand's choice to leave Madeleine speechless on the subject of her desire, viewing *François le champi* as an enactment of the suppression of "feminine" language (342). Citing Julia Kristeva's work, Gray discusses the shunning of

the idea of a mother's enjoyment of sexual pleasure by both East and West. Married women are to be childbearers with the function of producing heirs to carry their father's name, and are to be neither desiring nor desirable. Gray accuses Sand of propagating this view, privileging a male perspective in keeping with her masculine pen name. While excluding the possibility of a mother who desires limits women and denies them full personhood, Gray does not fully acknowledge that placing the language of desire on Madeleine's lips would violate not only the prohibition on desiring mothers, but the incest taboo. As Mozet points out, Sand mutes François's desire as well by leaving his words out of direct discourse. The narrator tells us that François spoke, but not what he said (94). One could argue that François is capable of verbalizing his feelings not because he is a man and therefore the appropriate originator of desire, but because he has had time to reflect on the transformation of his attachment. Sand would be portraying Madeleine as tongue-tied not to diminish her agency in the situation, but to underline the purity of her maternal love for François. Their relationship as man and wife can only be acceptable if the reader believes that Madeleine's desire is born at the moment of François's confession, an experience that would understandably leave her unable to express herself. [19] Diana Holmes agrees, seeing *François le champi* not as an oppressive silencing of the female protagonist, but as an optimistic tale in which desire triumphs over repression (33).

Sand is clear that Madeleine does not make Mme de Warens' mistake, nor Pygmalion's, for that matter. She sculpts François into a complete man, one she has no intentions of keeping for herself, and does not initiate a sexual relationship in which her creation has no choice. In *François le champi*, Venus's intervention is needed not to

bring the statue to life, so to speak, but to spark desire in the sculptor.[20] The sharp delineation between Madeleine's roles of mother and lover save both her and François from the consequences of incest, either in the form of a flawed product or the punishment of the gods visited on later generations. Instead, her virtue earns her happiness with a man she has made worthy of her. Robert Godwin-Jones describes Madeleine's achievements. "...she shows her worth by caring for a *champi* and after educating him crowns the process by becoming his wife; her spiritual level is so high she earns the right to marry her own child" (296).

Maternal Pygmalion figures are the only creators able to emerge from a relationship with their creations unharmed and without inflicting excessive harm. Mme de Warens' ultimate fate is dismal, but it results from her spending habits and susceptibility to con artists rather than from her relationship with Rousseau. The incestuous nature of their sexual relationship no doubt leaves Rousseau scarred, but when he reflects on their relationship, his memories are characterized overwhelmingly by gratitude, not blame. Madeleine and François go several steps further, achieving the only happy ending in the texts treated in this analysis. Two factors contribute to the relative success of these relationships. First, the ultimate goal of these relationships is the young man's independence. Both women foresee and work toward the day when they will relinquish their formative power because their protégés have achieved autonomy. Losing control is not a disaster, as is the case for Madamedes Belles Cousines, but an end. Second, these relationships are at least as Oedipal as they are Pygmalionesque. The intensity of feeling in the relationship, romantic love for François and an undefinable burning adoration for Rousseau, originates with the creation rather than the creator.

Successful resolution of the Oedipal conflict requires the presence of a father figure first to challenge and then with whom to identify. This presence is lacking in both relationships, which explains the young men's inability to make a substitute object choice. Anet might have played the role of father figure to Rousseau, but Jean-Jacques was not forced to compete with him. There are no father figures surrounding François. Blanchet fills the spot where a father figure could have been placed, but he embodies none of the qualities needed to win Madeleine's love, serving as a negative example rather than as a man to emulate. Consequently, both young men remain attached to their adoptive mothers. François's relationship to Madeleine is more successful because she more effectively leads him to self-reliance. Having established his own bases of power, he can freely choose her over an affair with la Sévère or marriage to either Mariette or Jeannette. The balance of power between François and Madeleine enables them to avoid the label of incest and to find happiness.

These maternal relationships mark the neutral midpoint in the spectrum of relationships defined by female Pygmalion figures. Earlier texts describe relationships that prove disastrous for their creator; those that follow result in the destruction of the creation.

Chapter 4

Monsieur Vénus and *Chéri*: The Creation, Adoration, and Destruction of the Male Object

Female Pygmalion figures undertake their projects to fulfill a need they cannot otherwise meet. Antoine de la Sale's Belle Dame des Belles Cousines needed a way to occupy her time and a *serviteur* who would not threaten the independence she was fortunate enough to have won. The lady of Pamplona and Henriette de Mortsauf are too young and vibrant to be entirely satisfied in their marriages to old or sickly men, but too virtuous to accept the conventional solution of taking a young lover. Mme de Warens and Madeleine Blanchet adopt sons as an outlet for their nurturing generosity. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the female Pygmalion's needs have become more frankly sexual, and acknowledged as such from the beginning. Rachilde's Raoule de Vénérande and Colette's Léa de Lonval approach their projects with a shared openness to and about the sensuality of their relationships. In fact, pleasure patently motivates these relationships in the first place. Both women are sexually experienced, with little concern about either their reputations or the fate of their immortal souls. Both are drawn to beautiful yet wildly inappropriate young men, and neither hesitates in her decision to take advantage of the opportunity before her. Raoule and Léa each bend traditional gender roles in playing the "sugar daddy" to her kept man while shaping him into the kind of lover she thinks she wants. The form he takes depends upon the threat each woman faces. Raoule de Vénérande, as a young aristocratic woman of marrying age, feels the pressure to choose a husband. A change in marital status would be a greater change than she could accept. Orphaned in infancy, raised by her maiden aunt, and independently wealthy, Raoule has escaped many of the pressures of patriarchal society and has no

intention of submitting to them now. Jacques Silvert, nominally younger and vastly weaker due to his poverty and lowly social standing, offers first an escape and then a solution to the conundrum of autonomy in marriage.

Colette's Léa faces a very different and more inevitable threat: old age and the loss of the beauty and sensuality that has in many ways defined her life up to this, her forty-ninth year. For her, independence is not an issue. She lives in a society of women, where men figure only in passing as brief diversions who may provide pleasure, but more importantly, income. As Léa nears the end of a successful career as a courtesan, she finds herself wealthy and unattached as she faces a transition to a new way of life. She sees clearly the inevitability of her aging as she looks at the women around her, former beauties now putting on weight, hunching over in age, or sprouting facial hair. Léa reserves a particular distaste for Lili, who does not acknowledge her age and unattractiveness, persisting in chasing very young men. However, Léa is still younger than these women and is not ready give up the fight for her beauty, especially not at the outset of her relationship with Chéri, six years before the opening scene of the novel. What Léa needs from this relationship is not a weak creature to be dominated, but a mirror that reflects back to her the image of a woman who is still beautiful and desirable. The exceptional beauty and desirability of the mirror itself heightens its value.

These two texts, which on the surface share many characteristics, provide additional perspectives from which to view the workings of social power. The different needs of the two sculptors not only aim at different ends, but also require different means. To use inappropriate bases of power in these cases would be to render the outcomes of their projects meaningless.

Raoule de Vénérande's driving force in life is a desire to preserve her independence, not just from the bonds patriarchal society would impose on her but from convention of any kind. She prides herself on her singularity, a pride that brings her to Marie Silvert in the first place with an idea for a ball costume that cannot be entirely executed by her couturier, but requires the assistance of a specialist. She smokes, fences, ignores religion, and refuses marriage, embodying the special privileges of elite individuals whose superiority enables them to step beyond the boundaries society normally imposes (Holmes 76). Like Pygmalion, Raoule has found the choice of available love objects unsatisfactory. She seeks a relationship in which she can accomplish two goals. First, she must retain her autonomy. This is a principle on which she will not compromise. Second, she wants to experience passion and pleasure, but she sees no way to accomplish this goal without sacrificing the first as long as she must play the female role. When she meets Jacques, she sees in him the potential for the partner she needs, one who can play both parts and mirror her own gender flexibility. Because she requires Jacques's total submission in order to make him a pliable partner, she will wield an impressive array of bases of social power, the most diverse since Madamedes Belles Cousines.

This creation story begins by invoking the Western original where Jacques plays the role of the forbidden fruit in a Decadent Eden characterized by the splendid artificiality prized in the Decadent aesthetic. Rachilde's description of the red-gold hair covering Jacques's rounded body equates him with the apples cooking on the stove, a representation of an intense, contradictory passion that takes Raoule from disgust to desire (Kingcaid 122,3). Jacques Silvert appears as a gateway to knowledge she does not

possess, knowledge not of good and evil, but of passion. But like the apples, Jacques will not be enjoyed in his natural state, but must be transformed from one state to another. As raw material, Jacques has nothing to offer but his beauty. He is neither intelligent, nor witty, nor artistically gifted. His skill is limited to his craftsmanship, another mark of his class: his hands are competent, but he lacks the inspiration, vision, and creativity of the artist. He is also surprisingly innocent, given his family background: an alcoholic father, an unfaithful mother, and a prostitute sister. Even in his immense poverty, Jacques has refused Marie's suggestions that he turn his appearance to his advantage, and has scraped by doing odd jobs. Raoule finds this temptation, hidden in a Paradise of artificial roses, wallflowers, and violets strewn over dirty plates and empty bottles, irresistible. And in the corner, under a pile of paper lilies, Marie Silvert watches and waits, ready to play the role of the serpent. However, the dialog between Eve and her tempter is entirely internal. External temptation requires the acknowledgment of another's power, which Raoule's independence will not permit. She is also not strongly inclined to resist. Any commands of "Thou shalt not" handed down in her earlier education have long been ignored, leaving her no real reason to resist this temptation not just to pleasure, but to singularity as well. And so the stage is set for the story of another Fall, not from Paradise, for Jacques begins this story living in poverty and squalor, but from innocence.

At this first meeting, Raoule de Vénérande wields an impressive degree of legitimate position power over Jacques Silvert. She is the wealthy client; he is not even the poor craftsman, but her substitute. His role is to ask, "Madame désire?" and then do whatever he can to satisfy her. The gap between them is so great that Raoule is initially disgusted and uneasy. However, her admiration of his talent for creating artificial

flowers elevates him just enough to make him worthy of an appraisal. This examination reveals more position power at Raoule's disposal. The "expression bête" of his eyes and his gaze akin to that of a begging dog affirm that she holds the power even as his physical beauty entrances her. The flash of her diamond and her gloved hand on his bare chest serve as additional reminders of Raoule's social position and the power it grants her. She also gives Jacques a taste of the benefits of satisfying her by paying him double what he asks for the work she has commissioned. Given the extreme poverty in which he lives, reward power proves an effective corollary to her already overwhelming power of legitimate position. Jacques has no means of refusing Raoule's demands on the basis of this power alone, but reward power puts a velvet glove on her iron fist.

Raoule does fall under Jacques's power, but it is not one he consciously exercises. He can control the effect of his beauty no more than the water lilies he is sketching for Raoule's costume can control their aphrodisiacal scent. We know already that Jacques lacks artistic talent, wit, family name, manners, and common sense. Rather than endowing him with a measure of agency, his seductive power further accentuates Jacques's status as an object to be used at will. Linda Klieger Stillman sees in this depiction of Jacques a gender-reversed parody of the portrayal of women as having only sexual significance (210). The first time Raoule fantasizes about Jacques, she evokes "un bel instrument de plaisir qu'elle convoitait" and that she holds in her arms already in her imagination (19). Raoule does not content herself with fantasies, however. She has a plan for "l'enveloppe, l'épiderme, l'être palpable, le mâle" that she has stumbled upon, a plan that seems to have been germinating for quite some time. Now that she has found a suitable piece of ivory, she has only to sculpt it to her specifications.

Raoule begins by placing Jacques in an environment, both physical and social, that traditionally belongs to women, an environment similar to those surrounding Hercules, dressed in long women's robes and spinning linen thread at Omphale's feet, and Achilles, disguised as one of Lycomedes's daughters in his court. The first steps in Raoule's plan reveal a catalog of topoi of femininity. The luxurious apartment detaches him from his former life, removes him from his work and acquaintances, and erases his daily concerns for meeting his basic survival needs. By enclosing him and eliminating the need for his activity, Raoule begins Jacques's shift toward a more female gender role in which he will be confined to the domestic sphere, remaining stationary while Raoule moves freely in society. His gilded cage, in all its luxury, not only contains Jacques, but also reinforces Raoule's reward power and builds her power of legitimate reciprocity. She has rescued him from his squalid dormer and promises to nurture his artistic talent and offer him a comfortable life, which Jacques accepts without recognizing what he will owe her in return. He insists, "Mademoiselle de Vénérande est une artiste voilà tout! Elle a pitié des artistes; elle est bonne, elle est juste..." (31).

Raoule's first visit to Jacques's new apartment underlines the position of weakness in which Raoule places Jacques, the position patriarchal society assigns to women. Jacques is lolling about on the furniture, "fou d'une folie de fiancée en présence de son trousseau de femme" when Raoule enters (34). She exerts power immediately: legitimate position power as the mistress of the house; legitimate reciprocity as Jacques's benefactress; expert power as a respectable artist herself and a year older than he; and coercive power, blatantly exercised in her "j'ai envie de vous étrangler." Her power is visually represented in her black sheath dress, "presque masculin" and her lion-clawed

"chevalière", a term that evokes an image of military prowess in feminine form while it describes her signet ring. Linguistically, the power imbalance appears in Raoule's heavy use of the imperative: "Répondez", "venez", Enfermez-vous". Raoule's carnivalesque rearrangement of the disorder Jacques has created with the furnishings of the apartment further suggests the inversion of roles that is beginning.

As Raoule directs him to bathe, Jacques is the object of her gaze, playing the role of the innocent country girl who comes to the city only to be despoiled by a predatory urbanite. Even his body blurs gender lines. Rachilde begins her description by placing him in another female role, that of a courtesan, emphasizing the voluptuous roundness and softness of his body. But she stops short of feminizing him completely, admiring the golden curls that cover his entire body and making a euphemistic reference to his other distinguishing male feature. This is exactly Raoule's goal for him, a lover with many feminine attributes, but who maintains a measure of masculinity.

Jacques's physical beauty is so great that Raoule nearly loses her nerve, fearing that she will not be able to maintain control over him or over herself. But when faced with the alternative of a conventional male-female relationship, she returns, marches into Jacques's apartment in a confrontational mood and finds exactly what she seeks: a passive, cowering child who hides his face in his pillow. This confounding of the feminine with the infantile is yet another nineteenth-century commonplace of femininity. Raoule finds his weakness intoxicating, and relaunches her project of a genderless lover immediately. Marie has inadvertently helped her in the process by dressing Jacques in a woman's nightgown. Jacques's laughter at his predicament overcomes her last reservations and she abandons herself to her task.

She outlines her plan for her gender-reversed relationship in a conversation with de Raittolbe, forcing him out of his role as would-be lover and into the position of confidante. She begins by telling him that she is *amoureux*, and that she will be Jacques's lover (*son amant*) rather than his mistress, loving Jacques with the intensity and hopelessness with which a fiancé loves his dead fiancée, an ominous foreshadowing of the ending. When de Raittolbe insists that she settle on a consistent pronoun to refer to Jacques, she chooses the feminine, and reveals her intentions to support him. After de Raittolbe leaves, she visits her aunt who is praying to the Virgin Mary, "Souvenez-vous, ô très douce Vierge Marie, qu'on n'a jamais entendu qu'aucun de ceux qui ont eu recours à vous aient été délaissés" (78), and wonders to herself whether anyone has ever asked the Virgin Mother for a sex change.

However, Raoule's true intention is not to become a man. The justification for her project lies in her perceived right to sexual satisfaction as a woman, "l'élite des femmes de notre époque" (72). She is spurred to action in both her own interests, and on behalf of her metaphorical sisters.[1] Men have failed women of her class by meeting only their own needs for pleasure and procreation, rather than concerning themselves with making their partners happy. This new vice she is pioneering, justified in her eyes because she is its innovator, will bring her a man with a woman's sensibilities, liberating Raoule and her sisters from the inferior role imposed on them by their sex. Antiquity's celebrated passions based on sex divorced from procreation live again in a new form. "Elle inventera des caresses, trouvera de nouvelles preuves aux nouveaux transports d'un nouvel amour et Raoule de Vénérande possédera Jacques Silvert..."(94).

Although Jacques's gender ambiguity initially inspires Raoule's project, she still has work to do. She has already placed him in a traditionally female role: her mistress, a kept woman who is the object of her gaze and her desire. But to be truly transformed, Jacques must embrace the part Raoule has assigned him. When she returns to the apartment after her earlier flight, she makes it clear that she is now fully committed to her undertaking. She silences him with her "Tais-toi. Je ne viens pas ici pour t'entendre", an objectification that emphasizes his feminization. In drugging him for their first sexual encounter, a scene laden with maternal imagery as Raoule spoonfeeds Jacques a dose of hashish, she separates him from any expectations about what sex should be, instilling artificially the flexibility toward which she is working. Maryline Lukacher sees in this overbearing motherhood a maternity that is reinvested with patriarchal attributes, another blurring of what is normally a sharply defined gender role (111). In his hallucinatory state, Jacques hears "les chants d'un amour étrange n'ayant pas de sexe et procurant toutes les voluptés" (62).

Raoule encourages and develops Jacques's femininity with a blend of coercive and reward power that would make B.F. Skinner proud. The turning point in their relationship begins when Raoule takes de Raittolbe to visit Jacques. The experience humiliates Jacques as he is put on display for Raoule's friend, whose masculinity and aristocratic status put Jacques's deficits in these areas in relief. As de Raittolbe leaves, he reminds Raoule of their plans for the evening, emphasizing the life the two of them have outside the apartment, a life in which Jacques does not participate. But the humiliation does not end when de Raittolbe leaves. Raoule turns on him, first criticizing his paintings as reminiscent of his former job, and then screaming at him for smoking and talking to

men without her permission. Jacques is speechless as she forces him to the floor and roars, "Je suis *jaloux*!" (84). This is the first time she reveals explicitly the masculine nature of her feelings for him and his expected feminine response. She says, as she senses she is hurting him, "Tu dois t'apercevoir.... que je n'ai pas, comme toi, des mains de fleuriste et que, de nous deux, le plus homme c'est toujours moi?" (85).

But her jealousy overcomes her and she breaks down sobbing, giving Jacques an opportunity to reply. He comforts her, extracts a profession of love from her, expresses his own jealousy at seeing her with another man, and complains at her treatment of him. In short, he reasserts his own masculinity. Raoule responds with an assertion of her powers of seduction, powers that do not shift her back to her masculine role. She kisses his head to bow it, then bites the nape of his neck, bringing Jacques enormous pleasure. She goes on to replace her coercive and reward powers with flattery, emphasizing the absolute power of beauty. Emboldened by his resulting arousal, Jacques expresses his desire: "...tu m'as prouvé, en effet, que je n'avais pas à rougir devant toi. Raoule, le lit bleu nous attend, viens!" (88).

Until this moment, power has shifted back and forth between them without resistance on the part of the one relinquishing it, but now the real struggle begins. Jacques is behaving like every other man she has been with in this situation. When Raoule tells him he will not be her lover, but her slave, he responds playfully, trying to pull her with him into the bedroom, but her insistence that he acknowledge her power evaporates his confidence. He threatens to leave; she tells him he cannot because they love each other. The gender roles they have been playing, those assigned them by biology, are turned back on their heads for a moment as Jacques turns to pout and Raoule,

apologetic, murmurs, "Pardon!.. moi, j'oubliais que tu es une petite femme capricieuse qui a le droit, chez elle, de me torturer" (89). She agrees to do as he wishes, apparently returning to her female role. But she is not the same woman. She undresses herself, pulling the curtain to prevent Jacques from seeing her, and slips into bed, cold as a marble statue. Jacques tries to retain his masculinity, asking, "Raoule, ne m'appelle plus *femme* cela m'humilie..." (90). But she is unresponsive, just as she is to the pleading for a response that follows, pleading she is all too familiar with. "Elle connaissait ce jeu-là, elle savait, mot à mot, ce que la nature dirait par la voix de Jacques..."(91). In desperation, he begs, "Fais de moi ce que tu voudras à présent..." (91). By exacting these words, Raoule has won the decisive battle. Stillman notes that although their roles are reversed, the dynamic of domination and negation permeates them yet (209). Raoule's wealth and social position grant her superiority over Jacques in many ways, but in order to create the lover she wants, she needs him to give up the power granted him by his gender. His acquiescence invests Raoule with this power and transforms her from marble statue to a living, desiring woman, a reward for his submission. In this momentary echo of the original Pygmalion myth, Raoule plays both Galatea and Venus, but in his cry of desperation, Pygmalion hands the goddess his tools. "Jacques Silvert, lui cédant sa puissance d'homme amoureux, devint sa chose, une sorte d'être inerte qui se laissait aimer parce qu'il aimait lui-même d'une façon impuissante" (94).

Once Raoule has appropriated Jacques's power, she has only to fine-tune him to her liking, a shaping she accomplishes gradually. She keeps Jacques enclosed in the apartment, pushing him into "l'existence oisive des orientales murées dans leur sérail", keeping him in a passive happiness "comme une perle dans sa nacre" (95). She sends

him flowers accompanied by a note emphasizing the playfulness of their role reversal "pour ne pas trop effrayer le mâle qu'elle désirait étouffer en lui" (96). She takes him out to the Bois de Boulogne, where he plays his feminine role to perfection, leaning his head on her shoulder, making silly statements that heighten his appeal, as do his fears that she will marry and leave him. The thought they share, "la destruction de leur sexe" demonstrates the growing success of her project (98).

She reinforces Jacques's femininity by beginning to visit cross-dressed, a move that emphasizes the performance value of gender roles (Holmes 164). Although startled by her first appearance in man's clothing, Jacques quickly accepts the intensified role-play, greeting Raoule like a worried wife when she appears at his door after a noisy confrontation in the street with Marie. When Raoule tells him Marie propositioned her, Jacques reacts in a manner that demonstrates his development: "Pareille idée eût amusé le fleuriste, trois mois plutôt, ce soir-là elle l'indigna..."(104). This version of events is not quite true. Marie actually propositioned de Raittolbe, but Raoule spins the story to emphasize her masculinity, thus encouraging Jacques's complementary reaction. In response to Raoule's observation that she passes for a man, Jacques says, "Pourtant ... il te manquera toujours quelque chose!" That this statement is accompanied by a sigh rather than laughter demonstrates the extent to which he has been feminized. The game of trading genders is becoming a real desire for a man, the first warning sign that Raoule has pushed Jacques too far. He confesses in response to Raoule's observation that she has never seen him so pretty, "j'ai résolu de te paraître agaçante!", using the feminine adjective to refer to himself for the first time (105).

Raoule's delight evaporates quickly when Marie appears, ranting about the disgusting nature of Raoule and Jacques's "sales amours". Each of their responses to her underlines the gender reversal that is now complete. Raoule prepares to fight, searching for the dagger in her pocket, while Jacques pales and retreats to his bedroom. De Raittolbe's intervention prevents physical violence, but the confrontation forces Raoule to view her relationship with Jacques from another perspective, one in which she sees some truth. As she reflects on Marie's outburst, she recognizes another form of female solidarity, one she would rather deny. "Il y a une chaîne rivée entre toutes les femmes qui aiment... L'honnête épouse, au moment où elle se livre à son honnête époux, est dans la même position que la prostituée au moment où elle se livre à son amant...." (108). She considers leaving the entire situation behind her, but practical considerations raised by her aunt prevent her from doing so, and the hope she still holds for Jacques and the new kind of love they will share prevails.

Raoule tells Jacques his sister was right about him and that he needs to reclaim his dignity as a man by returning to his garret and earning an honest living, an effort that will be rewarded by marriage. She explains, "... je t'ai perdu, je te réhabilite. Quoi de plus simple! Notre amour n'est qu'une dégradante torture que tu subis parce que je te paye. Eh bien, je te rends ta liberté" (112). Jennifer Waelti-Walters proposes three levels to the story of Jacques and Raoule. The first is the story of a masculine woman who uses her wealth and power to feminize a weak man. The second level criticizes the abuse of women that takes place in the name of love as a result of male passion for beauty and voluptuousness. The third is an attempt to understand the other by becoming that other in the love relationship. Waelti-Walters argues that once the roles have been explored,

Raoule steps back, beginning Jacques's education as a gentleman after their engagement (160-162). Raoule's offer of rehabilitation can be seen as a first instance of this third level of the story. But Jacques's response demonstrates Raoule's success at feminizing him. He explains his refusal: "Parce que je vous aime, comme vous m'avez appris à vous aimer...Je retournerai dans une mansarde, si vous l'exigez, je redeviendrai pauvre, je travaillerai, mais quand vous voudrez de moi, je serai encore votre esclave, celui que vous appelez ma femme!" (112,3). Her response echoes Madamedes Belles Cousines's, "Vous êtes tel que je veuil" with her "tu es meilleur que je ne pouvais le supposer" (113). Raoule de Vénérande has reached her goal of a lover who submits completely to her, allowing her not only to maintain control of her own actions and decisions, but to define her partner's very identity. Her earlier reflection has been realized. "Raoule le contempla pendant une minute se demandant avec une sorte de terreur superstitieuse si elle n'avait pas créé, après Dieu, un être à son image" (99).

The masculine role of lover and the godlike role of creator are both functions Raoule has usurped, placing her in a position of great power, but leaving her extremely sensitive to any vulnerability. Raoule has maintained her dominance through a series of moves designed to crush the claims to power of those around her. Her assumption of a man's role and her refusal to play the woman's place her at odds with society in general, but de Raittolbe, Marie, and Jacques personify the threats to her independence. Each time she senses the possibility of any of these people building a basis of power from which they might be able to exert influence over her, she reacts, modifying her own actions in order to remove the potential of falling under another's sway.

De Raittolbe, in his desire to be either her husband or her lover, has the potential to build bases of referent and legitimate position power. As her friend, de Raittolbe exercises a degree of referent power, but the referent power she exercises over him is greater, as evidenced by the number of times she successfully influences his behavior. She gets him to play the role of her confidante when he wants to be her lover, she convinces him to come to Jacques's apartment to see him, and to introduce Jacques to his architect friend in order to validate Jacques's invitation to a ball at her home, all against his directly expressed will. He involves himself with Marie, remaining in a situation he would rather avoid in order to protect Raoule's reputation. Ultimately, she uses de Raittolbe to kill Jacques, an act he would never commit on his own. However, if she were to take him as her husband or even as her lover, the balance of power, now tipped in her favor, would be upset.

Raoule's view of what is at stake in a traditional sexual relationship between a man and a woman is illustrated early in the novel. When Jacques's supernatural beauty and tearful innocence threaten her resolve to mold him into her ideal lover, she reacts by accepting de Raittolbe. She arranges to meet him the next day at a hotel, and in the carriage on her way to meet him, she reflects on her decision. "Certes, il en serait ainsi, elle se l'était juré et puisqu'*il* se trouvait, au demeurant, mieux que les autres, il l'amuserait peut-être davantage. Une erreur des sens n'est pas l'épanouissement d'une âme, et la beauté d'une forme humaine n'est pas capable d'inspirer le désir de s'attacher à elle par une éternité de folie" (55, 56). The use of feminine nouns (beauté, forme) to refer to the object of desire she is rejecting recalls the masculine role she played with him, a role that contrasts sharply with the one she is playing now. She has traded her

black sheath for buttoned gloves and lacy frills, taking pleasure in playing a woman. Rachilde ensures that we recognize this incarnation of her protagonist as a part to be acted by italicizing its title: "... elle se sentait *femme* jusqu'au plaisir" (56)[2]. Her pleasure is short-lived, however. When she arrives at the hotel, she cannot follow through with either her decision to accept de Raittolbe or to give up Jacques. "Durant tout le chemin, elle n'y avait pas songé et une fois en présence du sacrifice, le corps, qui ne s'appartenait plus, venait de se révolter. Raoule avait cédé sans aucune contestation" (56). Playing the woman, especially in a sexual relationship, constitutes surrender. This refusal aligns Raoule with Rachilde's other heroines. "Dans les romans de Rachilde, la femme libre refuse à l'homme ce à quoi il s'attend et lui montre qu'elle n'a pas toujours la volonté d'accepter son don" (Stillman 216). To grant de Raittolbe the title of her lover would be to acknowledge a greater degree of his referent power and to endow him with legitimate position power as well, that of any man over a woman in a gender-based relationship.

The sacrifices de Raittolbe makes to protect Raoule should grant him powers of both legitimate equity and legitimate reciprocity, the former due to his involvement in a situation he finds distasteful, particularly in his dealings with Marie, and the latter for his faithful friendship in a wide variety of situations. His reasons for choosing not to exercise them are not entirely clear, but the outcome of any such attempt may be predicted by the results of Raoule's interactions with Marie when Jacques's sister attempts to exercise power.

Marie Silvert threatens Raoule's autonomy as well, primarily through the attempted proxy exercise of Jacques's power and the threat of coercive power. Frustrated with Jacques's passivity and lack of manipulative skill, Marie appears at the hôtel de

Vénérande with a sad story about Jacques's despair at Raoule's departure, expecting Raoule to come running back to Jacques, bringing her wealth with her. Marie's use of guilt as she describes Jacques's suicidal depression amounts to an attempt to use the bases of power she supposes Jacques should be able to exert: referent and legitimate dependence. However, Marie quickly discovers that an agent cannot exercise power if the target will not recognize its basis. Raoule throws money at Marie, and, with the promise of a little more, has her thrown out, effectively ending her obligation to her and her brother. Marie's attempt at influence provokes a reaction, however, a link made clear by the temporal proximity of the events that follow. Raoule realizes how close she has come to entangling herself in a potentially embarrassing, distasteful situation and responds decisively. The baron de Raittolbe, who has been stymied "pour la millième fois", suddenly finds his offer to be either Raoule's husband or her lover accepted. Of course, she never follows through on her consent, returning to Jacques and entangling herself deeply in the emotional morass she had temporarily thought to avoid.

Raoule's return to her wildly unconventional relationship with Jacques provides Marie a basis of coercive power. Marie's disgust at their relationship carries with it the thinly veiled threat of public disclosure. De Raittolbe advises Raoule not to throw Marie out for fear that she will give details to all of Parisian society about Raoule's relationship with Jacques. Rather than allowing Marie to hold long-term influence over her behavior, Raoule moves to destroy her basis of power. She does not want to end her relationship with Jacques, so she legitimizes it. She first brings Jacques into her world by having him to her aunt's ball as one of the young artists the de Vénérandes traditionally invite, then quickly follows this introduction to her society with an engagement announcement.

Raoule no longer has so many secrets to keep, so the threat of revealing them loses much of its coercive power. Marie is paid off, whether by Raoule or de Raittolbe, and not heard from again until she sends a note alerting Raoule to her husband's intentions of infidelity.

Marie's and de Raittolbe's bases of power are fairly easily ignored or eroded. But the figure that poses the most serious threat to its creator is the creation itself. Raoule adopts Jacques as her partner in the new kind of love she is pioneering for two principal reasons. First, his beauty is nearly irresistible. Raoule first falls under its spell during her visit to the florist, overcoming it only by leaving the garret and getting fresh air. When she plays the role of voyeur as Jacques bathes, his perfection once again draws her under its power, which she examines in a series of contrasts. "Il est beau, j'ai peur. Il est indifférent, je frissonne. Il est méprisable, je l'admire!...Je l'ai acheté, je lui appartiens. C'est moi qui suis vendue... J'ai ri du coup de foudre et je suis foudroyée... Et depuis quand Raoule de Vénérande, qu'une orgie laisse froide, se sent-elle bouillir le crâne devant un homme faible comme une jeune fille?" (41). His power acknowledged, she quickly rejects it. "Qu'il m'ait dégoûtée, avant de m'avoir plu! Qu'il le soit ce qu'ont été les autres, un instrument que je puisse briser avant de devenir l'écho de ses vibrations!" (42). We see again the pattern of sensing the potential power of another followed by dramatic measures to destroy it. This resolution reveals not only her intentions with Jacques, but also her perception of the danger of becoming involved with a man. Her fear of losing her individuality and becoming merely a reflection of the other keep her resolutely independent. Her first impulse is to control and then crush him, but when his tears force her to question her ability to do so, she runs.

When she returns, she thinks to ensure her safety in the relationship by working to remove the element of gender. By stripping Jacques of his masculinity, she checks the legitimate position power it grants him. But Raoule is careful to cap Jacques's referent power as well, especially in the early stages of their relationship where his gender remains a threat. After their first sexual encounter, Jacques makes the mistake of expecting greater familiarity, using "tu" to address Raoule, familiarity she has permitted herself from the moment she refused his seductive power as she gazed at him in the bathtub, changing instantly from bewitched victim to dominatrix with her confrontational, "Enfant, sais-tu que tu es merveilleux?" (42). To maintain this control, however, she has to keep her distance. Thus, she forbids Jacques the use of "tu", reinforcing her denial that their sexual encounter was anything more than a drug-induced dream. When Jacques throws himself into her arms, she pushes him away, leaves the bedroom, and deposits a pile of gold coins at his place setting on her way out of the apartment. This rejection of intimacy thwarts Jacques's acquisition of any referent power. Her vision for an ungendered relationship does not include equality, but an exaggerated reversal of roles in which the physiological man cedes power to the psychologically masculine woman.

Their next meeting is the climactic one in which Jacques ultimately cedes his power as a man to Raoule. But earlier in the encounter, Jacques seems to gain a foothold in the relationship as he exacts promises of love from Raoule, gaining enough confidence to initiate their lovemaking. At the last minute, however, Raoule rips it away. She senses Jacques's developing referent power and his return to the legitimate power with which his gender invests him, and in response, just as she did when watching him bathe,

transforms herself from distraught and jealous lover to absolute master. As we have seen, the outcome of this incident is Jacques's total relinquishing of any masculine bases of power.

As Jacques's feminization progresses, however, he begins to develop new bases of power. Raoule was right to think that she had overcorrected, an intuition that leads to her offer to rehabilitate Jacques and then marry him. Her delight at his complete submission distracted her temporarily, but his developing feminine desires coupled with his androgynous seductive appeal combine to create a new threat to Raoule's control. Her fears of losing her absolute power over Jacques are the real motivation behind Raoule's attempts to re-masculinize Jacques. Waelti-Walters's suggestion that Raoule engineers their role reversal to promote greater understanding of the other is not in keeping with Raoule's desire for power, inclination to violence, and sense of superiority. She first acts on her suspicions of Jacques's over-feminization when she beats him herself in the aftermath of de Raittolbe's attack. She perceives Jacques's beauty as a source of irresistible referent power over her and anyone who approaches him. She surmises that de Raittolbe beat Jacques to fight off his attraction and holds Jacques responsible for his seductiveness. By destroying his beauty, she thinks to undermine his referent power and keep him under her control.

Raoule's wedding plans follow soon after her violent attack. Marriage to Jacques offers a solution to many threats Raoule is facing. First, he frees her from the obligation to marry someone else whose idea of a wife's role would be much more traditional. Second, the legitimization of their relationship erodes Marie's basis of coercive power. Finally, by taking Jacques as her "wife", she legalizes Jacques's commitment to her and

grants herself the legitimate position power to forbid his infidelity and to defend his honor against would-be lovers.

Their wedding night reveals more fully the threat Jacques now poses in his overly feminized state. His absence from the banquet forces Raoule to play the role of the groom, drawing the attention of their guests, who have already commented on Raoule's excessive masculinity both in her behavior and in her appearance due to her short hair. But the delicate balance of gender ambiguity is irrevocably upset in their wedding chamber. Raoule appears in cross-dress, which is nothing new, and Jacques asks her to seduce him as a nobleman would his bride. But when, after an hour of lovemaking, she opens her shirt, Jacques cries out, "Non! non! n'ôte pas cet habit", clear evidence that they have gone too far. "Une seule fois ils avaient joué sincèrement la comédie tous les deux, ils avaient péché contre leur amour, qui pour vivre avait besoin de regarder la vérité en face, tout en la combattant par sa propre force" (185). Dorothy Kelly clarifies the nature of the sin in her explanation of the function of their relationship. "The two members of the couple ... reflect each other in a reversed mirror image and permit a paradoxical narcissistic object love" (147). With Jacques's total loss of masculinity, he loses the ability to reflect Raoule completely because he can no longer provide the complement to the feminine traits she retains.

This overcorrection may be part of the reason Raoule restores her relationship with de Raittolbe. While their marriage offers her a new level of security—she tells Jacques, "Tu sais que je n'en ai plus peur" (187)—she also sees the need to push Jacques back a bit from the extremely feminine role he has adopted. Renewing their relationship with de Raittolbe provides Jacques with a role model. Raoule, secure in their legalized

relationship and aware of Jacques's need to reclaim some of his masculinity, allows Jacques to spend time alone with de Raittolbe, who teaches him to ride, resumes his fencing lessons, and goes out with him. This freedom is a major departure from the insulated, stationary existence Jacques led as Raoule's mistress and inspires de Raittolbe to plan some reforms of his own, not just for Jacques, but for Raoule as well. Looking at Jacques as an equal, seated on a horse with a cigar in the corner of his mouth, de Raittolbe thinks, "-- Peut-être tirerait-on un homme de cet argile... si Raoule voulait. Et il songeait à une réhabilitation possible, provoquée, en une minute d'oubli, par une vraie maîtresse que Raoule serait forcée de combattre avec la tactique féminine habituelle" (189). On the way back home, Jacques wants to stop at de Raittolbe's apartment, where he discloses that his and Raoule's gender reversals persist despite appearances. As a remedy, de Raittolbe suggests a visit to Marie's, which Jacques initially refuses, attempting instead a seduction of de Raittolbe, whom, the narrator explains, he has confused with Raoule. In the face of de Raittolbe's angry response, Jacques first laughs, then takes his arm and leads them to their horses and back to the hôtel de Vénérande for dinner, where Raoule never suspects what has passed between them, adding dissimulation to the list of female attributes Jacques has acquired.

A few nights later, it appears that de Raittolbe has succeeded in Jacques's reformation. Raoule, referred to as Mme Silvert, a marked choice of title that emphasizes the temporary reorientation to traditional gender roles, sits alone in their "temple azuré" waiting for Jacques, first doubting that he has betrayed her, but then putting a dagger to her heart. But Jacques returns, revealing that Raittolbe has not succeeded, but that Raoule has permanently transformed him. None of the prostitutes at his sister's

whorehouse has been able to arouse him. This demonstration of his definitive feminization results in his voluntary return to confinement in their bedroom, and grants Raoule the additional power of legitimate equity. He pays for his infidelity with renewed devotion that lasts a month. But Jacques's return to complete femininity brings with it a renewal of his feminine desire, which Raoule cannot satisfy. He visits de Raittolbe in cross-dress and attempts to seduce him. When Raoule arrives, she sees that Jacques has slipped entirely from her control, his coercive power of infidelity nearly made good, if not for de Raittolbe's resistance. Her only option is the one she told de Raittolbe she would adopt when he raised the possibility of infidelity at the outset of her project: she will destroy him. And she will do so by using his failed masculinity against him, pushing him into a man's role she knows he cannot play. He is forced into a duel to defend her honor, a duel she tells him is just to first blood, but which she has told de Raittolbe is to the death. Lukacher points out that Jacques's likelihood of success in fencing is as likely as his success in bearing a child. While the latter requires him to cross impossible gender barriers, the former requires a nearly equally impossible crossing of class boundaries (122).

As Jacques waits for the duel to begin, he reflects on his behavior. "Oui, certes, il l'avait offensée, cette femme; mais cet homme, pourquoi lui avait-il fait si mal au cou?... Ensuite, rien n'était de sa faute!... La prostitution, c'est une maladie! Tous l'avaient eue dans sa famille: sa mère, sa sœur; est-ce qu'il pouvait lutter contre son propre sang?... On l'avait fait si *fille* dans les endroits les plus secrets de son être, que la folie du vice prenait les proportions du tétanos! D'ailleurs ce qu'il avait osé vouloir, c'était plus naturel que ce qu'elle lui avait appris!" (204). In one last stereotype, Jacques's femininity appears as

an excuse for his behavior. Making him a girl taps into his maternal heritage of prostitution, the sinful side of the angel-whore dichotomy.[3] Because Raoule cannot control her fallen woman, she resorts to the other male fantasy described by Ross Chambers, the automaton. Jacques's story has come full circle, from a living man surrounded by lifeless flowers to a corpse fallen among the real violets growing in the grass around him. Holmes observes that Jacques's death serves the interests of the male ruling class by removing a subversive impetus to homoeroticism (120). This alignment of patriarchal wishes with that of such a transgressive daughter further emphasizes the degree to which Raoule has stepped beyond the bonds of femininity.

Jacques's death destroys de Raittolbe as well; he rejoins the military and volunteers for the most dangerous assignments. But Raoule emerges victorious, inverting the plot resolution that normally awaits female Pygmalion figures. By reversing the direction of Galatea's transformation, Raoule has created a lover fully under her control. Lukacher sees her collaboration with the German craftsman as a Decadent attack on maternity amounting to a rejection not only of this role, but also of all the sexual and social determinants that accompany it (*Maternal Fictions* 124, "Mlle Baudelaire" 463). Her wax mannequin retains all Jacques's beauty, partially derived from the hair, teeth, and nails she has extracted from his body, yet poses none of the threats. He cannot be unfaithful, nor can he confine her to one gender. Raoule's enjoyment of this flexibility is described in the final lines of the novel. "La nuit, une femme vêtue de deuil, quelquefois un jeune homme en habit noir, ouvrent cette porte. Ils viennent s'agenouiller près du lit, et, lorsqu'ils ont longtemps contemplé les formes merveilleuses de la statue de cire, ils l'enlacente, la baisent aux lèvres. Un ressort disposé à l'intérieur des flancs correspond à

la bouche et l'anime en même temps qu'il fait s'écarter les cuisses" (210, 211)[4]. Lukacher interprets her gender duality as undecidability, but this plasticity of roles is arguably Raoule's goal from the beginning of her project (121). She is not unable to choose, but rather unwilling to be constrained to do so. Her freedom is so great that she can fully inhabit both of her incarnations, so completely independent of one another that she becomes plural and embodies by herself the reunited halves of Plato's hermaphrodite.

In this Pygmalion story, the female characters emerge much better off than the males. Raoule has found a solution to her dilemma, and Marie, as proprietor of her own *maison close*, has taken a step up from her former profession. Yet neither of these women proposes an example for other women to follow, just as Rachilde insisted that her own life was not one to be taken as a model. In the world of *Monsieur Vénus*, there is no escape from restrictive definitions of gender roles. The more complete their reversal becomes, the more Jacques and Raoule fall into stereotypical patterns of the worst gender behavior. Their exchange, rather than offering another option, only emphasizes the rigid nature of these roles. Jacques embodies the most negative, limiting aspects of femininity. His value lies entirely in his appearance, which he learns to use to manipulate those around him. He is flirtatious and frivolous, devoid of intelligence, integrity, or character. He is controlled by his sensuality, unable to resist the pull of desire. Although she is a more fully developed character, Raoule displays the worst of masculinity in much of her behavior. Her need to control every aspect of her relationship, her ability to emotionally detach from the situation, and especially her ever-escalating use of violence in the face of difficulty paint an equally negative picture of male gender roles in patriarchal society. Marie Silvert and the baron de Raittolbe, while remaining in their biologically assigned

roles, offer little to counter these grim portraits. Raoule's goal for her relationship with Jacques is androgyny, "la destruction de leur sexe", but it proves unattainable with a living partner. True to the Decadent aesthetic, the artificial surpasses the real, offering Raoule the only viable solution to the problem of a woman's autonomy within a relationship. Unlike George Sand, Rachilde does not intend to transform society. *Monsieur Vénus* diagnoses a problem, but offers no solutions to the dichotomization of gender roles. Nonetheless, Raoule de Vénérande's emergence from the relationship as its victor is a refusal to relegate the female creator to the status of victim, a role played by MadameDes Belles Cousines, the lady of Pamplona, and Henriette de Mortsauf. What is missing is a third path, an option for women that neither forces them into one or the other role of the angel/whore dichotomy, nor insists that they assume the worst characteristics of men to maintain their independence. In *Chéri*, Colette's Léa explores alternate solutions.

Colette sets her Pygmalion story, *Chéri*, in a society largely unburdened by patriarchal governance. As a member of the demimonde, Léa de Lonval lives in a milieu dominated by women, primarily mature women either approaching or beyond middle age. The only male figures in Léa's life that get more than a passing mention are Patron and Chéri himself. In this setting, a relationship with a man does not threaten Léa's independence. There is no threat of censure for illicit sexual activity, no personal scruples to overcome, no need even for discretion as she engages in her relationship with Chéri. In fact, there is no one who holds any sway, whether moral, financial, or personal, over her decisions. She has no husband to whom she must remain faithful, no archbishop

to please, no commitment to patriarchal virtues to overcome. She is freer than even Balzac's Lady Dudley.[5]

The threat she faces is age and its effect on her identity. There is a potential price to be paid for the freedom Léa has enjoyed. The patriarchal system, in exchange for the limits, demands, and expectations it places on a woman, promises financial security and companionship intended to outlast her beauty and desirability via the institution of marriage. Bearing children multiplies the number of potential caretakers in her old age. Of course, potentially unfaithful husbands and ungrateful children prevent any ironclad guarantees, but a married woman is probably less likely to end her days alone than a woman in Léa's position. In her world, there are no long-term commitments. When one relationship ends, a woman must have the ability to attract a new man to begin another. As Léa nears the end of her career, she finds she has been successful enough to have no financial concerns, but her sense of self is in flux. She sees clearly what lies ahead in the faces and bodies of her associates, who are older, but not that much older, than she. Yet she is also aware that despite the inevitability of her aging, she has time left.

At forty-two, she has recently ended her latest relationship and finds herself at Charlotte Peloux's house on the same evening that Chéri finds himself with nothing to do. He is nineteen, impossibly beautiful, and interested. Léa takes him as her next, and last, lover, but he is different from those who preceded him. Spéleïeff and his fellows provided income, lavish gifts, and a life of luxury that has outlasted them. With Chéri, the roles are reversed: the older woman attracted to a beautiful young man takes him on as her lover and "keeps" him. Chéri is now the courtesan who, as Kloepfer, Borso-Borgarello, Mecke, Kleinert, and Stern note, is not only young and beautiful, but loves

jewelry, lacks intelligence, and remains dependent (127). He is therefore a more stereotypical courtesan than Léa was.[6] Michèle Sarde identifies this relationship of economic domination as the heart of male-female relationships in Colette's work (19). Her observation reveals a critical dynamic in the power relations between Léa and Chéri. As the reader discovers, Chéri has no need of Léa's financial support. His birth made his mother, and by extension, him as well, very wealthy. Combined with the generosity of his unidentified father is Chéri's own ability to invest wisely to maintain and increase his holdings. As Léa points out, he has no need to marry Edmée to ensure his financial security, because he is worth more than she is. Thus, Chéri's acceptance of Léa's financial support is entirely voluntary and amounts to his consent to be governed, unlike Jacques Silvert, whose vastly inferior resources and social standing leave him no choice but to submit to Raoule and the role she imposes on him.

Despite her adoption of a traditionally masculine role, Léa is not anxious to relinquish her femininity, as is Raoule de Vénérande. It is precisely her femininity that she is trying to preserve and enjoy until it runs out. The end result will not be masculinity, she hopes, like that of Mme Aldonza or the baronne de la Berche, but a comfortable asexuality. Thus Léa's interpretation of the role of "sugar daddy" converts her authority from the masculine exercise of power to maternal nurturing, a natural division of roles, according to Mari McCarty, given the age difference between Léa and Chéri(128). Mieke Bal identifies Léa's approach to her sexual relationship with Chéri from a strong maternal position as a mark of the feminism of Colette's text. She explains that Léa is torn between the myth of Marie, the Virgin Mother who functions in a world without male figures, and the myth of Eve, the fallen woman, but she refuses to choose

between the two, transcending destructive sexual ideology (22). To return to French and Raven's terminology, the maternal role Léa adopts emphasizes her referent power and downplays the harder bases of power such as reward or coercive, bases of power Raoule de Vénérande uses freely. Léa's choice of bases of power emphasizes the nature of the relationship she is cultivating.

Although Léa remains very much within the sphere of femininity even as she plays a traditionally masculine role, Chéri demonstrates a degree of gender flexibility that is hardly surprising given the dearth of male role models in Chéri's upbringing. The only men in his life have been servants and a tutor who stayed on less than a year. Thus it is left to Léa to teach him as much about masculinity as she sees fit. And his masculinity is an important facet of the mirror she is polishing. The jealousy of her friends over her continued beauty and strong health is not enough. She needs to be desired. Rather than encouraging his feminine attributes as Raoule did with Jacques, she tempers and redirects them to more suitable, masculine choices. This tendency is clearly visible in the opening scene of the novel, which begins with Chéri demanding Léa's pearls, which she makes him take off, telling him she is afraid he would accept them if she offered. She reminds him of what is appropriate for a man again when she tells him she is taking him to buy a wedding gift – a single pearl. This is an appropriate substitute for her necklace, but needs to be corrected again when Chéri, excited, wants a pink one. Léa insists on white, something masculine. This refusal of pink, a color very much associated with Léa and especially the enclave of her bedroom, underlines as well the necessary separation that Chéri's wedding will bring. Becoming a man will require that he give her up.

But in this first scene, he is very much attached. In fact, the opening pages contain Léa's version of Madamedes Belles Cousines's "vous êtes tel que je veuil": "Léa sourit de le voir tel qu'elle l'aimait, révolté puis soumis, mal enchaîné, incapable d'être libre" (720). Suzanne Relyea analyzes the initial description of Chéri as objectifying and therefore, according to traditional definitions of gender roles, feminized. She notes that the portrait is "all the more striking in that one does not frequently encounter perceptions mediated by unabashed female desire in literature, even in works written by women" (152).[7] This Chéri reflects to Léa the vision of herself she wants to see, a woman whose power is granted her voluntarily, a powerful attachment that is chosen out of desire, respect, and affection, not need, fear, or weakness. The real bond between them is love, but neither has recognized it as such. That Léa holds the power in the relationship is without doubt.

This scene, though it begins the novel, comes near the end of their 6-year relationship. To see how Léa initiated and nurtured this bond while shaping her partner, we need to travel back with Léa in memory to the beginning. Léa has known Chéri his entire life. The story of his childhood is recounted through her eyes, a childhood in which she was often present, "amie trop familière, sorte de marraine-gâteau qu'il tutoyait" (734). As he reaches adolescence, Léa is the one who holds him responsible for his behavior, pointing out that his lifestyle is ruining his health. Her observations of his pallor and weakness and her offer of a remedy set in motion the events that initiate an intimate and exclusive relationship between them. She extends her invitation to Normandy out of the maternal, nurturing side of her character that has always played a role in her relationships with her lovers, who are always younger. When she later

contemplates her next move after breaking off with Chéri, she tells herself, "Et c'est à moi qu'elle doit beaucoup, cette chair fraîche! Combien sont-ils à me devoir leur santé, leur beauté, des chagrins bien sains et des laits de poule pour leurs rhumes, et l'habitude de faire l'amour sans négligence et sans monotonie?" (796).

This second aspect of her self-image, her skill in love, resonates unexpectedly when Chéri, cradled comfortably in her arms and playing with her strand of pearls, demands a kiss. The scene recalls *Heptaméron* 26 in many ways. The young man, in love with an older and wiser woman but perceiving her as out of reach, sows his wild oats elsewhere, indulging to the point of making himself sick. He comes back to his faithful friend who nurtures him back to health and thus demonstrates her superiority over her counterparts. Emboldened by the evidence of her affection for him, the young man makes his move, asking his friend to protect him from the influence of other women by replacing them. Of course, Marguerite de Navarre's heroine has long desired the seigneur d'Avannes, but her commitment to patriarchal standards of virtue blocks her from acting on it. Léa, on the other hand, is caught off guard, both by Chéri's demand and by her own reaction to it. Her moral standards do not prevent her from acting on her desire, but she is cautious about on whose terms this relationship will proceed. The power struggle that follows determines not whether there will be intimacy between them, but who will have the upper hand. Chéri wins the first points by his quick recovery and his observation that Léa's mind is going places he had not suggested. Léa retreats to the banality of trip planning, in which Chéri seems to propose a compromise: an equal division of expenses, an equal division of power. Léa laughs, but when he calls her back to him, she demonstrates her own strength, based not on the element of surprise but on

real seductive power. "Elle l'embrassa si bien qu'ils se délièrent ivres, assourdis, essoufflés, tremblants comme s'ils venaient de se battre... Elle se remit debout devant lui qui n'avait pas bougé, qui gisait toujours au fond du fauteuil et elle le défiait tout bas: « Hein?.. Hein?... » et elle s'attendait à être insultée. Mais il lui tendit les bras, ouvrit ses belles mains incertaines, renversa une tête blessée et montra entre ses cils l'étincelle double de deux larmes, tandis qu'il murmurait des paroles, des plaintes, tout un chant animal et amoureux où elle distinguait son nom, des « chérie... » des « viens... » des « plus te quitter... » un chant qu'elle écoutait penchée et pleine d'anxiété, comme si elle lui eût, par mégarde, fait très mal" (738,9).

By initiating an erotic element to their relationship, Chéri shows Léa that he can be the mirror she needs, reflecting not only her skill at caring for and developing young men, but also her desirability. Chéri's effect on other women and his potential to seduce any number of them at will heightens his value and adds an element of pride at being his choice. But Léa's response makes it clear that while she is not immune to Chéri's attractions, she is the one who will control the relationship. Thus, the trip to Normandy that Léa initially offers as a friend concerned about his health becomes the beginning of an intimate relationship that will have lasting significance for them both. Yannick Resch notes that in Colette's work, "Men are the object of admiration and desire... They need take no greater initiative than to let themselves go, to let themselves be loved, thereby rapidly becoming objects of consumption" (142).

Léa's first intention is to save Chéri from himself. On the night their relationship begins, she tells him, "Tu t'abîmes" (736). She spends the first month in Normandy feeding him and letting him rest, disappointed but patient with his general lack of desire.

Then she brings Patron to train him in boxing, building his strength and stamina. Her efforts pay off. When Chéri arrived, he was exhausted, spending his days sleeping and waiting to go to bed. "Robuste à présent, fier de ses dix-neuf ans, gai à table, impatient au lit", Léa has restored his health and kindled his desire.[8] Having accomplished this goal, she means to take him back to Paris and to his "chères études", but instead she repeatedly delays their return, waiting for what has always followed with all her previous lovers: "la confiance, la détente, les aveux, la sincérité, l'indiscrète expansion d'un jeune amant" that mark for Léa the real surrender of oneself. Chéri's withholding of self-revelation is more than she can stand. For Léa, the expression of gratitude from her lover is less a basis of legitimate reciprocity to be exercised in order to wield further influence than a recompense for the energy she invests in them. When Chéri appears at her house a day after their return to Paris, still unwilling to verbalize his feelings but communicating them nonetheless, Léa's reaction demonstrates the pleasure she takes in the reward. "Chéri feignait le sommeil, la langueur, pour pouvoir mieux serrer les dents et fermer les yeux, en proie à une fureur de mutisme. Mais elle l'écoutait quand même, couchée contre lui, elle écoutait avec délices la vibration légère, le tumulte lointain et comme captif dont résonne un corps qui nie son angoisse, sa gratitude et son amour" (741). Thus, Léa has completed Chéri's transformation into a strong, healthy, and emotionally attached lover who will not return to his self-destructive lifestyle along with his return to Paris, but will remain bound to his benefactress.

The nature of the bonds between them is critical to the continued success of the relationship and dictates Léa's choice of the bases of power she is willing to exercise. Referent power has to be the key to her influence over Chéri and his principal reason for

staying with her because his real value to her lies in his free choice of her as his lover, a value that would be diminished if she had to exercise coercive power to keep him, or if he stayed with her because of her reward power. Any modifications of his behavior have to result from his desire to maintain and strengthen their relationship, for it is this desire that reflects back to Léa the image of herself that she seeks: a beautiful, nurturing, and desirable woman.

The preservation of this image rules out not only coercive and reward power, but informational and legitimate dependence powers as well. Léa exercises legitimate position power in small ways as she mothers Chéri, trying to correct his bad habits. Her admonitions to not smoke before noon, to stop crinkling his nose when he laughs, to not throw his clothes all over her bedroom, and to not choose a pink pearl as his wedding gift all carry a distinctly maternal tone that relies on her filling this role for him in response to his own mother's failure to do so effectively. Léa could exercise powers of legitimate reciprocity, but as discussed earlier, the gratitude of her young lovers serves more as a reward for her efforts than as a basis of power.

The basis of power she has at her disposal but flatly refuses to exercise is that of legitimate equity. When Chéri returns to her after six months of separation, they replay the dynamics of their entire relationship. Léa starts out mocking and aloof, reinforcing her own referent power but refusing to reveal the referent power he has over her by letting him see how she has suffered at his absence. Her exploitation of his jealousy when he sees a new ring reveals the importance of maintaining power. "L'accent rendait à Léa toute son autorité et elle se permit le plaisir d'égarer un peu plus celui qui lui laissait l'avantage" (810). When he obeys her command to apologize for his unruly

behavior, she rewards him with a caress, and receives in response powerful evidence of the referent power that has always been central to their relationship. "Nounoune chérie! Je te retrouve! ma Nounoune! ô ma Nounoune, ton épaule, et puis ton même parfum, et ton collier, ma Nounoune, ah!" (811). Her position firmly established, and reinforced by a confession of love, Léa foresees the rekindling of their desire, but delays it by returning to her role as nurturer. But when Léa confesses her love as well, Chéri's desire will not be delayed any longer. After their lovemaking, Léa revels in a surge of absolute referent power. Her resignation to old age, her attempts to let go of Chéri no longer appear necessary. The evidence of the events that have just occurred reaffirms her beauty, her desirability, and Chéri's devotion to her. "Il est là! Laissant sa maison, sa petite femme niaise et jolie, il est revenu, il m'est revenu! Qui pourrait me l'enlever?" (815). But her power is short-lived. In the morning they are both forced to come to terms with their age difference and the necessity of ending their relationship. The nature of Léa's project is revealed as she pushes Chéri back into his role of dependent adolescent, a young man who needs her to nurture him, to make plans for him, and to show him what he really wants, yet who is old enough to admire her beauty, wit, and charm, and to desire her.

But in her absence, Chéri has been forced to grow up enough to see the effect she has on him and to recognize that it cannot continue indefinitely. He knows he has to end it, but recognizes how much Léa has meant and still means to him. He wants the ending of this relationship to be exceptional, steeped in memories of graciousness and nurturing generosity. Therefore, for the first time, he exercises real power in their relationship, power that begins with his gaze. Bethany Ladimer notes that throughout Colette's work, the gaze is the act of only one partner, marking his or her power over the other at the

same time as desire (59). Throughout the novel, Chéri has been the object of Léa's gaze, but on the morning after their last night together, he pretends to sleep as he watches her get out of bed, seeing her objectively as she moves around the room unguardedly, unaware that she is being observed. "Pas encore poudrée, une maigre torsade de cheveux sur la nuque, le menton double et le cou dévasté, elle s'offrait imprudemment au regard invisible" (818). This temporary exchange of roles prepares the scene that follows.

When Chéri sits speechless as Léa talks about their departure, she comments that he acts as if he were still twelve years old. He tells her, "Avec toi, Nounoune, il y a des chances pour que j'aie douze ans pendant un demi-siècle" (820). This is not an observation, but an accusation. Léa recognizes immediately the change in Chéri, from the strength of his hand as he holds hers to the directness of his gaze. Confronted with this new power, she is unable to find the reprimand that will trigger the insult, the pouting, and the forgiveness that have always characterized Chéri's attempts at the exercise of his will. This exercise of Chéri's legitimate equity, his pointing out of the injury she has done him by preserving him in a state of perpetual adolescence, lays the groundwork for his release. When Léa reacts angrily first at his pity and then at the realization that he is slipping away from her, Chéri exercises power again, this time in the form of reward power balanced by a subtle coercion. In his "je te défends de m'abîmer ma Nounoune", he threatens to distort the image he has always reflected back to her, the image that has made him so valuable a mirror. He rewards her compliance with a full revelation of all that she has meant to him, an embellishment and enhancement of that image with facets Léa never knew he had captured. He recalls her concern that Chéri would be unkind to Edmée as he prepared to marry her, and again at his return to her, his

suffering in her absence, the praises he sang to Desmond about her: the beauty of her skin, the blue of her eyes, the sharpness of her tongue, the way she dressed, talked, walked, smiled. "Ah! ce n'est pas rien, qu'une femme comme Léa!" (825). But in his unveiling of his thoughts, he steps too close to the present and, though he stops short of verbalizing it, lets Léa see what he sees now, an old woman.

Her reaction to his slip demonstrates that his exercise of power has had the desired effect. Léa retreats from her momentary lapse into the role of abandoned lover and returns to her usual clear-sighted magnanimity, consequently restoring the mother-child dynamic of their relationship. Chéri's reward of the long-awaited full confession of his love and admiration has restored Léa's confidence in her referent power, even though it may now be faded. But when she puts her arms around Chéri's shoulders and he stiffens, "la défense de ce corps qui souffrait parce qu'elle était blessée", she refuses to exercise the power of legitimate equity he is granting her (825). Because he no longer desires her, because it is no longer appropriate for him to desire her, she has to let him go. Instead of capitalizing on the pain he has caused her, she focuses on the harm she has done, transferring the power of legitimate equity to him. It is on this basis that she finds the strength to send him back to his young wife and his own youth, and it is her own strength that she must rely on. After Chéri's brief exercise of power and his useless protest as she verbalizes what he was thinking, "Tu arrives ici, et tu trouves une vieille femme", he does not utter another word during Léa's reflections, confessions, and instructions, reinforcing his role as her reflector (825). The mirror deprived of its original is left empty and purposeless.

The end of *Chéri* suggests that he has emerged from the relationship relatively better off than Léa, who is left to confront her new identity as an old woman alone, while he returns to a wife and a future, filling his lungs with air as he leaves Léa's house, "comme un évadé" (828). But his silence in the last three pages of the novel indicates his emptiness when cut off from Léa. Relyea oberves, "Léa exists in, of, and for herself. She is the subject, the self of the novel. Chéri never accedes to real being: he *has* a function in Léa's life but *is* nothing, if not that function, even unto himself" (153). *La Fin de Chéri* shows the aftermath of this situation.

Léa succeeds in her transition to the next phase of her life, a transformation for which she prepares throughout *Chéri*. She studies Lili and her inappropriately coquettish relationships with men even younger than Chéri, or Mme Aldonza, deformed by rheumatism and wearing her black wig crookedly, or the baronne de la Berche, frighteningly virilized by old age. Rather than sliding into one of these roles, she makes a conscious decision about what the next phase of her life will be. Despite a few false starts and second thoughts, her relinquishing of Chéri enables her to follow through on her plans for a dignified, asexual, and contented old age. The narrator of *la Fin de Chéri* never lets us back in to Léa's thoughts, forcing us to observe her from a distance as Chéri does. But the picture that emerges is one of peace and contentment.

Chéri, on the other hand, cannot rise to Léa's expectations that he will fill the gaps she has left in his education. When the story picks up six years later, Chéri has returned from the war, but cannot fill his role as "père de famille". Anne Duhamel Ketchum explains Chéri's failure. "Because he did not learn the patriarchal law, Chéri cannot survive in a male world; but because of this, he is Chéri. He has never learned

that power constitutes the distinction and thus the definition of man in relation to woman" (26). Left feeling cold, empty, and abandoned by his Nounoune, Chéri needs a mother, and Edmée is too young to fill the role. She manages to grow up, but does so by plunging herself into meaningful work that takes her in a new direction, away from her husband. Thus, Chéri finds himself unable to connect with his wife or with society in general. He finds the void Léa left in his life impossible to fill. Like Rousseau, he is bound by a longing for a person who no longer exists. But Chéri cannot even resent her for choosing another over him. Léa let him go for his own good and has settled into a comfortable celibacy in his absence. No longer able to take comfort in the stories and pictures of Léa at the height of her beauty, or to content himself with substitute as false as la Copine's pearls, Chéri commits suicide. Although Léa plays no active role in bringing about Chéri's death, it is a direct consequence, albeit one beyond her control, of their relationship.

The female Pygmalion figures in this and Rachilde's texts represent a significant evolution from the heroines that appear earlier in French literary history. In the earlier texts, the women are clearly the losers in the outcomes of their relationships. In Rousseau and Sand, we reach a draw in the battle between creator and creation, female and male. But these texts show us Pygmalion figures who are able to survive playing God. The critical difference between these women and their predecessors is that they do not allow their relationships with their creations, or with any man, to define them. For Raoule and Léa, Jacques and Chéri are significant episodes, but part of a longer life story that continues after the relationship ends.

Despite the reversal in outcome from the male creation's survival at the female creator's expense to the success of the female creator and the destruction of her object, these relationships remain a zero-sum game. Rachilde and Colette succeed in creating protagonists who reverse the traditional gender roles, but cannot transcend them. These reversals serve a purpose, accentuating the injustice and violence that occurs so often in male-female relationships, whether literary or real. Our shock at Chéri's destruction translates into a re-evaluation of our acceptance of the female heroine's death for love, but offers no alternatives. The unidirectional exercise of power limits any relationship between creator and creation, rendering impossible the cooperation, flexibility, and communication necessary for a relationship in which both parties can avoid objectification and attain subjecthood.

Conclusion

In Ovid's version of the myth (*Metamorphoses*, book X), Pygmalion's skill as a sculptor allowed him to avoid involvement with the promiscuous, lascivious women around him by creating a modest, devoted companion, whom the sympathetic goddess Venus brought to life. Throughout the history of French literature, female Pygmalions have played the roles of both the goddess and the sculptor, trying to train and socialize an ideal male partner for themselves. They represent exceptional cases. Ordinarily, women have faced serious challenges as they sought meaningful relationships with men, because the patriarchy strictly limits their power. Whether considered the possession of their fathers or husbands, granted the same legal status as minors, or refused the right to own property or seek divorce, women have been disadvantaged in their ability to determine their own fate. But following Pygmalion's example with genders reversed offers female protagonists and the authors who create them the opportunity to confront the inequities women face and to explore alternatives. Widowhood or special situations that confer unusual wealth or social power on the exceptional woman allow her to transcend her normal condition of subservience to the privileged male.

Many of these protagonists' issues involve marriage. Madamedes Belles Cousines and Raoule de Vénérande find themselves in the rare position of having the resources to defy society's expectations. Neither is willing to sacrifice the freedom she has had the good fortune to attain, so each trains a lover who will not threaten it. Marguerite's lady of Pamplona, Henriette de Mortsauf, and Madeleine Blanchet all find themselves in unsatisfying marriages. Whether too much older, mentally unstable, or

emotionally distant, these women's husbands all have shortcomings that pique their wives' interest in other men. Despite their marital dissatisfaction, these women value their virtue and so are unwilling to solve their problem conventionally by taking a lover. They turn to Pygmalion's model to sculpt an extramarital partner who will love them chastely, either by embracing virtue and suppressing their passionate impulses, or by becoming an adoring son.

Neither Léa de Lonval nor Mme de Warens need be concerned about marriage, but they, like their peers, wrestle with the question of how to sustain a quasi-maternal role. The breakdown of mother-child relationships plays an important role in the formation of all the reversed-gender Pygmalion and Galatea couples. The young men in these stories need a mother figure, whether they have been separated from their own mother by distance, death, abandonment, or neglect and indifference up until the time their female mentors meet them, and none of the female Pygmalion figures has been a fully satisfied mother. Five of the seven have no children; Henriette's son and daughter have inherited their father's constitutional weakness and are unlikely to see adulthood. Sand's Madeleine Blanchet has a strong, healthy son; her only complaint would be that she wanted more children, but her cooling relationship with her husband makes that unlikely. Thus, even though Henriette and Madeleine have children of their own, there is still a space to be filled in their lives by an adopted son. All the women, by taking on their Pygmalion projects, act on an impulse to teach, shape, and nurture that remains strong despite their otherwise unconventional roles in figures such as Mme de Warens, Raoule de Vénérande, and Léa de Lonval. The mother's role is a natural point from which a woman can exercise power over a male because it is a position even patriarchy

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inability to adopt her flexible attitude toward sexual relations play important roles in her decision to replace him. And although she is not domineering, George Sand's Madeleine herself is drawn to François because he demonstrates deep compassion for those around him, putting their needs before his own in the same way she does. Thus he implicitly validates her own chosen code of ethics. More complicated and at times mutually contradictory demands are placed on the relatively recent male Galateas in French literature by women. Perhaps this situation reflects the greater difficulty that French women may have encountered in exercising their autonomy during a period when society was offering them a wider range of choices: divorce, for example, became legal only in 1884.[2] Jacques Silvert has the complicated task of mirroring Raoule de Vénérande's gender flexibility, playing weakness to her strength, poverty to her wealth, male to her female, yet femininity to her masculinity. His failure, in the form of homoerotic impulses, leads to his destruction. Finally, Chéri's role as a dependent and somewhat spoiled child allows Léa to study her ability to nurture, provide, and sometimes indulge, while his role as her lover reassures her of her continued beauty and desirability and her success in her battle against age as she nears the age of fifty. When Chéri can no longer reflect this image, through no fault of his own but simply because of the passage of time, Léa recognizes the need to let him go, but it is Chéri's inability to step out of the first role that proves to be his undoing. These relationships, except for Madeleine and François's, all fail when the statue reflects a distorted image of its maker, suggesting that the protagonist derives a measure of narcissistic pleasure from her relationship, but also that—as Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic suggests—the Master is dependent on the Slave for her sense of identity.[3]

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Although our women authors, unlike their male counterparts, readily place a female character in a power position for the long term, freeing her from the status of victim, none of them would have called herself a feminist. For Marguerite, the term is simply anachronistic, but George Sand, Rachilde, and Colette all overtly refused it. Despite their lack of interest in female solidarity, these women clearly understood the value of independence and the flexibility gained by living on the margins of society and were willing to appropriate them for their protagonists.[4]

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inability to adopt her flexible attitude toward sexual relations play important roles in her decision to replace him. And although she is not domineering, George Sand's Madeleine herself is drawn to François because he demonstrates deep compassion for those around him, putting their needs before his own in the same way she does. Thus he implicitly validates her own chosen code of ethics. More complicated and at times mutually contradictory demands are placed on the relatively recent male Galateas in French literature by women. Perhaps this situation reflects the greater difficulty that French women may have encountered in exercising their autonomy during a period when society was offering them a wider range of choices: divorce, for example, became legal only in 1884.[2] Jacques Silvert has the complicated task of mirroring Raoule de Vénérande's gender flexibility, playing weakness to her strength, poverty to her wealth, male to her female, yet femininity to her masculinity. His failure, in the form of homoerotic impulses, leads to his destruction. Finally, Chéri's role as a dependent and somewhat spoiled child allows Léa to study her ability to nurture, provide, and sometimes indulge, while his role as her lover reassures her of her continued beauty and desirability and her success in her battle against age as she nears the age of fifty. When Chéri can no longer reflect this image, through no fault of his own but simply because of the passage of time, Léa recognizes the need to let him go, but it is Chéri's inability to step out of the first role that proves to be his undoing. These relationships, except for Madeleine and François's, all fail when the statue reflects a distorted image of its maker, suggesting that the protagonist derives a measure of narcissistic pleasure from her relationship, but also that—as Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic suggests—the Master is dependent on the Slave for her sense of identity.[3]

that power constitutes the distinction and thus the definition of man in relation to woman" (26). Left feeling cold, empty, and abandoned by his Nounoune, Chéri needs a mother, and Edmée is too young to fill the role. She manages to grow up, but does so by plunging herself into meaningful work that takes her in a new direction, away from her husband. Thus, Chéri finds himself unable to connect with his wife or with society in general. He finds the void Léa left in his life impossible to fill. Like Rousseau, he is bound by a longing for a person who no longer exists. But Chéri cannot even resent her for choosing another over him. Léa let him go for his own good and has settled into a comfortable celibacy in his absence. No longer able to take comfort in the stories and pictures of Léa at the height of her beauty, or to content himself with substitute as false as la Copine's pearls, Chéri commits suicide. Although Léa plays no active role in bringing about Chéri's death, it is a direct consequence, albeit one beyond her control, of their relationship.

The female Pygmalion figures in this and Rachilde's texts represent a significant evolution from the heroines that appear earlier in French literary history. In the earlier texts, the women are clearly the losers in the outcomes of their relationships. In Rousseau and Sand, we reach a draw in the battle between creator and creation, female and male. But these texts show us Pygmalion figures who are able to survive playing God. The critical difference between these women and their predecessors is that they do not allow their relationships with their creations, or with any man, to define them. For Raoule and Léa, Jacques and Chéri are significant episodes, but part of a longer life story that continues after the relationship ends.

Despite the reversal in outcome from the male creation's survival at the female creator's expense to the success of the female creator and the destruction of her object, these relationships remain a zero-sum game. Rachilde and Colette succeed in creating protagonists who reverse the traditional gender roles, but cannot transcend them. These reversals serve a purpose, accentuating the injustice and violence that occurs so often in male-female relationships, whether literary or real. Our shock at Chéri's destruction translates into a re-evaluation of our acceptance of the female heroine's death for love, but offers no alternatives. The unidirectional exercise of power limits any relationship between creator and creation, rendering impossible the cooperation, flexibility, and communication necessary for a relationship in which both parties can avoid objectification and attain subjecthood.

Conclusion

In Ovid's version of the myth (*Metamorphoses*, book X), Pygmalion's skill as a sculptor allowed him to avoid involvement with the promiscuous, lascivious women around him by creating a modest, devoted companion, whom the sympathetic goddess Venus brought to life. Throughout the history of French literature, female Pygmalions have played the roles of both the goddess and the sculptor, trying to train and socialize an ideal male partner for themselves. They represent exceptional cases. Ordinarily, women have faced serious challenges as they sought meaningful relationships with men, because the patriarchy strictly limits their power. Whether considered the possession of their fathers or husbands, granted the same legal status as minors, or refused the right to own property or seek divorce, women have been disadvantaged in their ability to determine their own fate. But following Pygmalion's example with genders reversed offers female protagonists and the authors who create them the opportunity to confront the inequities women face and to explore alternatives. Widowhood or special situations that confer unusual wealth or social power on the exceptional woman allow her to transcend her normal condition of subservience to the privileged male.

Many of these protagonists' issues involve marriage. Madamedes Belles Cousines and Raoule de Vénérande find themselves in the rare position of having the resources to defy society's expectations. Neither is willing to sacrifice the freedom she has had the good fortune to attain, so each trains a lover who will not threaten it. Marguerite's lady of Pamplona, Henriette de Mortsauf, and Madeleine Blanchet all find themselves in unsatisfying marriages. Whether too much older, mentally unstable, or

emotionally distant, these women's husbands all have shortcomings that pique their wives' interest in other men. Despite their marital dissatisfaction, these women value their virtue and so are unwilling to solve their problem conventionally by taking a lover. They turn to Pygmalion's model to sculpt an extramarital partner who will love them chastely, either by embracing virtue and suppressing their passionate impulses, or by becoming an adoring son.

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Pygmalion relationships using French and Raven's theory illuminates power's effect as it swings wildly out of balance or approaches equilibrium. The relationships in which the power discrepancies are greatest fail most dramatically. The only successful relationship is the one where the members of the couple reach a balance, enabling them to go forward as partners rather than as master and servant.

Notes

Chapter 1

[1] For a summary of the debate, see Taylor.

[2] Elisabeth Caron presents the two sides of this discussion in the opening pages of her article.

[3] For a summary, see Mermier, p. 474.

[4] In the battle with axes, Enguerrant's hand is injured, preventing him from holding his ax and thus forcing him to forfeit the match. Saintré defeats Loisellench in the joust on horseback by breaking the straps on his *garde-bras*, and in the joust on foot, Saintré's lance gets caught in Loisellench's glove, forcing Loisellench to drop his weapon. The king then calls the match. Many of Saintré's challenges are resolved in similar fashion, demonstrating, as the narrator suggests, that he wins not because of his own superior skills, but because God is with him.

[5] Early critics suggested the relationship was chaste, but the narrator's descriptions of their exchanges in the *preau* can easily be interpreted as euphemistic.

Chapter 2

[1] In the Heptaméron itself, there are numerous examples of Marguerite's privileging personal spirituality over Catholic ritual. In novella 70, Oisille depicts her heroine dying a holy death. There is no administration of last rites, only a personal confession of sin made directly to God, with no clerical intervention (481). In contrast, the women of novellas 60 and 61 undergo all the Catholic sacraments associated with death, including a last confession, the taking of communion, and the rite of Extreme Unction. Both move their witnesses to tears at the spectacle of their piety, but both are faking it to escape

marriage and run off with another man (429, 438). In novella 23, another of Oisille's tales, a young woman's ignorance of Reformation theology leads to her suicide. A Franciscan monk pretending to be her husband sleeps with her. When she finds out she has been dishonored, she kills herself. Oisille thus explains her actions: "Et alors elle, qui n'avait jamais appris des Cordeliers sinon la confiance des bonnes oeuvres, la satisfaction des péchés par austérité de vie, jeûnes et disciplines, qui du tout ignorait la grâce donnée par notre bon Dieu par le mérite de son Fils, la rémission des péchés par son sang, la réconciliation du Père avec nous par sa mort, la vie donnée au pécheurs par sa seule bonté et miséricorde, se trouva si troublée en l'assaut de ce désespoir, fondé sur l'énormité et gravité du péché, sur l'amour du mari et l'honneur du lignage, qu'elle estima la mort trop plus heureuse que sa vie" (239).

The Reformers' ideas infuse Marguerite's poetry even more deeply. Whether Marguerite was a Protestant or whether she remained Catholic has long been debated. In her introduction to Marguerite's *Chansons Spirituelles* Michèle Clément concludes that the choice between the two was not yet necessary in Marguerite's day. Marguerite was clearly influenced by Reformed thinkers, but there was still hope that the Church might reform itself from within. There is no doubt, however, about the pervasiveness of Reformed theology in Marguerite's writing. The second stanza of Chanson 5 provides one a myriad of possible examples.

Si quelqu'un parle de la Foy
En la mettant quasi à riens
Au prix des oeuvres de la Loy,
Les estimant les plus grand biens,

Sa doctrine est novelle,

Laissez le là, passez avant;

Autant en emporte le vent. (95)

[2] Aside from Saffredent, Dagoucin, Hircan, and Géburon, who display admirable swordsmanship in the Prologue, Amadour of novella 10 is the only major character in the *Heptaméron* who wins honor through military prowess.

[3] Bonnivet is named in novella 14, in which he seduces a Milanese lady by deception. In novella 16, a French gentleman, likely Bonnivet again, seduces a Milanese widow through persistence. The discussions following both stories point out the self-serving nature of sexual conquest. Géburon, the narrator of novella 16 opens the discussion following his tale by addressing to the women of the company a confession: "Car nostre gloire, nostre félicité et nostre contentement, c'est de vous veoir prises et de vous oster ce qui vous est plus cher que la vie" (Matthieu-Castellani 262, 3).

[4] The critical debate over whether or not their relationship was in fact chaste or whether talking all night was just a euphemism misses the point of Oisille's story. The discussion may be valid for the original medieval version of the story, but is not important to Oisille's ends.

[5] Rolandine's story (novella 21) ends happily, but the husband she marries at the end of the tale is never an important character in the story's development. The relationship the tale narrates is disastrous, resulting in Rolandine's imprisonment and her lover's infidelity and death. The German couple of novella 32 finds happiness at the end of their tale as well, but their story is not one of two lovers coming together, but of punishment and forgiveness for the wife's infidelity.

[6] Noble women who draw the censure of the storytellers include the Duchesse de Bourgogne (novella 70), the foreign lady who kept men in her wardrobe (novella 49), the incestuous mother (novella 30), the unfaithful wife whose husband avenged himself by means of a poisoned salad (novella 36) and another lady of Pampelune who fell in love with her priest (novella 35).

[7] This masking of illicit acts with sacred activities occurs frequently in the *Heptameron.* (La Guardia 136). For example, Rolandine's fiancé disguises himself as a monk to see her (21), the prieur of Saint-Martin-des-Champs uses several religious covers to conceal his lust for Marie Héroët (22), another lady of Pampelune attends mass in order to see the priest she desires (35), and a Cordelier takes advantage of his power to impose penance on a young girl in an attempt to seduce her (41).

[8] An important difference to note is that while Galatea was finished and Saintré's transformation complete, this is a step in d'Avannes's transformation. The lady of Pampelune's project is only completed with her death, an ironic inversion of the new life that completes Pygmalion's work.

[9] The contrast between light and dark is one of many Marcel Tetel notes in his study of the language and imagery of the *Heptaméron*, where light versus dark parallels the contrast between love and lust, discovery and dissimulation (96). In a pathetic fallacy, the darkness of the day both mirrors and encourages d'Avannes's less than virtuous intentions.

[10] The lady is no dupe, however. Her promise to do all she can contains a qualification: "Si vous estes amoureux de la vertu comme il appartient à tel seigneur que vous, je vous

serviray pour y parvenir de toutes les puissances que Dieu a mises en moy » (Mathieu-Castellani 381).

[11] Cholakian, like Lajarte cited below, views D'Avannes's manipulation of the language of virtue as a ruse (133). Nicole Cazauran disagrees. "Dans le contexte, l'aveu est donc placé sous un double jour, sans qu'il prenne, comme semble le croire Philippe de Lajarte, valeur de "parodie", et son langage n'est pas si menteur qu'il ne s'accorde du moins à une vérité. Dans le penchant qui l'attire vers une dame dont il admire depuis longtemps la sagesse, le seigneur d'Avannes ne saurait reconnaître le désire de « se amuser » qui l'a fait s'adresser à la « legiere et belle » jeune femme dont la conquête fut si facile. Il lui faut, pour s'exprimer, d'autres mots, tels qu'il puisse y traduire, avec mauvaise foi mais sans hypocrisie, une dévotion qui s'adresse confusément à la vertu comme à la beauté de celle qu'il aime. Mais de l'amour « parfait », ce n'est là que l'ombre, ou au mieux, le plus bas degré, si l'on croit, avec celle qui l'écoute, que le jeune homme en sera un jour « susceptible ». Son discours serait alors vrai d'une autre manière encore, comme promesse d'avenir et préfigurant une perfection déjà obscurément désirée. » (240)

[12] In many Pygmalion texts, including Ovid's, there is an undercurrent of incest in the love of the creator for his or her creature, and vice versa. Its appearance in this text as well, where the Pygmalion project focuses on fostering virtue, points to its inextricability from the dynamics of a relationship between such dyads. This text does not really explore the Oedipal implications of such a relationship as some others do. D'Avannes's identification of the lady as his mother functions primarily as a ruse with which he can extract the kiss he so ardently desires.

[13] In experiments designed to test the 1959 theory, Raven found personal sanctions to be the most effective basis of power (Raven, Schwarzwald, and Koslowsky, 1998).

[14] This separation of the creation from the creator is not present in Ovid's tale, nor in other versions where the Pygmalion figure is male. This difference underlines the differing expectations for mature men and women in much of Western culture. Men, as a condition of adulthood, must leave the home and enter the world, whether to undertake quests, serve at court, enter politics, go to war, etc. Women, on the other hand, can much more easily be confined to the home, safely under the control of their creators. These differing expectations create another obstacle to the success of female Pygmalion figures, or perhaps a softening and more humane presentation of a woman's project when compared to a man's.

[15] The mule driver's wife of novella 2 suffered violence and ultimately death rather than submit to her would-be seducer.

[16] Marguerite was married first to the Duke of Alençon and then to the king of Navarre, both times in moves to advance or stabilize the position of France's royal family. Her daughter Jeanne d'Albret was married against her will to the Duke of Clèves, a man she found repugnant, but to whom her father and uncle deemed marriage politically expedient. In her letter requesting annulment of the marriage, a process with which Marguerite helped her daughter, Jeanne specifies the role her parents played in arranging and executing the marriage (Déjean 250).

[17] Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani argues convincingly that Balzac drew his inspiration for the *Lys* from *Heptaméron* 26. In addition to parallels in character, story, and plot structures,

she cites evidence that Balzac had borrowed a volume of the Heptaméron from the Royal Library in 1824 and that his *Grande Bretèche* rewrites novella 32.

[18] Book 5 of *Émile* discusses in detail the traits of an ideal woman, placing her firmly in the domestic sphere.

[19] In "Sémiotique du corps malade dans *la Comédie Humaine*," Lucienne Frappier-Mazur identifies the link between an excess of passion and the inability to eat that consumes and destroys Henriette (28).

[20] The regrets that remain in Henriette's letter are only a shadow of those expressed in the first edition of the *Lys*. Nancy Miller cites the first edition: "Une heure de Lady Dudley vaut l'éternité." (69). Madame de Berny, the real-life model for Henriette, asked Balzac to remove them, writing, "...la mort de Mme de Mortsauf n'a pas besoin de ces horribles regrets. Ils nuisent à la belle lettre qu'elle écrit" (Arrault 13).

Chapter 3

[1] Rousseau and François both have women who care for them initially. Rousseau's aunt Suzon and François's foster mother la Zabelle are their first female caregivers. However, neither bonds enduringly with these first mother figures.

[2] Despite Rousseau's protestations of innocence, he expresses rather bizarre fetishistic behavior in relationship to Maman's possessions, if not her person. He passionately kisses the contents of his room because they belong to her, and gobbles up tidbits of food taken from her mouth.

[3] Rousseau attributes her decision to a desire to separate him from a negative influence, Venture de Villeneuve. Rousseau's biographers feel it was just as likely that she had a mission to complete.

[4] Felicity Baker sees the lack of detail in this part of the portrait of Mme de Warens as a means of shielding her (and possibly himself as well) from accusations of espionage. Her mysterious trip to Paris, Rousseau's job in the Royal Survey office, and his uncle's role in building Geneva's fortifications suggest interesting political subplots, but Rousseau omits any details that may shed light on the matter.

[5] In "Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Peril of Reflection", Jean Starobinski points out that Rousseau is happy only when desire is concealed, deferred, or transformed. Mme de Warens' decision to add sexual intimacy to their relationship taints it in his eyes(30).

[6] Christopher Kelly explains that Mme de Warens is able to safeguard Rousseau from entanglements with other women by not stimulating his imagination as she satisfies his sexual impulses. "The weakening of Jean-Jacques's sexual imagination, which would have led him to other women, strengthens his less sexual imagination, which leads him into a community formed by Mme de Warens. It is her ability to separate physical and imaginary needs in order to satisfy each separately that allows Mme de Warens to construct her own unusual domestic community." (143).

[7] Many biographers suspect that the household triangle was not as successful as in Rousseau's depiction. Inaccuracies of detail suggest an attempt to conceal that Anet's death was not accidental, but a suicide in response to Mme de Warens' sexual relationship with Rousseau.

[8] Rousseau's defense seems to have been very successful. Criticisms of the relationship between him and Mme de Warens, including those of Balzac and Sand, place blame on his shoulders. Given his status, Rousseau is certainly the bigger target, while our knowledge of Mme de Warens extends little beyond what Rousseau tells us. But Rousseau's narration of their relationship certainly plays a role in this perception of his guilt. Thus, despite Sand's comment that he should have been willing to appear a bit flippant and ungrateful to his benefactress rather than revealing her faults, it appears that Rousseau may have been willing to sacrifice a bit of his reputation in order to protect hers. Of course, reader reaction may also have been an unintended consequence of his desire to portray their relationship in a light as ideal as possible.

[9] Rousseau laments his own lack of power and his inability to curb Mme de Warens' spending after Anet's death. "Anet était un garçon exact et rangé, qui maintenait l'ordre dans la maison de sa maîtresse.... Elle-même craignait sa censure, et se contenait davantage dans ses dissipations. Ce n'était pas assez pour elle de son attachement, elle voulait conserver son estime, et elle redoutait le juste reproche qu'il osait quelquefois lui faire qu'elle prodiguait le bien d'autrui autant que le sien. Je pensais comme lui, je le disais même ; mais je n'avais pas le même ascendant sur elle, et mes discours n'en imposaient pas comme les siens."(243).

[10] And, like Saintré, he exacts a degree of revenge by telling their story. Antoine de la Sale does not give us Saintré's version of the story, so we don't know whether he retold it accurately or not. Extensive biographical work on Rousseau gives us the opportunity to check his facts, however. Letters between Rousseau and Maman during his trip reveal that he knew of their relationship long before he returned (Cranston 132). Thus his pious

resolution to return faithfully to the woman he loved only to find his place taken was not quite as dramatic as he would have us believe.

[11] The nature/nurture debate cannot be cleanly resolved here, because of François's mother's presence near the end of the novel. Her ability to provide François with significant financial resources leads us to assume that she is a member of the upper classes and that François may very well be of noble blood. Thus his success, especially when compared to that of other *champis*, may be attributable both to his environment and to his genes.

[12] The relationship between Mme de Warens and Rousseau truly crosses the line of incest. Mme de Warens holds all the power in their relationship. Despite his reservations, which he never overcomes, Rousseau has no choice but to acquiesce. A sexual relationship between two such unequal parties cannot be viewed as healthy or legitimate.

[13] The irony of this statement is not lost. Rousseau the failure is none other than Rousseau the author, composer, and political and educational philosopher, while François's success consists of earning a living and satisfying his employer. However, when judging these two young men against the standards their female Pygmalions set for them, François emerges as the clear winner.

[14] Peter France notes that Rousseau knew he had been replaced long before he returned from Montpellier. Instead of the heroic return he paints, Rousseau was well aware that he was returning to a degrading situation that he was willing to endure for the sake of being close to Mme de Warens (93).

[15] The incestuous nature of François and Madeleine's relationship arises frequently in criticism of this text, and remains largely unquestioned. Kathryn Crecelius notes that

Sand's novels are built on incest, which is often the goal of the narrative and leads to a fulfilling rather than fatal end (2, 4). Naomi Schor states that in *François le champi*, incest is not only consummated, but happily so, leaving the mother-son couple as joyous as any at the end of a fairy tale (151). None of these critics explains why these relationships are fulfilling and, oddly enough, healthy despite their breaking of the incest taboo. In fact, although the relationship between Madeleine and François may violate a strict interpretation of incest, since, as Schor points out, parenthood is severed from genealogy in the logic of idealism (124), the power imbalance that makes such a relationship so harmful has been erased.

[16] That Sand applies the standard of responsibility as a measure of maturity to both young men and women is evident in *Nanon*. Another orphaned child free to stand outside the bonds of the generational transmission of patriarchal values of class and gender, Nanon earns recognition as a woman in her great-uncle's eyes not when she marries or becomes a mother, but when she begins contributing to the support of the family, taking on the responsibilities of a full partner (Massardier-Kenney 164).

[17] Helynne Hansen identifies *Mauprat* as the turning point for Sand's heroines. In earlier works, her protagonists are unable to find happiness in marriage, but Edmée de Mauprat shapes the man she loves into a suitable husband, both in terms of his responsibility and maturity and in his fulfillment of Rousseau's ideal of love and sentimentality (193).

[18] In *Nanon*, Kenney interprets the protagonist's refusal to become an object of romantic love, maintaining her role as a mother figure, as a means of retaining power (177).

[19] Aside from arguments based on the text itself, one can also appeal to evidence in the rest of Sand's work. Sand's heroines, including Edmée de Mauprat, Nanon, and Isidora,

do not bow meekly to the pressures of patriarchy, but strive to find happiness by escaping its bonds. Sand herself played the double role of mother and lover, making it difficult to believe that she would deny this possibility to her heroines. Madeleine, then, is clearly a special case, her desire quieted only because to voice it strongly would raise suspicions of incest.

[20] In justifying Madeleine, Sand may be defending herself. In her biography of Sand, Elizabeth Harlan discusses the maternalistic relationships Sand had with younger men, including Musset, Chopin, and Manceau. Musset wrote to her, "You thought you were my mistress, you were only my mother; heaven made us for one another...But we were too tightly bound, it was incest that we committed" (Harlan 181,2). Harlan goes on to suggest that Sand used the incestuous tension in her relationships with younger men as a prototype for the relationships she portrayed in her fiction, which Harlan finds more confessional than her autobiography (210, 264).

Chapter 4

[1] Raoule's justification of her behavior based on the interests of an entire class of women is surprising in light of Rachilde's adamant stance against feminism. She felt she won her freedoms on the basis of her own character and value and felt no sense of solidarity with other women. Those whom she found exceptional, she encouraged, but she felt it was the responsibility of each woman to earn respect based on her own qualities. Women as a class were not deserving of the rights feminine activists sought for them (Holmes 76, 77).

[2] Raoule's dressing up is like Rachilde's own role playing. Alfred Valette wrote her a letter expressing his pleasure and surprise at seeing her dressed in so feminine a costume

at a party, but he is unsettled because he is no longer sure when she is cross-dressed. This incident, as well as the fictional one represented here, leads to Melanie Hawthorne's observation that Rachilde views gender as performed and provisional (164).

[3] Nelly Sanchez attributes this emphasis on heredity, seen also in Raoule's character, as a Naturalist influence in Rachilde's writing.

[4] This phrase, "en même temps qu'il fait s'écarter les cuisses", is suppressed in all versions of *Monsieur Vénus* except the first, 1884 edition and the newest 2004 edition. Its editors, Melanie Hawthorne and Liz Constable, argue that the phrase "forces the reader to confront the degree of Rachilde's challenge to the sex/gender system" (xxviii), accentuating the novel's role in "explicitly challeng[ing] the gender hierarchy that the male role is dominant because penetrative. Raoule penetrates yet remains a woman and asserts heterosexuality while reconfiguring body parts to mimic sameness" (xxix).

[5] Erica Eisinger identifies Colette's plots as androgynous, with any of the primary roles capable of being played by either gender (100). This flexibility could explain Léa's freedom. Of course, reversing the gender roles as Colette has assigned them would reduce *Chéri* to a story even more frequently told than that of the older woman and the younger man. While Eisinger's observation that Colette's plots are not gender-specific may apply to some of her other texts, the tragedy of *Chéri* is a direct result of the gender roles being played out as assigned. Society tolerates May-December relationships between younger women and older men, likely because a man's value as a partner is viewed as extending beyond his physical desirability. Léa plays the traditionally male role of financial provider for her young lover, but must maintain her beauty for the relationship to continue.

[6] Kloepfer et al. note other prominent reversals as well. The ridiculous couple of Lili and Guido consist of a seventy-year-old woman and her seventeen-year-old lover whose father threatens to send him to a convent if he marries his aging mistress. Léa's friend Patron breaks off with his lover because she is ashamed that Patron feels the need to work, rather than to let her provide for him (127).

[7] The first text of this chapter, of course, contains several.

[8] This episode of the story is reminiscent of *Heptaméron* 26 again, where the lady of Pamplona cares for the seigneur d'Avannes, who has made himself sick from his escapades with another woman.

Conclusion

[1] In her analysis of the relationship between Raoule de Vénérande and Jacques Silvert, Dorothy Kelly relies on Freud's view of female desire as being essentially narcissistic. When women reach sexual maturity, they desire themselves rather than making an object-choice. The means of escape from this narcissistic desire is motherhood (146,7).

[2] Divorce was first legalized in 1792, but was restricted under Napoleon and abolished under the Restoration. It was reinstated in 1884, but only on the grounds of adultery, cruelty, slander, and criminal sentence (Campbell 503).

[3] Hegel describes the Master as dependent on the Slave in two ways. First, he is dependent on the Slave's recognition of his dominance and second, on his work. Hegel summarizes, "for just when the master has effectively achieved lordship, he really finds that something has come about quite different from an independent consciousness. It is not an independent, but rather a dependent consciousness that he has achieved" (Hegel 236). Conversely, the Slave develops the independent consciousness as a result of his

interaction with the world and the self-awareness and self-mastery he develops as a response to the state of fear and servitude in which he lives.

[4] The convent community in George Sand's 1839 version of *Lélia*, created and maintained by the title character, represents an exception because it functions effectively to increase the nuns' self-esteem.

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