

MADAME BOVARY: THE DIALECTICS OF
COLOR AND LIGHT

by

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ABSTRACT

Color and light, consistent with most visual phenomena in Madame Bovary, are more than mere descriptive tools: they actually serve as vehicles for Flaubert's characteristic use of symbolism. When taken cumulatively throughout the novel, the meanings ascribed to certain color and lighting effects often symbolize specific situations or a character's psychology, while at the same time reflecting a particular point of view.

This dissertation initially examines the questions of point of view, major themes and Emma's psychology. Though most of the novel is recounted by an omniscient third-person narrator, he frequently takes a back seat so that Emma's point of view, for one, becomes the dominant manner of presentation. By shifting from one point of view to another, the narrator presents us with much conflicting symbolism--are we witnessing a scene and its color and light through Emma's dreamy gaze or perhaps in a more objective light shed by the narrator? An additional source of conflict is to be found in Emma's psychology and the major themes of Madame Bovary, as they both center around the heroine's inability to distinguish dreams from reality, with reality eventually gaining the upper hand and crushing Emma's dream world. Color and light symbolism naturally

mirror all of these conflicts, with positive symbols often overshadowed by negative ones.

There are three basic types of illumination present in the novel--(1) dim light reflecting Emma's romantic nature; (2) harsh, revealing brightness which, in the present, sheds light on an all-too pervasive reality; and (3) a lack of illumination emphasizing Emma's depression and leading ultimately to the utter darkness of death.

Seven individual colors are explored for their symbolic aspects: blue, white, yellow, black, red, pale, and green. Blue symbolizes Emma's dreams and aspirations, her desire to attain an always nebulous higher state of being, which of course she will never reach. White can at times be interpreted along classical lines as representing innocence, naiveté, and potential, or conversely emptiness and ennui, as in the case of this same potential remaining unfulfilled. Yellow signifies reality which is always ready to engulf Emma and her dreams and is seen as yellowing the whiteness of her potential. Black takes on several symbolic connotations, usually dependent upon the point of view of the person lending it symbolic value. It can be seen as a reflection of the Church, of mystery, or, for Emma, of the perfect romantic hero who must dress in black. As the narrator is aware, however, and communicates to the reader, all meanings of black in the novel merely culminate in its traditional connotation, that of death, in this case,

Emma's of course. Red is another shade which can be divided into positive and negative aspects, with the positive signifying sensuality, voluptuousness, and by extension a certain erotic vision of love. On the negative side, we find many characteristics of red that Emma herself would consider disagreeable: a peasant origin, outlook or attitude, and a lack of sophistication sometimes coupled with crudeness or insensitivity. One or more of three basic meanings can be ascribed to pale in any given context; it can represent a dull uninteresting existence, a romantic ideal--for Emma--, or merely a pallor caused by illness or indisposition. Green, the final hue treated, is a secondary color on the artist's palette combining the blue of dreams and the yellow of reality, thus creating a feeling of malediction for Emma and a fatal mixture, since one cannot survive in the face of the other.

In the end, Emma is forced to recognize the reality which had been so clearly illuminated throughout the novel by the narrator and, unable to face the light, she ironically turns instead to the total darkness of death.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Each one of us, while inhabiting the same physical universe, perceives an entirely different world, which is for some a drab gray, while for others it reflects a dazzling array of hues. According to Gustave Flaubert, "Chacun de nous a un prisme à travers lequel il aperçoit le monde; heureux celui qui y distingue des couleurs riantes et des choses gaies."¹ Madame Bovary presents us with several visions of the same universe, for we see the world through Emma's eyes, through those of the narrator, and also from the point of view of most of the other characters. These perceptions of reality are elucidated by a corresponding symbolic color or lighting effect. Since each character sees the world through his own prism, there is no reason to believe that Emma, the dreamer, would be struck by the same colors as would Homais, the pragmatist, nor would the omniscient narrator always present us with the illusory shades of Emma's dream world.

D. L. Demorest mentions the symbolic value attached by Emma to the inhabitants of this dream world: "On se

1. "Mémoires d'un fou," in Vol. I of Gustave Flaubert, Oeuvres complètes (Paris: l'Intégrale-Seuil, 1964), p. 244.

rappelle le vicomte qui devient non une personne mais un centre de rêves d'amour, ainsi que le porte-cigares, car pour Emma les choses et les hommes deviennent vite des symboles"2 In Madame Bovary, the narrator exploits these symbols, as well as adding his own, with his subtle ironic touches:

A meshwork of irony is an essential part of the poetic structure of Madame Bovary. It permeates all the major themes and enters into the relation between innumerable minor details. The more carefully one examines its separate strands, the more startlingly evident is the ironic tissue of the whole. And symbolic pattern is so interwoven with it that the two can hardly be dissociated for analysis.³

Thus, the cigar case represents the world of love and luxury for Emma, but Charles desecrates it by smoking one of the cigars, revealing the narrator's presence in this ironic point.

This study will examine the visions created by some of these different prisms, in the form of color and light symbolism in Madame Bovary. There will be an in-depth analysis of light and color as they reflect and symbolize particular themes, the personalities of specific characters and the events which surround them, or, perhaps, envelop

2. D. L. Demorest, L'Expression figurée et symbolique dans l'oeuvre de Gustave Flaubert (Paris, 1931; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1967), p. 469.

3. A. G. Engstrom, "Flaubert's Correspondence and the Ironic and Symbolic Structure of Madame Bovary," Forum for Modern Language Studies, 46 (1949), 480.

them, as in the case of Emma. In order to achieve this end, I will first delve into the major themes and psychological considerations of Madame Bovary's principal characters, particularly Emma, and this will aid in clarifying subsequent references to them. When these matters have been examined, the analysis will proceed to the symbolic meanings of lighting effects and then of color, as applied to the themes and psychology of the novel, with one chapter devoted to each of these visual phenomena. D. A. Williams sees this symbolic importance of description in Flaubert in that "the details selected often possess a symbolic appropriateness which make them harmonize with the situation or state of mind of the character or characters present."⁴ Emma is the center of the novel, as emphasized by the title, Madame Bovary, and the symbols will be examined from her angle. We will witness the way in which she applies color and light to her own vision of the world, with the undercurrent of an ever-present real world, and the fashion in which the narrator contrasts the two.

Flaubert's attention to objects and to detail is well-known to all who look at his work symbolically. In his novels, objects, rather unimportant in themselves, take on added significance under the light which Flaubert sheds

4. David Anthony Williams, "Water Imagery in Madame Bovary," Forum for Modern Language Studies, 13 (1977), 71.

on them. In Madame Bovary, Emma's wedding cake and bouquet, for example, would not merit a second glance were it not for the penetrating way in which the narrator views them. Jean Pommier attributes this microscopic vision to Flaubert's myopia, causing him to perceive the minutiae of objects close to him.⁵ This conclusion may be a bit shortsighted itself, since Flaubert is keenly aware not only of visual detail, but also of subtle psychological distinctions. I therefore prefer to ascribe Flaubert's predilection for detail to his own great sensitivity.

Description, more than anything else, makes up the greater part of the novel:

Comme le peintre manifeste l'idée à travers formes et couleurs, ainsi l'écrivain doit-il la communiquer en construisant à l'aide du langage une forme représentative. L'art du roman, pour Flaubert, est avant tout l'art de la description.⁶

Pierre Danger is another one in a long list of critics to speak of Flaubert's description when he claims that

dans l'oeuvre de Flaubert, c'est à chaque page, à chaque paragraphe, du début jusqu'à la fin, que la description accompagne le récit, qu'elle en est la substance même et que, selon l'impression de Geneviève Bollème, elle est l'événement. Un roman de Flaubert est exactement construit comme un film où tout est exprimé par

5. Jean Pommier, "La Création littéraire chez G. Flaubert," Créations en littérature (Paris: Hachette, 1955), p. 15.

6. Claudine Gothot-Mersch, ed., Madame Bovary, by Gustave Flaubert (Paris: Garnier, 1971), p. xxxvii.

l'image, où les mots que l'on dit ont moins d'importance que la musique même de la voix qui les prononce, où un objet vaut plus par sa couleur et sa matière que par sa fonction. Etudier l'élément descriptif du roman, c'est donc en fait aborder l'oeuvre dans sa totalité.⁷

If an object is more important for its color than for its practical function, the color must be more important for its symbolic meaning than for its purely visual stimulus.

Danger, once again, discusses the principal place afforded to color and this time to light also, in Flaubert's work when he states that

les trois éléments qui entrent en jeu dans les descriptions de Flaubert sont, comme chez un peintre, la couleur, la matière et la lumière. Les deux premiers assurent l'organisation générale et l'équilibre du tableau, sa tonalité également depuis la douceur minutieusement nuancée des paysages de Normandie ou de Paris jusqu'à la violence surnaturaliste de l'Orient. La lumière apporte le relief, la variété, la vie à ces peintures. Elle glisse sur les objets, les enveloppe, les pénètre, elle est la véritable révélatrice de la couleur et de la matière.⁸

These three elements mentioned by Danger of color, light, and material, given the important role they play in the novel, deserve lengthy studies as to their significance in Madame Bovary. Jean-Pierre Richard in his Littérature et sensation and Danger himself, among others, have quite thoroughly studied the aforementioned material. The

7. Pierre Danger, Sensations et objets dans le roman de Flaubert (Paris: Armand Colin, 1973), p. 85.

8. Danger, p. 105.

emphasis in this study will therefore be on color and light, with light being included since color cannot exist without it as Danger has pointed out.

Although images and descriptions involving color and light appear with great frequency in Madame Bovary, the space allotted to them by critics up to now has been minimal; for the most part, one finds lone paragraphs on the subject scattered throughout larger works. Robert Allen, in his two-part article entitled "L'Atmosphère, telle qu'elle est évoquée par les adjectifs-clefs de Madame Bovary," furnishes a list of the twenty most frequently used adjectives in Madame Bovary. Of these twenty, nine refer to color, six of these nine heading the entire list, and the frequency of appearance of these colors is as much as eleven times greater than the norm. The second part of the article is subtitled "Les Adjectifs de couleur" and deals exclusively with the nine color-related adjectives which appear in the list. Although Allen in this second half of the article addresses himself solely to the question of colors in Madame Bovary, its scope is severely limited due to the restrictions imposed by a twenty-page article.⁹ Much work therefore remains to be undertaken on this topic.

9. Robert Allen, "L'Atmosphère, telle qu'elle est évoquée par les adjectifs-clefs de Madame Bovary," Les Amis de Flaubert, No. 33 (1968), p. 17, and Robert Allen, "L'Atmosphère, telle qu'elle est évoquée par les adjectifs-clefs de Madame Bovary: les adjectifs de couleur," Les Amis

As far as adjectives dealing with lighting effects are concerned, not a single one appears on Allen's list, but one must avoid the subsequent temptation to dismiss the question of light as being an unimportant one. Different nuances of light can be thoroughly described without the use of a single adjective referring specifically to light, as these two examples from Madame Bovary will illustrate. In the first, Emma remembers the Vicomte: "Mais le cercle dont il était le centre peu à peu s'élargit autour de lui, et cette auréole qu'il avait, s'écartant de sa figure, s'étala au loin, pour illuminer d'autres rêves."¹⁰ In the next example, Emma, while living at the convent, is attracted to the mystical beauties of religion so that "elle s'assoupit doucement à la langueur mystique qui s'exhale des parfums de l'autel, de la fraîcheur des bénitiers et du rayonnement des cierges" (p. 37). Though these citations entail descriptions of lighting effects, they are very adequately represented without the use of a single adjective referring

de Flaubert, No. 34 (1969). In the first half of this article, Robert Allen defines normal frequency as the numerical average of the use of a word. His source is George E. Vander Beke, ed., French Word Book (New York: Macmillan, 1929). The words are taken from 88 works of 13,000 words each, adding up to nearly 1,150,000 words. The works are from the end of the eighteenth, the nineteenth, and the beginning of the twentieth century.

10. Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary, ed. Claudine Gothot-Mersch (Paris: Garnier, 1971), p. 60. All further references to this work appear in the text.

to light. There are other reasons adjectives of light and darkness are not on Allen's list, one being that a play of light can be expressed by a myriad of different adjectives, while a color is usually restricted to a single adjective. We must remember that physically neither color nor any other visual phenomenon can exist without light, and again Pierre Danger states its importance:

C'est [la lumière] aussi qui fait jouer les couleurs en les faisant briller, en se mêlant à elles, en étant elle-même couleur, elle pénètre également les matières et les met en valeur, enfin l'abondance des verbes nous montre le caractère actif, dynamique de cette lumière.¹¹

A color, therefore, does not exist in a world by itself but is dependent upon the light present for the manner in which it will affect the reader.

In view of the paucity of material on the topic, this study will attempt to analyze in depth, color and light references in Madame Bovary, particularly in their symbolic connotations. Harry Levin would be the first to admit the symbolic importance of color and light in this novel as he feels that

nothing is mentioned that does not help to carry the total burden of significance. Hence every object becomes, in its way, a symbol, the novelist seeks the right thing, as well as the right word;

11. Danger, p. 103.

and things are attributes which define their owners, properties which expedite the stage business.¹²

As an added benefit, examining the color and light symbolism afforded in Madame Bovary will give us insights into new levels of meaning. Louise Dauner sees this symbolic understanding as an entry into the poetic aspect of the novel even though

one need never read for any meaning beyond the literal. An adequate unit of meaning will still be apprehensible, for the symbol is always a natural part of or element in the given situation or instance. Yet, to comprehend and use the symbols is enormously to enrich the aesthetic and even moral values of the novel and to walk simultaneously on two levels, as though one maintained a delicate balance both on the earth of the commonsense literal and in the air of the poetic, which is an integral part of the experience that poetry gives us.¹³

After such a study, we will also have a better grasp of the complex question of point of view, perspective, and the role of the narrator in Madame Bovary. This will be done by determining for whom a certain color or lighting effect is symbolic; if Emma believes herself happy, for instance, a morbid foreshadowing of her inevitable demise would most likely emanate from the narrator in his omniscience.

12. Harry Levin, The Gates of Horn: A Study of Five French Realists (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 253.

13. Louise Dauner, "Poetic Symbolism in Madame Bovary," South Atlantic Quarterly, 55 (1956), 208-209.

Most of the novel is narrated from an omniscient point of view, but, in spite of this position of power, Flaubert felt that the narrator must be totally objective, disappearing into the work: "L'auteur, dans son oeuvre, doit être comme Dieu dans l'univers, présent partout, et visible nulle part. L'Art étant une seconde nature, le créateur de cette nature-là doit agir par des procédés analogues."¹⁴

Henry James apparently felt Flaubert had succeeded in this task in Madame Bovary for he states that "he simply relates the facts in all their elaborate horror."¹⁵ James, however, oversimplifies the case, because though the narrator of the novel attempts admirably to retain his objectivity, the task is just about an impossible one. By the mere act of narrating, he is obliged to decide what facts to recount and what circumstances to delete, while placing more emphasis on some events than on others. The narrator of Madame Bovary occasionally abandons his objectivity in other manners, as he sometimes comes right out with a judgment or conclusion, and Mario Vargas Llosa maintains that

hay ocasiones en que el narrador omnisciente aparta con toda deliberación a los personajes y a los

14. Gustave Flaubert, Correspondance: Nouvelle édition augmentée, Vol. III of Oeuvres complètes de Gustave Flaubert (Paris: Conard, 1927), pp. 61-62.

15. Henry James, "Gustave Flaubert," Madame Bovary and the Critics, ed. B. F. Bart (New York: New York University Press, 1966), p. 61.

objetos para ocupar el primer plano del relato y pronunciar, profesoralmente, una sentencia filosófica, una conclusión moral, un refrán o aforismo, una regla de la vida que encuentra un ejemplo concreto en el hecho que ha narrado o que va a narrar ...¹⁶

More frequently, the narrator reveals his feelings through the subtle use of irony. While maintaining a façade of objectivity, the narrator can be ironic by using terms, innocent in themselves, but juxtaposed in such a way as to create an ironic effect. Shortly before Emma's seduction by Rodolphe Boulanger, for example, the narrator informs us: "Quand le costume fut prêt, Charles écrivit à M. Boulanger que sa femme était à sa disposition, et qu'il comptait sur sa complaisance" (p. 161). Subsequently, thanks to his "complaisance," Rodolphe possesses Emma, hence the irony. - Percy Lubbock sees the role of the narrator in irony:

His irony gives him perfect freedom to supersede Emma's limited vision whenever he pleases, to abandon her manner of looking at the world, and to pass immediately to his own more enlightened, more commanding height. Her manner was utterly convincing while she exhibited it; but we always knew that a finer mind was watching her display with a touch of disdain.¹⁷

Actually, the narrator's liberal use of free indirect discourse, in which a character's thoughts or words

16. Mario Vargas Llosa, La orgía perpetua: Flaubert y Madame Bovary (Barcelona: Biblioteca Breve-Seix Barral, 1975), p. 223.

17. Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (New York: Viking, 1957), pp. 89-90.

are reported in the third person with no particular introduction to inform the reader that the narrator has given the reins to one of his characters, allows him to insert his own opinions into the text. An example of this style is to be seen in a description of Charles's first wife, the ailing widow: "Le bruit des pas lui faisait mal; on s'en allait, la solitude lui devenait odieuse; revenait-on près d'elle, c'était pour la voir mourir, sans doute" (p. 12). By the use of this method, the narrator can slip comments and irony into his reporting of a character's words without the reader's paying much attention to his interference.

By his choice of color and light symbolism, the narrator makes himself felt to the observant reader. Not only is Emma's perspective visible, but the narrator often makes his presence known through the symbols he has chosen and often their ironic juxtaposition. The major thrust of the present study will deal with Emma's perspective and symbols coming up against the presence of the narrator and his more realistic symbolism.

CHAPTER II

MAJOR THEMES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All components of Madame Bovary are fatally structured so as to lead to one point, the inevitable demise of its heroine; all color and light symbolism in the novel must therefore be seen from this angle. The meaning of these symbols cannot be fully grasped, however, without also examining the major themes along with Emma's psychology and certain narrative traits. A particular color can signify an aspect of a theme, while a lighting effect can connote a salient characteristic of Emma's personality. The color blue, for example, symbolizes Emma's aspiration toward the absolute or, put more simply, her dreams, and moonlight is a romantic but distorting form of light, reflecting Emma's vision of the world. Emma does not see things in their true light any more than the moon shows them as they really are. In order to appreciate these images, one must be aware of the dream versus reality theme of the novel and the way in which this conflict manifests itself in Emma's personality.

The themes of Madame Bovary are numerous, but all pave the way for Emma's fall; viewed in the most general way, they break down to a single one--the conflict between

dreams and reality. For Emma, this means the romantic world of dreams coming up against the constricting world of life in the provinces as the wife of a country health officer, not even a doctor. She dreams of being married at midnight by candlelight but instead is married in broad daylight and, accompanied by her country cousins, traipses through the fields with burrs sticking to her gown. Following the wedding, with the start of married life, the young bride expects the romance to begin, but the continuous chain of hope-disappointment will but add another link. Emma's dream world will inevitably remain in contradiction and in conflict with the practical until one destroys the other, and this practical world, embodied by Homais and Lheureux, will naturally emerge victorious.

Emma, in spite of her high ideals, is destined to be surrounded by mediocrity, inadequacy, and failure. While still in school at the convent, she dreams of a cavalier galloping up on a black horse, and, in his place, Charles, half-asleep, saunters up to les Bertaux on what we later discover to be an old white nag. This old horse, the narrator is quick to point out, balks upon entering the gate, foreshadowing the disastrous consequences of Charles's arrival.

Not only is Emma's husband a failure, so are her marriage, her romances, and all dealings she has with others. The theme expressed by Brombert as the "pathos of

incommunicability"¹ is illustrated by Emma's inability to relate to people, and the dialogues in Madame Bovary do not even live up to the name--they are actually more often made up of two monologues. The conversation between Emma and l'abbé Bournisien is certainly an exercise in futility with neither party making any attempt to understand the other. L'abbé Bournisien is listening only to himself in the following example:

--Comment vous portez-vous? ajouta-t-il.

--Mal, répondit Emma; je souffre.

--Eh bien, moi aussi, reprit l'ecclésiastique.
 -- Ces premières chaleurs, n'est-ce pas, vous amollissent étonnamment? Enfin, que voulez-vous! nous sommes nés pour souffrir, comme dit saint Paul. Mais M. Bovary, qu'est-ce qu'il en pense? (p. 115).

This same failure to communicate occurs when Emma expresses her love to Rodolphe in rather extravagant terms, while he hears only a mistress like all the others he has had:

Il ne distinguait pas, cet homme si plein de pratique, la dissemblance des sentiments sous la parité des expressions. Parce que des lèvres libertines ou vénales lui avaient murmuré des phrases pareilles, il ne croyait que faiblement à la candeur de celles-là; on en devait rabattre, pensait-il, les discours exagérés cachant les affections médiocres; comme si la plénitude de l'âme ne débordait pas quelquefois par les métaphores les plus vides, puisque personne, jamais, ne peut donner l'exacte mesure de ses besoins, ni de ses conceptions, ni de ses douleurs, et que la parole humaine est comme un chaudron fêlé où nous

1. Victor Brombert, The Novels of Flaubert: A Study of Themes and Techniques (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 43.

battons des mélodies à faire danser les ours, quand on voudrait attendrir les étoiles (p. 196).

In this particular instance, not only does Flaubert illustrate scenically the inadequacy of words, he states it, and, ironically enough, does so quite adequately. Emma is thus doomed by the inability of others to understand her. She felt that if only Charles would ask her what was wrong, she might be able to open her heart, but Charles, of course, does not see that Emma is unhappy and will never be able to read her heart.

Close upon the heels of Emma's failing romances, naturally follow failing finances, since, in Emma's mind at least, love and luxury are one. In order to stoke the fires of her passion, she must be able to offer gifts to her lovers. This she does unceasingly with both Rodolphe and Léon until, just as her love affair with Léon is dying, Emma's economic situation reaches its disastrous culmination.

The previously mentioned lack of communication points up the disparity between Emma's vision of herself and the way others view her, resulting from Flaubert's manipulation of multiple visions or points of view. Charles sees her as a very contented wife and mother, which only adds to his own happiness. Consequently, there is a clash between Charles's contentment and Emma's discontent, which contributes greatly to Emma's sense of frustration. Later, in

Emma's mind, she is living a storybook romance with Rodolphe and she is willing to sacrifice anything for him, whereas he sees her as just another mistress, somewhat lacking in sincerity, like all the others. Emma always views herself differently than do others with whom she comes in contact, with the possible exception of Justin. It must be recalled that Emma seems to inhabit a dream world for this young man who reminds us of the youthful Gustave Flaubert in his silent adoration of Elisa Schlésinger. For the rest of the town, Madame Bovary is naturally a good subject for gossip, be it favorable or otherwise, and, as can be expected, it is mostly unfavorable. Emma is thus always alone in her visions, her dreams, and her thoughts, with even the narrator remaining aloof for the most part. Brombert expresses this theme as the loneliness of the individual in face of a harassing group.² Interestingly enough, Brombert sees this theme as occurring initially in relation to Charles's arrival at school, when he is ridiculed by the other students. It is typical Flaubertian irony that Emma should share this ostracism with her disdained husband, not only before she knows him, but also after her death when children stare at him over the garden wall.

The entire novel, as previously stated, is leading up to Emma's tragic end, with every situation pointing

2. Brombert, The Novels of Flaubert, p. 44.

invariably to such an end. Such tragedy, however, does not prevent the narrator from using his finely honed sword of irony on every occasion; no situation is above his ironic cuts. The romance of the pre-seduction scene between Emma and Rodolphe has as background the Comices agricoles with a prize being given for the best manure! Emma's very death suffers an ironic turn with the triumph of the character who had been the brunt of the narrator's greatest irony--Homais, the epitome of Flaubert's despised and mocked bourgeois.

Homais' rise, of course, was preordained by fate, just as had been Emma's disappointments and death. We know right from the start that Emma can never attain happiness in a world in which Mme Bovary mère can arrange a marriage of purely financial interest between her son and a complaining, older widow. Emma will not be able to survive a Homais or a Lheureux. We also know that Homais, with his chameleon-like adaptability, will eventually reach his goals; in this case, ironically, it is the Croix d'honneur. Homais--an honorable man!

Since Emma's world is the nucleus for all of the symbols of the novel, it is necessary to examine the essential characteristics of her psychology. Just as the major theme of the novel is the conflict between dreams and reality, the most important trait of Emma's character is the inability to separate her dreams from reality, creating the ever-burgeoning cycle of dream-disillusionment, with her

disappointments intensifying with each repetition of the cycle. One knows that a person of Emma's sensitivity can only relive that sequence a limited number of times before crumbling, as she does in the end, by suicide.

These persistent dreams need to be examined more closely as they are an integral part of Emma's personality. A dream dating from her school days is that of a cavalier with a white plume galloping up on a black horse. For a woman of Emma's low social standing, in her time period, such visions are destined to end in disappointment, with Emma assailed by the never-ending sameness of her world. Are her dreams, however, any less monotone than the real world? After she and Rodolphe have made plans to run off together, Emma has dreams of the wonderful new country she sees them inhabiting:

Cependant, sur l'immensité de cet avenir qu'elle se faisait apparaître, rien de particulier ne surgissait; les jours tous magnifiques, se ressemblaient comme des flots; et cela se balançait à l'horizon, infini, harmonieux, bleuâtre et couvert de soleil (p. 201).

The monotony of her dream world, were it to become reality, would not be any less boring than life in Yonville or Tostes. Emma dreamed of living in Yonville, but it turned out to be no better than Tostes; she dreamed of Rouen and suffered the same awakening. Dreams are a dangerous thing to attempt to live, and for Emma they will lead only to disaster.

Emma, of course, does make various attempts at living her dreams. In the area of romantic love, she marries Charles and does not find any of the passion of which she had dreamed. She then becomes Rodolphe's mistress, only to be disappointed and finally deserted. During her affair with Léon, one begins to see the disintegration of Emma's spirit and the dawning realization of her total lack of fulfillment, as in this passage when Emma finds herself before the walls of her convent school in Rouen: "Chaque sourire cachait un bâillement d'ennui, chaque joie une malédiction, tout plaisir son dégoût, et les meilleurs baisers ne vous laissaient sur la lèvre qu'une irréalisable envie d'une volupté plus haute" (p. 290). Emma will therefore never be satisfied and is destined for total dissolution, and she soon begins to feel her dissatisfaction with Léon: "Elle était aussi dégoûtée de lui qu'il était fatigué d'elle. Emma retrouvait dans l'adultère toutes les platitudes du mariage" (p. 296). Part of Emma's basic problem is that she is never moving toward a specific goal but rather is always running from something into a waiting lover's arms.

With such poor living fodder for her illusions, Emma must embellish reality with her dreams. Therefore, after succumbing to Rodolphe and later to Léon, she must cultivate her own passions, and her love, rather than feeding on the lover's charms, feeds only on itself or on Emma's dreams.

According to the well-known platitude, Emma is "in love with love." Thus, we see her writing letters to a Léon who is nothing more than a figment of her imagination, for "en écrivant, elle percevait un autre homme, un fantôme fait de ses plus ardents souvenirs, de ses lectures les plus belles, de ses convoitises les plus fortes ..." (pp. 296-297). When he and Emma have their weekly meetings, she is always disappointed by the real man, only to recreate the Léon of her imagination when back again in Yonville. Emma's dreams will only take her through so many of these disappointing encounters before her psyche gives out in ultimate disillusion.

Emma's dreams, however, are by no means limited to those of romantic love; she also tries to evoke passionate experiences in religion. Both at the convent and later in Yonville during her convalescence, Emma attempts to live in a haze of mysticism, and one may ask why she fails in this attempt where a Saint Teresa of Avila does not. Both see religion in terms of passionate love; Saint Teresa, however, possesses the necessary ingredient which is so blatantly lacking in Emma--a strong, enduring faith in the face of all obstacles. For Emma, religion is just one on the list of things she tries in order to make her life exciting. There is no real commitment on her part, since she is too wrapped up in herself to dedicate her life to anything other than self-gratification.

One other dream which Emma would like to see fulfilled comes at a time when she is feeling remorse over her love affair with Rodolphe. She has great visions of being the wife of a famous surgeon, and Homais furnishes this possibility by convincing Charles to operate on Hippolyte's clubfoot. When this dream is shattered, its failure sends Emma rushing back to Rodolphe. Emma's dreams of fame naturally have to be through her husband since as a woman in nineteenth-century France, she has virtually no ability to gain fame for herself or to change her life in any way, and since she is forced to depend on others in this matter, she is doomed to fail. Compounding this problem is the passive role which Emma plays in her world of dreams. She never sees herself as causing change; it always comes to her, as in the form of her lover riding up to her. Given these circumstances, Emma's only recourse is to wait, and, in all things, she plays the passive role of waiting for something to happen. She waits for romance; she waits for change; she waits for Léon to seduce her. It is interesting to note that Emma does not commit suicide by the more active form of jumping to her death from the attic window when the opportunity presents itself, but simply waits for a poison to take effect. Emma's whole life merely proves that all things do not necessarily come to those who wait; the only thing which comes to Emma is her demise, long-expected by the reader.

Emma, however, is not the only character in the novel suffering from a lack of will, which further explains why no one will be able to help her in her desire for change. She is ruled by her passions and dreams; Charles is ruled by everyone; Léon is dominated by Emma in their relationship. Even when he tires of her and wants to end their liaison he cannot: "Il s'efforçait même à ne pas la chérir; puis, au craquement de ses bottines, il se sentait lâche, comme les ivrognes à la vue des liqueurs fortes" (pp. 288-289). Even Rodolphe has very little strength of will; when Emma asks him for money, he refuses, not because of his very real antipathy for pecuniary demands in love, but simply because he does not have it. Had he had the money, the narrator informs us, Rodolphe would have given Emma the sum she had demanded. That strong cavalier for whom Emma was waiting is not to be found among the men of her acquaintance.

All of these character traits, both in Emma and in those who surround her, point up the fact that her personality will eventually succumb to the pressures placed on it by disillusionment. There is, however, one final quirk in Emma's make-up which supplies the means for her demise. As has already been stated, for her there is no distinction between love and luxury or money. With Léon, for example; Emma will not consent to holding their trysts in a less expensive hotel; the surroundings are as much a part of

their "love" as is Léon himself. She showers him with gifts, just as she had done with Rodolphe, and she surrounds herself with extravagances. Whereas Rodolphe and Léon seduce Emma with promises of love, Lheureux seduces her with luxuries, and Emma's ultimate demise comes as a direct result of her realization of this dichotomy between love and luxury. Neither Léon nor Rodolphe, though swearing their love for her, will lend her money to stave off bankruptcy, in spite of the fact that Emma believes they have the means to help her. Indeed, Rodolphe sees money and love as totally distinct, "une demande pécuniaire, de toutes les bourrasques qui tombent sur l'amour, étant la plus froide et la plus déracinante" (p. 317). With the failure of her dreams, and her illusions about love shattered, Emma is faced with but one choice--suicide. We thus see that Emma did not kill herself vulgarly for financial reasons, as many such as Félicien Marceau believe,³ but rather that these difficulties brought her to the point at which her illusions about love were destroyed.

As Emma is the center of all of the themes in Madame Bovary, she will also determine, whether directly or indirectly, the significance of all symbols studied in this thesis. As has previously been mentioned, blue represents

3. Félicien Marceau, "Emma Bovary," La Revue de Paris, January 1959, p. 38.

her aspirations and dreams; moonlight is her romantic vision; yellow is reality closing in on her. With an understanding of the themes of the novel and of the influence of Emma and her destiny on all symbols, we can proceed to the actual symbolic meaning of light and color in Madame Bovary.

CHAPTER III

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF LIGHT

As has been reiterated numerous times, Emma Bovary's view of the world differs sharply from what the reader of the novel perceives as reality, and the lighting effects described in Madame Bovary reflect this inconsistency. Emma, in her constant dreamlike state, almost literally sees the world through a haze, and her state of mind is reflected in the kinds of light conducive to her imaginings, such as candlelight or moonlight. This light is dim and vague and its ambiguity, like her dreams, is hardly likely to illuminate for Emma the sordid reality of her life. Félicien Marceau states it perfectly, with a bit of humor, when he informs us that he is "frappé de voir combien souvent, dans la description des états d'âme d'Emma, revient le mot 'vague'. C'est le vague, c'est le brouillard qu'elle a dans la tête. Les choses lui apparaissent dans une brume."¹ Emma's awestruck vision of the ball at la Vaubyessard underlines the appeal of dim lighting for her: "Les bougies des candélabres allongeaient des flammes sur les cloches d'argent; les cristaux à facettes, couverts

1. Marceau, p. 42.

d'une buée mate, se renvoyaient des rayons pâles ..."
 (p. 49).

In contrast to the romantic, dim light which is an accomplice in Emma's faulty vision of the world, the narrator plays with bright, glaring light, which is both revealing and uncompromising. It serves to heighten the feeling of immobility and of ennui from which Emma suffers, and it also emphasizes the reality which is ready to engulf her. Pierre Danger, in speaking of light states that "à midi elle révélait le silence et l'immobilité des choses" ² We witness an image of a reality-revealing light when, in order to read Rodolphe's letter, Emma goes up to the attic, where "elle se traîna jusqu'à la mansarde close, dont elle tira le verrou, et la lumière éblouissante jaillit d'un bond" (p. 210). Certainly, Rodolphe's treachery is an ugly bit of reality to be illuminated, and Emma is struck by the force of the sunlight.

It has been stated that the light most favorable to Emma's vision of the world is vague and dim; it most certainly would not be bright sunshine. At the same time, however, neither would total blackness or deep shadows appeal to her, for profound darkness in the novel is very much an evil omen, boding only tragedy. We feel this early in the novel when Emma despairs after the ball at la

2. Danger, p. 99.

Vaubyessard: "L'avenir était un corridor tout noir, et qui avait au fond sa porte bien fermée" (p. 65). Black, as we shall examine in the next chapter, sometimes takes on a dual connotation of both color and light. Here, we have black in the role of darkness and mystery, but the mystery is all for Emma, as she does not know that it hides only her own tragic end, while for the narrator and the knowledgeable reader it holds the promise of death.

This chapter will devote itself in turn to each of the three major lighting categories, Emma's preferred light, revealing light, and darkness, with examples from each one.

Emma's Preferred Light

As far as Emma's misty world is concerned, the damp region of Normandy furnishes the proper weather for developing this particular symbolism. Emma, as time goes on, loses herself more and more in the fog of her own dreams. It is as though with each new difficulty or disappointment she felt obligated to proceed farther into a mist of her own making, and in fact there are few references to fog and mist in Part I, while Parts II and III abound in similar allusions. The visit to la Vaubyessard does provide a good illustration of Emma's seeing the world through a misty haze since "à travers la brume, on distinguait des bâtiments à toit de chaume ..." (p. 48). With this description at the beginning of the visit, it is as if the narrator

were warning us not to take Emma's impressions too seriously and to look for the truth somewhere beyond the curtain of fog which she has thrown up to distract our attention, along with her own. As a matter of fact, this warning should be taken to heart for the entire novel.

Félicité seems to have furnished Marceau's diagnosis of Emma's "brouillard ... dans la tête" discussed previously.³ The servant tells Emma how similar her case is to that of "la Guérine": "'Son mal, à ce qu'il paraît, était une manière de brouillard qu'elle avait dans la tête, et les médecins n'y pouvaient rien, ni le curé non plus" (p. 112). What remedy is there after all for a hazy mind?

When Emma and Rodolphe begin their horseback ride, she looks back down on Yonville:

Emma fermait à demi les paupières pour reconnaître sa maison, et jamais ce pauvre village où elle vivait ne lui avait semblé si petit. De la hauteur où ils étaient, toute la vallée paraissait un immense lac pâle, s'évaporant à l'air. (p. 162).

On this magical outing with Rodolphe, Emma can shroud reality in her dreams, so that even the village becomes a haze.

With the loss of Rodolphe and a long illness, Emma wraps herself in a new mist, the dream of religious ecstasy. She asks for communion, and in watching the preparations,

3. Marceau, p. 42.

"il lui sembla que son être, montant vers Dieu, allait s'anéantir dans cet amour comme un encens allumé qui se dissipe en vapeur" (p. 218). We know, of course, that this is all there is to Emma's dreams--"un encens allumé qui se dissipe en vapeur." It is, however, her being which is compared, by Emma herself, to such an ephemeral phenomenon, thereby illustrating that Emma's dreams and her being are one and the same; one cannot exist without the other. When her dreams "se dissipe en vapeur" so will she.

With the viewing of Lucie de Lammermoor, Emma seems once again to be caught up in the romantic musings of her novel-reading days: "Elle se retrouvait dans les lectures de sa jeunesse, en plein Walter Scott. Il lui semblait entendre, à travers le brouillard, le son des cornemuses écossaises se répéter sur les bruyères" (p. 228). No wonder Emma's head is filled with mist, after having absorbed so many novels of the Scottish moors!

Emma next turns to a love affair with Léon in order to realize her dreams. She, however, merely ends up by finding "toutes les platitudes du mariage" in the relationship (p. 296), and it is only while in Yonville that she finds Léon appealing, having created of him a hero in her imagination. Rouen, at a distance, would be expected to be enveloped in this same dream-haze, and this is indeed the case. Emma watches for the approach of the city on her weekly trips to Rouen, and it appears in this way:

"Descendant tout en amphithéâtre et noyée dans le brouillard, elle s'élargissait au delà des ponts, confusément" (p. 268). The city is thus at first wrapped in fog, both physically and symbolically so, by Emma's dreams, but upon closer examination, it emerges from the haze and from the unreal light cast upon it by Emma's dreams. On the return trip, it does not take long for the city to be clothed in an unreal light nor for Léon to become a perfect lover:

A chaque tournant, on apercevait de plus en plus tous les éclairages de la ville qui faisaient une large vapeur lumineuse au-dessus des maisons confondues. Emma se mettait à genoux sur les coussins, et elle égarait ses yeux dans cet éblouissement. Elle sanglotait, appelait Léon, et lui envoyait des paroles tendres et des baisers qui se perdaient au vent (p. 272).

As Emma gets closer to the reality which is surrounding her, she feels the need to keep herself in a constant haze, not only mentally but physically also, as illustrated by the following passage:

Madame était dans sa chambre. On n'y montait pas. Elle restait là tout le long du jour, engourdie, à peine vêtue, et, de temps à autre, faisant fumer des pastilles du sérail qu'elle avait achetées à Rouen, dans la boutique d'un Algérien (p. 294).

Emma's eyes are forcibly opened to the truth of the world around her the evening after the masked ball in Rouen; it is at this time that she receives news of the impending seizure of her possessions. After leaving the group with whom she passed her night of debauchery, Emma walks by

herself "et peu à peu les figures de la foule, les masques, les quadrilles, les lustres, le souper, ces femmes, tout disparaissait comme des brumes emportées" (p. 298). At the same time, however, Emma's own fog is beginning to lift, for the news of the seizure awaits her, along with the attendant disillusion in the men with whom she has peopled her dreams.

Rousset gives us the following description of Emma's reaction to Rodolphe's refusal to help her:

Mme Bovary a vu Rodolphe pour la dernière fois, elle revient à Yonville, éperdue, pour se donner la mort; ce n'est plus la montée vers l'extase passionnelle, mais la descente, vers le suicide; au cours de cette marche hallucinée, à la nuit tombante, elle se trouve au sommet d'une côte, la même peut-être que naguère, au-dessus du village; elle sort brusquement de son extase tournoyante, "tout disparut. Elle reconnut les lumières des maisons, qui rayonnaient de loin dans le brouillard.

"Alors sa situation, telle qu'un abîme se représenta ... elle descendit la côte en courant" Le retour de l'imaginaire au réel est une chute vers le village, qui, cette fois, sort du brouillard au lieu de s'y résorber; c'est une descente dans l'abîme.⁴

Reality, in the form of the village, is thus now only too visible through the fog, and Emma goes down to meet it.

With her death, Emma fulfills the impression she had had that "son être, montant vers Dieu, allait s'anéantir

4. Jean Rousset, *Forme et signification: Essais sur les structures littéraires de Corneille à Claudel* (Paris: José Corti, 1962), p. 126.

dans cet amour comme un encens allumé qui se dissipe en vapeur" (p. 218). Charles goes in to see Emma's body for the last time:

Les herbes aromatiques fumaient encore, et des tourbillons de vapeur bleuâtre se confondaient au bord de la croisée avec le brouillard qui entraît. Il y avait quelques étoiles, et la nuit était douce.

La cire des cierges tombait par grosses larmes sur les draps du lit. Charles les regardait brûler, fatiguant ses yeux contre le rayonnement de leur flamme jaune.

Des moires frissonnaient sur la robe de satin, blanche comme un clair de lune. Emma disparaissait dessous; et il lui semblait que, s'épandant au dehors d'elle-même, elle se perdait confusément dans l'entourage des choses, dans le silence, dans la nuit, dans le vent qui passait, dans les senteurs humides qui montaient (pp. 339-340).

The fog which had been Emma's dreams, and by extension Emma herself, is thus dissipating, and with Charles's subsequent death, nothing will remain of either.

In the fog with which Emma surrounds herself, she cares mainly for dim lights in the world around her. For this reason, we find her fascinated principally by evening and artificial lighting. Many is the time her fancy takes flight upon beholding the dancing play of light and shadows cast by candlelight. The fascination first reveals itself when we learn that Emma would like to be married "à minuit, aux flambeaux" (p. 27). The candlelight is not reserved solely for an attraction to a romantic love life, for we learn of Emma's beginnings at the convent school that "elle

s'assoupit doucement à la langueur mystique qui s'exhale des parfums de l'autel, de la fraîcheur des bénitiers et du rayonnement des cierges" (p. 37). Emma is simply in love with romance of any kind and is just as capable of having an affair with religion as she is of having one with a man.

Emma's visit to la Vaubyessard becomes the high point of her life in Tostes as life in this château epitomizes everything for which she has always waited. Her bedazzled gaze will not be shocked by a revealing, bright natural light: "Les bougies des candélabres allongeaient des flammes sur les cloches d'argent; les cristaux à facettes, couverts d'une buée mate, se renvoyaient des rayons pâles ..." (p. 49). For Emma, then, the magical light consists mainly of candlelight, thus artificial or weak light and even secondary sources of light, as in the reflections mentioned in the preceding scene. These same types of reflections and candlelight are seen in Emma's visions of Paris:

Paris, plus vague que l'Océan, miroitait ... aux yeux d'Emma dans une atmosphère vermeille
Le monde des ambassadeurs marchait sur des parquets luisants, dans des salons lambrissés de miroirs, autour de tables ovales couvertes d'un tapis de velours à crépines d'or Dans les cabinets de restaurant où l'on soupe après minuit riait, à la clarté des bougies, la foule bigarrée des gens de lettres et des actrices
(p. 60).

Again, in these same dreams of Paris, we are given a strong dose of Emma's confusion of luxury and love. To her, the two are synonymous:

Les soupirs au clair de lune, les longues étreintes, les larmes qui coulent sur les mains qu'on abandonne, toutes les fièvres de la chair et les langueurs de la tendresse ne se séparaient donc pas du balcon des grands châteaux qui sont pleins de loisirs, d'un boudoir à stores de soie avec un tapis bien épais, des jardinières remplies, un lit monté sur une estrade, ni du scintillement des pierres précieuses et des aiguillettes de la livrée (p. 61).

Examining only the lighting effects in the passage, we find that "clair de lune" cannot be separated from "scintillement des pierres précieuses." The romance of a moonlit night goes hand in hand with the luxurious glittering of precious stones, at least in Emma's mind.

In Emma's ennui at life in Tostes, particularly after the ball, the narrator supplies us with an ironic touch on Emma's view of lights. The organ-grinder sometimes stops outside the window with his musical box and mechanical dancing figures: "C'étaient des airs que l'on jouait ailleurs sur les théâtres, que l'on chantait dans les salons, que l'on dansait le soir sous des lustres éclairés, échos du monde qui arrivaient jusqu'à Emma" (p. 67). The fact that these figures and their carnival-like music are a reminder of "lustres éclairés" is actually quite comical, in a certain pathetic way.

With Emma's initial acquisition of a lover in the form of Rodolphe, she reaches great heights of joy, just as she imagines heroines in novels would:

Elle entraît dans quelque chose de merveilleux où tout serait passion, extase, délire; une immensité bleuâtre l'entourait, les sommets du sentiment étincelaient sous sa pensée, et l'existence ordinaire n'apparaissait qu'au loin, tout en bas, dans l'ombre, entre les intervalles de ces hauteurs (p. 167).

In Emma's mind, then, these great heights of feeling glitter in contrast with the shadows of the ordinary world, and she, of course, is above anything ordinary in the "sommets du sentiment." It is to be noted, however, that this ordinary existence appears "entre les intervalles de ces hauteurs." Reality is thus ready to swallow a vulnerable Emma should she fall from the heights she currently inhabits.

How close Emma always is to falling from her heights is emphasized by the view we have of Rodolphe writing her his letter of adieu. He does his composing during the night shortly after their last meeting, and when he has almost finished, the narrator makes this comment: "La mèche des deux bougies tremblait" (p. 208). Like Emma's romantic illusions which the candlelight represents, the candles are very prone to being put out by a wind from outside. Rodolphe here is playing with the delicate equilibrium of Emma's dreams, and it would not be too difficult to push her into total darkness, as he later does.

To keep the symmetry of the novel, Flaubert presents us with another flirtation with mysticism by Emma, this time in Part II. Each one of the three parts of the novel centers around one man and contains one period of religious fervor, the final one in Part III just before Emma's death. In any case, during Emma's illness after Rodolphe's departure, she gives her fantasy free rein upon receiving communion:

Les rideaux de son alcôve se gonflaient mollement, autour d'elle, en façon de nuées, et les rayons des deux cierges brûlant sur la commode lui parurent être des gloires éblouissantes. Alors elle laissa retomber sa tête, croyant entendre dans les espaces le chant des harpes séraphiques et apercevoir en un ciel d'azur, sur un trône d'or, au milieu des saints, tenant des palmes vertes, Dieu le Père tout éclatant de majesté, et qu'un signe faisait descendre vers la terre des anges aux ailes de flamme pour l'emporter dans leurs bras (p. 219).

Once again, it is the candlelight which appeals to Emma's imagination as it had in the convent (p. 37).

This religious period does not last long, and Emma enters into her newest phase in the theater in Rouen where she meets Léon again. As usual, Emma is dazzled by the wonderful new scene before her as she was at la Vaubyessard. The lighting, though perhaps bright, is of an unreal nature, the rays being cast from the many-faceted chandelier: "Cependant, les bougies de l'orchestre s'allumèrent; le lustre descendit du plafond, versant, avec

le rayonnement de ses facettes, une gaieté subite dans la salle ..." (p. 228).

The romance promised by this artificial lighting so favored by Emma having failed to materialize, we find her in agony after the consumption of arsenic. This same type of misleading light is present when Berthe is brought in to see her dying mother:

Elle considérait avec étonnement la chambre tout en désordre, et clignait des yeux, éblouie par les flambeaux qui brûlaient sur les meubles. Ils lui rappelaient sans doute les matins du jour de l'an ou de la mi-carême, quand ainsi réveillée de bonne heure à la clarté des bougies, elle venait dans le lit de sa mère pour y recevoir ses étrennes ... (p. 325)..

It is thus not only Emma who is fooled by the appealing appearance of burning candles; Berthe also sees the world in a far more pleasing light, due to their presence.

Emma, in the end, is ironically granted her wish to be "married" at midnight by candlelight, for her dead body is dressed in her wedding gown, and the "guests" are confronted with the following scene:

La chambre, quand ils entrèrent, était toute pleine d'une solennité lugubre. Il y avait sur la table à ouvrage, recouverte d'une serviette blanche, cinq ou six petites boules de coton dans un plat d'argent, près d'un gros crucifix, entre deux chandeliers qui brûlaient (p. 330).

Apart from artificial illumination, there is another form of dim light which strikes a sentimental chord in Emma--starlight and moonlight, forms to evoke a sigh from any romantic breast. On only the second appearance of

stars, however, the reader is given a hint of the very weak base Emma has for romance. It is in the description of the spectacular confection for Charles and Emma's wedding reception: "A la base, c'était un carré bleu figurant un temple avec portiques, colonnades et statuette de stuc tout autour, dans des niches constellées d'étoiles en papier doré ..." (p. 30). The stars in Emma's romantic longings are like these paper stars; they will not last, and she will never have the romantic fulfillment for which she yearns.

Naturally, in the pictures in the keepsakes Emma looks at while still at the convent school, it is often a question of English ladies who, "rêvant sur des sofas près d'un billet décacheté, contemplaient la lune, à demi drapée d'un rideau noir" (p. 39). This image then becomes a part of her dreams.

Emma, in her disappointment over her honeymoon, feels that in a romantic spot they could have appreciated the sweetness of their new life as "le soir, sur la terrasse des villas, seuls et les doigts confondus, on regarde les étoiles en faisant des projets" (p. 42). Emma is never content with the present and is always dreaming of the future or feeling nostalgia about the past, and even in this ideal dream picture which she paints for herself of a couple enjoying their honeymoon while looking at the stars, they are making plans for the future, rather than enjoying the moment for itself.

Emma, in her "vast" experience, knows that moonlight is conducive to love and decides to try it on her flagging "romance" with her husband:

[D]'après des théories qu'elle croyait bonnes, elle voulut se donner de l'amour. Au clair de lune, dans le jardin, elle récitait tout ce qu'elle savait par coeur de rimes passionnées et lui chantait en soupirant des adagios mélancoliques; mais elle se trouvait ensuite aussi calme qu'auparavant, et Charles n'en paraissait ni plus amoureux ni plus remué (p. 45).

Emma's problem, as is hinted to us in this passage, is that her theories are not correct; one cannot create love by moonlight and poetry.

In spite of this fact, Emma continues to be dazzled by the moonlight, and we know that she must be deeply impressed by the conversation between "un cavalier en habit bleu" and "une jeune femme pâle" at the ball at la Vaubyessard when they discuss Italy and "le Colisée au clair de lune" (p. 53).

Because of Emma's faulty view of the world, she is quite impressionable when it comes to love, and Rodolphe takes full advantage of that fact; he knows just what clichés to use in order to win her heart. At the Comices, he declares: "'[Q]ue de fois, à la vue d'un cimetière, au clair de lune, je me suis demandé si je ne ferais pas mieux d'aller rejoindre ceux qui sont à dormir ...'" (p. 142). Rodolphe knows very well that for Emma moonlight symbolizes all that is romantic, and he uses this knowledge to full

advantage by parodying romantic sentiment to her. Later, he uses the same appeal to the moon in attempting to woo her: "La nuit, toutes les nuits, je me relevais, j'arrivais jusqu'ici, je regardais votre maison, le toit qui brillait sous la lune ..." (p. 160).

Once Rodolphe has won Emma, he no longer needs to appeal to her through romantic phrases, and it is Emma herself who takes on sentimental poses, much to his discomfiture. She begins speaking of her mother and of Rodolphe's also:

Rodolphe l'avait perdue depuis vingt ans. Emma, néanmoins, l'en consolait avec des mièvreries de langage, comme on eût fait à un marmot abandonné, et même lui disait quelquefois, en regardant la lune:

--Je suis sûre que là-haut, ensemble, elles approuvent notre amour (pp. 174-175).

This scene, in fact, would be quite comical if played on stage. Who could help envisioning the two mothers sitting up there on the moon nodding in approval of their children's illicit love affair?

Starlight naturally comes into play in Emma's dreams of life with Rodolphe in some vague tropical paradise which they will inhabit after running away together, "et leur existence serait facile et large comme leurs vêtements de soie, toute chaude et étoilée comme les nuits douces qu'ils contempleraiient" (p. 201).

This joint departure will never take place however, and we see a strange type of moonlight on their last evening together, not at all like the bland one of Emma's dreams:

La lune toute ronde et couleur de pourpre se levait à ras de terre, au fond de la prairie. Elle montait vite entre les branches des peupliers, qui la cachaient de place en place, comme un rideau noir, troué. Puis elle parut, éclatante de blancheur, dans le ciel vide qu'elle éclairait; et alors, se ralentissant, elle laissa tomber sur la rivière une grande tache, qui faisait une infinité d'étoiles; et cette lueur d'argent semblait s'y tordre jusqu'au fond, à la manière d'un serpent sans tête couvert d'écailles lumineuses. Cela ressemblait aussi à quelque monstrueux candélabre, d'où ruisselaient, tout du long des gouttes de diamant en fusion (p. 203).

Emma's initially rather harmless dreams seem to have taken on rather nightmarish proportions, with this romantic moon creating a headless snake and a monstrous candelabrum.

Certainly, this is no longer the romantic "clair de lune" witnessed up to now. Pierre Danger refers to this scene in saying:

C'est alors le spectacle extraordinaire des jeux de la lumière sur l'eau: des taches lumineuses changeantes, fugitives prennent les formes les plus étranges, évoquant au passage des symboles vaguement érotiques, les courbes se dénouent sans cesse et se renouent dans une sorte de délire baroque, figurant le désir exacerbé d'Emma et la volupté qui l'étouffe.⁵

Emma's dreams and aspirations have been invaded by erotic desires and voluptuousness, thus creating the bizarre forms seen here. Her innocent schoolgirl dreams of romance have

5. Danger, p. 262.

received this added dimension of eroticism; her new knowledge of "love" thus does nothing to erase this tendency to dream, but rather adds to it.

The sight of the moon remains capable of stirring Emma even after Rodolphe's abandonment, as it does during the presentation of Lucie de Lammermoor: "Mais personne sur la terre ne l'avait aimée d'un pareil amour. Il ne pleurerait pas comme Edgar, le dernier soir, au clair de lune, lorsqu'ils se disaient: 'A demain; à demain! ...'" (pp. 229-230). Emma's ability to be caught up in a dream by the scene she is witnessing is attested to by the fact that she identifies so totally with what is happening on stage, to the extent that she calls the actor by his real name, thinking that he truly feels the sentiments he is expressing on the stage. She is only too willing to imagine any sentiment of Edgar's as being for herself.

With Emma's new love affair with Léon, we find a forced nature in the romance; it is very reminiscent of Emma's reciting verses to Charles in the garden by moonlight in order to stimulate feelings of love in herself and response in her husband (p. 45). The scene takes place between Léon and Emma in a boat on the river: "Une fois, la lune parut; alors ils ne manquèrent pas à faire des phrases, trouvant l'astre mélancolique et plein de poésie ..." (p. 262). The moonlit scene calls for "phrases," so that is what the young couple supplies, but the narrator lends a

cynical turn to his own sentence by leaving out what these "phrases" are. He does not even feel the need to let us know what was said, as we can fill in these clichés for ourselves. Emma finds the need for more clichés of a similar nature when writing to Léon, in order to keep the fires of passion burning:

Ils en vinrent à parler plus souvent de choses indifférentes à leur amour; et, dans les lettres qu'Emma lui envoyait, il était question de fleurs, de vers, de la lune et des étoiles, ressources naïves d'une passion affaiblie, qui essayait de s'aviver à tous les secours extérieurs (p. 288).

Emma, unfortunately, did not learn from her earlier experience with Charles that the moon, the stars, and romantic verses are not enough to stir the heart.

This interlude with Léon shows us the erotic element which has entered her romantic dreams: "[B]rûlée plus fort par cette flamme intime que l'adultère avivait, haletante, émue, tout en désir, elle ouvrait sa fenêtre, aspirait l'air froid, éparpillait au vent sa chevelure trop lourde, et, regardant les étoiles, souhaitait des amours de prince" (p. 295). Since Emma is at home at the time, Léon, so far away in Rouen, seems capable of providing for her needs, and when Emma writes to him, from this distance, he takes on all of the attributes of the man of her dreams: "Il habitait la contrée bleuâtre où les échelles de soie se balancent à des balcons, sous le souffle des fleurs, dans la clarté de la lune." The narrator calls incidents like

these "élans d'amour vague" (p. 297), and the vague light supplied to the dream by the moon would certainly contribute to this feeling.

It is after Emma's death that we receive a final view of the moon, in a totally ironic and cynical fashion. Justin, in his great young love for Emma, reminiscent, as we have already seen, of Flaubert's for Elisa Schlésinger, goes out to Emma's grave that night, after she has been buried: "Sur la fosse, entre les sapins, un enfant pleurait agenouillé, et sa poitrine, brisée par les sanglots, haletait dans l'ombre, sous la pression d'un regret immense plus doux que la lune et plus insondable que la nuit" (p. 347). Certainly, Lamartine could not supply us with a more heartrendingly romantic scene than this one, but Flaubert sees to it that the scene is shattered when Lestiboudois chases him from the cemetery for stealing his potatoes. Even in death, then, Emma's dreams are shattered, for here is her faithful lover guarding her body in death running away as a suspected potato thief.

Revealing Light

In contrast to these deceptions, there is the bright revealing light illuminating reality. This light, when it is direct, will play no tricks on Emma, but predictably she seems rather infrequently to encounter this beacon of truth. For the greater part of the novel, Emma is able to

avoid reality and for this reason when she encounters sunlight it is usually filtered, dispersed or avoided in some way. For Emma, full sunlight and bright light in the present are too revealing of reality and therefore quite unbearable. In her dreams, however, she is able to give romantic attributes to the sun, probably because she has read novels about the Mediterranean or the tropics, such as Paul et Virginie. In her reminiscences and projections of the future, the sun also takes on quite gentle characteristics.

We shall first look at instances of illumination in its negative aspect, shedding light on reality. Charles, oblivious to any romantic longings, has no fear of sunlight and rides in it all day on his rounds. In his early married days in Tostes, after bidding a watching Emma good-bye, he is enormously happy "avec le soleil sur ses épaules et l'air du matin à ses narines ..." (p. 35). Charles is not bothered by the world around him, nor does he question his own merit; it is Emma who will see him revealed as the mediocre being that he is.

Emma, after la Vaubyessard, finds life in Tostes more and more unbearable, particularly during the winter. The light only serves to emphasize the sameness of existence in this boring village: "Les carreaux, chaque matin, étaient chargés de givre, et la lumière, blanchâtre à travers eux, comme par des verres dépolis, quelquefois ne³

variait pas de la journée" (p. 66). The passage of the light through the frost tends to heighten the effect of immutability since one cannot see out to provide some semblance of variety. During sunshine, frost and snow would also brighten the sunlight through reflection, thereby shedding greater light on Emma's ennui. Though Yonville is to be her savior, the light coming through the windows of her bedroom on her first tour of the house is only too reminiscent of that "left behind" in Tostes: "Dans la chambre, au premier, un jour blanchâtre passait par les fenêtres sans rideaux" (p. 87).

Emma does however latch onto a dream, in the form of Léon who begins to take on more and more attributes of her perfect hero. We witness this during the walk they take to see Berthe at the wet-nurse's house. It must be noted, however, that this is a very sunny day, and the two are walking beneath a bright noonday sun. There must therefore be some hint of reality in the scene, and it comes in the form of a combining of light and color on the river: "le soleil traversait d'un rayon les petits globules bleus des ondes qui se succédaient en se crevant ..." (p. 97). Blue, as will be detailed more closely in the next chapter, represents Emma's dreams and her higher aspirations. The sunlight here appears to be bursting the blue bubbles, surely an apt metaphor, if a bit hackneyed, for the effect

of reality upon Emma's dreams, which, like the bubbles, will succeed each other as each is burst by reality.

After the visit with the priest, during which nothing has been accomplished, Emma returns home to a by-now familiar and depressing light form: "Le jour blanchâtre des carreaux s'abaissait doucement avec des ondulations" (p. 118).

Rodolphe, like Charles, has no fear of reality, and as a man who knows how to go after what he wants, he again exploits it to his own advantage. He sees Emma as hankering after love and he will use this knowledge to seduce her; he can therefore look upon her face in the full light of the sun: "Il se détachait en pleine lumière ..." (p. 139).

During the horseback ride on which Rodolphe possesses Emma, most of it is spent in a dreamlike state on her part. The scene does provide from time to time, though, a gentle hint of the reality which will never leave Emma's life, much as she tries to avoid it: "Quelquefois, dans un écartement des nuées, sous un rayon de soleil, on apercevait au loin les toits d'Yonville, avec les jardins au bord de l'eau, les cours, les murs, et le clocher de l'église" (p. 162). Though Emma may seem to leave for a short while the ugly reality represented by Yonville, it will always be waiting for her, as the narrator has subtly indicated here, showing sunlight illuminating reality through the clouds with which Emma has surrounded herself.

Immediately after the operation on Hippolyte's clubfoot, before it is known what a disaster it truly was, Homais writes an article of praise for the Fanal de Rouen in which he claims that "la lumière ... commence à pénétrer dans nos campagnes" (p. 182). Yes, the light of reality is beginning to penetrate more and more into Emma's life, but when it dawns in its full strength, she will not be able to bear it and will become a victim to this very light on which Homais thrives.

The full light of reality is soon shed on the catastrophic results of Charles's operation on Hippolyte. After hearing from a distance the screams emitted during the amputation of the stableboy's leg, Charles and Emma hear a noise on the sidewalk: "Charles regarda; et, à travers la jalousie baisée, il aperçut au bord des halles, en plein soleil, le docteur Canivet qui s'essuyait le front avec son foulard" (pp. 190-191).

Emma's next great disappointment comes in the letter in which Rodolphe breaks off their relationship. She goes up to the attic after reading it, and her opening of the window is like opening Pandora's box for the light of reality comes rushing in: "Les ardoises laissaient tomber d'aplomb une chaleur lourde, qui lui serraient les tempes et l'étouffaient; elle se traîna jusqu'à la mansarde close, dont elle tira le verrou, et la lumière éblouissante jaillit d'un bond" (p. 210).

Emma soon advances closer to the window and feels pulled toward the ground below her. Jean-Pierre Richard feels that suicide at this moment would be an acquiescence to the liquid imagery in her life:

Quand Emma, abandonnée par Rodolphe, veut se jeter de la fenêtre de son grenier, elle se sent physiquement attirée par le vide; un vertige liquide la possède: "il lui semblait que le sol de la place oscillant s'élevait le long des murs" Elle se tenait "au bord, presque suspendue, entourée d'un grand espace ... Elle n'avait qu'à céder, qu'à se laisser prendre". La mort n'est qu'un acquiescement à cette marée liquide qui, tout du long, a soutenu à la fois et absorbé sa vie.⁶

There definitely is an invitation to a liquid acquiescence, but there is also a bright light pulling Emma toward this assent. The entire paragraph from which Richard quoted reads as follows:

Le rayon lumineux qui montait d'en bas directement tirait vers l'abîme le poids de son corps. Il lui semblait que le sol de la place oscillant s'élevait le long des murs, et que le plancher s'inclinait par le bout, à la manière d'un vaisseau qui tangue. Elle se tenait tout au bord, presque suspendue, entourée d'un grand espace. Le bleu du ciel l'envahissait, l'air circulait dans sa tête creuse, elle n'avait qu'à céder, qu'à se laisser prendre; et le ronflement du tour ne discontinuait pas, comme une voix furieuse qui l'appelait (p. 211).

It is thus the light of the sun pulling Emma downward toward suicide, revealing the disillusion life holds for her. Ironically, it is Charles who, by calling her, pulls her

6. Jean-Pierre Richard, "La Création de la forme chez Flaubert," Littérature et sensation (Paris: Seuil, 1954), p. 141.

away from this vision of reality and prevents her suicide, at least for the time being.

Emma recovers physically from the loss of Rodolphe, but she is well on the way to being overcome emotionally by the reality ready to swamp her. Therefore, the reality images present during the mad cab ride of seduction with Léon are hardly surprising: "Une fois, au milieu du jour, en pleine campagne, au moment où le soleil dardait le plus fort contre les vieilles lanternes argentées, une main nue passa sous les petits rideaux de toile jaune et jeta des déchirures de papier ..." (pp. 250-251). Not only is the sun shining brightly upon Emma's hand during her newest romantic dream, but yellow curtains are quite visible, and yellow, as we shall see later, is the color which symbolizes reality. Actually, it is quite a fitting symbolism since yellow most closely approximates our conception of the sun's color.

The next two cases to be examined of disillusionment represented by the clear light of day both concern Léon. After asking him for the money she needs to cover her debts, Emma sets out to return to Yonville: "Il faisait beau; c'était un de ces jours du mois de mars clairs et âpres, où le soleil reluit dans un ciel tout blanc" (p. 304). The sun is saying that Léon will not come to Emma's aid, as the reader and the narrator both already know, and the next day just before three o'clock, the appointed hour

of his arrival in Yonville, Emma asks mère Rolet for the time:

La mère Rolet sortit, leva les doigts de sa main droite du côté que le ciel était le plus clair, et rentra lentement en disant:

--Trois heures, bientôt (p. 313).

Again, Emma refuses to regard the evidence around her, and is once more disillusioned soon afterwards to learn that Léon has not come to help her.

Just before asking the time, we find Emma lost in reverie about the past. She remembers the sunny day she and Léon walked to mère Rolet's house:

Elle se souvenait ... Un jour, avec Léon ... Oh! comme c'était loin ... Le soleil brillait sur la rivière et les clématites embaumaient ... Alors, emportée dans ses souvenirs comme dans un torrent qui bouillonne, elle arriva bientôt à se rappeler la journée de la veille (p. 313).

The sunshine of that long-ago day had been attempting to illuminate reality for Emma, just as it did the day before and will do again in a few minutes, as seen above. As usual, Emma closes her eyes, but very soon they will be opened, only to be closed again in death.

The other side of the symbolism of the sun and bright light is actually somewhat benign compared to what we have observed thus far. It retains its ability to show things as they truly are, but quite often one can avoid a direct confrontation with this glaring truth. Emma, for example, manages to keep herself, for the most part, from

direct contact with the sun's glaring, truth-revealing rays. Certainly, early in the action of the novel she refuses to see Charles for what he really is, undoubtedly preferring her own vision of a cavalier riding up on a black horse to rescue her from her dreary farm life. After one of Charles's visits, Emma accompanies him outside as he is leaving, but she goes back for her umbrella to protect herself from melting snow: "L'ombrelle, de soie gorge-de-pigeon, que traversait le soleil, éclairait de reflets mobiles la peau blanche de sa figure" (p. 19). Ostensibly, Emma gets the umbrella to protect her from the drops of water, but symbolically she is shading herself from the truth as provided by the sunshine.

The noonday walk with Léon in the bright sunlight takes on some of this same symbolism, with Léon putting himself in the shade, probably along with Emma; in this way Emma symbolically does not see him for what he is:

Il était midi; les maisons avaient leurs volets fermés, et les toits d'ardoises, qui reluisaient sous la lumière âpre du ciel bleu, semblaient à la crête de leurs pignons faire pétiller des étincelles. Un vent lourd soufflait. Emma se sentait faible en marchant; les cailloux du trottoir la blessaient, elle hésita si elle ne s'en retournerait pas chez elle, ou entrerait quelque part pour s'asseoir.

A ce moment, M. Léon sortit d'une porte voisine avec une liasse de papiers sous son bras. Il vint la saluer et se mit à l'ombre devant la boutique de Lheureux, sous la tente grise qui avançait (pp. 93-94).

Emma, never one for the sun, is about to return home until Léon arrives and places them both in the shade preventing the truth from penetrating in the sun's rays. Ironically, this shade is directly in front of Lheureux's shop, and Lheureux is another man about whom Emma will be unable to see the truth until it is too late.

Though Emma cannot bear the sun in the present, in the past it becomes a harmless image, a sign of happier times, as when, after Léon's departure for Paris, Emma cannot help thinking of their past "bons soleils" (p. 126).

The narrator, of course, has his ironic touches to add to the manipulation of lighting effects, for example in Homais' description of the Comices agricoles. The entire scene between Rodolphe and Emma while watching the awards is a mere comical parody of a love scene, with Homais adding the finishing touches. Emma had always had dreams of the tropics, for example based on Paul et Virginie (p. 36), and the article by the pharmacist tells of the tropical scene in Normandy during these wonderful Comices: "Où courait cette foule, comme les flots d'une mer en furie, sous les torrents d'un soleil tropical qui répandait sa chaleur sur nos guérets?" (p. 158).

When Rodolphe returns six weeks after the day of the Comices, he finds Emma at home without Charles and realizes that absence has "made her heart grow fonder." The indirect lighting of the sun contributes to an unreal golden

effect: "Le jour tombait. Les petits rideaux de mousseline, le long des vitres, épaississaient le crépuscule, et la dorure du baromètre, sur qui frappait un rayon de soleil, étalait des feux dans la glace, entre les découpures du polypier" (p. 159). This light, with its over-brightness, would seem to have a blinding effect rather than a revealing one, and Emma is surely blinded and dazzled by Rodolphe.

After receiving a letter from her father, Emma is assailed by a fit of nostalgia, and in her reminiscences, the sun is more of a wonderful golden haze than a bright light: "Elle se rappela des soirs d'été tout pleins de soleil Il y avait sous sa fenêtre une ruche à miel, et quelquefois les abeilles, tournoyant dans la lumière, frappaient contre les carreaux comme des balles d'or rebondissantes" (p. 177).

This sun, which strikes the reader as more of a haze in Emma's mind than a true orb in the sky is seen again in her dreams of the fantastic life she and Rodolphe will have together, in a tropical paradise, of course:

Cependant, sur l'immensité de cet avenir qu'elle se faisait apparaître, rien de particulier ne surgissait; les jours, tous magnifiques, se ressemblaient comme des flots; et cela se balançait à l'horizon, infini, harmonieux, bleuâtre et couvert de soleil (p. 201).

As will be stressed in this work, were Emma given the chance to live this dream, it would be just as monotonous a life as her own, emphasized by expressions such as "les jours ...

se ressemblaient comme des flots" In the case of such a dream's coming true, this same sun would become a harsh one revealing the sameness and the ennui surrounding Emma.

Emma's hiding from reality and the sun continues into Part III, and we learn that the day of the cab seduction scene the sun is shining brightly (p. 250). Emma, however, is temporarily protected from the sun by having entered the cab, just as she entered the woods with Rodolphe just as the sun was coming out (p. 163). Shortly afterwards we do learn however that Emma's hand comes out into the daylight (p. 251), thus indicating to the reader at least that reality is beginning to encroach upon Emma's life, and of course this pitiless reality does have its way in the end driving Emma toward her death, the promise of which is symbolized, traditionally enough, by darkness and deep shadow.

Darkness

Darkness and shadow can symbolize mystery, as it does in the form of the color black as we shall see later, but it is for Emma's point of view that the mystery function applies. For the reader, there is no mystery at all about the fact that Emma's fate is early death since there is no way she will be able to handle the disillusionment life will mete out to her. The same symbol, therefore, often has the same meaning for both Emma and the reader. The

reader simply has more knowledge than the heroine who does not realize that behind this mystery is death.

Emma herself often views her depression and boredom as being dark, and this is quite apropos for another reason, since it is depression which leads to suicide, thus joining the death image expressed by the darkness symbolism. The shadows of boredom are seen in contrast with the romantic lights of a ball when Emma compares what she believes to be her school friends' lives with her own:

A la ville, avec le bruit des rues, le bourdonnement des théâtres et les clartés du bal, elles avaient des existences où le coeur se dilate, où les sens s'épanouissent. Mais elle, sa vie était froide comme un grenier dont la lucarne est au nord, et l'ennui, araignée silencieuse, filait sa toile dans l'ombre à tous les coins de son coeur (p. 46).

Emma's opportunity to live this magical existence at a ball does not last long, and she will be forced back into her former feelings of ennui, but they will be worse in light of her memories of la Vaubyessard. It is therefore fitting that upon retiring to their room in the château after the festivities, Charles goes to bed and Emma places herself at the open window: "La nuit était noire" (p. 55). This is only a small indication of how black things will seem to Emma once back in Tostes with all of the glory of this magical evening behind her.

Things become even more somber however when, after waiting and hoping for a full year, Emma realizes she is

not going to be invited back to la Vaubyessard: "L'avenir était un corridor tout noir, et qui avait au fond sa porte bien fermée" (p. 65). Emma is totally hemmed in by her dull life, and even the door at the end of her dark future is closed to her. Fortunately, this is so, for if it were opened, Emma would see that it has been hiding her complete disillusionment and death.

Life may appear more hopeful to Emma in Yonville, for it is there that she meets Léon, a soul with whom she thinks she can sympathize. She is particularly joyful upon the realization that he loves her, but the narrator immediately inserts a warning note for the reader: "Le lendemain, à la nuit tombante, elle reçut la visite du sieur Lheureux, marchand de nouveautés" (p. 105). It is in large part by the hand of Lheureux that night does close in on Emma, and the narrator is hinting that though she is happy at this moment, forces are constantly working against Emma.

When Léon leaves Yonville for Paris without any love relationship having developed between them, Emma's feelings are expressed numerous times by darkness metaphors: "Le lendemain fut, pour Emma, une journée funèbre. Tout lui parut enveloppé par une atmosphère noire qui flottait confusément sur l'extérieur des choses ..." (p. 126). We learn of what occurs to her love for Léon with time: "L'amour, peu à peu s'éteignit par l'absence, le regret

s'étouffa sous l'habitude; et cette lueur d'incendie qui empourprait son ciel pâle se couvrit de plus d'ombre et s'effaça par degrés" (p. 127). At first, Emma interprets her aversion for Charles as greater need for Léon, "mais, comme l'ouragan soufflait toujours, et que la passion se consuma jusqu'aux cendres, et qu'aucun secours ne vint, qu'aucun soleil ne parut, il fut de tous côtés nuit complète, et elle demeura perdue dans un froid horrible qui la traversait" (pp. 127-128). The greater her depression as time goes on, the darker the images become, culminating with the aforementioned "nuit complète."

Rodolphe appears on the scene to seemingly pull Emma from the darkness of her depression, and in his talented efforts to seduce her, he uses images of darkness and light. While watching the Comices, he tells Emma that it is possible to find happiness, and it comes in the form of a person:

On ne s'explique pas, on se devine. On s'est entrevu dans ses rêves. (Et il la regardait.) Enfin, il est là, ce trésor que l'on a tant cherché, là, devant vous; il brille, il étincelle. Cependant on en doute encore, on n'ose y croire; on en reste ébloui, comme si l'on sortait des ténèbres à la lumière (p. 147).

It would be better for Emma not to believe that she has found this treasure, for it glitters falsely and only causes her greater disillusionment, thus plunging her back into the gloom from which she thought she was emerging. With each disappointment, however, the gloom becomes greater

until the day of her death when she will never more emerge from it.

After Emma has succumbed to Rodolphe's seduction in the woods, it appears that she has attained exactly what Rodolphe had promised above:

Elle entraît dans quelque chose de merveilleux où tout serait passion, extase, délire; une immensité bleuâtre l'entourait, les sommets du sentiment étincelaient sous sa pensée, et l'existence ordinaire n'apparaissait qu'au loin, tout en bas, dans l'ombre, entre les intervalles de ces hauteurs (p. 167).

Emma creates for herself the sparkling which Rodolphe had promised and looks back on the shadows from which he had said she would emerge. Unfortunately, once Rodolphe's temporary fling is over, Emma will fall back more deeply into darkness.

The two lovers take to meeting at night in the garden behind the Bovary house, and we learn that these shadows which Emma thinks she has left behind are waiting for her: "Des massifs d'ombre, çà et là, se bombaient dans l'obscurité, et parfois, frissonnant tous d'un seul mouvement, ils se dressaient et se penchaient comme d'immenses vagues noires qui se fussent avancées pour les recouvrir" (p. 173). It is only Emma in fact who will be swallowed up by these black waves, as Rodolphe would be impervious to any disappointment in their love affair; his feelings, after all, are not truly involved in the eventual outcome of their romance.

Emma is symbolically engulfed by the darkness of disillusionment when Rodolphe writes to her canceling both their projected departure and their love affair. They see each other for the last time late at night just before Rodolphe goes home to write the fatal letter, and upon leaving "il la vit avec son vêtement blanc peu à peu s'évanouir dans l'ombre comme un fantôme ..." (p. 205). Emma's naiveté about her lover, as symbolized by the white, is swallowed up by the ever-waiting darkness.

During the long convalescence from the unspecified illness brought on by Rodolphe's flight from her, Emma watches out her window for the routine return of small events: "Le plus considérable était, le soir, l'arrivée de l'Hirondelle. Alors l'aubergiste criait et d'autres voix répondaient, tandis que le falot d'Hippolyte, qui cherchait des coffres sur la bâche, faisait comme une étoile dans l'obscurité" (p. 218). Emma's spirits have reached an entirely new low ebb when the mere sight of a stableboy's lantern in the dark is a high point in her depressing life. It is, however, an indication of travel, as signified by the arrival of l'Hirondelle, and Emma certainly would like to be traveling herself. Perhaps she is also looking for Rodolphe and hoping he will return.

Rodolphe's disappearance leaves a void which Emma finds it necessary to fill, and after her brief flirtation with religion Léon comes along once more. This time, he

has overcome his former reticence and promptly declares his love to her, causing an intimate conversation between the two of them. Though it is obvious things will develop into Emma's second extramarital affair, the narrator gives us a somber warning: "Par la fenêtre à guillotine, on voyait un coin de ciel noir entre des toits pointus" (p. 241). The choice of a "fenêtre à guillotine" surely is no accident, and the pointed roofs are very evocative of the summits of sentiment surrounded by shadows as seen by Emma after she was seduced by Rodolphe (p. 167). We all know that Emma is doomed to the valleys rather than the peaks.

The love affair does begin, however, and it continues with a regularity of clockwork, every Thursday, with the same actions and reactions every week. After leaving Léon, Emma does the same thing every Thursday evening: "Elle allait rue de la Comédie, chez un coiffeur, se faire arranger ses bandeaux. La nuit tombait; on allumait le gaz dans la boutique" (pp. 271-272). Soon Emma's comedy will be over, and when night finally closes in, there will no longer be anyone to light the lamps for her.

Upon learning that all of her belongings are up for sale, Emma really does begin to witness night falling and darkness closing in on her; for instance, when she goes to see Guillaumin in desperation, "le ciel était sombre et un peu de neige tombait" (p. 307). Emma is close to despairing of ever finding the money to forestall her

creditors, but she remembers Rodolphe: "Tout à coup elle se frappa le front, poussa un cri, car le souvenir de Rodolphe, comme un grand éclair dans une nuit sombre, lui avait passé dans l'âme. Il était si bon, si délicat, si généreux!"

(p. 314). The simile in this description is quite well chosen, because lightning only brightens the night sky for a flash; certainly Rodolphe will not keep the night from swallowing Emma--he sent her out into it once before.

After leaving Rodolphe, Emma suffers from hallucinations, and in the midst of them the narrator informs us:

"La nuit tombait, des corneilles volaient" (p. 319). This is thus the end for Emma, and, emerging from her delirium, she sees the truth, prompting her to go after the arsenic.

With her death, however, Emma seems to fall into the greatest depths of darkness possible, for her death is apparently heralded by the Blind Man, and when she realizes he has come, she calls out his name: "Et Emma se mit à rire, d'un rire atroce, frénétique, désespéré, croyant voir la face hideuse du misérable, qui se dressait dans les ténèbres éternelles comme un épouvantement" (p. 333).

Darkness, thus, comes triply for Emma: (1) in the guise of the Blind Man who is perpetually in the dark, (2) in the form of the death that he announces, (3) in the eternal darkness that looms before her eyes.

Summary

Throughout the novel, we see a constant play of light and shadow, just as Emma suffers many ups and downs in her battle between dreams and reality. Though Emma herself is drawn to ambiguous, in-between types of light, that are neither truly bright nor truly dark, it is the bright light of reality which brings about her end, the blackness of death.

CHAPTER IV

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF COLOR

Even before examining the symbolic connotations of color in Madame Bovary, it will be useful to learn just how important color is to Gustave Flaubert. With his predilection for description, he always paints an extremely vivid picture, and all of Flaubert's works have tremendous visual appeal. The strident images of Salammbô immediately come to mind; but Madame Bovary also hits us with a constant barrage of colors, in far greater numbers than one would expect to find considering the banality of the theme and the locale treated. This high frequency in the appearance of colors has already been alluded to in Chapter I, in reference to Allen's article which states that some colors appear as much as eleven times more often than usual.¹ As far as the dreariness of the topic of Madame Bovary is concerned, Flaubert would have an answer to this charge: "L'Art n'a rien à voir avec l'artiste. Tant pis s'il n'aime pas le rouge, le vert ou le jaune; toutes les couleurs sont belles, il s'agit de les peindre."²

1. Allen, "L'Atmosphere," No. 33, p. 17.

2. Gustave Flaubert, Correspondance 1850-1859, Vol. XIII of Oeuvres complètes de Gustave Flaubert (Paris: Club de l'Honnête homme, 1974), p. 225.

One possible reason for Flaubert's obsession with color has been advanced by Doctor Galerant. He claims that Flaubert insists on using "adjectifs décrivant la couleur, traduisant ainsi l'obsession des visions colorées: le 'dreamy state' caractéristique des épilepsies du lobe temporo-occipital mis en évidence par les Anglo-Saxons, il y a peu d'années."³ Whether the source of these visions be physical or purely inspirational is merely an academic question. What is important is how the author uses them in the work at hand. Our interest will lie therefore in the symbolic aspect of Flaubert's visions, not in why he had them.

This direction of study will carry throughout the thesis. While an author's life and his intentions may be very interesting, what is of major import in a work of art is how it affects its reader, since most works are destined for an audience of some kind. A fictional text exists not to remind the reader necessarily of the author's own life but rather to evoke a response, usually emotional, on the part of the reader. What we will be examining then is the affective value of colors and their symbolism in Madame Bovary. Actually, Flaubert is well aware of the affective value of color in nature. According to him before writing of what one has seen, one must digest all of the details of

3. Docteur Galerant, "Flaubert vu par les médecins d'aujourd'hui," Europe, 485-87 (1969), 108-109.

the event or scene. . After all, the author must be well aware of how a given situation has affected him before attempting to re-create the same reactions in a reader. When Louise Colet proposes a visit to the Salpêtrière so that she might write about it immediately afterward, she receives the following recommendation from Flaubert:

Ce n'est pas une bonne méthode que de voir ainsi tout de suite, pour écrire immédiatement après. On se préoccupe trop des détails, de la couleur, et pas assez de son esprit, car la couleur dans la nature a un esprit, une sorte de vapeur subtile qui se dégage d'elle, et c'est cela qui doit animer en dessous le style. Que de fois, préoccupé ainsi de ce que j'avais sous les yeux, ne me suis-je pas dépêché de l'intercaler de suite dans une oeuvre et de m'apercevoir enfin qu'il fallait l'ôter. La couleur, comme les aliments, doit être digérée et mêlée au sang des pensées.⁴

If Flaubert is so aware of this spirit which animates the style, his own included one would suppose, it is evident to the perceptive critic that of course he is not nearly as objective a writer as he would have us believe. It would seem that he strives merely for an appearance of objectivity, in order to allow this spirit of which he writes to evoke an emotional reaction on the part of the reader.

In this way, colors in Madame Bovary become symbolic of themes, psychology and events, and Geneviève Bollème claims that

l'art de Flaubert, dans la description, consistera essentiellement à noyer l'objet et ses caractères

4. Flaubert, Correspondance 1850-1859, p. 371.

distinctifs et spécifiques dans un ensemble affectif où les choses s'estomperont jusqu'à se défaire, se mêleront pour ne plus être que sensation, glissement, couleur, empiètement, de l'une sure l'autre, déroulement elles-mêmes de toute une vie psychologique.⁵

All things in the novel will thus lose their identity as objects to become symbols or to take on an affective value of some kind, and nothing will be gratuitous, as all will contribute to the feeling imparted by the whole.

Let us then proceed to discover the feeling which Flaubert wished to evoke in Madame Bovary:

Si Gustave Flaubert a "la pensée", quand il écrit un roman, "de rendre une coloration, une nuance", ce n'est pas seulement par pur symbole, mais surtout, parce qu'il perçoit une couleur dominante dans le pays où se déroule l'action; Madame Bovary, par exemple, évoque pour lui: "la grise existence qui l'entoure en province"...⁶

Of course, this does not imply that the only color used in Madame Bovary will be gray. Nonetheless, the colors utilized will simulate a feeling of grayness. One method of creating this sensation is set forth by Danger when he explains how the colors used for Mme Bovary differ from those describing Marie Arnoux in L'Education sentimentale:

Les tons sont plus froids et plus clairs pour Emma, depuis le safran pâle de sa robe de bal et le jaune de sa robe d'été jusqu'au bleu, couleur dominante, que l'on retrouve dans sa robe de mérinos, son col de soie, le voile qu'elle porte pendant sa promenade

5. Geneviève Bollème, La Leçon de Flaubert (Paris: Julliard, 1964), pp. 116-17.

6. Antoine Youssef Naaman, Les Débuts de Gustave Flaubert et sa technique de la description (Paris: Nizet, 1962), p. 408.

avec Rodolphe et la robe de soie qu'elle met pour aller à Rouen, couleurs à la fois plus gracieuses et un peu dures, claire délavées, comme ces "rubans pâles ressemblant à des feuilles de roseau" qui encadrent son visage sous l'ovale de sa capote.⁷

We thus find a preponderance of cool colors in Madame Bovary, contributing to the gray atmosphere since gray itself is a very cool color.

In this way, Flaubert actually paints a picture with the written word, and in speaking of writing he often mixes painting terms with those for writing. Jean Seznec sees this confusion between painting and novels recurring on the part of critics when they claim that Emma's problems arise from her propensity for reading novels: "It is said that Mme Bovary has been perverted by books; but it is worth noticing that one of the first times we catch her dreaming, she is dreaming in front of pictures." "In short, Madame Bovary's disasters come from having seen life through chromolithographs."⁸ Now, this too is an oversimplification of the case, for Emma does indeed dream over novels as well as pictures. One could say that these pictures and keepsakes provide visual images for her dreams, whereas the novels provide a certain amount of plot for the wanderings of her imagination.

7. Danger, p. 140.

8. Jean Seznec, "Flaubert and the Graphic Arts," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 8 (1945), 178, 179.

Not only are pictures a part of Madame Bovary, but the description can be said to resemble a painting, more particularly an impressionist work:

Ce qui frappe d'abord c'est que les paysages de Flaubert, comme de nombreuses toiles impressionnistes, sont construits par masses de couleurs qui se répondent et s'équilibrent en taches plates et bien délimitées les unes par rapport aux autres, ce qui crée souvent un effet délibéré d'écrasement du relief et de la perspective.⁹

The technique used in an impressionist painting seems to apply quite aptly to Emma's dreams:

The followers of the French Impressionist school have been said to have utilized the additive process by substituting the juxtaposition of small spots of pure color for mixtures of colors. When viewed from an adequate distance the light rays reflected from these adjacent colors merge, producing upon the eye a blended hue sometimes entirely different from that which would have been produced had the colors been mixed on the palette.¹⁰

Emma views her dreams in this way--from a distance. The hue she perceives is definitely different from what she would see were she actually living the existence of which she dreams. The following is a rather long description of one of Emma's dreams, which at her distance appears harmonious and covered with sun, but which, were she to live it, would inspire nothing but ennui:

Souvent, du haut d'une montagne, ils apercevaient tout à coup quelque cité splendide avec des dômes,

9. Danger, p. 86.

10. Ralph Mayer, The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques, 3rd ed. (New York: Viking, 1970), p. 122.

des ponts, des navires, des forêts de citronniers et des cathédrales de marbre blanc, dont les clochers aigus portaient des nids de cigogne. On marchait au pas, à cause des grandes dalles, et il y avait par terre des bouquets de fleurs que vous offraient des femmes habillées en corset rouge. On entendait sonner des cloches, hennir les mulets, avec le murmure des guitares et le bruit des fontaines, dont la vapeur s'envolant rafraîchissait des tas de fruits, disposés en pyramide au pied des statues pâles, qui souriaient sous les jets d'eau. Et puis ils arrivaient, un soir, dans un village de pêcheurs, où des filets bruns séchaient au vent, le long de la falaise et des cabanes. C'est là qu'ils s'arrêteraient pour vivre; ils habiteraient une maison basse, à toit plat, ombragée d'un palmier, au fond d'un golfe, au bord de la mer. Ils se promèneraient en gondole, ils se balanceraient en hamac; et leur existence serait facile et large comme leurs vêtements de soie, toute chaude et étoilée comme les nuits douces qu'ils contemplerait. Cependant, sur l'immensité de cet avenir qu'elle se faisait apparaître, rien de particulier ne surgissait; les jours, tous magnifiques, se ressemblaient comme des flots; et cela se balançait à l'horizon, infini, harmonieux, bleuâtre et couvert de soleil (p. 201).

In another episode, later removed from the novel by Flaubert, Emma sees life through window panes of many different colors. Sherrington attributes a significance to these colored visions for our heroine:

Another piece of symbolism which Flaubert had intended to present by means of the restricted point of view technique was the "coloured glass" episode. The day after the ball, Emma, walking in the grounds of La Vaubyessard, comes upon a small pavilion, one window of which is composed of small pieces of glass of different colours. She looks in turn through the blue, the yellow, the green, and the red panes, and notes the changes in the countryside; she then looks through the other window, which is of clear glass and sees things as they are. The implications of the passage are obvious: metaphorically, this is what Emma spends her whole life doing, and this is what the point of view technique continually emphasizes. The episode was finally omitted, partly, no doubt,

because it does not really fit Emma's experience-- not once does it occur to her to look through the clear glass.¹¹

When we see life through Emma's eyes, we are thus affected by the way in which colors strike her, which is definitely in an impressionistic vein. She is able to separate out each color or each psychological effect. While living her life of debauchery in Rouen, for example, she is perfectly capable of putting aside the reality of her money worries.

Now that we have gotten somewhat of an idea of Flaubert's use of color and its importance to him, the method to be followed in this chapter must be set out. First of all, in order to understand the symbolism of the many colors used in Madame Bovary, they need to be examined in context:

Même lorsque les mots que Flaubert emploie ont une valeur symbolique classique comme dans le cas des couleurs il ne fait pas appel à ce symbole. Les valeurs symboliques qu'il donne aux couleurs se dégagent toujours du contexte ...¹²

Flaubert does sometimes employ a classic symbolism, but this must always be determined by studying the text at hand. Not only must a specific color be examined in context to develop its symbolic value but also to determine whether or not it

11. R. J. Sherrington, Three Novels by Flaubert: A Study of Techniques (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 123. Sherrington describes an episode to be found in Jean Pommier and G. Leleu, ed., Madame Bovary: nouvelle version précédée des scénarios inédits, by Gustave Flaubert (Paris: José Corti, 1949), pp. 215-17.

12. Allen, "L'Atmosphère," No. 33, p. 25.

is symbolic. To return to blue which symbolizes Emma's dreams and her aspirations toward the infinite, more often than not, this meaning fits the context. Not every single patch of blue in the sky or blue stocking, however, would necessarily add to the symbolism. Though not every occurrence of the color will be due to a symbolic use, the symbolism will be determined by the high frequency of a particular symbolic meaning applied to one color. In order to support my theories, I will always give numerous examples from throughout the novel, examined in context and in reference to the entire work.

Several colors will be looked at chronologically to determine their development through the novel, and effects of the various colors upon each other will also be studied. Since blue has been used so frequently thus far as an example, it is appropriate to begin our study there.

Blue

Blue is one of the most important symbols in Madame Bovary; representing dreams, illusion, and an aspiration toward the infinite or the absolute, what color could better symbolize Emma's hopes or pipe dreams? A propos of Madame Bovary, Flaubert writes, "J'ai fini de soir de barbouiller la première idée de me rêves de jeunes filles. J'en ai pour

quinze jours encore à naviguer sur ces lacs bleus"13

Demorest along the same lines claims that

Flaubert aurait faussé la vraie couleur s'il avait manqué de peupler ses pages de bayadères, d'y jeter des océans et des climats exotiques, car Emma habite avec obstination "le pays bleu" des rêves, comme le dit à chaque instant l'auteur14

Emma's dreams are very much tied up with her sentimentality, and "the motif of blue . . . is perhaps more intimately linked to the sentimental core of the novel than any other single motif in Madame Bovary. It is associated with Flaubert's concern to make us dream. . . ."15

One of Emma's most noted characteristics is her quest for the realization of her dreams. This quest, however, is never fulfilled, and Martin Turnell feels that "most of her journeys, whether real or imaginary, are a search for the pays bleu, the land of Romantic love. It is characteristic of all of these journeys that they end in disillusionment or disaster."16

Now, in dealing with the symbolism of a particular color, there are often variations of the hue. Flaubert affords us with the basic bleu, but there are also bleuâtre and azur, to name the most important. The symbolic

13. Flaubert, Correspondance 1850-1859, p. 175.

14. Demorest, p. 431.

15. Stirling Haig, "The Madame Bovary Blues," The Romantic Review, 61 (1970), 28.

16. Martin Turnell, "Madame Bovary," Sewanee Review, 65 (1957), 542.

meanings for these different shades are at root the same, with different nuances. Azur, occurring only three times in the novel, does not take on monumental importance. It does, however, take on the meaning of an ideal for which to reach, but in a truly exaggerated sense. "In heraldry blue is termed azure."¹⁷ For example, when Emma asks for communion when she seems to be dying after the rupture with Rodolphe, she thinks she perceives "en un ciel d'azur, sur un trône d'or, au milieu des saints tenant des palmes vertes, Dieu le Père tout éclatant de majesté, et qui d'un signe faisait descendre vers la terre des anges aux ailes de flamme pour l'emporter dans leurs bras" (p. 219).

Bleuâtre represents dreams and the ideal, but verging on and crossing over the line of sentimentality, about which Flaubert has only ridicule, as he does for Lamartine. In writing of Graziella by this author, Flaubert states: "Voilà un gaillard qui vit continuellement avec une femme qui l'aime et qu'il aime, et jamais un désir: Pas un nuage impur ne vient obscurir ce lac bleuâtre."¹⁸ One year later, Flaubert once again mentions Lamartine in regard to bleuâtre:

Non, je n'ai aucune sympathie pour cet écrivain sans rythme, pour cet homme d'Etat sans initiative.
C'est à lui que nous devons tous les embêtements

17. Arnold Whittick, Symbols, Signs and Their Meaning (Newton, Mass.: Charles T. Branford, 1960), p. 152.

18. Flaubert, Correspondance 1850-1859, p. 185.

bleuâtres du lyrisme poitrine, et lui que nous devons remercier de l'Empire: homme qui va aux médiocres et qui les aime.¹⁹

Flaubert thus appears to have little patience with what could be called romantic sentimentality. With a heroine such as Emma, he would certainly have a difficult time avoiding this pitfall in his own novel, as he himself admits. In writing of Léon and Emma, he says:

Il faut que je finisse la lune de miel de mes amants. J'écris présentement des choses fort amoureuses et extra-pohétiques [sic]. Le difficile c'est de ne pas être trop ardent, en ayant peur de tomber dans le bleuâtre.²⁰

In Madame Bovary, however, the narrator uses the bleuâtre image to advantage to evoke Emma's own excessive sentimentality. After her horseback ride and amorous adventure with Rodolphe, "une immensité bleuâtre l'entourait, les sommets du sentiment étincelaient sous sa pensée, et l'existence ordinaire n'apparaissait qu'au loin, tout en bas, dans l'ombre, entre les intervalles de ces hauteurs" (p. 167). As we have seen earlier, when Emma emerges from this sentimental haze she will fall into the dark valleys waiting for her. Later on, when Emma dreams of living in foreign lands with Rodolphe, bleuâtre again represents romantic sentimentality as "cela se balançait à l'horizon, infini, harmonieux, bleuâtre et couvert de soleil" (p. 201).

19. Flaubert, Correspondance 1850-1859, p. 323.

20. Flaubert, Correspondance 1850-1859, p. 461.

In her next intrigue, when Emma begins to tire of Léon, whenever she writes to him, she perceives a man much different from the reality: "Il habitait la contrée bleuâtre où les échelles de soie se balancent à des balcons, sous le souffle des fleurs, dans la clarté de la lune" (p. 297). Bleuâtre, then, is part of an extraordinary dream existence for Emma, just as moonlight is part of a marvelous world of romance and poetry.

These variations on the basic color theme, while important, pale in comparison to the frequent appearance of blue itself. Blue, as has previously been mentioned, symbolizes the quest for the absolute or ideal, or more simply the world of dreams. Naturally, Emma, being the heroine of the novel, is the focal point for this symbol. Therefore, in the first important appearance of the color, even though the scene involves Charles without Emma, the symbolism evokes the as yet unknown Emma Rouault. The letter which Charles receives summoning him to les Bertaux arrives "cachetée d'un petit cachet de cire bleue ... " (p. 13). By breaking the blue seal of the letter, Charles symbolically breaks into Emma's dreams, as we can well imagine he does upon his arrival, since Emma will create of this bumbling health officer the man of her dreams. Moments before actually meeting Emma, Charles sees in the barn of les Bertaux that: "Il y avait sous le hangar deux grandes charrettes et quatre charues, avec leurs fouets, leurs

colliers, leurs équipages complets, dont les toisons de laine bleue se salissaient à la poussière fine qui tombait des greniers" (p. 15). Symbolically, Emma's dreams of blue are being sullied through contact with the peasant atmosphere of the farm. Immediately following this description, both Charles and the reader see Emma, the future Madame Bovary, for the first time: "[u]ne jeune femme, en robe de mérinos bleu ... " (p. 15). The use of the color blue in this initial scene sums up much of Emma's personality--she is a dreamer. With the presence of Charles, a young man of some distinction in her eyes--after all, he is not a peasant farmer and has studied medicine in the big city--, Emma is able to make of him a romantic hero capable of removing her from her surroundings. This dream is, however, only a cardboard base for married life, as the confection made for their wedding reception illustrates: "A la base ... c'était un carré de carton bleu figurant un temple avec portiques, colonnades et statuette de stuc tout autour, dans des niches constellées d'étoiles en papier doré" (p. 30). When her beginnings in married life do not live up to her expectations, Emma feels that honeymoons, in order to be enjoyed, must be spent in romantic places, in "des chaises de poste, sous des stores de soie bleue ... " (p. 41). As we know, however, Emma's married life with Charles is destined to be a disappointment, and she will be forced to turn her dreams in another direction.

The ball at la Vaubyessard arrives to provide Emma with more food for her active imagination. Here is a typical romantic scene to spark her fancies: "A trois pas d'Emma, un cavalier en habit bleu causait Italie avec une jeune femme pâle, portant une parure de perles" (p. 53). Not only does the blue represent Emma's ideal, but they are discussing Italy, land of romance, and the young woman is pale--the classic sentimental heroine. Would not Emma give anything to be in this woman's place?

Toward the end of their stay in Tostes, Emma becomes more and more bored and discontented. From time to time, an organ-grinder shows himself outside the window, and Emma hears "des airs que l'on jouait ailleurs sur les théâtres, que l'on chantait dans les salons, que l'on dansait le soir sous des lustres éclairés, échos du monde qui arrivaient jusqu'à Emma." When the man had received money in his hat, "il rabattait une vieille couverture de laine bleue, passait son orgue sur son dos et s'éloignait d'un pas lourd. Elle le regardait partir" (p. 67). It is as if Emma's dreams of blue have become old and used as has the beggar's old woolen cover. Emma has lost most hope in Tostes and is being consumed by her ennui; she watches the organ-grinder symbolically leave with her dreams on his back. Since Emma has given up hope, it will be up to Charles to take her out of Tostes to a golden land of opportunity--Yonville-L'Abbaye?

As we move into the second part of the novel and life in Yonville, blue makes a rather subdued appearance, until Emma arrives on the scene. Upon Emma's meeting her future hero Léon, as could be expected, she wears some blue: "Elle portait une petit cravate de soie bleue" (p. 86).

Emma begins to share some sentimental moments with Léon and will soon realize that she loves him, the incarnation of her great romantic hero. However, the present given by Léon to Charles supplies the reader with a hint of Léon's true personality. The gift chosen by Léon is "une belle tête phrénologique, toute marquetée de chiffres jusqu'au thorax et peinte en bleu" (p. 102). Léon may be a young dreamer, as represented by the blue, but a practical side, symbolized by the logical marking of the head, will take over as he will become a young lawyer making a most respectable marriage, thus furthering his career.

Emma, however, during Léon's stay in Yonville, will continue to idealize him. He represents her dream-refuge from Charles. At one point, when she is irritated with Charles, Emma looks at Léon and "son grand oeil bleu, levé vers les nuages, parut à Emma plus limpide et plus beau que ces lacs des montagnes où le ciel se mire" (p. 104). Léon for Emma is poetry, and poetry is even Léon's favorite reading material. Stirling Haig says of this poetic blue:

The blue country will always be associated with our aspirations and our ennui, which are forever inseparable, and, in Madame Bovary, blue lends

strength to the undertow of sentiment that surreptitiously tugs at our sensibilities. The ironically placid surface conceals a current of sympathy, gently but firmly urging the reader to lose himself, with Emma, in what Flaubert termed le grand bleu de la poésie.²¹

In the following chapter, Emma's gaze is again drawn toward a pair of large blue eyes, but the contrast is striking. Whereas Emma loses herself in the poetry of Léon's blue eyes, she is incapable of giving herself over to her own daughter. At one point, she is annoyed by Berthe who comes close to her mother's knees "et, s'y appuyant des bras, elle levait vers elle son gros oeil bleu, pendant qu'un filet de salive pure découlait de sa lèvre sur la soie du tablier" (p. 118). Structurally, the two descriptions are almost identical, as can be seen by examining them side by side:

Léon

[S]on gran oeil bleu,
levé vers les nuages,
parut à Emma plus
limpide et plus beau
que ces lacs des
montagnes où le ciel
se mire (p. 104).

Berthe

[E]lle levait vers elle
son gros oeil bleu,
pendant qu'un filet de
salive pure découlait
de sa lèvre sur la soie
du tablier (p. 118).

In the first case, Emma is feeling irritated with Charles; Léon is an unknown factor to this unhappy woman, and therefore appealing as a type of escape or refuge. In the second instance, Emma is distraught because she has just made her fruitless visit to l'abbé Bournisien. Berthe is looking for

21. Haig, p. 34.

refuge in her mother's apron strings and Emma undoubtedly feels stifled by this dependence upon her. After all, she wants to depend upon someone herself. Therefore, the two scenes are obviously told from Emma's point of view, since the two pairs of large blue eyes are followed by such contrasting description. Léon's eyes remove her to mountain lakes; Berthe's make all the more obvious and annoying the everyday reality of a drooling baby and a dull family life.

In the same chapter as the Berthe incident, Léon is still very much the dreamer himself as the narrator highlights in Léon's plans for his future life in Paris: "Il aurait une robe de chambre, un béret basque, des pantoufles de velours bleu" (p. 121); The difference between Léon and Emma is that he will settle down to a life of bourgeois respectability and have no regrets for his unfulfilled dreams, whereas Emma will never be happy with her lot; always creating new illusions.

Another great difference between Emma and Léon is that Léon is capable of being satisfied merely through dreaming of possessing certain things. Emma will never be satisfied without actually possessing the things she desires, but, of course, even their possession will not satisfy her. Since Emma believes she has imposed great sacrifices on herself in her faithfulness to Charles, she feels entitled to certain indulgences such as the blue cashmere dress she

orders from Rouen; owning the dress, however, will not decrease her dissatisfaction.

With the departure of Léon from Yonville, Emma returns to the bad times she knew in Tostes. Her apathy reaches such heights, and her health appears so endangered that Charles asks his mother to come, but the visit of the mother-in-law is for Emma a real trial as Madame Bovary mère even arranges to cut off her supply of novels. Why not try to cut off her dreams? The day of the mother-in-law's departure is a market day, and one has a feeling of release, particularly upon seeing "des paquets de rubans bleus, qui par le bout s'envolaient au vent" (p. 130). Emma will soon be able to allow her dreams this freedom to fly for that very day she will meet Rodolphe Boulanger. We do not, however, immediately learn Emma's reaction to Rodolphe. His plans to seduce her are seen from Rodolphe's point of view, just as we saw Emma for the first time from Charles's vantage point and through his plans for her, and also as we will see her initial meeting with Léon in Rouen through his eyes and his projects for seduction.

The next time that we see Emma with Rodolphe is the day of the Comices agricoles. It is at this affair that he tries to gain entry into Emma's thoughts and dreams of love. In spite of his cynicism about love, he uses all of the clichés to try to win Emma's heart. We find this same attitude toward the Comices since "tout en se moquant des

comices, Rodolphe, pour circuler plus à l'aise, montrait au gendarme sa pancarte bleue" (p. 141). The analogy extends a bit further because of the color of the pass. Rodolphe will use his charm to circulate in the blue world of Emma's dreams. Later, while the two future lovers are unremarked observers of the scene, Rodolphe speaks to Emma of two moralities, stressing: "[L]'éternelle, elle est tout autor et au-dessus, comme le paysage qui nous environne et le ciel bleu qui nous éclaire" (p. 149). This morality is, however, a false, empty morality existing only in illusions, as supported by the comparison to the blue sky, which, like Emma's dreams, is unattainable. Shortly afterwards, the old servant Catherine-Nicaise-Elisabeth Leroux receives her prize for 54 years of service on the same farm. Enough analogies can be drawn between her situation and Emma's to make the scene poignantly ironic. First of all, the servant is wearing a blue apron (p. 154), just as Emma was wearing blue when Charles first arrived at les Bertaux. Catherine passively waits 54 years to receive in reward a silver medal worth 25 francs. All of Emma's waiting similarly ends in disillusion and disappointment. Ironically, however, with her small reward, the old servant is more than satisfied, whereas Emma, no matter how much she has, will never be satisfied.

Emma receives what she believes to be the opportunity of realizing her dreams during her horseback ride with

Rodolphe. Her inability to see life as it is and her tendency to view everything tainted by her illusions is emphasized by the blue veil she wears: "Au bas de la côte, Rodolphe lâcha les rênes; ils partirent ensemble, d'un seul bond; puis, en haut, tout à coup, les chevaux s'arrêtèrent, et son grand voile bleu retomba!" (p. 162).

Her eyes are so veiled by her dreams that Emma is incapable of seeing how sordid a place has been chosen for their first amorous encounter. D. A. Williams states this dichotomy:

The reality of Emma's seduction is at odds with her idealized expectation and recollection. She is not floating miraculously in the vast blue sky or above the limpid water of a mountain lake but reluctantly walking around a slimy pool which, ironically, is not all that different from the "mare bourbeuse" associated with her peasant origins.²²

Interestingly enough, after the return from this forest tryst, all mention of the color blue disappears until after the failure of Charles's operation on Hippolyte. It is as if the disillusion from which she suffers allows no dreams to enter. With the spectacular medical failure of the operation, Emma is forced to turn to Rodolphe again. When they pick up their liaison once more, Emma has adopted a new dream, that of running away with Rodolphe. Though he does not immediately consent to the plan, surely she continually nurtures this idea in her breast. The greater her

22. Williams, "Water Imagery," p. 22.

aversion for Charles, the more Emma turns to Rodolphe.

"Quand il devait venir, elle emplissait de roses ses deux vases de verre bleu ... " (p. 192). The dreams which Charles has left empty and unfulfilled, as the blue vases, Emma attempts to fill with Rodolphe, or the roses. This love affair, however, like the roses, will soon wilt, leaving the vases empty once again, as Emma will feel the emptiness surrounding her.

In this same chapter, we receive a small dose of what is to come in the line of Emma's money difficulties with Lheureux. He arrives demanding the sum she owes, but Emma cannot immediately put together the amount of the debt. Just in the nick of time, a roll of blue paper containing fifteen napoleons arrives from M. Drozerays. The color blue of the paper indicates how much Emma's dreams are wrapped up with money and luxury. If she spends her dreams as quickly as she does the fifteen napoleons--as she inevitably will--her hopes and life will soon be dissipated.

For the time being, Emma is full of hope for the future, for she and Rodolphe are making plans to run off together, at Emma's instigation of course. It is at this time that Emma has her dreams in "bleuâtre" (p. 201) about the days they will spend together. This optimism is short-lived, as Rodolphe does his running without her. Upon receipt of his parting letter, Emma is wracked by despair and comes very close to suicide. Ironically, at this point,

she seems almost capable of attaining the absolute for which she has been wishing: "Elle se tenait tout au bord, presque suspendue, entourée d'un grand espace. Le bleu du ciel l'envahissait ... " (p. 211). Emma, however, never reaches for this absolute; she waits for it to come to her, an impossibility. The imagery surrounding the preceding quotation supports this hypothesis, since the blue to Emma, though of the sky, would seem to be of water, ready to swallow her:

Il lui semblait que le sol de la place oscillant s'élevait le long des murs, et que le plancher s'inclinait par le bout, à la manière d'un vaisseau qui tangué. Elle se tenait tout au bord, presque suspendue, entourée d'un grand espace. Le bleu du ciel l'envahissait, l'air circulait dans sa tête creuse, elle n'avait qu'à céder, qu'à se laisser prendre; et le ronflement du tour ne discontinuait pas, comme une voix furieuse qui l'appelait (p. 211).

Naturally, Emma does not stop herself, but is stopped by another voice calling her, that of Charles.

That very evening at dinner, Emma hears Charles speak of Rodolphe's expected departure, at which point she sees his blue tilbury ride past, causing her to faint (p. 212). It is easy to see that the blue tilbury represents Emma's dreams being driven off, in this case by Rodolphe, or better still that her dreams containing Rodolphe are forsaking her.

During her illness, there is virtually no mention of blue. Apparently, Emma's ventures into the land of

religious mysticism are rather half-hearted this time; it seems as if she is biding her time, awaiting a better illusion. The next serious meaning of blue occurs when Emma meets Léon again for the first time at the theater in Rouen. When he speaks to Emma we learn she is wearing "une robe de soie bleue ..." (p. 226). Blue seems to be in Emma's attire for all important initial encounters with the men in her life. The first time she met Charles, she was wearing a "robe de mérinos bleu ..." (p. 15). When she and Rodolphe had their ride in the woods, she had on a "voile bleu ..." (p. 162). During Emma's very first meal with Léon at the Lion d'or upon her arrival in Yonville as we have seen, she is wearing "une petite cravate de soie bleue" (p. 86). An initial encounter with a new hero image brings out all of Emma's hopes and dreams, only to be dashed later on, as they are in every case.

However, in the paragraph following the description of Emma's blue dress for the trip to the theater in Rouen, the narrator inserts an ominous note on blue. Though Emma is soon to be caught up in another attempt to live her dreams with Léon, we see blue in another light at the Croix rouge, the inn of which Emma will see so much and where "les tables noires sont poissées par les glorias, les vitres épaisses jaunies par les mouches, les serviettes humides tachées par le vin bleu ..." (p. 226). The reader thus has a hint that the sordidness into which Emma will soon fall,

for example at the masked ball, ironically occasioned by her attempts to reach greater heights in her quest for the absolute.

As she starts out on her new adventure with Léon, Emma appears oblivious to the reality which is encroaching upon her dream world. Her hopeful nature is revealed in the color of her changeable eyes upon Léon's revelation of his love for her: "Ce fut comme le ciel, quand un coup de vent chasse les nuages. L'amas des pensées tristes qui les assombrissait parut se retirer de ses yeux bleus; tout son visage rayonna" (p. 240). Darkness, however, will soon descend upon Emma's vision again, and it will be permanent. Léon then, in his romantic reminiscing, recalls a time he came to Madame Bovary's house and subsequently accompanied her on her errands. He recalls that she was wearing a hat "à petites fleurs bleues" (p. 240). One wonders whether Emma's small, hopeful blue flowers will burgeon under Léon's care, or whether he merely wants to pluck her flowers, reminiscent of Ronsard. We soon find Emma feeling old in the face of his sentiments and Léon wishing they might have met earlier:

--J'y ai songé quelquefois, reprit-elle.

--Quel rêve! murmura Léon.

Et, maniant délicatement le liséré bleu de sa longue ceinture blanche, il ajouta:

Qui nous empêche donc de recommencer? ... (p. 242).

Léon is thus being very delicate in handling Emma's dreams, just as he plays with the edging of her belt for he knows to treat their sentiments very gently. His fingering of the blue border, however, is indicative of the fact that, though he may not realize it at the time, he is merely playing with Emma's dreams and aspirations for his own benefit, since, as the narrator knows, in the end Emma's dreams will be dashed while Léon will make a suitable bourgeois marriage. This chapter is certainly full of propitious signs for Léon as, before meeting Emma in the cathedral, "une compagnie d'oiseaux tourbillonnaient dans le ciel bleu ... " (p. 244). While awaiting Emma in the cathedral,

ses yeux rencontrèrent un vitrage bleu où l'on voit des bateliers qui portent des corbeilles. Il le regarda longtemps, attentivement, et il comptait les écailles des poissons et les boutonnières des pourpoints, tandis que sa pensée vagabondait à la recherche d'Emma (pp. 245-246).

Actually, there is an analogy to be drawn between Léon and these fishermen. Just as they have baskets full of fish, so Léon will put Emma into his basket, and, indeed, is there any difference between Léon's baskets and Rodolphe's box of love souvenirs; have they both not done some collecting of women? At the moment, Léon has merely dangled the bait of his presence, but Emma will soon take that bait, as we well know.

Our next encounter with blue occurs upon Emma's return to Yonville and her arrival in the midst of the chaos

of the Homais household. During the pharmacist's berating of Justin, we learn of the existence of the bottle of arsenic, which is made of blue glass (p. 253). All of Emma's dreams and aspirations will find their end in the form of this blue bottle at the moment of her suicide, and actually it represents her ultimate dream, that of a heroic and beautiful death and afterlife. For the time being, however, we have but a foreshadowing of the event to come, offered to us by the omniscient narrator, in the form of this arsenic bottle.

With Emma's offer to go to Rouen in order to consult Léon on the matter of her power of attorney for Charles, the two lovers find themselves with three full days of honeymoon, as the narrator dubs them. During these three days, they lead an unreal existence, one unlike the everyday reality that will eventually need to be faced. They spend much of their time on an island, away from the noise of the city, leading them to see their surroundings in a dreamlike state:

Ce n'était pas la première fois qu'il apercevaient des arbres, du ciel bleu, du gazon, qu'ils entendaient l'eau couler et la brise soufflant dans le feuillage; mais ils n'avaient sans doute jamais admiré tout cela, comme si la nature n'existait pas auparavant, ou qu'elle n'eût commencé à être belle que depuis l'assouvisance de leurs désirs (p. 262).

One might well question how they would view the world together were they not in such an ideal situation.

All of the time they pass in a boat on the water reminds one of the analogy between Léon and the fishermen.

He has truly caught Emma though for the time being he takes the role of the weaker partner. Later on, however, he will throw her back, but it will be too late for Emma and she will die anyway. Did Rodolphe not think of her: "Ça bâille après l'amour, comme une carpe après l'eau sur une table de cuisine" (p. 134)? Emma, of course, is not aware of her plight as Léon appears to be more her mistress than she his (p. 283). She continues to dream and to desire things such as a blue tilbury in which to go to Rouen (p. 275). Just as when she saw Rodolphe leave Yonville in his blue tilbury she watched her dreams depart, by riding to Rouen in a similar conveyance, she would be bringing her dreams with her. Léon would then be the man of her dreams in the flesh, rather than only at a distance.

The preceding symbolism is not the only occasion on which we see reality being clothed in Emma's dreams, thus presenting things from her point of view. In the midst of the financial problems closing in on Emma, she goes to see Lheureux who once again extends her credit. Not only does he lend the money requested, but he insists that she purchase some lace. Now, this acquisition is merely creating another debt, which Emma steadfastly refuses to see. She is so wrapped up in dreams, that reality does not penetrate their protective covering. In this same way, the debt is covered in Emma's mind, just as Lheureux physically wraps the lace: "Et, plus prompt qu'un escamoteur, il enveloppa

la guipure de papier bleu et la mit dans les mains d'Emma" (p. 293). Lheureux, of course, is expert at preventing Emma from realizing the true state of her finances, as he does on this occasion, refusing to reveal the price of the lace.

Emma's financial difficulties soon come to a head, and the Bovarys' belongings will be sold unless she can pay her debts. In desperation, she goes to Rodolphe, but before asking for money brings up the love they shared and suggests starting over: "Et elle était ravissante à voir, avec son regard où tremblait une larme, comme l'eau d'un orage dans un calice bleu" (p. 317). Now, this metaphor can be looked at symbolically on two levels. First of all the calice bleu is a flower, suggesting how delicate Emma's "blue" dreams are and how close to destruction by the impending storm. At the same time, however, one cannot help thinking of the French homonym evoking a chalice. Certainly, Rodolphe is about to sacrifice Emma's dreams and illusions. With his refusal to give her the money she so desperately needs, she will soon see the truth--that money and love are not one. This evocation of another meaning through use of the homonym is not only an effective device on the part of the narrator, but also an affective one, stimulating a reaction on the part of the reader and causing a string of associations. To continue the affective metaphor, Emma has no other recourse but that of avaler le calice, which she does in the form of another blue container: "[E]lle alla droit vers la

troisième tablette . . . , saisit le bocal bleu, en arracha le bouchon, y fourra sa main, et, la retirant pleine d'une poudre blanche, elle se mit à manger à même" (p. 321). The "calice bleu" has been transformed into a "bocal bleu" from which Emma sacrificially swallows the arsenic.

What we must keep in mind in dealing with blue and aspirations and dreams, is that it is all illusory. The symbolism is merely a trick of the narrator; he shows us what it means to the characters in the book, but, as readers, we must keep our objectivity and realize that all dreams will come to naught, since dreams of the sort entertained by Emma have no place in the bourgeois world. Emma's father, on the otherhand, is too deeply involved emotionally to step back and view the situation with any degree of objectivity. That is why he allows himself to be deluded by appearances when he has been summoned to Yonville by Homais after Emma's death. He attempts to convince himself that she is not dead because "la campagne n'avait rien d'extraordinaire: le ciel était bleu, les arbres se balançaient; un troupeau de moutons passa" (p. 342). At that moment, he sees the village, gallops in and discovers the truth. He too is disillusioned; he had been deceived by the blue sky which was merely masking reality, as had Emma's blue veil during the woods encounter with Rodolphe.

Upon Emma's death, her dreams and aspirations, along with the color which symbolized them, become merely

grotesque, an art at which Flaubert, let us not forget, is a master. After all, he created Yuk of Smarh and Djalioh, the man-monkey of "Quidquid volueris," to say nothing of La Tentation de saint Antoine. Therefore, the grotesqueness of what occurs to this symbolic blue after Emma's burial should not surprise us:

[L]e père Rouault repassa sa blouse bleue. Elle était neuve, et, comme il s'était, pendant la route, souvent essuyé les yeux avec les manches, elle avait déteint sur sa figure; et la trace des pleurs y faisait des lignes dans la couche de poussière qui la salissait. (p. 346).

This romantic dream color has become a mere stain which Emma has left upon those who were close to her.

It remains but for Charles to close the account, since it opened upon him. We find him in the garden of the house in Yonville:

Des jours passaient par le treillis; les feuilles de vigne dessinaient leurs ombres sur le sable, le jasmin embaumait, le ciel était bleu, des cantharides bourdonnaient autour des lis en fleur, et Charles suffoquait comme un adolescent sous les vagues effluves amoureux qui gonflaient son coeur chagrin. (p. 356).

Berthe will find her father dead at seven o'clock that evening. It is ironically fitting that the husband who smothered Emma's dreams should suffocate from his own elusive feelings of love for her, on the very spot where she used to meet her lovers, and that his death, rather than Emma's, should end the illusory world of dreams which had set the tone of the novel.

White

White in Madame Bovary is a good example of a color which must be interpreted by the context rather than merely accepting the traditional symbolic meaning. In fact, close examination reveals both a positive and a negative aspect of the color. There are two positive interpretations, the usual innocence or naiveté, and a type of potential, as in the case of a blank page waiting for something to be written upon it. The negative side is emptiness or ennui, symbolized by this same blank page which the reader knows or suspects will never be filled.

In the novel, Flaubert has exercised his usual penchant for slight variations of the same color, and so we encounter not only blanc but also blanchâtre. Blanchâtre takes on the symbolism of white, but only in its negative connotations, symbolizing emptiness and ennui. In the first part of Madame Bovary, Emma suffers much from boredom after the ball at la Vaubyessard, and during the winter we witness the following scene: "Les carreaux, chaque matin, étaient chargés de givre, et la lumière, blanchâtre à travers eux, comme par des verres dépolis, quelquefois ne variait pas de la journée" (pp. 65-66). As we can see, this whiteness has no variations, and its sameness only serves to heighten for the reader, as well as for Emma, the ennui from which she is suffering. The light, also, as we have already seen, tends to highlight this ennui.

Indeed this same image with only slight changes reappears in the second part of the novel. We certainly have a premonition of the boredom and emptiness of life in Yonville the first evening Emma spends in her new home: "Dans la chambre, au premier, un jour blanchâtre passait par les fenêtres sans rideaux" (p. 87). Once again the image shows up in Emma's room after her disappointing conversation with l'abbé Bournisien: "Le jour blanchâtre des carreaux s'abaissait doucement avec des ondulations" (p. 118). In all cases the dreariness of the color penetrating the window panes brings out a feeling of ennui or emptiness.

In another type of description, the same impression is evoked. Emma and Charles are in the theater in Rouen: "On voyait là des têtes de vieux, inexpressives et pacifiques, et qui, blanchâtres de chevelure et de teint, ressemblaient à des médailles d'argent ternies par une vapeur de plomb" (p. 227). These are also heads belonging to people whose lifestyle Emma would no doubt envy. The terms used to describe them, however, are far from flattering, and the "blanchâtre" of their hair and skin would tend to indicate that this lifestyle has led to naught.

As exemplified by the above quotations, blanchâtre, in itself a white become drab or dreary, symbolizes a dull existence made up of ennui or emptiness. Though the number of appearances of blanchâtre is relatively small, only six in the entire novel, when one considers how obscure the

color actually is, this small number of appearances looms quite large, as does Emma's dull existence which it represents.

Having looked at this variant of white, we can proceed to a detailed study of the main color. In some cases, as has already been stated, blanc will retain the symbolic meaning of blanchâtre, whereas in others, we will see innocence, naiveté, or hope. This hope is to be viewed as a potential or possibility of accomplishment, either in reality or in Emma's mind.

The first true appearance of the color white does not occur until after Charles has arrived at les Bertaux and has already seen Emma, the implication being that the main importance of the symbol is for Emma.

Of course in the beginning, Emma is full of innocence and naiveté, or perhaps a better term would be ignorance, as she is actually ignorant of reality. In any case, Charles, upon watching her sew in the farmhouse, "fut surpris de la blancheur de ses ongles" (p. 16). During the conversation held later between Charles and Emma, we receive more details of her appearance: "Son cou sortait d'un col blanc, rabattu" (p. 17).

Not only is Emma all innocence, but we see images indicating her potential for future events; life is spread out before Emma and before the reader. During the many visits Charles subsequently makes to les Bertaux, Emma is

in the habit of seeing him off. Once, when the snow is melting, she gets her umbrella: "L'ombrelle, de soie gorge de pigeon, que traversait le soleil, éclairait de reflets mobiles la peau blanche de sa figure" (p. 19). It is almost as if the narrator were playing with the reader. We still know very little about Emma, and so any history could be played out upon that white face, just as the reflections are dancing across it. What type of color, what type of lighting will dominate in the end? On the same page, we find a similar allusion in the form of Charles's wife's bookkeeping since "elle avait choisi pour M. Rouault une belle page blanche" (p. 19). What the poor woman did not know at the time was that she was setting the stage or preparing the page for her husband's second marriage. This situation is certainly evocative of Charles's sending Emma off to her two love affairs.

After the death of Héloïse, Charles begins spending more time at les Bertaux and of course becomes quite taken with Emma. One day when they are alone, they have a glass of liqueur together, after which Emma "se rassit et elle reprit son ouvrage qui était un bas de coton blanc où elle faisait des reprises ..." (p. 23). As time goes on and Emma becomes more deeply enmeshed in her desperate attempts to live her dreams, her innocence and hope, symbolized by the white, will need far more mending than she will be able to do.

We next encounter white at the wedding in the form of one of the young guests: "ne soufflant mot dans sa robe blanche de sa première communion rallongée pour la circonstance, quelque grande fillette de quatorze ou seize ans ..." (p. 27). The description of this dress contrasts with that of Emma's wedding dress which one would assume to be white also:

La robe d'Emma, trop longue, traînait un peu par le bas; de temps à autre, elle s'arrêtait pour la tirer, et alors délicatement, de ses doigts gantés, elle enlevait les herbes rudes avec les petits dards des chardons, pendant que Charles, les mains vides, attendait qu'elle eût fini (p. 29).

The young country girl at the wedding has long since outgrown the naiveté and hopes of her first communion. Emma, though older, still maintains far too many hopes, symbolized by the dress that is too long and picks up burrs along the way, which Emma here is able to pick out with her fingers. Charles, of course, merely stands by and waits. We know that eventually Emma's hopes will symbolically pick up far too many burrs, as she goes through life, for her to be able to remove, and Charles, as could be expected, will do nothing to help.

In vague disappointment after her marriage, Emma looks back upon her convent school days, during which she went through a period of mysticism:

Vivant donc sans jamais sortir de la tiède atmosphère des classes et parmi ces femmes au teint blanc portant des chapelets à croix de

cuivre, elle s'assoupit doucement à la langueur mystique qui s'exhale des parfums de l'autel, de la fraîcheur des bénitiers et du rayonnement des cierges (pp. 36-37).

At the time, in the midst of all of these white faces, Emma is still very innocent and naive. In the midst of this vague lighting, she also has great hope for her mystical life and desires some vow to fulfill.

After giving up on mysticism for the time being, Emma takes to the reading of novels, accompanied by a fascination with the current vogue of keepsakes, little books of remembrances offered as gifts. She loves to examine these little books hidden from the nuns, as the romance and sentimentalism of them touch a cord in her being. What we find in Emma's leafing through the pictures is much white, since she is very hopeful about her future with a romantic cavalier, "un jeune homme en court manteau qui serrait dans ses bras une jeune fille en robe blanche ..." (p. 39). She sees pictures of English ladies "étalées dans des voitures, glissant au milieu des parcs, où un lévrier sautait devant l'attelage que conduisaient au trot deux petits postillons en culotte blanche" (p. 39). A final example of the white described in the keepsakes has to do with water in a virgin forest "où se détachent en écorchures blanches, sur un fond d'acier gris, de loin en loin, des cygnes qui nagent" (p. 40). Throughout Emma's school experiences, seen in retrospect from her disillusion in

marriage, we see hope, innocence, and potential. The contrast is marked when she thinks of the lives her school-mates must now be leading:

A la ville, avec le bruit des rues, le bourdonnement des théâtres et les clartés du bal, elles avaient des existences où le coeur se dilate, où les sens s'épanouissent. Mais elle, sa vie était froide comme un grenier dont la lucarne est au nord, et l'ennui, araignée silencieuse, filait sa toile dans l'ombre à tous les coins de son coeur. Elle se rappelait les jours de distribution de prix, où elle montait sur l'estrade pour aller chercher ses petites couronnes. Avec ses cheveux en tresse, sa robe blanche et ses souliers de prunelle découverts, elle avait une façon gentille, et les messieurs, quand elle regagnait sa place, se penchait pour lui faire des compliments ... (p. 46).

In Emma's mind, there thus exists a tremendous discrepancy between her halcyon days of innocence at school and her present married life. Knowing Emma's chronic malcontentedness, one tends to wonder just how happy she really was in school. One hint that we have that her state of unrest did not start at the moment she left the convent is her own reminiscences. She looks back on two distinct periods--one of an attachment to mysticism and another to romance and love. Emma must therefore have become disillusioned with the one lifestyle to have so easily espoused another.

Throughout her nostalgia, Emma continues to suffer her boredom, but finally an event occurs to change the pattern of sameness in life at Tostes--Charles and Emma are invited to the ball at la Vaubyessard. Emma is of

course bedazzled by the people and her surroundings, and everything appears totally marvelous to her naive eye: "Le sucre en poudre même lui parut plus blanc et plus fin qu'ailleurs" (p. 51). This seemingly innocent observation on the part of the narrator of Emma's impressions is actually a very subtle foreshadowing of a white powder we will encounter later on--the arsenic. We are receiving a gentle hint that the emptiness of Emma's hopes, as symbolized fittingly enough by the white powdered sugar, will lead inevitably to suicide. Emma's admiration of the white powder therefore indicates she is well on the way to consuming it and being consumed by it.

In contrast, several images at the ball point up the emptiness of the lifestyle so admired by Emma. The narrator describes a few men at the ball, all of whom seem to be of the same family: "Ils avaient le teint de la richesse, ce teint blanc que rehaussent la pâleur des porcelaines, les moires du satin, le vernis des beaux meubles, et qu'entretient dans sa santé un régime discret de nourritures exquisés" (p. 52). Though to Emma they may appear wonderful, it is obvious to the careful reader that this white complexion is a sign of decadence and indolence and that what makes them appear so marvelous to Emma is the lifestyle which surrounds them--"la pâleur des porcelaines, les moires du satin, le vernis des beaux meubles, et ... un régime discret de nourritures exquisés" (p. 52). Emma,

however, is blind to this decadence and sees only the possibility of a romantic intrigue when she sees a young woman drop into a man's hat "quelque chose de blanc, plié en triangle" (p. 54).

The dichotomy between an interpretation of a symbol for Emma's point of view and the interpretation which the reader lends to it is not uncommon. A perfect example is the white squares on the map of Paris which Emma purchases for herself. She looks at the map and imagines herself in the capital: "Elle remontait les boulevards, s'arrêtant à chaque angle, entre les lignes des rues, devant les carrés blancs qui figurent les maisons" (p. 59). To Emma, these white squares are intriguing with much potential for romance while the reader, aided by the narrator's point of view, is inclined to see them as lifeless empty spaces on the map.

Emma's hope is very definitely symbolized by white as can easily be seen in her state of mind in Tostes after the ball. She is merely awaiting an event: "Comme les matelots en détresse, elle promenait sur la solitude de sa vie des yeux désespérés, cherchant au loin quelque voile blanche dans les brumes de l'horizon" (p. 64). This white sail is her "great white hope."

Part II brings us to Yonville not only with new hopes and new potentials but an emptiness and decay waiting in ambush for Emma. One of white's first appearances is in

the description of the notary's house, "une maison blanche au delà d'un rond de gazon que décore un Amour le doigt posé sur la bouche ...," (p. 73). It is as though Cupid were hiding what is to come from the reader; he knows the secret of Emma's future loves and also Emma's future disasters partly at the hands of Guillaumin. The white is thus one of potential but also one of emptiness to come, as it is later in Léon's thoughts of Guillaumin "portant des lunettes à branches d'or et favoris rouges sur cravate blanche" (p. 98). This man who will surreptitiously play a role in Emma's future, in her financial ruin, represents nothing more than emptiness and corruption. Certainly, this man with glasses "à branches d'or" will contribute to Emma's disillusionment with love, as combined with luxury, here subtly evoked by the gold of his glasses.

We receive another hint of future corruption when we learn from the narrator that since the events about to be told nothing has changed, that even "les foetus du pharmacien, comme des paquets d'amadou blanc, se pourrissent de plus en plus dans leur alcool bourbeux ..." (p. 75). What a distressing picture this image paints--it is as if we see innocence, in the form of the foetuses which are white, rotting away in the fluid supplied by the pharmacist. After all, it is his new order, that of the self-serving pragmatist, which will help to destroy Emma's innocence, her

potential, and her romantic notions, to say nothing of his arsenic bringing about the actual death.

Lheureux rounds out the trio of corrupt men who are described in the beginnings of Part II and who will directly or indirectly lead to Emma's destruction. The description by the narrator heightens the reader's perception of Lheureux's corruption: "Sa figure grasse, molle et sans barbe, semblait teinte par une décoction de réglisse claire, et sa chevelure blanche rendait plus vif encore l'éclat rude de ses petits yeux noirs" (p. 105). Certainly the innocence represented by the white of his hair and benevolent exterior only tend to heighten, for the reader at least, the malevolence of Lheureux's eyes and, behind them, of his true being.

Emma, of course, is unaware of the feeling of foreboding at which the narrator is hinting upon her arrival in Yonville. She is filled with new dreams and vague new hope since discovering in Léon what she feels to be a kindred spirit. We therefore witness an image of potential, which we will meet many times throughout the novel--that of wings, in this case, Emma, in her new-found awareness of the love she has for Léon, thinks about him constantly and is jealous of Mme Homais who sleeps in the same house. She finds that "ses pensées continuellement s'abattaient sur cette maison, comme les pigeons du Lion d'or qui venaient tremper là, dans les gouttières, leurs pattes roses et leurs

ailes blanches" (p. 110). Emma, like these white-winged pigeons, would love to spread her wings and fly away, but she deigns to allow her naive thoughts to rest upon Léon, just as the pigeons stem their flight and allow their white wings to dip in the gutters of the house in which he lives. Taking the simile to its extreme, one is shocked at the comparison of Emma's thoughts to pigeons and Léon to gutters!

Léon, however, is a short-lived fancy due to his departure for Paris, and after he has left "les mauvais jours de Tostes recommencèrent" (p. 128). Emma feels that she is suffering even more this time and is sure that it will never end. For this reason, she feels that she has the right to indulge all of her whims, one of which is to learn Italian. The problem however is that she merely purchases dictionaries, a grammar, and a supply of white paper (p. 128). Now, these blank pages have great potential, for if Emma fills them, she will have accomplished something. We know though, without ever having the fact stated, that Emma will never learn Italian and the pages will remain white. Emma herself can be seen as a blank sheet of paper with potential for living, but she will always remain so, as nothing of note will ever be accomplished by her: "Elle était pâle partout, blanche comme du linge" (p. 129).

Léon may have left Emma's white-winged thoughts without an object, but Rodolphe arrives on the scene to fill that need. The day of the Comices, we see a return of the white-wing image, this time on butterflies rather than on pigeons. Emma and Rodolphe, who are watching the festivities from above, witness this scene: "Un coup de vent qui arriva par les fenêtres fronça le tapis de la table, et, sur la Place, en bas, tous les grands bonnets des paysannes se soulevèrent, comme des ailes de papillons blancs qui s'agitent" (p. 154). This image may be interpreted as implying Emma's impending flight into a love affair; her hopes are ready to soar right into the arms of Rodolphe. Emma, so long as she has hope--or perhaps Flaubert would cynically call it *naïveté*--, will always be wanting to fly up to something better, but she will never be able to attain the heights for which she yearns.

Charles, ever the complaisant husband, soon convinces Emma to accompany her lover-to-be on an outing on horseback, and Rodolphe arrives with his two horses: "Emma fut charmée de sa tournure, lorsqu'il apparut sur le palier avec son grand habit de velours et sa culotte de tricot blanc" (p. 162). To an erotically frustrated Emma, Rodolphe's white pants may indeed be promising, but of course, once they are lovers, Emma will soon be disillusioned and feel remorse, and she will eventually be left in worse straits than

previously. The white in this case will thus lead to nothingness.

The remorse, however, is temporary, and Rodolphe, in Emma's disappointment over Charles's ineptitude as a surgeon, becomes her refuge, the person to whom her thoughts and hopes turn during her moments of discouragement at home. Therefore, after the argument with her mother-in-law and the apology she has been forced to make, her natural response is to turn to Rodolphe. Since he is the one in whom she places her hopes, the signal she uses to attract his attention is quite apt:

Ils étaient convenus, elle et Rodolphe, qu'en cas d'événement extraordinaire, elle attacherait à la persienne un petit chiffon de papier blanc, afin que, si par hasard il se trouvait à Yonville, il accourût dans la ruelle, derrière la maison (p. 198).

The white, once again, represents Emma's hope, and only the reader and the narrator can know that this hope is ill-founded and will lead nowhere other than to disappointment.

In the midst of all of Emma's searching for her absolute, and of Charles's bumbling, there is, in my mind, one truly tragic and innocent character, and that is Berthe. We see her cradle when Charles arrives home in the middle of the night: "La veilleuse de porcelaine arrondissait au plafond une clarté tremblante, et les rideaux fermés du petit berceau faisaient comme une hutte blanche qui se bombait dans l'ombre, au bord du lit"

(p. 200). As the whiteness of the cradle suggests, Berthe is a perfectly innocent creature, and in fact has a pure unquestioning love for her mother, even though it goes unnoticed for the most part by Emma. It is therefore the utmost in cynical irony to note that the most innocent one of all in the novel will come to the worst fate--child labor in a cotton mill, and the suggestion of the whiteness of the cradle in the darkness presages the fact that it is the darkest of destinies which will overtake the innocent child. She will doubtless never know anything but unhappiness, and it is thus the innocent victim who pays for her parents' follies.

Emma, however, remains oblivious to her daughter's blind love, as she continues to be wrapped up in her own dreams and desires. While Charles sleeps and dreams beside her, Emma's thoughts are elsewhere. She dreams of the exotic lands she will explore with Rodolphe: "Souvent, du haut d'une montagne, ils apercevaient tout à coup quelque cité splendide avec des dômes, des ponts, des navires, des forêts de citronniers et des cathédrales de marbre blanc, dont les clochers aigus portaient des nids de cigogne" (p. 201). Since Emma sees herself as soon leaving Yonville and her drab life with Rodolphe, she is full of expectation and hope, as can be seen in the image of the white marble cathedrals. The reader, however, knows that there is nothing behind this hope, and actually the scenery of Emma's

dreams resembles more the backdrop of a stage scene than a real place; there is nothing behind the dreams, as in fact there is nothing much to Emma herself other than the dreams. When Rodolphe sees her for the last time before his letter of separation, "il la vit avec son vêtement blanc peu à peu s'évanouir dans l'ombre comme un fantôme . . ." (p. 205).

For Rodolphe, who never understood Emma, she is no more than a shade, but, as on certain rare occasions, he is not far from the truth, since she is made up of her dreams and without them would be nothing. Without them, suicide will be her only option, so the image of Emma in white disappearing like a ghost into the shadows is actually a bit of gruesome foreshadowing of her death, which will be aided in large part by disillusionment with Rodolphe. This interlude with Rodolphe remains thus a blank page in both of their lives. Rodolphe's life has certainly not been appreciably changed by Emma's presence, nor has Emma found what she has been seeking, and in so failing she has not yet been able to find a substitute for her great hopes.

The following evening, upon seeing Rodolphe's flight in his tilbury, Emma faints, and "elle restait étendue, la bouche ouverte, les paupières fermées, les mains à plat, immobile, et blanche comme une statue de cire" (p. 213). This scene is eerily evocative both of the plaster statue of the priest which fell and broke by the wayside as Emma will do, and of Emma's future death pallor. The use of the

adjective "immobile" is particularly fitting as we see Emma taking on the characteristics of the world which surrounds her, as during her convalescence "la neige sur le toit des halles jetait dans la chambre un reflet blanc, immobile" (p. 218). As we well know, and as the narrator constantly hints, Emma will be conquered by the world around her rather than vice versa, and she takes on the immobility, the immutability of the whiteness and blankness around her.

Emma, however, is still capable of attaching her hopes to another object, which is clearly demonstrated even while she remains dreadfully ill after the disappointment inflicted by Rodolphe. Emma is infected by a religious zeal to replace her dashed hopes of erotic happiness with her lover:

Un jour qu'au plus fort de sa maladie elle s'était crue agonisante, elle avait demandé la communion; et, à mesure que l'on faisait dans sa chambre les préparatifs pour le sacrement, que l'on disposait en autel la commode encombrée de sirops et que Félicité semait par terre des fleurs de dahlia, Emma sentait quelque chose de fort passant sur elle, qui la débarrassait de ses douleurs, de toute perception, de tout sentiment. Sa chair allégée ne pesait plus, une autre vie commençait; il lui sembla que son être, montant vers Dieu, allait s'anéantir dans cet amour comme un encens allumé qui se dissipe en vapeur. On aspergea d'eau bénite les draps du lit; le prêtre retira du saint ciboire la blanche hostie; et ce fut en défaillant d'une joie céleste qu'elle avança les lèvres pour accepter le corps du Sauveur qui se présentait (p. 218).

The white host is Emma's new hope and the Savior and religion will become the focal point of Emma's new dreams. Since she

is not about to succumb to her despair, she obviously needs some new potential, and religion will temporarily fill the void. As usual, however, Emma's fascination with mysticism does not last long; she divests herself of her do-good interests, and her next opportunity appears in the shape of Léon at the theatre in Rouen.

This new phase in the hopes and dreams of Emma ushers in the third part of the novel. I see this part of the work as a sort of decrescendo after the high point of the novel, which in my view is Rodolphe's abandonment. Had the novel ended at that point with Emma's death, it would have been far more tragic. With this falling off, it would be expected that white as a symbol of hope and potential would appear with far less frequency, and this is indeed the case. An excellent illustration of this fact is the scene we have previously witnessed in Emma's room in the Croix rouge with Léon "maniant délicatement le liséré bleu de sa longue ceinture blanche ..." (p. 242). As I have stated earlier, the blue trim represents Emma's dreams which must be handled delicately by Léon because of their present fragile state. At the same time, however, the white which is surrounded by the blue reminds us that Emma's dreams, though hopeful for her, actually contain only emptiness. Since these dreams are so delicate, once they are shattered by Léon and the others through playing with them, Emma will come face to face with nothingness.

At the start of Emma's love affair with Léon, the all-too familiar image of white wings reappears, this time in the form of butterflies as at the Comices. From inside the cab summoned by Léon, "une main nue passa sous les petits rideaux de toile jaune et jeta des déchirures de papier, qui se dispersèrent au vent et s'abattirent plus loin, comme des papillons blancs, sur un champ de trèfles rouges tout en fleur" (p. 251). For the first time, Emma's hopes and potential take flight, as does the torn, destroyed note. Up to this point, the wings may have fluttered, as at the Comices, but there has never been flight. Now, in a sense, in the destruction of Emma's last vestiges of resistance, in the form of the torn note which expressed Emma's refusal to meet Léon, Emma has definitively paved the way for her own destruction. Léon, after all, will only lead her back into the boredom she finds in her marriage, and Emma will not be able to bounce back from the blows dealt to her in this final section of the novel.

Since Emma's potential for life has taken flight during her stay in Rouen, the return to Yonville brings a fitting use of the color white. She returns to town in the midst of canning time and is told to go at once to the pharmacist. Given these instructions, Emma descends upon a scene of chaos in the pharmacy, where Homais himself is berating Justin who went into the locked room containing arsenic in order to find another kettle. We then learn a

bit of information about the contents of the room which Emma stores in her mind for later, and which presages for the reader the suicide to come: "Tu as vu une bouteille, en verre bleu, cachetée avec de la cire jaune, qui contient une poudre blanche, sur laquelle même j'avais écrit: Dangereux! ..." (p. 253). Emma in her later despair will destroy all her hopes and potential by literally devouring them in the form of the white powder. Emma has certainly come a long way from her reactions at la Vaubyessard: "Le sucre en poudre même lui parut plus blanc et plus fin qu'ailleurs" (p. 51). From a sign of hope to Emma, the white powder has degenerated to a grim foreboding on the part of the reader. Homais in this scene also informs Emma of the death of her father-in-law.

Due to this death, Charles's mother arrives in Yonville, and we witness a scene in which the three adults are together without speaking. This silence only serves to heighten the impending tragedy of the innocent, unsuspecting child with them as "près d'eux, Berthe, en petit tablier blanc, raclait avec sa pelle le sable des allées" (p. 258).

With Emma's increasing involvement with Léon, depravity replaces innocence, hope, and potential to an ever greater degree. Where we find Emma, in a gesture of modesty covering her face when she gives herself to Rodolphe for the first time, with an emphasis on the whiteness of her neck (p. 165), we find only false innocence and modesty

with Léon in their hotel trysts where "rien au monde n'était beau comme sa tête brune et sa peau blanche se détachant sur cette couleur pourpre, quand, par un geste de pudeur, elle fermait ses deux bras nus, en se cachant la figure dans les mains" (p. 270). In her greater decadence, Emma spends more time in Rouen and in order to have her hair done frequents the unreality of the theater district where one can see actors and actresses ready to live any role, their faces a blank able to play out any emotion. Flaubert's description of them certainly expresses an emptiness or hopelessness: "[E]lle voyait, en face, passer des hommes à figure blanche et des femmes en toilette fanée, qui entraient par la porte des coulisses" (p. 272).

Life has taken on for Emma a bit of the allure of a mad roller coaster ride, and she is about to begin the final disastrous descent. Upon returning to Yonville from a night of debauchery at the masked ball in Rouen, she learns the news of the impending seizure of the household. In desperation, she once again goes to see the calculating Lheureux: "Elle fut lâche, elle le supplia; et même elle appuya sa jolie main blanche et longue, sur les genoux du marchand" (p. 299). As detached observers, we can see the hopelessness of this now pathetic white hand, the hand which had been so quick to spend money, to furnish its owner with what she thought she craved. Now, however, it can

accomplish nothing since Lheureux is not the receptive lover or husband, as had been Charles, Rodolphe, and Léon.

During the next three days, Emma seems to be more and more surrounded by hopelessness and emptiness. We see a return of the white light which, treated as a whitish light earlier in the novel, had served to heighten her ennui and a feeling of emptiness. Now we are faced with this same void and an almost total hopelessness when Emma is in Rouen after having asked Léon for money. The narrator informs us that she is behaving like an automaton in doing all that force of habit impels, and so she begins walking to the Croix rouge in order to return to Yonville: "Il faisait beau; c'était un de ces jours du mois de mars clairs et âpres, où le soleil reluit dans un ciel tout blanc" (p. 304). It is as if the brightness were revealing an absolute emptiness as symbolized by the total whiteness of the sky.

At the end of her three-day unsuccessful search, Emma turns to her only recourse after the shattering of her illusions--death. This she does by eating the white arsenic powder discussed earlier. She obtains the key to the "capharnaum" from Justin:

La clef tourna dans la serrure, et elle alla droit vers la troisième tablette, tant son souvenir la guidait bien, saisit le bocal bleu, en arracha le bouchon, y fourra sa main, et, la retirant pleine d'une poudre blanche, elle se mit à manger à même (p. 321).

Emma thus symbolically breaks through her dreams--the blue bottle--and devours the empty hopes which had been contained within.

Through Emma's disillusion and disasters, however, she does not lose all capacity for hope. It is, ironically, at the moment of the last rites that she seems infused with new life. We see white symbolizing hope in the following tableau: "Il y avait sur la table à ouvrage, recouverte d'une serviette blanche, cinq ou six petites boules de coton dans un plat d'argent, près d'un gros crucifix, entre deux chandeliers qui brûlaient" (p. 330). To support my thesis of an infusion of new hope, the narrator gives this interpretation:

Elle tourna sa figure lentement, et parut saisie de joie à voir tout à coup l'étoile violette, sans doute retrouvant au milieu d'un apaisement extraordinaire la volupté perdue de ses premiers élancements mystiques, avec des visions de béatitude éternelle qui commençaient (p. 330).

Once again, just when she seems to have lost all that she hoped for and desired, Emma turns these hopes toward religion.

Emma's death, however, definitively ends any earthly hopes for her, and all of the funeral arrangements only emphasize this fact. Charles decides that she will be buried in her wedding gown, white shoes, and a crown, and that she be placed inside three coffins (p. 334). Emma is thus being buried with her hopes, and well buried besides,

considering the three caskets. Looking back on her wedding during which Emma was dressed in the same way, one can see a recreation, and one is tempted to ask which is more of a funeral. For the reader at least, Emma did bury her hopes and potential at the time of her marriage to Charles. The question is probably academic, however, since in truth, given her situation and her desires, Emma was destined to fail from the beginning.

At the time of the funeral preparations, the feeling of nothingness is heightened, for example, when Charles comes to bid Emma adieu: "Des moires frissonnaient sur la robe de satin, blanche comme un clair de lune. Emma disparaissait dessous ..." (p. 339). Then, when Homais cuts a lock of her hair, Emma cannot prevent the desecration to her body any more than she could prevent the destruction of her spirit in life: "Enfin, se raidissant contre l'émotion, Homais donna deux ou trois grands coups au hasard, ce qui fit des marques blanches dans cette belle chevelure noire" (p. 340). Once again, this imagery is a startling reminder of the nothingness to which Emma has come.

The novel does not end, however, with the death of Emma, and neither does the imagery utilizing white as a symbol. We next witness Charles's deterioration: "Pour lui plaire, comme si elle vivait encore, il adopta ses prédilections, ses idées; il s'acheta des bottes vernies,

il prit l'usage des cravates blanches" (p. 349). Therefore the symbol leaves us with a final terrible irony on the life of Charles and Emma. He finally does something to please her when it is too late and can only lead to nothing, that is to Emma's own fate.

Yellow

The color yellow comes frequently into play in opposition to the positive connotations of blue and white. In contrast with dreams, hopes, and innocence, yellow symbolizes reality and dreariness, or failure, since for Emma reality is failure. If white is innocence and potential, then, in yellowing, it makes contact with what for Emma is a very sordid reality.

Yellow, in the first part of the novel, actually makes a very limited appearance, which is quite fitting since Emma at the beginning of the novel has far more illusions than at the end. Her dreams and hopes have not yet been quite so tainted by the real world as they will have been at the time of her death.

We do find some yellow at the time of the celebration of the wedding of Charles and Emma: "De grands plats de crème jaune, qui flottaient d'eux-mêmes au moindre choc de la table, présentaient, dessinés sur leur surface unie, les chiffres des nouveaux époux en arabesques de nonpareille" (p. 29). This description contrasts vividly with the

wedding which Emma had envisioned for herself, at midnight by candlelight (p. 27). The yellow cream, then, is a reminder of the reality of the peasant-style wedding. This whole dish actually suggests the reality of this bizarre union, as we find Charles's and Emma's initials on the surface of the yellow cream "en arabesques de nonpareille." The word "nonpareille" then is indirectly evocative of how unlike Charles and Emma really are, and the yellow shows the reality of their lack of similarity. At this wedding, we have seen many indications of the destiny of the marriage: the cardboard base of the wedding confection, the burrs in the wedding gown, and now the initials combined with the yellow cream.

After this ordeal of a wedding, Emma accompanies Charles to her new home, the same house in which he had lived with his first wife. From the description given of Emma's tour of the house, she must have been terribly disappointed. The reality of the situation could not live up to what we would envision as her expectations. Naturally, yellow appears in the description of the living room: "Un papier jaune-serin, relevé dans le haut par une guirlande de fleurs pâles, tremblait tout entier sur sa toile mal tendue ..." (p. 33).

After the failure of her attempts to stimulate love in herself for Charles, we see Emma beginning to take walks in the country with her dog. It is during these solitary

strolls that she begins truly to regret her marriage:

Sa pensée sans but d'abord, vagabondait au hasard, comme sa levrette, qui faisait des cercles dans la campagne, jappait après les papillons jaunes, donnait la chasse aux musaraignes, ou mordillait les coquelicots par le bord d'une pièce de blé. Puis ses idées peu à peu se fixaient, et, assise sur le gazon, qu'elle fouillait à petits coups avec le bout de son ombrelle, Emma se répétait:

--Pourquoi, mon Dieu! me suis-je mariée?
(pp. 45-46).

At this point, Emma tries to imagine how she might have met another man before Charles. She is chasing away reality with her imagination, just as the dog is barking after the yellow butterflies. Reality, however, will be just as elusive to get rid of as are the butterflies. Emma will manage to dream reality away for short stretches, but it will always come flitting back.

There is another dog in the novel, one which appears in the keepsake pictures of English ladies: "On en voyait d'étalées dans des voitures, glissant au milieu des parcs, où un lévrier sautait devant l'attelage que conduisaient au trot deux petits postillons en culotte blanche" (p. 39). Compare this dog's actions with those of Madame Bovary's in regard to l'Hirondelle: "Un accident l'avait retardé: la levrette de madame Bovary s'était enfuie à travers champs" (p. 80). The noble dog in the picture remained with his worthy carriage, while Madame Bovary's dog was more than happy to run away from the yellow

reality of the coach "un coffre jaune" (p. 80). It is just too bad Emma could not have done the same.

Emma's great opportunity for change does arrive in the form of the invitation to the ball at la Vaubyessard. All it provides however is more fantasies and a sort of turning point in her life:

Son voyage à la Vaubyessard avait fait un trou dans sa vie, à la manière de ces grandes crevasses qu'un orage, en une seule nuit, creuse quelquefois dans les montagnes. Elle se résigna pourtant; elle serra pieusement dans la commode sa belle toilette et jusqu'à ses souliers de satin, dont la semelle s'était jaunie à la cire glissante du parquet. Son coeur était comme eux: au frottement de la richesse, il s'était placé dessus quelque chose qui ne s'effacerait pas (p. 58).

Emma's innocence and acceptance of her husband have thus been yellowed much as the shoes have, and as the narrator tells us, Emma's new feelings will not be erased.

The yellow wax from the ball is evocative of a future event however. If the white sugar foreshadows the white powdered arsenic, then the yellow wax prefigures the yellow wax seal on the bottle of poison. From this point on, Emma's dissatisfaction will drive her relentlessly on to her death.

Back in Tostes, the wig-seller is a constant reminder of the oppressiveness from which one can suffer in this village while dreaming of the big city. This malcontent like Emma does nothing but dream and wait. The following description starts with his shop:

Elle avait pour décoration une vieille gravure de modes collée contre un carreau et un buste de femme en cire, dont les cheveux étaient jaunes. Lui aussi, le perruquier, il se lamentait de sa vocation arrêtée, de son avenir perdu, et, rêvant quelque boutique dans une grande ville, comme à Rouen, par exemple, sur le port, près du théâtre, il restait toute la journée à se promener en long, depuis la mairie jusqu'à l'église, sombre, et attendant la clientèle. Lorsque madame Bovary levait les yeux, elle le voyait toujours là, comme une sentinelle en faction, avec son bonnet grec sur l'oreille et sa veste de lasting (p. 66).

This man, living in a world of boredom and dissatisfaction, in a reality of stagnation, symbolized by the yellow of the hair, remains as a constant reminder of the totally unstimulating environment in which Emma finds herself trapped. In another tinge of particularly Flaubertian irony, it is Emma who finally ends up on the port near the theater in Rouen, but it is there that she reaches about her lowest point in depravity, for it is there, ironically in a hairdresser's shop, that she is offered tickets to the masked ball, a ball she does finally attend, only to reach a low ebb in her self-esteem.

Due to Emma's increasing depression, Charles seeks medical advice and is told she needs a change of air, thus occasioning the move to Yonville. While cleaning out a drawer in preparation for the moving, Emma pricks her fingers on the wire of her wedding bouquet: "Les boutons d'oranger étaient jaunes de poussière, et les rubans de satin, à liséré d'argent s'effiloquaient par le bord. Elle le jeta dans le feu" (p. 70). This is a clear example of white

undergoing the yellowing process mentioned earlier. At the time of her wedding, Emma was naive and hopeful about her new marriage, and her bouquet was white. Now she is disillusioned and far from hopeful about Charles as a husband, and the reality of the situation imposed by time has yellowed the bouquet. Having been disillusioned about her husband as a romantic hero and being faced with the reality of his ordinariness, Emma must pin her hopes on something else, and the move to Yonville temporarily fills the void.

For Emma, therefore, Yonville-l'Abbaye represents the possibility of a new start, while we, the readers, know that she has left none of her problems behind. As a matter of fact, though she may feel her disillusionment remained in Tostes, the symbolism of yellow lets the reader know that reality has accompanied her in the form of the coach l'Hirondelle: "C'était un coffre jaune ..." (p. 80).

Ironically, in all of Emma's attempts to escape, for example to Rouen, she takes the yellow Hirondelle, thus always taking her problems with her and climbing back into the coach to bring her problems back home again.

Léon becomes Emma's new romantic hero, and during their walk back from the wet-nurse's house, while their eyes are saying so much to each other, the narrator drops a hint to the reader of what the future holds for Emma:

"Dans les briques, des ravenelles avaient poussé; et, du bord de son ombrelle déployée, madame Bovary, tout en

passant, faisait s'égrener en poussière jaune un peu de leurs fleurs flétries ..." (p. 97). At the end of her adventures, Emma will be like one of these flowers, and Léon, her present companion, will be able to push thoughts of Emma and her destruction from his mind in order to marry Léocadie Leboeuf, just as Emma pushes the yellow flowers with her umbrella. In this same vein of reality, we recall the bright, revealing sunlight of the scene discussed in the preceding chapter.

As time goes forward, Emma becomes aware of her love for Léon, and at the same time suffers from what she sees as her sacrifice of this love in favor of fidelity to Charles. She therefore turns to the parish priest for help in the form of l'abbé Bournisien whose skin is red and "semée de macules jaunes qui disparaissaient dans les poils rudes de sa barbe grisonnante" (p. 115). The hideous yellow here described is indicative of the ugly reality which surrounds Emma, even in the village's only representative of the supernatural. By the priest's failure to help her, a source of escape from the ennui from which she suffers has been cut off. Reality has already begun to close in on her, though Emma is unaware of the fact. The irony of the present situation is that Emma sees religion in a mystical and romantic light, whereas this priest is of the most mundane sort possible.

Emma, however, is not destined to yield to Léon just yet, since he is too timid to broach the topic and effectively removes temptation by removing himself from the scene. That, of course, does not do away with any possibility of an amorous adventure, as we begin to suspect with the appearance of Rodolphe on market day. From her window, Emma sees "un monsieur vêtu d'une redingote de velours vert. Il était ganté de gants jaunes ..." (p. 130). These yellow gloves worn by Rodolphe are an ominous sign to the reader skilled at reading the color symbolism of the novel. Though Emma will see him as a sort of romantic savior, we know that she will be brought closer to dealing directly with reality at Rodolphe's hand, hence fittingly enclosed in a yellow glove. Their initial meeting over the two unconscious bodies of his servant and of Justin certainly is not a chivalrous situation, and Emma's yellow dress portends evil of their acquaintanceship, (p. 132). In this initial meeting with Rodolphe, Emma is not wearing blue as she was when she first met Charles and Léon and as she will be for her initial amorous encounter with Rodolphe in the woods. This is indicative of the difference in the men's personalities, as, for Rodolphe, there are relatively few preliminaries to his seduction. Charles and Léon were both quite deferential to Emma, whereas Rodolphe determines a goal--the possession of Emma--and

sets about accomplishing his objective with a realist's sense of expediency.

In fact, Emma herself is given a hint of the reality of Rodolphe's future desertion when she is with him during the Comices and

elle aperçut au loin, tout au fond de l'horizon, la vieille diligence l'Hirondelle, qui descendait lentement la côte des Leux, en traînant après soi un long panache de poussière. C'était dans cette voiture jaune que Léon, si souvent, était revenu vers elle; et par cette route là-bas qu'il était parti pour toujours! (p. 151).

This Hirondelle has a habit of creeping into the narrative as a reminder of reality even when its color is not mentioned. The experienced readers have been alerted to its shade and should be aware of its symbolism.

Reality, in Emma's affair with Rodolphe, does begin to close in little by little as symbolized by the décor of his room when she arrives early in the morning: "Les rideaux jaunes, le long des fenêtres laissaient passer doucement une lourde lumière blonde" (p. 169). Just two paragraphs further on, we learn of Rodolphe's evident displeasure at these visits, and he warns Emma that she is compromising herself. The yellow curtains are actually a recurring symbol, as we shall see with the progression of the novel. As reality hems Emma in more and more, she will literally enclose herself in yellow, as curtains of this color will hang around her.

Rodolphe's apparent fears for Emma's position seem to be well-founded when, on one of her early-morning returns from la Huchette, she comes upon Binet duck-hunting. From this moment, Emma lives with the fear that he will reveal the fact that he has seen her in the fields so early, particularly since Emma gives him an excuse which is a blatant lie on her part. When he comes into Homais' pharmacy, where Emma happens also to be, he makes no revelation but orders "quatre onces de cire jaune ..." (p. 172). This color is an evocation of the reality which begins to encircle Emma, and Binet with his ever-turning lathe will somehow seem to help bring about the inevitable end.

It comes as no surprise to the reader, having picked up on the hints dropped by the narrator, that Rodolphe deserts Emma, and she is deprived of her opportunity to run away to exotic places. At this time she almost gives in to the cry of Binet's lathe to commit suicide but is prevented by Charles's call. She does, however, fall seriously ill and spends a long winter convalescing. During this period, Emma watches for the everyday events of the villages: "Le plus considérable était, le soir, l'arrivée de l'Hirondelle" (p. 218). The yellow of this coach brings out the dreary reality of Emma's everyday existence, always the same. It is also a constant reminder that the Hirondelle may leave, but it always comes

back, and Emma was not on it when it left, and even if she had been she would have come back. Everyone seems to return to Yonville--both Rodolphe and Léon return.

At the end of Part II, we can easily compare frequency of appearance of yellow between the first and second parts. The number of occurrences in the second part, eighteen including l'Hirondelle, far exceeds that of the first part, six. This is to be expected since it is with the passage of time that Emma becomes more entrapped by the reality of the bourgeois world surrounding her, and comes ever closer to failure. With this thinking, it would be normal to expect an even greater occurrence of the color in Part III, and it is indeed the case--twenty-three, including implied yellow, such as l'Hirondelle, and Part III is even shorter than Part II. The concentration of yellow is thus very much higher than in Part II.

The third part of the novel is dedicated in part to the third man in Emma's life and to the fall which she experiences, occasioned by the ever-approaching reality we have been examining. Léon and the enclosing reality which pursues Emma come together in the cab, since the cab which is seen beneath a fiercely beating sun is also decorated with yellow curtains (pp. 250-251). Once again, the situation of the two lovers is filled with irony, as just at the moment when Emma feels her hopes are soaring, reality is once again surrounding and enclosing her in the form of the

cab's yellow curtains. Not only is she surrounded by yellow and reality during the seduction, but after this scene of romantic abandon, she pays a driver to catch up with the yellow Hirondelle (p. 251) to bring her back to her real world, which is only too ready to devour her.

Upon returning to Yonville, Emma is faced with the scene in the pharmacy in which she learns where to find the arsenic, "une bouteille en verre bleu, cachetée avec de la cire jaune, qui contient une poudre blanche ..." (p. 253). The yellow wax of the Binet incident (p. 172) has reappeared. Could one say that Binet had sealed her fate? After all, he has been compared to one of the Three Fates, turning out Emma's death on his lathe.²³ When Léon comes to Yonville, ostensibly to visit his old friends, we discover that "Binet, fatigué d'attendre l'Hirondelle, avait définitivement avancé son repas d'une heure ..." (p. 264). Binet no longer needs to wait for the yellow Hirondelle to bring Emma to him. It already has done so, and as has already been stated, he has definitively sealed her fate, here symbolically with the yellow wax.

The occurrence of yellow is certainly becoming extremely frequent, as failure and reality approach their victim Emma ever more closely. Once again, the image of the yellow curtains recurs: "Aussi, elle acheta pour sa

23. Engstrom, p. 493.

chambre une paire de rideaux jaunes à larges raies, dont M. Lheureux lui avait vanté le bon marché ..." (pp. 264-265). Emma herself is doing all that is necessary to help reality close in on her; purchasing the yellow curtains, though they be a bargain, is merely contributing to putting Emma more deeply into debt.

A particularly striking instance of yellow driving her toward her now unavoidable fate is a description of Emma's trips to Rouen in the Hirondelle during which "la route, entre ses deux longs fossés pleins d'eau jaune, allait continuellement se rétrécissant vers l'horizon" (pp. 267-268). The yellow sides of the road are growing together at the horizon, at which point symbolically Emma will meet her fate.

Not only does Emma go toward reality and Rouen in the yellow coach, bordered on both sides by yellow water, but the yellow curtains make another appearance, this time in regard to Léon: "Elle désira connaître son logement, le trouva médiocre; il en rougit, elle n'y prit garde, puis lui conseilla d'acheter des rideaux pareils aux siens ..." (p. 283). The reader will remember that Emma has recently purchased yellow curtains for herself (p. 265). She therefore is causing reality to hem her in, both in Yonville and in Rouen, leaving absolutely no route of escape.

Ironically, after Emma has gone to Rouen to ask Léon for money and when she is returning to Yonville where she

will soon meet her fate, Homais is making the same trip, and it is he who helps her into the yellow Hirondelle which will drive her to her meeting with the world as it is and to ultimate disaster (p. 305).

We finally receive a more concrete notice of Emma's destruction in the form of the yellow paper announcing the seizure. The scene takes place between Félicité and Emma: "Et la pauvre fille, émue, lui tendit un papier jaune qu'elle venait d'arracher à la porte. Emma lut d'un clin d'oeil que tout son mobilier était à vendre" (p. 307). This yellow paper is subtly evocative of the supply of white paper which Emma had bought in order to learn Italian (p. 128). With the passage of time and events however, the paper has merely yellowed and become a tool of the ever-present reality, ready to cut Emma off from her dreams and bring her to failure.

This yellow paper does contribute to Emma's final step, that of consuming the arsenic in Homais' "capharnaum":

La clef tourna dans la serrure, et elle alla droit vers la troisième tablette, tant son souvenir la guidait bien, saisit le bocal bleu, en arracha le bouchon, y fourra sa main, et, la retirant pleine d'une poudre blanche, elle se mit à manger à même (p. 321).

Now we know implicitly that to get to her fate, that of consuming the arsenic in order to commit suicide, Emma has had to break the yellow seal, symbolically placed by Binet, her faithful Fate. We thus find three major colors coming

together in this bottle of poison: the yellow of reality and failure, the blue of dreams, and the white of hope and innocence, and this union ends in Emma's inevitable fate-- death.

Black

Black is the color which occurs with the greatest frequency in the novel with 29 occurrences in Part I, 42 in Part II, and 31 in Part III. This large number of appearances is due, at least in part, to the numerous symbolic meanings which can be ascribed to black. It takes on the classic connotations, the Church and death, among others, whereas for Emma black is a color associated with her perfect romantic hero. In addition to these symbolic meanings for the color itself, black at times is used to describe light or a lack of illumination. Therefore, it occasionally takes on some of the attributes of darkness formulated in the preceding chapter. One of its important characteristics, as far as the study of the color black is concerned, is mystery.

Rather than trace an elaborate chronological development of the color as I have done with blue, white, and yellow, from this point on, I will merely give several illustrations for each symbolic meaning of a particular color. By now, the reader undoubtedly can follow the progression quite well without any unnecessary goading on my

part, and the abbreviated format will permit us to touch on more colors.

It will first of all be helpful to examine black as it takes on the meaning of mystery, since this connotation will reappear in other contexts. Mystery is of course an interpretation provided by black in the sense of a lack of illumination. Oftimes, however, this same explanation is applicable to the color itself. After all, black is a dark color, therefore inherently somewhat mysterious. Parts I and II afford many examples of the mystery function of black, both in a lighting situation and simply in a color context. When Charles is called to les Bertaux, it is in the black of night (p. 13), indicative of the unknown aspect of the place. When Charles first sees Emma's eyes, we learn that "quoiqu'ils fussent bruns, ils semblaient noirs à cause des cils ..." (p. 16). These eyes, after all, hold a mystery which Charles will never manage to penetrate, for Emma's is a soul filled with romance and a love of intrigue and mystery, witnessed by her love of keepsakes and her fascination with the women pictured in them, who "rêvant sur des sofas près d'un billet décacheté, contemplaient la lune, par la fenêtre entrouverte, à demi drapée d'un rideau noir" (p. 39).

We find this mystery and intrigue ironically coloring the atmosphere during and before Emma's liaison with Rodolphe, ironically because their affair will never

reach the heights which she ascribes to a great love affair. The atmosphere is one of intrigue and mystery during their ride in the woods: "Les massifs d'arbres, de place en place, saillaient comme des rochers noirs" (pp. 162-163). After this initial erotic encounter, Emma looks at herself in the mirror: "Jamais elle n'avait eu les yeux si grands, si noirs, ni d'une telle profondeur" (p. 167). She no doubt realizes that her eyes contain new mystery, the secret that she now has a lover (p. 167). The blackness of night image recurs in regard to their garden trysts:

Pendant tout l'hiver, trois ou quatre fois la semaine, à la nuit noire, il arrivait dans le jardin ... Des massifs d'ombre, çà et là, se bombaient dans l'obscurité, et parfois, frissonnant tous d'un seul mouvement, ils se dressaient et se penchaient comme d'immenses vagues noires qui se fussent avancées pour les recouvrir (pp. 172-173).

The mysterious aspect of black leads us to examine its role in symbolizing the perfect lover or romantic hero for Emma who apparently has garnered from pictures that the ideal hero must be dressed in black. At one point in Part III with Léon, Emma voulut qu'il se vêtît tout en noir et se laissât pousser une pointe au menton, pour ressembler aux portraits de Louis XIII" (p. 283). Emma's penchant for identifying with pictures has already been examined, so this is not a surprising desire on her part, and Gothot-Mersch advances an even more preferable version of the sentence. In several versions, such as the autograph

manuscript, the line reads "aux portraits Louis XIII."²⁴ This period would have a romantic appeal for Emma, and any gentleman in pictures of the time would certainly take on the traits of the ideal lover. Though it is not a singular trait for a well-dressed man of Emma's time to wear black, what is striking is the number of times it is associated in Emma's mind with the romantic hero. Certainly, since the color is such a banal one, the narrator did not need to mention it. Almost as often we find a black and white combination. For example, at school Emma reads many novels:

Elle aurait voulu vivre dans quelque vieux manoir, comme ces châtelaines au long corsage, qui, sous le trèfle des ogives, passaient leurs jours, le coude sur la pierre et le menton dans la main, à regarder venir du fond de la campagne un cavalier à plume blanche qui galope sur un cheval noir (p. 38).

This hero is thus caught up in an aura of mystery ("cheval noir") and hope ("plume blanche") for Emma.

Black or black and white continue to be related to the romantic hero throughout the novel, as, in the disappointment of marriage, Emma dreams of being in "un cottage écossais avec un mari vêtu d'un habit de velours noir ..." (p. 42). Later on, upon seeing Charles she thinks: "Que n'avait-elle, au moins, pour mari un de ces hommes d'ardeurs taciturnes qui travaillent la nuit dans les livres, et portent enfin, à soixante ans, ... une brochette de croix,

24. Gothot-Mersch, Madame Bovary, p. 425.

sur leur habit noir, mal fait" (p. 63). Would this be Homais?

Léon, as a romantic hero in Emma's dreams, must wear black, and, as she looks at him on the way back from the wet-nurse's house, "son regard ... rencontra l'épaule du jeune homme, dont la redingote avait un collet de velours noir. Ses cheveux châtons tombaient dessus ..." (p. 96).

At the time of the staging of Lucie de Lamermoor, Emma is feeling quite cynical and disenchanté. All she needs to rekindle her romantic notions, however, is the appearance of the hero in a black coat:

Emma voulait ne plus voir dans cette reproduction de ses douleurs qu'une fantaisie plastique bonne à amuser les yeux, et même elle souriait intérieurement d'une pitié dédaigneuse, quand au fond du théâtre, sous la portière de velours, un homme apparut en manteau noir (p. 231).

Interestingly enough, at a time of great discouragement for Emma, when she has been to Rouen to ask Léon for money, she thinks she sees the Vicomte in a tilbury pulled by a black horse (p. 304). The mysterious black horse of the romantic hero in the picture in the keepsake remains, but the white plume of hope has disappeared.

This interpretation of black, as all Flaubertian symbolism, would hardly seem complete without some ironic twist to it, and the narrator sees to it that irony abounds here. Some of the creatures who arrive in Emma's life in

the guise of the perfect hero are almost laughable, as on the organ-grinder's instrument "des danseurs hauts comme le doigt, femmes en turban rose, Tyroliens en jaquette, singes en habit noir, messieurs en culotte courte, tournaient, tournaient ..." (p. 67). The grotesqueness of Djalioh comes to mind once again. Charles, like the monkeys, obviously fails all of Emma's criteria for a hero, but he wants to give her "une surprise sentimentale ..., son portrait en habit noir" (p. 120). This is quite fitting since Charles sees himself as making Emma very happy, so he should want to dress like her hero.

Emma's black and white "hero" does make his appearance at the time of the appraisal of the Bovary household goods. Maître Hareng arrives "boutonné dans un mince habit noir, en cravate blanche, et portant des sous-pieds fort tendus ..." (p. 301). Ironically enough, this "romantic hero" does find his way into Emma's innermost secrets, in a manner of speaking, for, in his search, he examines Rodolphe's letters (pp. 301-302).

Emma associates black clothing with the perfect lover or hero, but at times her love affair is with the Church. Bournisien, as the parish priest, is the earthly representative of Emma's high ideals, and we learn that his cassock is black (p. 78). However, we later have the following description of his mode of dress:

La lueur du soleil couchant qui frappait en plein son visage pâlisait le lasting de sa soutane, luisante sous les coudes, effiloquée par le bas. Des taches de graisse et de tabac suivaient sur sa poitrine large la ligne des petits boutons, et elles devenaient plus nombreuses en s'écartant de son rabat, où reposaient les plis abondants de sa peau rouge ... (pp. 114-115).

During the wake, we receive a similar impression of the priest: "M. Bournisien, plus robuste, continua quelque temps à remuer tout bas les lèvres; puis, insensiblement, il baissa le menton, lâcha son gros livre noir et se mit à ronfler" (p. 339).

As Emma looks back upon her convent days, black again refers to the Church in the form of the nuns: "Elle aurait voulu, comme autrefois, être encore confondue dans la longue ligne des voiles blancs, que marquaient de noir çà et là les capuchons raides des bonnes soeurs inclinées sur leur prie-Dieu ..." (p. 113). In her nostalgia, the black of the Church takes on a sympathetic appearance.

When dealing with the present, however, as in the case of Bournisien, the narrator communicates a real distaste for religion to the reader.

Death, the most usual traditional meaning for black, is, in the course of events, the interpretation to which all others in the novel lead. All of her lovers, real and imaginary, merely speed Emma along the way to death. The mystery which so fascinates her is after all only another mask for her inevitable demise. Death, in this guise,

makes its first appearance toward the end of Part I, after Emma's disappointment over not being invited back to la Vaubyessard. She sees her coming days as being exactly the same, with never a change: "L'avenir était un corridor tout noir, et qui avait au fond sa porte bien fermée" (p. 65). The door at the end of this black corridor will one day open to Emma to reveal her death, the one thing which has been awaiting her, instead of her passively waiting for it. She will have a fate similar to the one to which she subjects her wedding bouquet when "les corolles de papier, racornies, se balançant le long de la plaque comme des papillons noirs, enfin s'envolèrent par la cheminée" (p. 70).

All of Emma's illusions help her along the route to self-destruction, and her lovers are no exception. Rodolphe does so by making her a part of his collection, a box in which he keeps "pêle-mêle des bouquets, une jarretière, un masque noir, des épingles et des cheveux--des cheveux! de bruns, de blonds ..." (p. 206). This black mask can be interpreted as the black mask of death.

Lheureux of course is ever ready to help her along the path to destruction. After the death of her father-in-law, he hints at the possibility of a power of attorney, which will lead to her financial ruin, and immediately afterward, "Lheureux déclara que Madame ne pouvait se dispenser de lui prendre quelque chose. Il lui enverrait

un barège noir, douze mètres, de quoi faire une robe" (p. 260). This black dress may be in mourning for someone else, but it is a mourning she will not take off until her own death.

Emma goes to Rouen for three days ostensibly to consult Léon about the legal ramifications of the power of attorney she has had drawn up. They are, of course, passed in quite a different fashion, "une vraie lune de miel" (p. 262). They spend their time on an island in the river: "Ils se plaçaient dans la salle basse d'un cabaret, qui avait à sa porte des filets noirs suspendus" (p. 262). These black nets suspended above the doorway, perhaps the closed door at the end of the black corridor (p. 65), are like death waiting to ensnare Emma.

The nets do begin to drop with the threatened seizure of Emma's possessions, and in her desperation she goes to see Guillaumin. The narrator, for this visit, insists upon the presence of black:

Elle s'habilla, mit sa robe noire avec sa capote à grains de jais Un large poêle de porcelaine bourdonnait sous un cactus qui emplissait la niche, et, dans des cadres de bois noir, contre la tenture de papier chêne, il y avait la Esméralda de Steuben, avec la Putiphar de Schopin (p. 307).

This funereal atmosphere is confirmed by Emma's lack of success in obtaining the money needed at a price she would be willing to pay.

It is at this time that she goes to see Binet, who truly personifies death. When we first meet this strange man, he is dressed, like one of Emma's imaginary lovers, in black: "Il portait un gilet de drap noir ..." (p. 77), and it is Binet who will be her final lover, in the guise of death, certainly a Freudian destiny. When Emma goes to see him at his lathe, we see how close he is to turning out her death:

Il était seul, dans sa mansarde, en train d'imiter, avec du bois, une de ces ivoireries indescriptibles, composées de croissants, de sphères creusées les unes dans les autres, le tout droit comme un obélisque et ne servant à rien; et il entamait la dernière pièce, il touchait au but! (pp. 311-312).

Binet, therefore, does not have to do anything for Emma in order to have her; he will soon possess her on his own terms, death.

With Emma's actual expiring, we see all of the classic death symbols in black. For example, Emma's father arrives in town and faints upon seeing "le drap noir" (p. 341). He sees an ominous sign while riding to Yonville: "trois poules noires" (p. 341). The women in the funeral cortege wear "mantes noires" (p. 344).

Black, then, is a color with both positive and negative aspects. For Emma, it is the Church, mystery and the perfect romantic hero. The reader, on the other hand, sees all of these meanings culminating in the major one, which is that of death.

Red

Red in Madame Bovary, in certain contexts, takes on some of its traditional symbolism, but in a limited fashion. There are actually two main areas of meaning to be examined for red--a positive and a negative. On the positive side, red can signify sensuality, voluptuousness, and by extension a certain erotic vision of love. This is, of course, one of the usually accepted symbolic interpretations of the color. On the other hand, in different contexts, red also presents several major negative elements: a peasant origin, outlook or attitude, and a lack of sophistication sometimes combined with crudeness or insensitivity.

The positive aspect will be studied first, since it is the more readily accepted. Arnold Whittick refers to its meaning in this way: "As the colour of love it is derived from fire, which suggests the idea of warmth or heat."²⁵ In a literal application of the fire image, we witness Emma's wedding bouquet tossed into the flames, and "les corolles de papier, racornies, se balançant le long de la plaque comme des papillons noirs, enfin s'envolèrent par la cheminée" (p. 70). Emma's yearnings for romantic, sensual love have consumed her marriage to Charles, producing only black butterflies, ashes. Sensuousness is expressed in the fire image of the sunset on the return

25. Whittick, p. 244.

from the woods as Rodolphe watches Emma: "Elle était charmante, à cheval! Droite, avec sa taille mince, le genou plié sur la crinière de sa bête et un peu colorée par le grand air, dans la rougeur du soir" (p. 166).

Charles and Emma's bedroom in Tostes presents a truly ironic scene for the reader when he first views it along with Emma, for the bed is in "une alcôve à draperie rouge" (p. 34). What more sensual design could there be for such a disappointing marriage? Another ironic aspect is the fact that it is here that Charles slept with the cold-footed widow. An analogous décor is to be seen in the hotel room which Emma and Léon share: "Les rideaux de levantine rouge, qui descendaient du plafond, se cintraient trop bas vers le chevet évasé ..." (p. 270). Not only is the décor analogous, but so is the situation since "Emma retrouvait dans l'adultère toutes les platitudes du mariage" (p. 296).

The voluptuousness of the color is illustrated in Emma's dreams of traveling with Rodolphe: "On marchait au pas, à cause des grandes dalles, et il y avait par terre des bouquets de fleurs que vous offraient des femmes habillées en corset rouge" (p. 201).

Later we find a truly sensuous image of red at the very beginning of Emma's affair with Léon, in the cab:

Une fois, au milieu du jour, en pleine campagne,
au moment où le soleil dardait le plus fort

contre les vieilles lanternes argentées, une main nue passa sous les petits rideaux de toile jaune et jeta des déchirures de papier, qui se dispersèrent au vent et s'abattirent plus loin, comme des papillons blancs, sur un champ de trèfles rouges tout en fleur (pp. 250-251).

It is at this time that Emma's hopes truly take flight in the form of the white butterflies, as has earlier been discussed. They appear on a field of red, thus signifying that Emma has given herself up to purely sensual love, as there is no longer anything else available to her. All of her attempts to live an ideal romantic love end only in desperate eroticism. Ironically enough, the positive aspect of red now appears quite gloomy.

On the truly negative side, however, we view the characteristics which Emma herself would find distasteful, for example anything having to do with a peasant outlook or a lack of sophistication. Allen sees red in this way also, though he limits his interpretation to this one: "Le pattern sémantique principal de ROUGE implique la rusticité et le manque de raffinement."²⁶ Charles represents the epitome of this symbolism upon his arrival at school: "Quoiqu'il ne fût pas large des épaules, son habit-veste ... laissait voir, par la fente des parements, des poignets rouges habitués à être nus" (p. 3). Once again, we note Charles's unsophisticated behavior when

26. Allen, "L'Atmosphère," No. 34, p. 16.

Emma's father "s'aperçut ... que Charles avait les pommettes rouges près de sa fille, ce qui signifiait qu'un de ces jours on la lui demanderait en mariage ..." (p. 25). After their marriage, Charles continues to exhibit this same rusticity for "Emma quelquefois lui rentrait dans son gilet la bordure rouge de ses tricots ..." (p. 64).

Hippolyte, the stable boy is certainly every inch the peasant, as is demonstrated not only by his actions, but also by description: "Sa chevelure rouge était entremêlée de brins de paille ..." (p. 87), and then when Hippolyte brings Emma's bags he is described as "le pauvre diable, dont la grosse chevelure rouge dégouttait de sueur" (p. 257). At the masked ball, however, it is Emma herself whom we see as losing all vestiges of sophistication: "Elle mit un pantalon de velours et des bas rouges, avec une perruque à catogan et un lampion sur l'oreille" (p. 297). This red is not only sensuous but it also represents a loss of sophistication or respectability. At the end of this night of debauchery, Emma begins to suspect what is happening to herself: "Tout et elle-même lui étaient insupportables. Elle aurait voulu, s'échappant comme un oiseau, aller se rajeunir quelque part, bien loin, dans les espaces immaculés" (p. 298). We know, however, that this is impossible since her hopes have already taken flight in the form of the torn-up note (p. 251).

Along with lack of sophistication sometimes goes a sort of crudeness or insensitivity, best exemplified by l'abbé Bournisien, particularly in his conversation with Emma prior to his catechism class: "Des taches de graisse et de tabac suivaient sur sa poitrine large la ligne des petits boutons, et elles devenaient plus nombreuses en s'écartant de son rabat, où reposaient les plis abondants de sa peau rouge ..." (p. 115).

Emma, even after her death, is persecuted by crudeness and insensitivity, for while waking her body Homais and l'abbé Bournisien enter into a discussion of Christianity with predictable results: "Ils s'échauffaient, ils étaient rouges, ils parlaient à la fois sans s'écouter; Bournisien se scandalisait d'une telle audace; Homais s'émerveillait d'une telle bêtise; et ils n'étaient pas loin de s'adresser des injures ..." (p. 337).

Emma is thus fittingly enough a victim of red, fittingly for red traditionally symbolizes violence. She is pushed toward death by her own desires for love and sensuality and also by the people around her who, through their own attitudes to some extent, cannot live up to the characters peopling Emma's dreams.

Pale

Upon initial examination of the color, or lack of color, pale, one uncovers three basic meanings for the

shade. It can represent a lustreless, uninteresting existence,²⁷ a romantic ideal or merely a pallor caused by illness or indisposition, hardly a very profound symbolic meaning. Close study reveals however that to a large extent the three meanings blend together so that in the end there is little distinction among them, and even superficial interpretations lead to symbolism.

The dull existence symbolized by pale finds a good example in the first description of the main room of the house in Tostes: "Un papier jaune-serin, relevé dans le haut par une guirlande de fleurs pâles, tremblait tout entier sur sa toile mal tendue ..." (p. 33). Certainly, it would be difficult to find a duller existence than the one in Tostes. In seeming contrast, Emma's nostalgia reveals the romantic ideal epitomized in her sufferings after her mother's death:

Emma fut intérieurement satisfaite de se sentir arrivée du premier coup à ce rare idéal des existences pâles, où ne parviennent jamais les coeurs médiocres. Elle se laissa donc glisser dans les méandres lamartiniens, écouta les harpes sur les lacs, tous les chants de cygnes mourants, toutes les chutes de feuilles, les vierges pures qui montent au ciel, et la voix de l'Eternel discourant dans les vallons. Elle s'en ennuya, n'en voulut point convenir, continua par habitude, ensuite par vanité, et fut enfin surprise de se sentir apaisée, et sans plus de tristesse au coeur que de rides sur son front (p. 40).

27. Allen, "L'Atmosphère," No. 34, p. 14.

This, then, is one of the great "existences pâles" which is just the apogee to which Emma aspires throughout the novel. The result, however, is boredom and a dull way of life, bringing us back to the first meaning of pale discussed here, that of a truly colorless existence.

Any pallor having to do with a suffering heroine joins the third meaning with the other two. We see this exemplified during the presentation of Lucie de Lammermoor: "Lucie s'avancait, à demi soutenue par ses femmes, une couronne d'oranger dans les cheveux, et plus pâle que le satin blanc de sa robe" (p. 230). This is most definitely the image of the poor suffering, romantic heroine, a role which Emma in her dreams would not be loath to fulfill. All three possibilities of symbolism for pale are thus interconnected and one often causes or leads to the next which in turn initiates the following one.

There are in fact many examples of pale associated with the romantic ideal. One of them is to be seen at the ball at la Vaubyessard: "A trois pas d'Emma, un cavalier en habit bleu causait Italie avec une jeune femme pâle, portant une parure de perles" (p. 53). In Emma's ideas about Paris we see "la société des duchesses; on y était pâle ...". (p. 60). This pallor thus sets the women apart in a romantic way for Emma, but it may just as well mean that they are sickly, with only Emma seeing romance.

As Allen remarks, there are cases in which pale takes the place of all mention of a particular color without the reader's knowing what this color is.²⁸ This occurs in one case in the description of the gift Emma gives to Léon: "un tapis de velours et de laine avec des feuillages sur fond pâle ..." (p. 102). Since Léon is now Emma's perfect man, the pale usage is quite apropos. At the same time, the appearance of pale makes the actual color of the rug very vague, just as Emma's own vision of her romantic ideal remains nebulous.

The dullness of Emma's existence in Tostes is symbolized by pale in, ironically, a form of light, as we saw earlier with blanc and blanchâtre. She suffers acutely from boredom and sadness on Sundays when she hears Vespers rung: "Quelque chat sur les toits, marchant lentement, bombait son dos aux rayons pâles du soleil" (p. 65). After Léon's departure from Yonville, Emma suffers more and more from her ennui, but her love for Léon fades: "L'amour, peu à peu, s'éteignit par l'absence, le regret s'étouffa sous l'habitude; et cette lueur d'incendie qui empourprait son ciel pâle se couvrit de plus d'ombre et s'effaçà par degrés" (p. 127). With the fading of the purple of this love, Emma is left with only the pale sky of her drab, unsatisfying life. She begins indulging in some excesses

28. Allen, "L'Atmosphère," No. 34, p. 14.

and creates a strange impression in the village:

Malgré ses airs évaporés (c'était le mot des bourgeoises d'Yonville), Emma pourtant ne paraissait pas joyeuse, et, d'habitude, elle gardait aux coins de la bouche cette immobile contraction qui plisse la figure des vieilles filles et celle des ambitieux déçus. Elle était pâle partout, blanche comme du linge ... (p. 129).

Life, for Emma, could hardly be more unbearable in its dullness and lack of interest. What is ironic about the situation is that she is much the romantic heroine, just pining away with her "airs évaporés."

It is the old servant, Catherine-Nicaise-Elisabeth Leroux, however, whose entire existence encompasses all manner of dullness, and her face registers this emptiness: "Rien de triste ou d'attendri n'amollissait ce regard pâle" (p. 155). Not even the slightest emotion seems to perturb the colorlessness of her look. Emma, however, is incapable of renouncing all emotion.

During Emma's desperate weekly trips to Rouen to see Léon, the pale sky image returns in all its manifold monotony in a description of the countryside around Rouen: "La pleine campagne remontait ... d'un mouvement monotone, jusqu'à toucher au loin la base indécise du ciel pâle" (p. 268). These trips to Rouen, though Emma will not admit it to herself, are just as dull and wearisome as everything else she has tried.

All of her longings for a romantic ideal and her suffering from a dull existence lead to a sickly pallor which will end in her death. After Emma has taken the arsenic and while she is dying, Berthe remarks on how pale her mother is (p. 325).

Toward the end of the Bovarys' life in Tostes, Emma becomes quite sickly: "Elle pâlisait et avait des battements de coeur" (p. 69). This paleness is also associated with the dullness of life in Tostes in that it is dissatisfaction with the monotony which causes the physical reaction. In her ennui, however, Emma behaves as she no doubt imagines a romantic heroine would:

En de certains jours, elle bavardait avec une abondance fébrile; à ces exaltations succédaient tout à coup des torpeurs où elle restait sans parler, sans bouger. Ce qui la ranimait alors, c'était de se répandre sur les bras un flacon d'eau de Cologne (p. 69).

The three meanings of pale are thus united in this one situation with Emma suffering physically from boredom, but pouring cologne on her arms, no doubt much as she would envision a great heroine doing.

We find another union of meanings when Emma begins to pretend to be a good housewife and mother with Léon looking on helplessly: "Emma maigrît, ses joues pâlirent, sa figure s'allongea" (p. 110). It is from Léon's point of view that we witness this scene. It is therefore not surprising to find Emma's almost sickly bearing become

intriguingly romantic, for in Part II he loves her in a completely sentimental fashion.

Emma is truly suffering after she has taken the arsenic and has been vomiting so terribly. This time she is literally suffering with a real physical cause: "Un grand frisson lui secouait les épaules, et elle devenait plus pâle que le drap où s'enfonçaient ses doigts crispés" (p. 323). Now, ironically, Emma has become the suffering romantic heroine. She, however, will be unable to enjoy her new-found status since it will lead to her death. It also exacts a far higher price than she had ever expected in actual physical distress. At the same time, the narrator plays his heroine a nasty trick by recounting in detail the physical manifestations of the poisoning. What reader could maintain an emotional response to the heroine's misery in the light of such graphic descriptions?

Pale, then, is a romantic ideal, a dull, monotonous existence, or illness and indisposition. All of these, like every other color symbol in the novel, culminate in the final indisposition of Emma's death.

Green

The last color to be examined will be green, a rather fitting culmination since it is the sum of two colors and their respective symbolism. According to Whittick, green sometimes symbolizes hope, as the harbinger

of spring.²⁹ When used in this context in Madame Bovary, it is either not directly symbolic or merely ironic, as is often the case. Certainly, the freshness of spring does not fit Emma's life. The more important interpretation of green is as the result of combining blue and yellow. If one mixes these two pigments in painting, green is the result. In recalling the symbolism of these two primary colors, we find that blue represents Emma's dreams, while yellow, conversely, is the reality which is determined to destroy them. The resultant green could therefore hardly be an encouraging symbol, and is in fact symbolic of a sort of malediction upon Emma. Pierre Danger would agree:

Nous avons déjà montré la puissance suggestive, pendant la promenade d'Emma avec Léon, de ces herbes minces se courbant au courant de la rivière: "comme des chevelures vertes abandonnées". Il y avait là, dans la vibration frénétique d'un paysage nimbé de lumière et de chaleur, à un moment où Emma croit au bonheur, comme un rappel de la malédiction fondamentale qu'elle porte en elle, irrémédiablement, dans son inconscient. Et le thème se poursuit de loin en loin dans le roman jusqu'à cette grande pièce de velours vert dont Charles désire recouvrir le corps d'Emma, comme s'il avait compris que c'était en effet, depuis toujours, sa couleur naturelle.³⁰

And, in fact, one can justify the fact that Charles instinctively knows that the color of malediction belongs to Emma, for the narrator recounts the words spoken by Charles to Rodolphe:

29. Whittick, p. 193.

30. Danger, p. 315.

Il ajouta même un grand mot, le seul qu'il ait jamais dit:

--C'est la faute de la fatalité (p. 355).

The traditional meaning of green, as being a messenger of spring and new life is certainly morbidly ironic, given the circumstances. The image of the blue of Emma's dreams coming in contact with the yellow of reality proves that neither can retain its uniqueness for Emma. She never sees reality for what it is nor can her dreams exist alone with reality attempting to infringe upon them. Their individuality is given up to combine in green or malison for Emma.

It is Charles, however, who introduces green to us even before we meet Emma, and shortly after their first meeting, we have a prime example of green symbolism. Charles comes downstairs after setting Emma's father's leg, and we learn that "la peinture verte s'écaillait sous le salpêtre ..." (p. 16). Now we could ascribe the classic meaning of hope, renewal and new life to green in this context; this green paint however is peeling. To Charles, Emma becomes undoubtedly very promising of a new life, but due to the curse of her destiny their union is doomed from before the start.

The wedding day presents this same sinister meaning for green when the wedding procession "ondulait dans la campagne, le long de l'étroit sentier serpentant entre les

blés verts ..." (p. 28). The greenness of the wheat is misleading, as the new life the young couple is beginning will be anything but fruitful. Actually, the green on either side of the path gives the impression of Emma's unhappy fate ready to hem her in. It is as if her family and friends were marching her off to meet it.

The green billiard table of la Vaubyessard (p. 49) eerily foreshadows Hippolyte's distress, for while suffering from gangrene he is apparently placed on the billiard table of the Lion d'or (p. 184). Though its initial appearance at la Vaubyessard would indicate a possible new life for Emma, the green table signifies the curse under which she lives for it is merely a preview of another disappointment in her life. We are faced with a clash between dream, in the form of la Vaubyessard, and reality, in Hippolyte and the operation's drastic failure, thus justifying the appearance of green.

Our introduction to Yonville presents us with another presage of the bad times to come, on this occasion of Emma's death when we see the cemetery which is "si bien rempli de tombeaux, que les vieilles pierres à ras du sol font un dallage continu, où l'herbe a dessiné de soi-même des carrés verts réguliers" (p. 73). The green grass may be a symbol of fertility, but, ironically, it is placed over the graves in the cemetery, a cemetery where, in a relatively short time, Emma herself will be buried. When Emma

goes to church to talk to the priest, the narrator insists on this same greenness in describing "les grandes orties poussées entre la petite enceinte et les dernières tombes. C'était la seule place qui fût verte ..." (pp. 113-114).

A warning note about Lheureux is sounded when he arrives at the Bovary home for the first time with his "carton vert" (p. 106). Lheureux's reality, yellow, coming up against the blue of Emma's dreamworld, will form the green of her inevitable demise or malediction.

Emma's heroes, Léon and Rodolphe have a habit of wearing similar colors, since they perform a similar function in Emma's destruction. When Emma sees Rodolphe for the first time, "elle aperçut un monsieur vêtu d'une redingote de velours vert" (p. 130). This again represents reality, in Rodolphe, in conflict with dreams, in Emma, leading to her demise. Léon, when he meets Emma in the cathedral, wears "un habit vert" (p. 244). Like Rodolphe, in him, reality makes contact with Emma's dreams. Léon himself is somewhat torn between dreams and reality, but when it comes down to a choice, he will opt for reality and pragmatism as he does in choosing a good bourgeois marriage.

Once more, a man dressed in green appears in the form of a messenger from Vinçart looking for repayment: "Il retira les épingles qui fermaient la poche latérale de sa longue redingote verte, les piqua sur sa manche et tendit poliment un papier" (p. 290). Certainly, Emma's dreams of

a life of luxury come up against a rather formidable obstacle in the form of this man reminding her that she must eventually pay her debts.

The way in which Emma pays her debts, however, is with her life rather than with money. Her dreams constantly butting up against the ever-present wall of reality bring her to the inevitable act of suicide. We then meet the green velvet mentioned earlier by Danger. Charles, in his orders for Emma's funeral, declares that he wants the caskets covered with a large piece of green velvet (p. 334). Emma's blue dreams in the face of a persistent yellow reality have brought her face to face with her malediction, as the green velvet reminds us.

Green, then, ironically points to a possibility of new life which really never exists. More importantly, however, this secondary color, formed from blue and yellow, denotes the fact that dreams cannot retain their autonomy in the face of reality.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The examination of color and light in Madame Bovary can be done on different levels, just as the novel lends itself to both literal and symbolic interpretations. We can read a particular description of Emma, for example, superficially and take it as just that, a depiction of a person with certain physical characteristics. On the other hand, some aspects of a description may be endowed by the narrator, either consciously or unconsciously, with symbolic insights for the reader. A certain choice of color or illumination may symbolize situations or a given character's psychology while at the same time reflecting a particular point of view, most often either Emma's or the narrator's, this despite Flaubert's claims of objectivity. The representation of different points of view in symbolic interpretation leads to the reader's receiving conflicting messages from the novel, particularly between Emma's starry-eyed vision and the narrator's more "objective" view.

These theories have been verified by a thorough examination of color and light occurrences in context, with frequency of appearance of a given symbolic interpretation as the criterion for its definition in the entire novel. In

numerous cases, I determined through whose eyes we were witnessing the scene so that the validity of the symbol could be judged. If it is Emma seeing a situation through a romantic haze, the reader might want to revise the assessment of the circumstances presented in the novel, to one more congruent with the known facts and Emma's destiny. This divergence in point of view adds to the main theme of the conflict between dreams and reality, as there is the same conflict reflected in point of view, in color, and in lighting.

This work has attempted to delve more deeply into the most important symbolic meanings of the principal colors and lighting effects of Madame Bovary, as reflected in the frequently changing point of view. It sets out the major chromatic and luminary symbolic intent of Madame Bovary and clarifies the link between color, light, psychology, destiny, and point of view in this novel. In so doing, it has opened the door for possible new insights through examination of aspects which I have not included in the present study. Some eventual areas of consideration could therefore include an investigation of the love and luxury theme as symbolized by gold and silver. In the area of illumination, a particularly intriguing study could be done on twilight, a light form which is neither night nor day, neither light nor dark, just as Emma is neither here nor there. She does not belong to the world which surrounds her, but no more is she

a part of the one to which she aspires, which in any case does not truly exist anywhere but in Emma's imagination.

The completion of the current study also opens the way for similar studies on all of Flaubert's works. There is apparently an ongoing dissertation entitled Color Symbolism in Flaubert's Novels by Radmila Lapov under Beatrice Fink at the University of Maryland.¹ Marie-Jeanne Durry, while looking at L'Education sentimentale, envisions a similar possibility for light in Flaubert's works. She would like to see

une étude où l'on montrerait en Flaubert un des premiers écrivains qui épient le jeu des reflets lumineux. Ces extraordinaires "moires du vernis du piano où se reflètent les lampes", ce sont les mêmes qui "frissonnaient sur la robe de satin, blanche comme un clair de lune", sous laquelle disparaissait Emma morte, et les mêmes encore qui, larges, frissonneront sur l'asphalte séchant après la pluie devant le Café Anglais où Frédéric conduit la Maréchale.²

It would therefore be rewarding to apply the same symbolic study of color and light to all of Flaubert's major works, and from there to attempt a comparative analysis, significantly adding to the understanding of Flaubert's narrative and symbolic structure.

1. "Dissertations in Progress," The French Review, 49 (1976), 581.

2. Marie-Jeanne Durry, Flaubert et ses projets inédits (Paris: Nizet, 1950), p. 85.

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