LA DÉMOLITION DU ROMANTISME: A study of

Gustave Flaubert's *L'éducation sentimentale*.

This thesis is submitted under the regulations governing the Degree of Master of Arts, at the Australian National University, Canberra

Mary B. Sinclair B.A.

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I declare that this thesis is all my own work and all sources used have been acknowledged.

Mary B. Sinclair

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction.</th>
<th>La démolition du romantisme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1.</td>
<td>Gustave Flaubert and the bourgeoisie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2.</td>
<td>A sentimental education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3.</td>
<td>Frédéric Moreau : A Romantic in a revolutionary world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4.</td>
<td>The unsentimental artist : novelist as historian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have based my study of Flaubert's novel *L'éducation sentimentale* on the assumption that a work of art exists in a particular historical context, that is, the novel is not an autonomous object, residing in a political and social vacuum totally detached from both author and reader. The historical context at the point of genesis and throughout production can of course be different from the historical circumstances surrounding the reception of the novel and there is, thus, no question of the uniqueness of each work of art for each individual reader.

La Démolition du Romantisme

As a member of society, the author's own mentality and perspective are shaped by the material conditions of his existence and thus his views, either consciously through what he selects to write about or unconsciously by a natural assimilation of his cultural environment, aspects of his time through his artistic endeavours. I believe that a valuable and informative approach to the understanding of the literary work is achieved through an analysis of the historical forces surrounding its production; the novel as a work of art becomes more interesting and more accessible. Similarly, the novel can enhance an understanding of the social and political milieu in which it was written. However, it is as invalid to attempt to treat the work of art solely as an historical document as it is to consider it as a divinely inspired object whose integrity and value are self-explanatory. A sincere interpretation must take both situations into account. As Flaubert
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L'éducation sentimentale lends itself to the approach which I have adopted as it involves a mixture of historical documentation and straight fiction. The history which forms the immediate backdrop to the fictitious story of thwarted love is the years 1840 to 1851, a time of political upheaval and social change in Paris, which included the Revolutions of 1848. It was a time of crises and violence in which patterns of existence were disturbed and threatened and individuals were forced to confront the issues of a new, emerging society. As a result of the revolutionary activity of the industrial workers, the existing order was questioned, social structures and organizations were forced to change and men had to adapt to survive. The novel is also interesting as, historically, it reveals that precarious point where romanticism as a social philosophy and an aesthetic movement became obsolete in the contemporary world. Capitalism, industry, the proletarian workers and socialist writers each placed a knife in the no longer useful or adequate body of romantic thought. New ideas were killing an old way of life, and Flaubert, one of those caught in the change-over, was

(1) G. Flaubert, Correspondance, lettre à Mme Roger des Genettes, octobre, 1864.
The first to recognize the death signs:

Je viens de lire le livre de Proudhon sur l'Art! On a désormais le maximum de la pignouferie socialiste...Chaque phrase est une ordure. Le tout à la gloire de Courbet et pour la démolition du romantisme! (2)

The fiction paralleling the historical events is a portrayal of a young romantic who remains utterly devoted to his unpractical ideals regardless of his changing social situation. That he fails to fulfil his goal demonstrates Flaubert's view that Romanticism can no longer provide a satisfactory alternative to the values of modern society.

In The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte and Class Struggles in France 1848-1850, Karl Marx records the same historical period as that which Flaubert portrays in L'éducation sentimentale. The novelist's account of the political lead-up to 1848, the revolutions of that year and the events leading to the coup d'état of Louis Bonaparte corresponds with Marx's historical analysis of the same events. (3)

(2) G. Flaubert, Correspondance, lettre à Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, 12 août, 1865.

(3) The similarities between Marx and Flaubert in their political writing has been noted by Géralde Nakam, who says "nous proposerons une lecture parallèle de Flaubert et de Marx témoins de la révolution de 48,...parce que se retrouvent chez le romancier et chez le révolutionnaire, visionnaire du réel, les mêmes lignes de force, et comme un même rythme des phénomènes." "Le 18 Brumaire de L'éducation sentimentale" in Europe, Sept., Oct., Nov., 1969, p.240.
There is no evidence that Flaubert read any of Karl Marx's works, indeed, in the Correspondance there is no mention of Marx at all despite Flaubert's research on socialist thought. Marx wrote Class Struggles in France 1848-1850 from January to October 1850, but this did not appear in French until 1895, 15 years after Flaubert's death. Similarly, The Eighteenth Brumaire was written by Marx from January to March in 1852 but the first French translation was only published in Lille in 1891; however The Manifesto of the Communist Party, written in 1848, appeared in French in Paris just before the June insurrection of 1848, but Flaubert must not have been aware of the pamphlet or its author. It does seem strange that he should not have made contact with Marx's ideas from his association with the politically active George Sand, herself a self-proclaimed Socialist. The differences between the two contemporaries are obvious; the novelist lacks that political commitment to social change which we find at the basis of the historian's writing. However, apart from the fact that they both chose to write on the same period of conflict in French history, there are other similarities between the two which are worth mentioning because of the illuminating results one obtains from the exercise of comparing the works of two influential minds of the nineteenth century. In Flaubert's unrelenting abuse of the bourgeoisie there is the same passionate disgust and hate as one finds in the writings of his contemporary, Karl Marx:
The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors', and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash-payment'. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. (4)

But, where Marx recognizes these characteristics of the middle-class as being responsible for the exploitation of the masses of propertyless workers and their resultant misery, Flaubert exposes the mediocrity and hypocrisy infecting modern man. Marx's definition of the bourgeoisie is specific; it is "the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour". (5) Flaubert does not see this class in economic terms; he objects rather to a certain mentality associated with the bourgeoisie. His contempt is not for the appropriation of capital and the accumulation of wealth at the expense of the proletarian masses; it is for the stupidity and banality of a way of life aspired to by the lower classes and practised by the middle-classes. As he says to George Sand in 1867, "La haine du Bourgeois est le commencement de la vertu. Moi, je comprends dans ce mot de 'bourgeois' les

(5) ibid., p.79.
bourgeois en blouse comme les bourgeois en redingote". His scorn covers a far greater spectrum of society than Marx's, as he includes those who aspire to wealth as well as those who have already established themselves economically. Marx, like Flaubert, acknowledges the pervasiveness of the values of the bourgeoisie and sees materialism and hypocrisy invading every aspect of modern life:

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers. (6)

Marx has stated that the period in French history from the 1848 revolution, through Louis Bonaparte's take-over until his downfall in September 1870 is riddled with contradictions.

The period we now have to consider exhibits a motley mixture of crass contradictions... we have unions which, in the first clause of their articles of association, preach disunion; struggles whose first law is irresolution; in the name of tranquility, barren and purposeless agitation; in the name of revolution, a solemn preaching of tranquility; passion without truth and truth without passion; heroes without heroic deeds, and history without events; evolution whose only motive force appears to be the calendar, an evolution that grows tedious through the unending succession of the same tensions and

(6) ibid., p.82.
relaxations; contrasts that seem periodically to reach a climax, only to decline without the attainment of a solution; pretentious efforts and philistine dread of a world cataclysm, while the would-be saviours of society are all the while engaged in petty intrigues and court comedies..." (7)

Flaubert's novel, *L'éducation sentimentale*, reflects the contradictions which Marx notes. The hero, Frédéric Moreau, is constantly confronted with the contradictions of the modern world - men without loyalty fighting for political causes, the poverty of the factory workers coexisting with the opulence of the bourgeoisie, the victory of the February revolution and the defeat of the June insurrection, and the paradigmatic contradiction of Frédéric himself, a Romantic in a world of revolution and bourgeois values whose dreams have little to do with the violence of the times. It was the same historical period when France consolidated capitalism as its economic system and the bourgeoisie became the most powerful ruling class; money became the basis for a society motivated by materialism and the accumulation of wealth. Flaubert reveals the extent to which all his characters are dominated and influenced by money and expresses his disgust at the deification of property and the stupidity of his own class.

et se confondit avec Dieu". (8) Both Flaubert and Marx see money as the controlling force in the new industrial society, the agent responsible for the paradoxes inherent in modern life. Money, says Marx,

transforms fidelity into infidelity, love into hate, hate into love, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master, master into servant, idiocy into intelligence, and intelligence into idiocy...it is the fraternization of impossibilities. It makes contradictions embrace. (9)

Further, Marx continues, it is the particular economic system having as its motivating force the accumulation of wealth which prevents the existence of true social relationships. Within the capitalist system, man is alienated from his fellow man because of the false reality which is engendered by this economic system. Under capitalism it appears that when objects are exchanged they do so merely as things, excluding the role played in their production by man and his labour; a peculiar social relationship exists, then, between men which "assumes in their eyes the fantastic form of a relation between things". (10) The bourgeoisie, having as their incentive the maximization of profit and the accumulation of wealth, are incapable of anything


but a false consciousness because the reality of capitalism is false. Flaubert demonstrates the truth of Marx's theory that industrial capitalism produces deceptive social relationships between men; in *L'éducation*, the individual efforts of his characters are thwarted and reduced to sterility. Frédéric is incapable of finding love; Deslauriers fails to realize his dreams of power. The successful bourgeois banker, Dambreuse, dies a pathetically lonely death while his wife schemes for his fortune in order to make her lover happy; the worker, Dussardier, dies loyally fighting for the Republic, despite his agonizing doubts that he may have been supporting the wrong cause. The artist, the art dealer, the socialist, the factory owner, the prostitute and the wealthy bourgeois wife, each character falsely supposes that his own aspirations can be fulfilled and each character in the novel fails to achieve a meaningful life with an optimistic philosophy to justify his existence. Flaubert exemplifies Marx's notion that man is alienated from his fellow man with the portrayal of the botched and frustrated individual, Frédéric Moreau, as the hero of the novel.

Much has been made of the autobiographical nature of *L'éducation*; many major characteristics of Frédéric Moreau's life coincide with those of Flaubert (for example, the bourgeois background, the education in romantic traditions and lawschool in Paris and, the central concern of the novel, the fantasy affair with the older woman) and many of the
characters of the novel can be identified with people from Flaubert's immediate circle of friends. (Jacques and Marie Arnoux are said to be Maurice and Elisa Schlésinger, Charles Deslauriers is a combination of Louis Bouilhet and Maxime du Camp, the unflattering portrait of Baptiste Martinon is said to be based on Mérimée, Mlle Rose-Annette Bron, called La Maréchale is modeled on the courtesan Algaé Sabatier, la Présidente, and so on.)\(^{(11)}\) The historical background of the novel can be verified by comparison to other historical accounts of the time and, as such, the novel is an important social document by an eye-witness of the events. However, the identification of the characters in the novel serves no purpose beyond satisfying literary curiosity. What is important is that Flaubert intended \textit{L'éducation} to be a history of the men of his generation; if Frédéric Moreau as the hero is Flaubert's self-portrait then we must ask to what extent the artist can represent the men of his generation. The author can chronicle his times and reflect the current cultural ideology in his work but he can hardly be taken as a typical member of society. Frédéric does not represent a generation but a type found in that generation - an over-sensitive, romantic imagination in a modern world.

That much of Frédéric's life coincides with that of Flaubert's is not in itself useful information for the study of

\(^{(11)}\) For a complete survey of the autobiographical content of \textit{L'éducation} see the Preface to the edition of the novel, Paris, Club de l'Honnête Homme, 1971.
the novel. What is relevant is that the author himself exemplifies the condition of the artist in a changing social order, and his work of art is evidence of the dilemma confronting the bourgeois artist in mid-nineteenth century France. Gustave Flaubert, son of a provincial doctor, was himself a bourgeois caught in the dilemma of having to write for a bourgeois public whose mentality and ideology he detested. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnold Hauser notes, "the curious and almost unprecedented situation came about that artists and writers were filled with hatred and contempt for the very class to which they owed their intellectual and material existence". (12) Flaubert's vitriolic criticism is directed against the stupidity and materialism of his own class. He attempts to detach himself from the middle-class in order to record as impartially as he can the events occurring in the turbulent age in which he lived. As a bourgeois, Flaubert is steeped in the romantic traditions of the literary age which precedes him and is forced to confront his contemporary world with the attitudes and imagination of a Romantic. The contradictory opposites of \textit{L'éducation} (romanticism and revolution, dream and reality, ambition and illusion) are inherent in the author, a bourgeois writing against the bourgeoisie, a romantic writing a realist novel.

The period Flaubert is writing about, the same period in which he lived, was a time of violent political and social change. It was also witness to the introduction and consolidation of capitalism as the economic system of the new industrial France and with this new economic order came the rise to financial and political power of the bourgeoisie, the masters of Industry. As a result of the mechanics and motivations of industrialization, two other social phenomena occurred: the proletariat became a vocal and active force within the structure of society and socialist writers began to disseminate their ideas for organizations in which all men, regardless of birth or class, would be given equal rights and opportunities. Industrial capitalism was to herald the death of the individual and the birth of the mass. Flaubert recognized his age as "un monde nouveau et laid, un monde énorme qui est peut-être celui de l'avenir". He was a witness to the end of an age, the death of romanticism.
CHAPTER 1

Gustave Flaubert and the Bourgeoisie
The rise of the bourgeoisie to power, both politically and economically, was the most significant effect of the French Revolution. Moreover, with the revolution of 1830 and the establishment of the Orleanist, Louis-Philippe, as king, France entered a period of embourgeoisement never before experienced—the French middle-classes particularly in Paris, had gained access to the previously closed realms of the aristocrats and had prevented the lower classes, the petite bourgeoisie and the proletariat, from jeopardizing their privileged position. The bankers, merchants, and industrialists maintained power through the accumulation of wealth and the consequent aura of well-being and security which this wealth obtained for them. As Adeline Daumard suggests in her study of the Parisian middle-classes in the nineteenth century, the economic power derived from money became the underlying influence in the development of the bourgeois life-style:

Le règne de Louis Philippe est celui de la bourgeoisie, règne non seulement matériel mais aussi spirituel et moral. La domination de la bourgeoisie repose sur son influence politique et économique, et également sur la confiance que les bourgeois mettent dans la civilisation qu'ils représentent. (1)

During the July Monarchy (1830-1848), the real kings of France were the bankers and financiers and the influence of their reign invaded all parts of French life. The term bourgeois

underwent a remarkable change in French history, beginning as a term of abuse for a stupid person in the seventeenth century, then referring to a man whose speech, manners, dress and way of life were inferior to the cultivated elegance of the Versailles society in the eighteenth century. (2) However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the term bourgeois had undergone such a re-evaluation that it expressed the economic, political and social power which the middle-class had obtained. The social position involved an immunity from the criticism by writers and artists against the obsessive concern of the class for money-making and for what they saw as the spiritually deprived way of life of those involved in business activities. Such was his authority that the bourgeois' values pervaded every aspect of life: the characteristics of conservatism, materialism and mediocrity for which he had been lampooned and ridiculed in the previous century were upheld as social ideals in the nineteenth century. The bourgeois was no longer the outsider, rejected from aristocratic society because of his pettiness and thrift; he was now a member of the most influential class in France. During this critical change in the status quo, another social phenomenon occurred: the artist, previously an accepted

(2) See Raymond Giraud, *The Unheroic Hero*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1957, pp. 13-26, for a detailed analysis of the change in definition of the word bourgeois. Priscilla Clark in *The Battle of the Bourgeois*, Paris, Didier, 1973, pp. 20-25, distinguishes between the Bourgeois, a fictive creature or "literary model or structure based on an overtly ideological interpretation of society" and the bourgeois who, as a member of society, can be defined by his economic function and his participation directly in the economic circuit.
part of the aristocratic hierarchy, became alienated from his own class. As the bourgeois rose to power, the social position of the artist became more and more precarious. Eventually, with the height of bourgeois rule during the July Monarchy, the artist began to reject the social values of the new middle-class and to exclude himself from the attitudes and aspirations of this class. There is a severe dilemma however; in the eighteenth century, the artist received his patronage, both moral and monetary, from the élite class whose values he supported. In the nineteenth century a rather more complex situation developed. The artist, usually from middle-class origins himself, was increasingly disillusioned with the ruling class; he dissociated himself from their moral and aesthetic values; he used his art to rant against their system. However, at the same time, he depended upon the bourgeoisie for survival - he recognized the new educated public and, as before, the nexus between artist and ruling class was money. In the industrial society, the artist, along with all other workers, was only too aware of his position; his art was a commodity, and, while spiritually estranging himself from the system which placed art alongside other consumer goods to be regulated by supply and demand, he was forced to participate in the world of capital.

How, then, do we arrive at this confused situation in which artists react with contempt and despair against the very class from which they derive their intellectual and material support? Why is the artist, in the middle of the nineteenth
century, so interested in disengaging himself from the middle-class? The French Revolution of 1789 had heralded the first French Republic and with it the optimism of a new, changed society - the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, "protection of property, freedom of conscience, of press and from arbitrary arrest; equality before the law, equal taxation and equal eligibility to office; and...the right of rebellion."(3) The Declaration of the Rights of Man inspired the revolutionary fervour of the men of '48, but it also encouraged counter-revolution in the years following the French Revolution of 1789; a conservative political ideology was espoused in France dedicated to the restoration of royal authority and the re-establishment of an aristocratic class; in short, the social and political gains from the overthrow of the Ancien Régime were eroded during the Restoration period and the bourgeois July Monarchy. During this time, 1815-1848, the ruling powers attempted to revive a belief in the establishment and the former conservative institutions of society, the Church and the Monarchy. Immediately after the French Revolution, the nation's leaders were concerned to protect the first French Republic from the evils of the old order - royal despotism and aristocratic privilege - and yet their Constitution also showed a concern to maintain the financial and political interests of the bourgeoisie. Following the declaration of the second French Republic in 1848, the industrial bourgeoisie saw the danger of the charters

of the first French Revolution: the health of the capitalist system and the class maintained by this system was threatened by the politically freed classes who were now seeking economic privileges. In order to reinforce their economic and social position, the bourgeoisie sold out completely to the conservative forces in an attempt to stifle revolutionary ideas and re-establish themselves as the ruling power. The reactionary leader, Louis Bonaparte, was elected, firstly, President in December, 1848 and then Emperor Napoleon III in December 1852. It was this compromise with conservatism which alienated the artists and writers. Political commitment, or support for the ruling party, meant subscribing to the values of the middle-class and confirming their social and cultural values. Writers of the time accused the bourgeoisie of their ready acceptance of materialism and denounced their obsessive desire to make money.\(^{(4)}\) Capitalism offered only one choice: total support of a system which seemed to glorify false ideals and mediocre 'great men'. For those incapable of sustaining this demand, the alternative was desperate: to despise the bourgeois society.

\(^{(4)}\) See Raymond Giraud, *The Unheroic Hero* (1957), Chapter I, for a discussion of the reaction of mid-nineteenth century writers to the power of the bourgeoisie and the influence of the middle-classes on all aspects of French life. The major criticism is against the emphasis placed on money in the new industrial society, for example Balzac refers to "the worship of the golden calf"; Leconte de Lisle talks of "...this century...which recognizes nothing but gold for its God, and which crushes underfoot all adoration for the true and the beautiful"; and Vigny describes the nineteenth century as "this society based on gold".
which provided the intellectual and financial assistance necessary for artistic survival. Gustave Flaubert was one who chose to bite the hand that fed him.

The artists of the time demonstrated their objection to the constrictions of middle-class conventions in one of two ways. Like Théophile Gautier and Gérard de Nerval, they attempted to shock the conservative complacency with their Bohemian attitudes and their theories of *L'art pour l'art* or, like Flaubert, they distanced themselves from the bourgeoisie and satirically portrayed the banalities of modern life through their work.

Further, Flaubert not only adopted the stance of impartial chronicler of the events of his time but also espoused a philosophy in which he saw his kind, the men of letters, as the leaders of society, the only people with the talent and the intelligence to guide humanity:

*Il y a un fond de bêtise dans l'humanité qui est aussi éternel que l'humanité elle-même. L'instruction du peuple et la moralité des classes pauvres sont, je crois, des choses de l'avenir. Mais quant à l'intelligence des masses, voilà ce que je nie, quoi qu'il puisse advenir, parce qu'elles seront toujours des masses.*

*Ce qu'il y a de considérable dans l'histoire, c'est un petit troupeau d'hommes (trois ou quatre cents par siècle, peut-être) et qui depuis Platon jusqu'à nos jours n'a pas varié; ce sont ceux-là qui ont tout fait et qui sont la conscience du monde. Quant aux parties basses du corps social, vous ne les élèverez jamais. Quand le peuple ne croira plus à l'Immaculée Conception, il croira aux tables tournantes. Il faut se consoler de cela et*
vivre dans une tour d'ivoire. Ce n'est pas gai, je le sais; mais, avec cette méthode, on n'est ni dupe ni charlatan. (5)

His belief that art was the only way remaining to modern man to escape the stupidity and uselessness of the post-revolutionary society was stubborn and persistent, and it defied the values of the middle-class. It was, indeed, clearly elitist:
"C'est nous, et nous seuls, c'est-à-dire les lettrés, qui sommes le Peuple, ou pour parler mieux, la tradition de l'Humanité."(6) Flaubert believed the masses to be incapable of preserving the cultural traditions of France because of their ignorance; with equal vehemence, he believed the ideals of the bourgeoisie to be contrary to those of the artist or anyone concerned with the advancement of art in society. For this, he despised the bourgeoisie.

Both Jean-Paul Sartre(7) and Jonathan Culler(8) note that a hatred of the bourgeoisie was an obvious characteristic of the early Romantics who belonged by birth to the aristocracy: writing was the activity of gentlemen and disgust for the

(5) G. Flaubert, Correspondance, lettre à Mlle Leroyer de Chantepie, 23 janvier, 1866.
(6) ibid., lettre à George Sand, mai, 1867.
middle-classes who involved themselves in the cruder truck of life was an automatic assumption of the aristocratic condition. The first Romantics, such as Chateaubriand, Alfred de Vigny and Alfred de Musset, they suggest, wrote courtly work for an élite audience for whom bourgeois ideals and values, if considered at all, were scorned and ridiculed. The romantic characteristic of bourgeois baiting was no more than the expression of class opposition - the traditional hatred of the upper classes for the lower classes. The situation is somewhat different for Flaubert and the men of the later nineteenth century, the second generation Romantics. If they possess that characteristic of the aristocratic condition - contempt for the middle-class ethic, then, Sartre argues, they can be identified as Romantics. However, this is something of an anomaly, as, like Flaubert, the second generation Romantics were themselves bourgeois. In order to justify the condemnation of their own class, these artists had to reject their background and origin and form their own aristocracy: in effect, they underwent a process of déclassement, which denied their bourgeois origins and formed their own cultural minority, outside any class.

Sartre's analysis only partly explains the phenomenon. It is not sufficient to assume that the writers after the Restoration period were so immured in the Romanticism of their predecessors as to believe in the validity of the aristocrat's self-protecting maxim - "défense aux roturiers d'écrire". (9)

(9) Sartre, op.cit., p.113.
For the second generation Romantics were the men of '48 and, confronted with class revolution, social upheavals and the establishment of industrial capitalism, a stubborn commitment to the aristocratic ideals of a previous artistic movement was hardly adequate. As Sartre says "l'autonomie romantique est un mensonge; la vérité de cette littérature est l'aliénation."(10) The explanation for the intense hatred of the middle-class by Flaubert and his contemporaries is not only that they indulged in this in order to establish their artistic credentials but also that the new social order offered them nothing. They were not just rejecting their own class but consciously opting out of capitalist society. Arnold Hauser's claim that Romanticism was essentially a middle-class movement,(11) releasing artistic endeavour from the clutches of the aristocrats and allowing style and subject to be directed at a new mass reading public rather than the small, effete audience of drawing room and salon, explains more usefully the alienation of the writer from his class. Romanticism was a literature of escapism and the later romantics were attempting to avoid the influence of the middle-classes. Flaubert's "odieux bourgeois" indicated the frustrating existence of post-revolutionary life in France rather than the elitist's contempt for the grubby endeavour of the bourgeoisie.

(10) Sartre, ibid., p.117.
Flaubert's one concern in his passive objection to the changing governments and his withdrawal from any political confrontation was that art be allowed to survive in a world where all other human relationships were wrenched apart to facilitate the making of money. After the 1848 Revolution and the establishment of a provisional government by the Republic, Flaubert remarked, "Je ne sais si la forme nouvelle du gouvernement et l'état social qui en résultera sera favorable à l'Art...On ne pourra pas être plus bourgeois ni plus nul. Quant à plus bête, est-ce possible?"(12) However, his major preoccupation was not with the political institutions in control of France but with the pervasive influence of the middle-class on all aspects of society. In particular, he objected to the stupidity and mediocrity of the bourgeoisie. Jules and Edmond de Goncourt accuse Flaubert of railing against the bourgeoisie for the very same attributes which he himself possesses. Even though Flaubert is acknowledged as a superior artist, he is seen as

un être si ordinairement doué, si peu doté d'une originalité! Et je ne parle pas ici seulement de l'originalité des idées, et des concepts, je parle de l'originalité des actes, des goûts de la vie; je parle d'une originalité particulière, qui est toujours le cachet d'un homme supérieur. Par Dieu! cette ressemblance bourgeoise de sa cervelle avec la cervelle de tout le monde, - ce dont il enrage, je suis sur..."(13)

(12) G. Flaubert, Correspondance, lettre à Louise Colet, mars, 1848.

This is, however, a questionable point of view, not only because of the bias it expresses but especially as the brothers Goncourt do not think Flaubert is a 'true' artist because he does not collect *objets d'art*, a trait one would normally associate with the aquisitive, affluent middle-classes. Nevertheless, the criticism is just in that it fairly identifies Flaubert as a member of the middle-class he so detested.

Gustave Flaubert's position is unequivocal: he is a bourgeois writer. His immediate family came from the wealthy bourgeoisie of Rouen, then the third largest city in France. His father, although from a lower middle-class background, was an influential citizen and a respected doctor whose bourgeois virtues of thrift and economy enabled Flaubert to maintain his life as a writer on a private income derived from his father's investments in land; his mother was the daughter of a physician and from a higher social class than her husband. The family lived a comfortable, discreet bourgeois life. Despite his own middle-class background, Flaubert's loathing for his class is matched only by his pessimism and despair at the futility of its philosophy. In order to escape a confrontation with modern life, he retreated to a hermit's existence at Croisset where he devoted himself utterly to art, his substitute for the mammon of the bourgeoisie and his panacea against the ugliness of the world. Flaubert's response is not a political commitment but a retreat from the responsibility of choosing active participation in the changing social organization of modern France. He is aware of the economic and social
inequalities in society, as the descriptions in his novel of Parisian workers and provincial factory employees prove, and yet, while faithfully recording these circumstances, he does not attempt to change the existing social structure either indirectly through his art or directly with committed political action. His only substantial expression of a desire for an alternative order is his rather ineffectual scheme of rule by mandarins, in which the cultural traditions of a country, and of the world, are maintained and perpetuated by a small group ("la conscience du monde") of littérateurs and artists whose priority would be to encourage the progress of humanity despite the restrictions of the era of 'muflisme'.

Like many in the century to follow, Flaubert assumed that more economic and social privileges for the masses automatically meant deprivation and debasement of the living standards of the few with whom he identified the natural ability to foster and sustain that part of humanity which distinguishes man from beast; he mistook the aims and methods of democratization as being those of the philistine and the bourgeois. "Je hais la démocratie", he wrote to George Sand after the proclamation of the Commune in 1871,

(14) "Muflisme" was the term given by Flaubert to describe the era of civilization in which he lived; the contemporary world was dominated by the influence of the bourgeoisie whose common characteristics the author identified as stupidity and boorishness.
Il était temps de se défaire "des principes" et d'entrer dans la Science, dans l'examen. La seule chose raisonnable (j'en reviens toujours là), c'est un gouvernement de mandarins, pourvu que les mandarins sachent quelque chose et même qu'ils sachent beaucoup de choses. Le peuple est un éternel mineur, et il sera toujours (dans la hiérarchie des éléments sociaux) au dernier rang, puisqu'il est le nombre, la masse, l'illimité. Peu importe que beaucoup de paysans sachent lire et n'écoutent plus leur curé; mais il importe infiniment que beaucoup d'hommes, comme Renan ou Littré, puissent vivre et soient écoutés. Notre salut est maintenant dans une aristocratie légitime... (15)

The concept of "l'Art pour soi, pour soi seul" as a meaningful aesthetic was a definite reaction against a soulless ideology - that of the post-revolutionary bourgeois society. Flaubert responded to the materialism of his class with a profound disillusionment which coloured his writings and his own theory of Art; this despair was responsible for the formulation of his poetics, the necessary impartiality of Art, by which he attempted to recreate the dullness and monotony of life by subjecting his material to a scientific theory of impassibilité.

The rise to supreme power of the bourgeoisie during the July Monarchy and the subsequent compromise of the middle-classes with the reactionary leader, Louis Bonaparte, in order to conserve their status and to protect it from the encroaching demands of the working-classes is the foreground of Flaubert's

(15) G. Flaubert, Correspondance, lettre à George Sand, 29 avril, 1871.
novel, *L'éducation sentimentale*. The novel spans the turbulent years 1840 to 1851 and the epilogue to the novel is set in the year 1867 when the second Republic has given way to the Second Empire. The history of Frédéric Moreau was in fact written contemporaneously with the events of the epilogue, as Flaubert spent five tortured years, 1864 to 1869, involved with his 'odieux bourgeois'. The portrayal of the bourgeois (his way of life, his milieu and his aspirations) in the novel is as appropriate evidence to use to determine Flaubert's estimation of the bourgeoisie as are the informal letters he writes to friends in which he reveals his disgust and horror, quite undisguisedly, for the middle-class. In *L'éducation*, we find a large range of characters representing nineteenth century Parisian bourgeois society with which Flaubert would have been familiar. The hero himself, Frédéric Moreau, is a hybrid of sorts, representing that type in his generation with which Flaubert identified - the man with sensitivity and imagination perverted by romanticism who lacks the ability to adjust his expectations of life to suit his actual experience of living. Frédéric is different from the general array of middle-class men because, even though he is a member of a class, he also represents a specific individual, Flaubert himself. As a writer, and a writer in a changing social order, Flaubert's personal experiences can hardly be typical of an age. However, the portrayal of a vast number of characters who represent different and varied aspects of society in Paris gives to the
novel that achievement for which Flaubert hoped: to present the moral history of the men of his times.

In the novel, the hero's background is not entirely bourgeois: his mother, although married to a man of humble origin, was from a titled family and, in the village of Nogent, she holds a relatively esteemed position, despite her financial difficulties. As a bourgeois, there is no sense of crassness attached to the Moreau's attitude to money, even though money is an influential and necessary component in Madame Moreau's aspirations for her son and in Frédéric's own expectations. Unlike the successful bourgeois involved in banking, industry or manufacturing who aims at the pursuit of profits, for the Moreaus, money is merely a means to an end - it allows Frédéric to indulge in his purposeless quest for experience and it lets his mother believe in her son's serious application to a 'proper' position in society. Thus, Frédéric accepts the ill-gotten wealth of an uncle engaged in business at Le Havre as an inheritance. The Moreau household is genteel and comfortable, revealing neither the sumptuous ostentation of the Parisian bourgeois nor the tasteless vulgarity of the provincial bourgeois. It is, nevertheless, bourgeois: Mme Moreau is prudent and thrifty; she dislikes political criticism and expects her son to uphold the status quo by becoming a member of the secure, respected establishment - a counsellor of the state, an ambassador or a minister or, more realistically, a barrister at Troyes. And her bourgeois morals are sufficiently
pliable to ignore her son's indiscretion and tardiness over his liaison with the provincial heiress, Louise Roque, at the prospect of his marriage to Mme Dambreuse, the wealthy widow of the Parisian banker.

In the persons of Monsieur Roque and Monsieur Dambreuse, Flaubert provides two portraits of the hated bourgeois and his material values. Both are equally condemned - the provincial bourgeois for his meanness, banality and ruthlessness and the Parisian for the worthlessness of his pursuits and the shallowness of his life. In L'éducation, Flaubert provides us with a variety of different characters from the bourgeoisie: our choice seems to lie between the successful ones, like Roque and Dambreuse, or the failures, like Frédéric Moreau and Charles Deslauriers. Ultimately, there is no choice at all: the lives of the successful characters only reinforce the pointlessness of their existence and the futility of their endeavours as their success is merely a measure of their acceptance of the middle-class ideology. The types of characters presented in the novel emphasize Flaubert's pessimistic view of the alternatives available in modern society.

The Comte d'Ambreuse has relinquished his title during the Restoration period in order to capitalize on the rise to power of the bourgeoisie. With this foresight, he merely exchanges his prior nobility for that of the aristocracy in the bourgeois régime of the July Monarchy: an acute business perception and an easily compromised political allegiance
guarantee his position in the grande bourgeoisie, the financial élite of Paris who wield the political and economic power. As a banker he has access to the privileged political and social circles of the capital and is courted by the ousted aristocrats of the Ancien Régime and the upwardly-mobile middle-classes of the new order. If his opportunism in business advances his wealth, his expediency in politics reveals his absolute slavery to the accumulative process of the capitalistic system. Dambreuse oscillates from one political extreme to another in a tireless effort to conserve his interests. In 1825, during the reign of the Bourbon king, Charles X, he abandons his title and his party as he can see no further political or financial mileage left in being a blue-blood. After 1830 and the installation of the Orleanist, Louis-Philippe, he inclines towards Left Centre - radical enough to prove the rejection of his noble class and sufficiently reactionary to prove his loyalty to his adopted class: "il était officier de la Légion d'honneur, membre du conseil général de l'Aube, député, pair de France un de ces jours". (p.37) After the February Revolution in 1848 and the overthrow of the King by the Parisian proletariat, Dambreuse, fearing that his considerable fortune would be seized and distributed among the masses inspired by Socialism, adopts the catch-cry of the Revolution "Vive la République!", "même il avait voté le bannissement des d'Orléans", (p.357) sympathizes with current socialist thought and "il congédia trois domestiques, vendit ses chevaux, s'acheta, pour sortir dans les rues, un
chapeau mou, pensa même à laisser croître sa barbe." (p.333) In his own interests, he becomes a gauge of the feelings of the people and the government. "M. Dambreuse, tel qu'un baromètre, en exprimait constamment la dernière variation." (p.405)

However, M. Dambreuse's major sin is not his great wealth, nor his position in society nor even his ignorance of the suffering classes which he exploits in order to augment his fortune. We feel that Flaubert's most severe indictment against the banker is for his bourgeois mind: he is shallow and superficial, not only in his political convictions, but also in his social relations. He lacks that largesse of spirit and ability to appreciate concepts of value which Flaubert recognizes as the essential traits of the men of his generation. He belongs to the aristocracy of Paris, the élite of France and yet the social gatherings at the Dambreuses are tedious and the conversation trite. The substance of their intercourse reveals their lack of principles and their banality. Even Frédéric is disappointed to find that, within the inner circles of the bourgeoisie, there is no depth of experience or substantial form to which he can attach his own formlessness. "Il fut stupéfait par leur exécrable langage, leurs petitesses, leurs rancunes, leur mauvaise foi, - tous ces gens qui avaient voté la Constitution s'évertuant à la démolir..." (p.404). And, despite their obvious differences, it is this characteristic, mediocrity of the mind, which links M. Dambreuse and M. Roque.
One suspects from the portrayal that all that Flaubert finds to hate in the bourgeoisie is incarnate in le père Roque. The son of a footman, Roque is as ruthless and astute in business as his Parisian counterpart; he serves as M. Dambreuse's agent in suspect business enterprises and thus compromises the financier so that his own ambitious aspirations become a practical possibility. With the banker's influence, and using Frédéric as his instrument, Roque hopes to buy his respectability in the right bourgeois circles. Although bourgeois respectability is not his main aim, Roque is sufficiently aware of the spirit of his age to know that money is the only social differential and that respectability depends much more on wealth than it does on moral values: like a good piece of property, it can be purchased at the right price. Thus, he seduces the mainstay of Nogent's bourgeoisie, Mme Moreau, with the largeness of his estate and, despite his crassness, the nature of his business deals, and his loose morals, secures the promise of marriage between his daughter and Frédéric. With this marriage comes the opportunity for social mobility, as Roque intends to introduce aristocracy into his family by persuading Dambreuse to recover the title of Mme Moreau's grand-father for Frédéric, his intended son-in-law. During the June insurrections of 1848, Roque comes to Paris with the Nogent contingent of the National Guard, the bulwark of the bourgeois July Monarchy, to maintain order and to quell the rebellious working-classes. His meanness and cruelty are revealed in his despicable act of shooting a
hungry prisoner crying for bread in order to appease his own anger at the damage done to his house-front during the street fighting. This personal motivation for political action affirms more than anything else Roque's bourgeois mentality, the characteristic which Flaubert found most distressing in his contemporaries, as it represented the inability of modern man to venerate anything except property or to commit himself to anything but the protection of property.

Although Roque and Dambreuse represent extreme instances of middle-class man and his values, there are many other examples in L'éducation sentimentale of characters who reveal varying degrees of mediocrity, pettiness and the lack of integrity. The most disturbing aspect of Flaubert's analysis of his generation is the extent to which political action is performed to maintain personal, individual interests. From the novel it would appear that the middle-classes are incapable of a sustained vision of humanity or of a philosophy for a social system encompassing the many variables excluded from their immediate world of money and the getting of money. Frédéric's concern for the revolutions of 1848 depends very much on his emotional welfare and the state of his relationship with Mme Arnoux. In the February days, he is disappointed by his lover who fails to arrive at an arranged rendez-vous; his hopes of victory and seduction are shattered and he expresses his frustration by joining the Parisian workers railing against the government. The revolution, for Frédéric, is an outlet for his thwarted
sentimental ambition, and his sexual energy is dissipated as he vicariously assists in the aggression of the mob as they overrun the Royal Palace. Likewise, Charles Deslauriers, whose search for power is as impotent and futile as Frédéric's search for love, longs for social upheaval in order to overthrow the class he desperately yearns to be part of, but which consistently excludes him. His hatred for the bourgeoisie turns him into a man of principle and he espouses the cause of the workers in order to avenge his exclusion from bourgeois circles. Even La Vatnaz takes up the banner of socialism and women's emancipation because her dreams of love, family, home and fortune have not materialized. "Aussi, comme beaucoup d'autres, avait-elle salué dans la Révolution l'avènement de la vengeance...", (p.335) and Sénécal, theoretician of socialism, turns out to be an assassin like M. Roque as he kills the Republican, Dussardier: integrity gives way to expediency for Sénécal believes that the end justifies the means - "La fin des choses les rend légitimes. La dictature est quelquefois indispensable. Vive la tyrannie, pourvu que le tyran fasse le bien!" (p.416) The most obvious example of personal interests influencing political loyalty is seen in the courtesan, Rosanette, whose enthusiasm for the current régime depends solely on her economic welfare and the stability of her patronage. Similarly, the precarious business ventures of M. Arnoux determines his political involvement. In 1840, as an established entrepreneur, he is a Republican ostensibly bringing art to the people (Il recherchait l'éémancipation
des arts, le sublime à bon marché). After going bankrupt in 1847, he joins the revolution as a member of the National Guard and the owner of a factory manufacturing china. With the defeat of the workers in the June insurrections, Arnoux joins ranks with the bourgeoisie and attends the capitalist Dambreuse's dinner parties. He hopes to recover his fortune by setting up some business which will be "tout à la fois un foyer de propagande et une source de bénéfices". (p.395) Like M. Dambreuse, Arnoux's economic interests completely shape his political allegiance.

Flaubert's definition of the bourgeoisie is focused on the values and morality of a powerful ruling class whose interests did not happen to coincide with those of the artist. His attitude to his own class was fraught with the same tension that can be found in the unresolved conflicts of the novel, L'éducation, and in the contradictions of modern society after the introduction of industrial capitalism in France; he upheld the values of the middle-class - love of property, security, money, authority and social stability - insofar as those characteristics were an essential part of his own background. Nonetheless, he despised the bourgeois for his stupidity in not recognizing values beyond the material. His bitter attack was directed against the mentality of a class who sacrificed all to the accumulation and conservation of wealth at the expense of fostering the development of the individual and the establishment of an artistic and cultural élite. The bourgeois himself is defined by his economic position in society
but Flaubert's objection was not to the position or the occupation but to the encroaching influence the way of life of the middle-class had on any other values. Materialism and the conservative morality associated with the bourgeois (which Flaubert exemplifies in the portrayal of M. Roque and even the character of Mme Moreau) are oppressive philosophies crushing the freedom of spirit and the progress of humanity which are manifested in the art of a generation. Against the tyranny of the bourgeois, Flaubert pitted his art, for the two realms he saw as being mutually exclusive. "La beauté n'est pas compatible avec la vie moderne." (16)

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(16) G. Flaubert, *Correspondance*, lettre à Mme des Genettes, décembre, 1866.
Paris is more than just a setting for much of the story of Frederick Berven. The city defines the historical circumstances of the novel and essentially determines the nature of the hero's sentimental education. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the population of Paris doubled (x) as people from the provinces, attracted by the culture, power and money, flocked to the capital to find their fortune and to share in the excitement of the city. Like Frederic, it is an escape from the dullness of country life in which romance and adventure could not possibly take place. For others, like Charles Dastur, the attraction came from the sense of social mobility found in the city. With the French Revolution, existing class structures were gradually giving way to the status of money, until the July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe when the leaders of middle-class society dominated financial and political power and wealth became the only class determinant. For Frederic, the opportunities of pursuing a sentimental education are only available in the city and, despite his failure at law and his lack of success at obtaining a position, it is essential for him to remain in Paris.

Historically, Paris, as the source of extricate and sophisticated power, was the venue for the revolution of 1830 even though

(1) Trissell, p. 10

A Sentimental Education
Paris is more than just a setting for much of the story of Frédéric Moreau. The city defines the historical circumstances of the novel and essentially determines the nature of the hero's sentimental education. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the population of Paris doubled (1) as people from the Provinces, attracted by the culture, power and money, flocked to the capital to find their fortune and to share in the excitement of the city. For many, like Frédéric, it is an escape from the dullness of country life in which romantic adventure could not possibly take place; for others, like Charles Deslauriers, the attraction comes from the lure of social mobility found in the new bourgeois régime. Since the French Revolution, existing class structures were gradually giving way to the status of money, until the July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe when the leaders of middle-class society dominated financial and political power and wealth became the only class determinant. For Frédéric, the opportunities of pursuing a sentimental education are only available in the city and, despite his failure at law and his lack of success at obtaining a position, it is crucial for him to remain in Paris. Historically, Paris, as the centre of economic and political power, was the venue for the revolutions of 1848 when the

industrial workers challenged the existing power structure. (2)
This tumultuous political situation forms the background for the attempted sentimental education of Frédéric - the events leading to the revolution, the Revolution of 1848, the abdication of Louis-Philippe and the proclamation of the second Republic, the unstable political and social climate which preceded the coup d'état of Louis Bonaparte in December 1851 and his eventual election as Emperor Napoleon III in December 1852. The novel finishes three years before the fall of Bonaparte and the declaration of the Third French Republic in 1870. In effect, Frédéric's sentimental education occurs between 1840 and 1851 mainly in Paris. After the coup d'état on 2nd December 1851, there is a break in the narrative of 15 years, until March 1867 and the beginning of the 67-68 winter when Frédéric gives a retrospective of his unsuccessful experiences.

In a letter to Mlle Leroyer de Chantepie, Gustave Flaubert wrote: "Je veux faire l'histoire morale des hommes de

(2) It is interesting to note that the numbers of workers actually participating in the insurrections of 1848 were comparatively small (in February, 7,000 men took part in the Revolution and in June, 10 to 12,000 were involved) for actions which had quite remarkable political and social repercussions for France. From most of the contemporary accounts of the times one has the impression that the entire Parisian working-class supported the revolutionary movement. Jean Vidalenc states that "le roman de Flaubert nous montre que la Révolution n'a pas concerné toute la ville. Cela - je ne dis pas pour les littéraires, mais pour les historiens - c'est extrêmement précieux". "Flaubert, historien de la révolution de 1848" in Europe, Sept., Oct., Nov., 1969, p.69.
Flaubert has titled his novel *L'éducation sentimentale* and here, in this letter, he elaborates on his very specific use of the word "sentimental". It is a word which is confined to the realms of emotion and love; further, the connotation of the word is enlarged when the author uses it to encompass inactive or unrealized passion. In his generation at the mid-century, the men of '48, Flaubert believes that the self-indulgent concepts of romanticism prevent a real experience of life, as the emphasis is placed on the self and the passionate afflictions of the individual rather than the social man and his changing political environment. Frédéric's basic belief, and the one which motivates his entire education, is that all action is inspired by love.  

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(3) G. Flaubert, *Correspondance*, lettre à Mlle Leroyer de Chantepie, 6 octobre, 1864.  

(4) Anthony Thorlby states that for Flaubert sentimentality "characterizes the quality of romantic emotion: that is, it is not so much direct or 'real', as associative - less a passion than an aspiration". He continues "the very idea of a 'sentimental education' is based on an assumption that every interest, activity and accomplishment is essentially sentimental; if not actually inspired by love, it follows the same pattern of feeling and its value is emotional." Thorlby's analysis of Flaubert's use of the word *sentimental* is based on a comparison of the first *L'éducation sentimentale* (1845) and the second, the one with which I am concerned, of 1869. Although the two novels are very different, both are histories of disillusionment in which young men have been inspired by the search for love and romantic passion and ended with unrealized ambitions. See *Gustave Flaubert and the Art of Realism* by Anthony Thorlby, London, Bowes and Bowes, 1956, p.24.
His constant disillusionment results from the falsity of his basic assumptions - a romantic education is not an adequate experience in the modern world. Flaubert's novel reveals the extent to which lives based on sentiment and emotion are doomed to failure in a world of materialism and bourgeois values.

Thus, Frédéric undergoes his education against a background of riots and insurrections in the capital. Confronted with this real world, his sentimentality is even more obviously hollow. The busyness and commotion of the city and the violence and destruction of the revolution contrast severely with the stagnation of Frédéric's own pursuits: his love affairs are impotent, his forays into politics are farcical and his attempts at a career lack purpose and commitment. Often throughout the novel, he is overcome by a feeling of paralysis which immobilizes him completely and the only relief he has from this condition is to submerge himself in further romantic longings. His ambitions and desires are so removed from the real world of bourgeois ideology and social revolution that he is incapable of controlling the events which make up his own life: too often, he finds himself being suffocated by his environment, "il lui semblait que les ténèbres humides, l'enveloppant, descendaient indéfiniment dans son coeur"(p.43) and he indulges in the romantic solution of wanting to end his tortured existence with suicide.
Des nuées sombres couraient sur la face de la lune. Il la contempla, en rêvant à la grandeur des espaces, à la misère de la vie, au néant de tout. Le jour parut; ses dents claquaient; et, à moitié endormi, mouillé par le brouillard et tout plein de larmes, il se demanda pourquoi n'en pas finir? (p.99)

His ambitions of love, which have little to do with the reality of love, are what compromise his sentimental education; he is inspired by a longing for experience ("c'était une envie de se sacrifier, un besoin de dévouement immédiat, et d'autant plus fort qu'il ne pouvait l'assouvir" (p. 107)) which leads inevitably to disillusionment. He has expectations of how his life should be to which he stubbornly clings despite the compounded failures and multiplicity of missed opportunities. Frédéric's dreams fail to materialize and his sentimental education becomes, paradoxically, a lesson in anti-romanticism: a life based on false illusions leads to personal frustration and disappointment.

At the beginning of the novel, Frédéric is 18; the year is 1840. At the story's end, it is 1867-1868. In the intervening 28 years, France witnessed an abortive Revolution of the workers in Paris, various political insurrections, Bonaparte's coup d'état, and the consolidation of capitalism as the system of social production. (Jacques Droz writes that "with the 1830s, the Industrial Revolution brought to the fore a series of phenomena - mechanization, industrialization on a large scale, and concentration..."
which would stamp their character on the society and the economy then emerging in France...it would not be until after the middle of the nineteenth century that the keynote of the French economy would be really capitalistic."(5) Frédéric's emotional education spans these same years. He begins his sentimental education from the moment on board the ship when he metaphorically begins the voyage down the river of life; at 18, he is full of what seem to him the important things of life - unrealized dreams and unfulfilled expectations.

Frédéric pensait à la chambre qu'il occuperait là-bas, au plan d'un drame, à des sujets de tableaux, à des passions futures. Il trouvait que le bonheur mérité par l'excellence de son âme tardait à venir. (p.20)

Even here, we can sense the lifelessness of his adolescent yearnings and there is a feeling of the pre-destined life-cycle - in his beginning is his end. His thoughts are not the energetic fantasies of an anticipated headlong confrontation with life; rather he awaits the abstract concept 'happiness' to transport him to a life not unlike the passivity of a painted picture or a written play. Despite his solid bourgeois background, Frédéric has a strong propensity to the romantic condition even while at school - the same schooling which was to give Deslauriers his yearnings for power and wealth - and his main ambition is to become the Walter Scott of France. Both

school-friends fantasize about their future life:

Ils parlaient de ce qu'ils feraient plus tard, quand ils seraient sortis du collège. D'abord, ils entreprendraient un grand voyage avec l'argent que Frédéric prélèverait sur sa fortune, à sa majorité. Puis ils reviendraient à Paris, ils travailleraient ensemble, ne se quitteraient pas; - et, comme délassement à leurs travaux, ils auraient des amours de princesses, dans des boudoirs de satin, ou de fulgurantes orgies avec des courtisanes illustres. (p.32)

Such dreams are innocuous in schoolboys. It is when one seeks to measure reality situations against the fantasy and to experience profound disillusionment at life for not providing the inaccessible sequences of romantic novels that danger begins. Frédéric's first disillusionment occurs when Deslauriers' career takes priority over their dreams of living together in Paris: "C'était le premier de ses rêves qui s'écroulait." (p.33) His friend has adjusted his childish sentiments to the exigencies of the real world - his ambition includes position and status and to obtain this he is prepared to put aside the illusory ideas of youth. Frédéric persistently remains loyal to his fanciful expectations for this future - his goal was love, and, while Deslauriers serves his apprenticeship as a solicitor's clerk waiting for his opportunity to arrive, Frédéric prepares himself for his future: he reads the Romantics.
There is a self-destructive aspect in his philosophy for the future. The essence of his romanticism is that the real world can never absolutely measure up to his idealism - if his dreams were attainable, his resultant situation would be as unsatisfactory to him as his unfulfilled dreams. The unyielding attitude of the young Frédéric determines the stultifying quality of his sentimental education; when, at 18, he makes his pronouncement on love, the type of love he will seek in life, it is as if he is the failed man speaking at the novel's end, with a lifetime of regrets and unrealized ambitions to embitter him in his coming old age:

J'aurais fait quelque chose avec une femme qui m'eût aimé...Pourquoi ris-tu? L'amour est la pâte et comme l'atmosphère du génie. Les émotions extraordinaires produisent les œuvres sublimes. Quant à chercher celle qu'il me faudrait, j'y renonce! D'ailleurs si jamais je la trouve, elle me repoussera. Je suis de la race des déshérités, et je m'éteindrai avec un trésor qui était de strass ou de diamant, je n'en sais rien. (p.35)

With these preconceived impressions, Frédéric enters into relationships and leaves them inevitably unfulfilled and dis-
illusioned. In the epilogue to the novel, a lifetime later, Frédéric is still awaiting happiness and, in fact, he settles on a bungled sexual escapade which occurred during his school-days in 1837 as being the happiest time he had ever had. When he first goes to Paris to study law, he is shocked by the reality of living (checking his own laundry, dealing with the boorish concierge, meeting fellow students) and the life he had expected he would find; he summons up all his mental and emotional resources, drawing on his school-boy experiences of romanticism, in order to reconcile the two situations - he writes a novel, composes German waltzes, attends the theatre and regularly stands outside the house where Mme Arnoux lives.

The woman who most successfully corresponds to Frédéric's idealized invention, and who consequently offers him the least in terms of contentment and self-development, is Mme Marie Arnoux. She is an older women, married with two children who virtuously remains faithful to her profligate husband; indeed, she has all the prerequisites for the position of romantic lover - "Elle ressemblait aux femmes des livres romantiques" (p.27) - she is beautiful, unreachable and of such a nature that there is never any possible chance that their love will be consummated. The vague verbiage he uses prevents Frédéric from ever assessing her as a human being and it is always in terms of trivia that he makes his appraisal - her clothing, her accessories, her hair style. Always the accumulation of details about her person conceals the real
person he thinks he loves. The person of Mme Arnoux is so amorphous in his mind, being merely the materialization of the image of a romantic heroine, that he confuses her with any woman - she becomes the abstract, Woman.

Frédéric's love for Mme Arnoux epitomizes all the falsity of his sentimentality and the inadequacy of such sentiment to support his living as a mid-nineteenth century man; he attempts to cling to the manners and motivations of an outmoded social philosophy. The discrepancy between his own notions of what love, life and happiness are and the ideals of the new bourgeois society is so huge that Frédéric appears, by the standards of his age, as a misfit, a failure. Moreover, in his own terms, he is a failure - the illusory happiness of the novels escapes him, his idealized love is disquieteningly unsatisfactory, in short, life is ultimately empty and he cannot identify the cause of his own sense of disappointment and futility. Where other men seek position or money, Frédéric looks for love -
Qu'est-ce que j'ai à faire dans le monde? Les autres s'évertuent pour la richesse, la célébrité, le pouvoir! Moi, je n'ai pas d'état, vous êtes mon occupation exclusive, toute ma fortune, le but, le centre de mon existence, de mes pensées. Je ne peux pas plus vivre sans vous que sans l'air du ciel! (p.304)

Later, hearing of Arnoux's final bankruptcy and the probability of the family's having to leave the country, Frédéric feels that the loss of his ideal would be the loss of the meaning of his life - "Est-ce qu'elle ne faisait pas comme la substance de son coeur, le fond même de sa vie?" (p.447)

This relationship undermines for Frédéric the substantial reality of his life: its insidious effect is threefold. The hopelessness of loving a married woman and the impossibility of having her as a daily companion add fuel to Frédéric's romantic fires. However, all is not well in the world of romantic love, for Frédéric suffers physical desire for his ideal, the satisfaction of which would destroy his illusions of love. He is torn by the conflict between wanting to preserve her modesty and virtue (which would consequently maintain his own false illusions) and wanting to make her his mistress (which would immediately reduce her status in his eyes). After attempting an elaborate plan to seduce her, Frédéric finally gives up all hope, realizing that her accessibility to him is increased if he refrains from physical advances. And thus the absurdity of his idea of what living
together means, of the routine and banality of daily existence
despite the presence of the loved one, is perpetuated.

Et ils s'imaginaient une vie exclusivement amoureuse, assez féconde pour remplir les plus vastes solitudes, excédant toutes joies, défiant toutes les misères, où les heures auraient disparu dans un continuel épanchemen
d'eux-mêmes, et qui aurait fait quelque chose de resplendissant et d'élevé comme la palpitation des étoiles. (p.306)

The second defect of the relationship, in terms of its contri-
bution to Frédéric's failure, is that he elevates Mme Arnoux
to such a position that she is the meaning, the essence of his life and yet the relationship has an enervating effect on him. It is essentially lifeless and does not inspire Frédéric to action, to fulfil himself either through a purposeful career or through a belief in his fellow men and the establishment of meaningful relations with both men and women. He continues to dream:

il songeait au bonheur de vivre avec elle, de la tutoyer, de lui passer la main sur les bandeaux longuement, ou de se tenir par terre, à genoux, les deux bras autour de sa taille, à boire son âme dans ses yeux! Il aurait fallu, pour cela, subvertir la destinée; et, incapable d'action, maudissant Dieu et s'accusant d'être lâche, il tournait dans son désir, comme un prisonnier dans son cachot. Une angoisse permanente l'étouffait. Il restait pendant des heures immobile, ou bien il éclatait en larmes. (p. 91)
This physical and spiritual paralysis prevents him from participating in life and insulates him from real experiences. His energy and passion are frustratingly misdirected towards an impossible end, a goal which invalidates Frédéric's aspirations as it is no more than an illusion. Finally, his preoccupation with Mme Arnoux excludes any happiness for him from other relationships: thinking this lifeless form of love to be his ideal, any other form which does not correspond to this image can not satisfy him. "Est-ce qu'après avoir désiré tout ce qu'il y a de plus beau, de plus tendre, de plus enchanteur, une sorte de paradis sous forme humaine, et quand je l'ai trouvé enfin, cet idéal, quand cette vision me cache toutes les autres.." (p.303) By some standards, his affair with Rose-Annette Bron is satisfactory. He is often content in the domesticity of her surroundings; she fulfils his sexual needs; his ego is comforted temporarily by having taken Arnoux's lover (a substitute revenge, perhaps, for not having his wife). However, she is all Mme Arnoux is not, and, despite the dilemma of Frédéric's situation, he will continue to yearn for a romantic heroine and not find any meaning in an affair with a courtesan. Similarly, the other two women in his life can be nothing more than worthless substitutions for Mme Arnoux. Mlle Louise Roque would appear to be a most suitable choice for Frédéric as she is a young, wealthy, provincial heiress who is greatly impressed by his urbanity. Moreover, she loves him to such an extent that she forgoes social
propriety and proposes marriage to her tardy intended. Once again, Frédéric's romantic sensibilities are shocked into inertia and, at the critical moment of having to make a decision, he does nothing at all. By the time he decides to return to the provinces and marry the one woman he thinks loves him (after, of course, all his other romantic and financial prospects have vanished in Paris), it is too late. When he is contemplating returning to Nogent to marry Louise, he thinks in retrospect that he gave up happiness by not accepting her proposal. "J'ai eu tort de ne pas saisir ce bonheur", he says with regret, referring to the time when he had believed there were greater things waiting for him than domestic life with an unsophisticated provincial girl:

Un bien autre avenir lui était réservé! Il en avait la certitude aujourd'hui; aussi n'était-ce pas le moment de s'engager, par un coup de coeur, dans une détermination de cette importance. Il fallait maintenant être positif. (p.391)

Frédéric's self-delusion here is complete: he rejects the rational, practical opportunity presented to him as being a sentimental whim which he must resist, and considers that he must be realistic and positive in his decision about his future. His realism involves continuing to pursue the false illusion of love with Mme Arnoux and to speculate on his economic welfare as Mme Dambreuse's lover.
Madam Dambreuse is something of an anomaly in Frédéric's sentimental education, as she is the one case where he courts for the sake of ambition. She is his entry into the élite circles of the haute bourgeoisie, the centre of the power of France. As a widow, she offers him the prospect of an elegant life created by her status and wealth, and Frédéric is seduced by the financial security and privilege attached to this. His sentimental longings are entirely spiritual and even he acknowledges the necessity to his chosen life of an independent income. Even though Frédéric confesses to Mme Arnoux that money does not inspire him ("je me moque bien de l'argent!") - and his ineffectual attempts to obtain a career or join the money-making bourgeoisie suggest this is true in one sense - he is certainly motivated by his fantasies of an easy, elegant life of luxury provided by the Dambreuse funds. It is not until the demands of Mme Dambreuse come into direct conflict with the demands of his romantic ideals (when Mme Dambreuse buys the silver casket at the auction of Arnoux's goods) that Frédéric's romantic commitment to Mme Arnoux appears to be total and unabating. He has been prepared to marry a woman he does not love for her money but he is incapable of surrendering his illusions of love - "Il était fier d'avoir vengé Mme Arnoux en lui sacrifiant une fortune; puis il fut étonné de son action, et une courbature infinie l'accabla". (p.460). As before, confronted with his illusions, his energy is sapped and he is incapable of action. In this case, acting
in the cause of his dreams has drained him of his energy because it is essentially a futile, meaningless gesture. Sentimentally, he has made the right decision and yet he is left feeling empty and disillusioned and still incapable of reconciling this feeling of futility with the act inspired by his love for Mme Arnoux.

Frédéric maintains his longing for the unattainable Mme Arnoux throughout his life. The conclusion of his sentimental education is a cruel lesson in facing reality. In the final chapters of the novel, he is faced with an old, grey-haired woman - the woman he has idolized for 27 years, the woman who has withheld herself from him and who is at last prepared to give herself to him. If this event had occurred many years earlier, Frédéric's sentimental education would have been somewhat different, as the actual merging of his romantic ideal and physical reality might have done something to dispel his fantastic longings and false illusions. His final encounter with Mme Arnoux is perfectly in keeping with the artificiality of their entire relationship. They speak at each other with the learnt phrases from Romantic novels, attempting to maintain the illusion of romantic love. Mme Arnoux tells Frédéric that her memory of him is as a lover from a novel ("il me semble que vous êtes là, quand je lis des passages d'amour dans les livres") and he assures her that she has inspired him to feel love as it is written about in the novels. ("Tout ce qu'on y blâme d'exagéré, vous me l'avez
fait ressentir." p.465). The pretence provided by the surface formalities is not sufficient to hide his deeper feelings of disappointment at finding Mme Arnoux aged and submissive. He is confronted with the paradox of feeling both lust and disgust for the woman offering herself to him and, at the same time, wanting to avoid degrading his ideal. Frédéric ignores the moment of truth confronting him - the dream has faded and the romantic lover, like any other, is vulnerable to the ravages of time. If Mme Arnoux had been more to him than an image, an illusion of what he thought he wanted, the reality of finding his life's inspiration reduced to the form of a grey-haired woman would not have been the severe shock that it is to Frédéric. The very basis of his entire life is eroded in Mme Arnoux's gesture of giving him a lock of her hair - an ironically romantic act which mocks itself with the anti-romantic circumstances in which it is given. In reality, Frédéric's dreams do eventuate as the woman he has loved for so long is finally accessible to him but there is no reconciliation between the horror and disappointment of the reality and the inspiration of the illusion.

To the end, Frédéric's sentimental education is a failure. Sentiment is no longer capable of supporting a sound attitude to modern life and the romantic philosophy with its emphasis on the spiritual yearnings of the individual no longer an adequate response to a world of revolution and socialist ideas and the rights of mass-man. As Frédéric's
education is paralleled by that of his schoolfriend, Deslauriers, in the novel, the comparison is presented between two different sorts of experience in contemporary life: Frédéric discovers at the end his disillusionment after a life-time inspired by his ambitions for love. Deslauriers' dreams are also thwarted and he ends his life as regretful and bitter as Frédéric. Flaubert seems to be suggesting something more than the inadequacy of the doctrine of romanticism to allow for a full and direct experience of life. All human efforts, whether motivated by fame, wealth or power, are futile against the powerful presence of modern society with its industrialization, capitalism and bourgeois mentality. Frédéric's false illusions are no more damning than those of Deslauriers or the other characters presented by Flaubert. Dambreuse's existence, the most economically successful one in the novel, is undermined by the fact that his life's endeavours will be used to gratify the whims of his bored wife with her lover. The lack of integrity shown by most of the characters (for example, Arnoux, Dambreuse, Sénecal, Roque) matches the self-deceit of both Frédéric and Mme Arnoux, and the one consistently loyal character, Dussardier, dies a brutal death for his pains. It is a pessimistic portrayal of a generation. Flaubert's optimism lies outside the framework of his novel: in an age of false illusions, the only redemption is in art and, for the author's generation, the affirmation lies in the lesson of L'éducation sentimentale that sentiment, along with
illusory ambitions of power and wealth, are insufficient to provide modern man with a meaning to life.

The irony of Frédéric's sentimental education is that, despite the fact that it is contrary to the experiences of modern society, it depends on money to survive. It does appear that, for Frédéric, love inextricably involves money. Money is the nexus between him and other people. It determines the status of the Moreau family in the village of Nogent and it allows Frédéric to attempt to fulfil his romantic ambitions. His entire sentimental education depends on the acquisition of his uncle's inheritance, for without it he would have been another discontented, provincial lad, forced to sit out his life as a clerk to the village solicitor while dreaming of Paris. With the inheritance, he has mobility and the opportunity to live in the capital and to devote his whole life to the pursuit of the romantic ideal. Money allows Frédéric to indulge himself in his illusions, never having to confront the true routine tedium of life nor to accept the small happinesses and imperfect contentment that can be expected. Money ("the external, common medium and faculty for turning an image into reality and reality into a mere image") is the agent in Frédéric's life which enables him to believe in dreams. The emptiness of his illusions is seen in his relationship with Mme Arnoux. After discovering that his

family fortune no longer exists and before he receives his inheritance, Frédéric is too ashamed to return to Paris for fear that his romantic heroine will see him, the romantic lover, with shabby gloves. There is no concept for him of "love will find a way" as his own notion of what is expected from love and the loved one is hampered by his illusions. For him, having no financial independence excludes him from the realms of love. Mme Arnoux's own precarious financial situation puts Frédéric in a vulnerable position with respect to her husband, who is only too ready to capitalize on Frédéric's obsession for his wife by borrowing money from him to delay his bankruptcy. In fact, at critical stages in the relationship with Mme Arnoux, it is through money that Frédéric expresses his commitment to her. When Arnoux finally is forced to flee the country to escape his financial problems, Frédéric jeopardizes his future security with Mme Dambreuse by borrowing 12,000 francs from her to pay Arnoux's debts, and consequently keep Mme Arnoux in Paris. Strangely enough, his dealings with Mme Arnoux are not so very different from his relationship with the prostitute, La Maréchale. For her, money and love are obviously united. Frédéric buys her favours and her attention in much the same way as he uses his money to keep his romantic image of Mme Arnoux intact by attempting to keep her away from destitution and poverty.

Frédéric's affair with Mme Dambreuse is utterly pecuniary; the proposed marriage is a straight-forward mercenary act with no love lost on either side - Frédéric
wants the privilege and status provided by Mme Dambreuse's position in society and her money and she wants to work at creating a 'grande passion' to relieve her boredom. Money also regulates the relationship between the Moreau family and the Roque family. It is only after realizing the potential of the property and accumulated wealth of M. Roque that Mme Moreau includes this man, whom she had previously considered distasteful, in her soirées. It is also on the basis of this wealth that she encourages Frédéric to marry Louise Roque. He seriously considers the proposition twice - once when he had lost a great deal on the stock market and thinks he can compensate for the loss with a good marriage. And much later, when he is totally disillusioned with Paris and has sacrificed the Dambreuse fortune to safeguard his illusions of Mme Arnoux, Frédéric returns to Nogent to marry Louise (which contradicts the gesture he has just made as, all things being equal, he intends to pick up another fortune to replace the one he has given up for his principles). Even his friendships with men are influenced by money: M. Dambreuse includes him in his circle because he can invest in his money-making business; Hussonnet courts him for a subscription to support his newspaper; Deslauriers spends a great deal of time either living off him or envying him his money and Arnoux exploits him mercilessly as Frédéric will deny him nothing for his wife's sake. His life is a series of unsuccessful relationships with both men and women and his search for
happiness is constantly frustrated by the conflict between his spiritual longings for fulfilment through a romantic attachment and the very real business of everyday life and his financial interests. His sentimental excesses ensure that he is neither a wise business man nor a cautious lover and his quest for love and happiness is doomed because of its dependence on money.

_L'Éducation sentimentale_ is a critique of romanticism and Frédéric's sentimental education demonstrates the futility of a life motivated by sentiment. The concept of an emotional education in the life of a man of the mid-nineteenth century is anachronistic to Flaubert because the basic assumptions underlying the notion of sentimentalism are in conflict with the values and interests of a bourgeois society. Romanticism with its encouragement of sentimentalism prefers to ignore social issues for the self-indulgence of the individual's concerns. Modern bourgeois society with its glorification of money and property subjects the individual to a process of dehumanization in which the ideology of the system, "the restless never-ending process of profit-making", to use Karl Marx's description, overwhelms the puny attempts of any one person to survive as an individual. As Peter Cortland says, "the implication seems to be that all personal efforts in the modern world are doomed to be quixotic, and that only in subordination to the movement of the mass does the average individual find any use for himself". (7)

Thus Frédéric, the hero of *L'éducation*, makes no impact at all on the process of his own life, indeed, the reverse happens and social reality imposes itself on him to such a degree that even his attempts at realizing his dreams are frozen into passivity. He becomes a victim of the social forces around him and confronts what Lukács calls "the problem of the possibility of action for the individual in a developed *bourgeois* society, the problem of the inevitable discrepancy between ideology and reality for all who live in capitalist society".\(^{(8)}\) This power of external society to suppress the individual and render him immobile throws into relief another contradiction existing in the novel - that of the juxtaposition of Frédéric's lost opportunities in a world of chance and success. The absurdity of his situation is that the potential is always present for political expediency, social mobility, financial success and personal fulfilment and yet he can never motivate himself to seize the opportune moment. He destroys all chance of happiness with women because of his obsession for Mme Arnoux; he cannot apply himself to law studies because of his vague feeling that he is meant for something grander. His forays into politics are abortive because of his lack of commitment to any political philosophy and his financial interests are disastrous. His sentimental education prevents him from experiencing a bourgeois way of life or from forming a viable alternative to this life style. Paradoxically, at no stage does Frédéric

explicitly reject the bourgeoisie and their ideology, in fact, he believes himself to be most comfortably at home when he is surrounded by the plush ostentation of the banker's house and the superficiality of the social gatherings. Nonetheless, he is at odds with the basic tenets of a society inspired by money as he has no ambition to succeed professionally or financially. His only incentive is that prompted by his romantic illusions which fail, ultimately, to substantiate his life. Certainly, in the nostalgic retrospective of the epilogue, Frédéric Moreau and Charles Deslauriers both acknowledge failure, "ils l'avaient manquée tous les deux, celui qui avait rêvé l'amour, celui qui avait rêvé le pouvoir", and place the blame for their regrets on the times - "ils accusèrent le hasard, les circonstances, l'époque où ils étaient nés".

Not only is the sentimental education inadequate but it also lacks any development. From the time in 1840 when Frédéric begins his life in Paris full of dreams and lofty ambitions until the final scene where he and Deslauriers discuss their happiest moment, there is no experience which the hero undergoes which changes critically or essentially his self-concept or his ability to grasp the meaning of incidents in his life. The romantic escapade of the schoolboys with its exotic overtones of oriental fantasies is a falsely enhanced memory of a frightening, shameful experience, and yet it is transformed into the most important event in both their lives. The memory symbolizes the extent of their disillusionment
while it reveals the degree to which Frédéric, at least, has failed to learn that his sentiment has prevented him from confronting reality.
CHAPTER 3

A Romantic in a revolutionary world.
The 1848 Revolutions in Europe were manifestly unsuccessful. The French historian Jacques Droz attributed this failure to the gap between the aspirations and awakening consciousness of the masses and the lagging social and political organizations at the time.

The basic problem for the men of '48 and the fundamental cause of their failure lay in the fact that the revolutions, inspired by the unanimous determination of the peoples of Europe to obtain liberty and nationhood, took place at a time when the economic and social structure, still strongly marked by the forms of the Ancien Régime, did not allow the dis-inherited classes to make common cause against the classes in possession and to take up the banner of social revolution. (1)

It was not only in retrospect that the European revolutions proved fruitless. Contemporary writers also chronicled the disasters of the period, recognizing the force of the working-classes in the February victory and the true beginnings of the bourgeois republic in the June defeat. (2) As a man of the age, Flaubert records with remarkable accuracy the events of the turbulent years and reveals his own disillusionment with the new society created by the revolutions of 1848. *L'éducation sentimentale* is an account of Paris and the Parisians during

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this time. Through the person of Frédéric Moreau we are presented with the individual's own helplessness in a changing society. After the failure of the workers in June 1848 to overthrow the form of the state, or rather, after the bourgeois state had been successfully reinstated as a result of the defeat of the June insurrectionists, Frédéric Moreau discusses the situation with his equally disillusioned friend, Deslauriers. He takes stock of the political situation in a rare moment of lucidity which reveals not so much his ability to repeat ideas gleaned from dinner parties at the Dambreuses but rather the political stance of the author himself:

L'étincelle manquait! Vous étiez simplement de petits bourgeois, et les meilleurs d'entre vous, des cuistres! Quant aux ouvriers, ils peuvent se plaindre; car, si l'on excepte un million soustrait à la liste civile, et que vous leur avez octroyé avec la plus basse flagonnerie, vous n'avez rien fait pour eux que des phrases! Le livret demeure aux mains du patron, et le salarié (même devant la justice) reste l'inférieur de son maître, puisque sa parole n'est pas crue. Enfin, la République me paraît vieille. Qui sait? Le Progrès, peut-être, n'est réalisable que par une aristocratie ou par un homme? L'initiative vient toujours d'en haut! Le peuple est mineur, quoi qu'on prétende! (p.411)(3)

Flaubert's own statements on the ultimate salvation of the people being realized through an aristocracy of the

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(3) In the letter to George Sand on the 29th April 1871, Flaubert repeats these same ideas about the inferiority of the masses and their need to be led by one man or an educated élite. See Ch I. p.13.
intelligentsia are well recorded in his *Correspondance*. He shows little optimism for the progress of humanity or for the ability of the masses to recognize their own subservient position in society and to act to change the situation. He is fiercely critical of the socialist ideas proliferating at the time and accuses socialist writings of being more reactionary, and more doctrinaire, than the pervasive beliefs of Catholicism which he felt shaped the stultifying organization of society during the *Ancien Régime*. Flaubert prepared himself for the writing of *L'éducation* by reading the works of Saint-Simon, Leroux, Fourier and Proudhon, the major socialist writers who had influenced the intellectual background to the 1848 Revolutions. His conclusions about them are totally unsympathetic as he felt they were instrumental in wanting to drag France back into the repressive age which preceded the French Revolution of 1789.

Il y a une chose saillante et qui les lie tous: c'est la haine de la liberté, la haine de la Révolution française et de la philosophie. Ce sont tous des bonshommes du moyen âge, esprits enfoncés dans le passé... S'ils n'ont pas réussi en 48, c'est qu'ils étaient en dehors du grand courant traditionnel. Le socialisme est une face du passé... On a senti instinctivement ce qui fait le fond de toutes les utopies sociales: la tyrannie, l'antinature, la mort de l'âme. (4)

He considered socialist ideas about a communistic society to be entirely counter to the spirit of liberty introduced into France with the overthrow of the *Ancien Régime* because they

(4) Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance*, lettre à Mme des Genettes, été 1864.
were no more scientific or philosophic than religion in attempting to dictate to man the cause of his human predicament. Indeed, his main attack on the socialist thinkers is for their similarity with French Catholicism in the sense that both attempt a rigid explanation of man's origins and destiny and both attempt to control despotically the organization of society. In *L'éducation*, Flaubert satirically emphasises the stupidity of the middle-classes because they take the ideas of the socialists seriously:

And, later, when describing the chaos of the political clubs formed to air the views of candidates for the Provisional Government formed after the February Revolution, Flaubert scornfully shows how the workers, imbued with socialist thought, confuse socialism and Christianity. A patriot "en blouse" says to the members of the club who have refused to listen to a priest:

>Ce n'est pas, non plus, parce qu'il est prêtre, car, nous aussi, nous sommes prêtres! L'ouvrier est prêtre, comme l'était le fondateur du socialisme, notre Maître à tous, Jésus-Christ! Le moment était venu d'inaugurer le règne de Dieu! L'Evangile conduisait tout droit à 89! Après l'abolition de l'esclavage, l'abolition du prolétariat. On avait eu l'âge de haine, allait commencer l'âge d'amour. (p.342)
The February Revolution of 1848 was a victory for the workers of Paris. As a result, Louis-Philippe abdicated and the second French Republic was proclaimed and temporarily controlled by the Provisional Government. Within the following month, parliament passed various bills which allowed the victors to believe in their success: a ten-hour working day was introduced by decree; universal, direct suffrage was made available with secret ballot for all French men from the age of 21 and another decree was passed which abolished the property qualification for entry into the bourgeois National Guard, thus allowing the workers to obtain arms. The optimism was to be short-lived and it required a constant battle to maintain a semblance of the initial victory of the February days. Flaubert's pessimism and disillusionment at the political chaos of the aftermath of the revolution and the illusory victory of the working classes would suggest that he was a convinced revolutionary. His social satire is shown very clearly in the descriptions of the political clubs of Paris which sprang up as vehicles for the dissemination of the huge numbers of manifestos appearing from the population. Any aspect of society could be represented and every idea could be heard. Candidates hoping for election to the Provisional Government rehearsed their views in the clubs and hoped for numbers to support their election. To show the extent of the confusion of the time, even Frédéric joins the ranks of those seeking candidature. He is spurred on by the general
infectious madness and his idea of the situation is definitely distorted by his romanticism. He dismisses the political issues and the conflict between the classes for a more colourful interpretation of the events - visions of grandeur, uniforms and great men emerging victorious from revolutions to lead nations to peace and prosperity. In this dream, he places himself as one of the splendidly uniformed heroes. The description of Frédéric's vision reveals the extent of Flaubert's scepticism of the achievements of the February Revolution and the ability of the temporary government to implement progressive social policy.

Frédéric writes his speech and reveals his absolute political naiveté by hoping for the banker Dambreuse's endorsement of his impassioned demands for free trade, tax on incomes, graduated taxation, a European federation, education for the masses and the encouragement of the arts, all of which contravene the bourgeois' interests in maintaining his privileged position in society. Such are the times that men like Frédéric, without commitment, goals or motivation, can become excited.
by causes which have no relevance to themselves or to the society in which they live. In a sense, Flaubert revealed this inability to support a cause in his own life when he physically withdrew from the political world of action at his retreat in Croisset where he contented himself with observing the world about him with disgust. (5)

Frédéric attends the many clubs around Paris in order to find a sympathetic audience and discovers that the whole range of political possibilities and absurdities is covered somewhere—"c'étaient des plans de phalanstères, des projets de bazars cantonaux, des systèmes de félicité publique." (p.338) He eventually chooses the Club de L'Intelligence as an appropriate venue for his debut in politics. The procedure of the meeting is farcical. Flaubert's dissatisfaction with the state of politics is obvious from this parody of a meeting presided over by Sénecal, whose own political affiliations are as fluid as those of Dambreuse. The empty words of the characters who have no real convictions and who are more concerned with their image than their impact on the changing government reveals the superficiality of the proceedings. In all this confusion, Frédéric's candidature is no more than

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(5) Flaubert did emerge from his refuge during the Prussian invasion of France in 1870, when he became a lieutenant in the National Guard of Croisset. In a letter to George Sand on the 10th September, 1870, Flaubert writes: "Quoi qu'il advienne, les gens qui sont maintenant au pouvoir seront sacrifiés, et la République suivra leur sort. Notez que je la défends, cette pauvre République; mais je n'y crois pas." Correspondance.
another futile act to add to the politically shallow performances of those around him. Frédéric realizes the silliness of his action when he is prevented from speaking to the workers about the formation of the Republic by a patriot from Barcelona who incites the crowds with his revolutionary fervour although none can understand his Spanish. He is confronted with the conflict between his fanciful vision of a glorious republic and the unglamorous reality of the men who will be the bulwark of this same republic. He finds himself totally uninvolved with the events and incapable of maintaining his interest in the political issues which had fired his election speech.

The same treatment is given the description of the workers' victory in the February revolution. Flaubert presents the scene of the palace, newly vacated by the king and now over-run by the people, as a bitter social indictment of the meaninglessness and eventual failure of the revolution. Despite his aesthetic theory of impartiality, his disgust at the futility of the events of 1848 transforms a mere scientific account of the mobs at the palace into a critical attack on the political events. Again Flaubert questions the suspect motivations and the superficiality of the convictions of those involved in the débâcle. The masses gratuitously ransack the furnishings of the palace and destroy the throne in order to celebrate their triumph. This is not an enlightened society which deserves the liberty, fraternity and equality
they have fought for and Flaubert shows the people as being very similar to marauding barbarians who have defeated enemy territory. The most emphatic statement about the deceptive nature of the victory is the description of a prostitute posing as the statue of Liberty:

Dans l'antichambre, debout sur un tas de vêtements, se tenait une fille publique, en statue de la Liberté, - immobile, les yeux grands ouverts, effrayante. (p.327)

Frédéric observes the turmoil and destruction as if he is watching a play; he is estranged from the events and yet affected by the general excitement around him. Unlike his companion Hussonnet who finds the common people disgusting, he is overwhelmed by a vast, nebulous feeling of love for everyone. He is swept away by his romantic notions as he thinks he experiences a feeling of unity and empathy for the fighting mobs he is watching.

Le magnétisme des foules enthousiastes l'avait pris. Il humait voluptueusement l'air orageux, plein des senteurs de la poudre; et cependant il frissonnait sous les effluves d'un immense amour, d'un attendrissement suprême et universel, comme si le cœur de l'humanité tout entière avait battu dans sa poitrine. (p.329)

Because of his lack of commitment to anything except his quest for romantic love, Frédéric passes through life without gaining knowledge or experience. He is momentarily taken by certain events but rarely sees beyond the external image and the people who influence him do so superficially. He becomes
obsessed with the small, unimportant details of people and their lives and never considers the repercussions of his knowledge in terms of understanding situations or people in any depth. His accidental involvement in the political events of 1848 and his quick retreat from this involvement as soon as he is rejected show the lack of purpose in his life. Flaubert reveals the paradoxical situation of men without causes living in a society which offers a confusing choice of opportunities to espouse a faith. Indeed, since the revolution of 1789, demands were being placed on the individual which had not been made before. No longer was society an ordered, pre-destined structure in which each member accepted his place. The 1848 revolutions completely exploded the security of the hierarchical organization of society and the individual was confronted with a fragmented disarray from which he had to make sense of life. Being in control of his own political and social situation opened the possibilities for opportunity and absurdity, for progressive change and self-destructive anarchy. Frédéric finds himself in this situation. Equipped with nothing but illusions, he is incapable of supporting a cause or maintaining a conviction. His own self becomes a mirror of the chaos around him. He is fragmented and dissipated among the many ideals and possibilities confronting him. As Flaubert shows in *L'éducation*, not many of the banners that were taken up by the Parisian revolutionaries were worth supporting and the confusion surrounding
the establishment of the Provisional Government blurred the real issues anyway, making it difficult to distinguish exactly what the February revolution had achieved or what alternatives it posed to the men of '48.

In the novel Flaubert describes in vivid detail and with historical accuracy the major political events between 1840 and 1851. We are given some indication of the general political unrest in 1840 when Deslauriers warns Frédéric of the coming revolutions:

> Ces bonnes gens qui dorment tranquilles, c'est drôle! Patience! un nouveau 89 se prépare! On est las de constitutions, de chartes, de subtilités, de mensonges! (p. 34)

When Frédéric goes to Paris to study law, he becomes aware of various skirmishes and demonstrations by workers and students. In one particular riot around the Panthéon, in December 1841, he meets Hussonnet and the working-class Dussardier who is to emerge as the only character in the novel who maintains any integrity and stable loyalties. But, despite his contact with the erupting social milieu, Frédéric remains uncommitted to any of the issues of the day and his goals and aspirations are not affected by the changing political ideas of most of the people he knows.

(6) There are instances in the novel of historical inaccuracies, mainly involving dates (for example, the Pritchard Affair Flaubert dates as December 1841 instead of 1844) but these do not detract from the authenticity of the descriptions of the critical political events of the decade 1840-1851, nor do they lessen the impact of the historical background of the fictional aspects of L'éducation.
Flaubert's description of the climax to the various riots and demonstrations over the years leading to 1848 is vivid and immediate. He combines his own first-hand knowledge of the February Revolution with information from contemporary writings on the subject\(^{(7)}\) to produce a picture of the sacking of the Palais-Royal by the workers which is highly evocative of the general confusion and chaos existing amongst the milling, directionless revolutionaries. He captures the intense feeling of excitement generated from the victory and the equally intense feeling of waste and futility which is also present. Flaubert does not dwell in particular on the bourgeois' demonstrations against the Provisional Government nor the workers' counter-demonstrations, nor does he detail the changes to the constitution made by the Provisional Government. However, he maintains the feeling of uncertainty and disorder which permeated the period between February and June of 1848. He manages to convey both the bourgeoisie's fear for the outcome of the social upheaval and the directionless enthusiasm and optimism of the workers at their apparent liberation. There is very little information provided to account for the occurrence of the June insurrections. This

\(^{(7)}\) In his *Correspondance*, particularly during the years 1864 to 1869 while *L'éducation* was being researched and written, Flaubert indicates that he is involved in a detailed research programme on the historical background to his novel. P-G Castex suggests that Flaubert did not consult massive library sources as his letters indicate but borrowed extensively from previously written contemporary accounts (such as those of Maxime du Camp, Daniel Stern, Pelletan) and from newspaper articles. See *Les Cours de Sorbonne*, pp. 78-84.
is, of course, deliberate as the political events only play a role in relation to Frédéric's own affairs. At the time of the June days, he is with Rosanette at Fontainebleau and the only indication there is of the bitter street-fighting which was to lead to the repression of the workers and the re-establishment of the bourgeois republic is the faint echoing of drum rolls in the villages around Paris summoning the troops and National Guards from the surrounding districts to the capital to support General Cavaignac and his repression of the industrial workers.

Quelquefois, ils entendaient tout au loin des roulements de tambour. C'était la générale que l'on battait dans les villages, pour aller défendre Paris. (p.367)

The description of Paris during the June days of the insurrection is as well documented as the scenes of the February riots and again Flaubert conveys both the facts of history and the underlying feeling of futility and hopelessness that accompanied the suppression of the insurrectionists and their mass slaughter.

Des canons en marche faisaient au loin sur le pavé un roulement sourd et formidable; le coeur se serrait à ces bruits différant de tous les bruits ordinaires. Ils semblaient même élargir le silence, qui était profond, absolu, - un silence noir. Des hommes en blouse blanche abordaient les soldats, leur disaient un mot, et s'évanouissaient comme des fantômes. (p.374)

There is an unearthly quality in these descriptions of the destruction in Paris and the senseless killing which stands
in contrast to the feeling of relief and elation of the bourgeoisie at the turn in their favour in the political events.

Further political events until 1851 are telescoped in the novel and are given secondary importance to the story of Frédéric Moreau. It is not until the coup d'état of Louis Bonaparte on the second of December in 1851 that Flaubert again allows history to dominate the fictional lives of the novel. There is again the juxtaposition of a detached account of what is happening in Paris and the emotional statement of the meaninglessness of the action. The final gesture of futility is the death of the loyal Dussardier at the hands of his supposed friend and one-time comrade, Sénechal. Dussardier is killed while crying "Vive la République!" at the time when the new Republic is most endangered. At the coup d'état, Louis Bonaparte gained control of the Assembly and was voted back as President by an overwhelming majority of the people. This power allowed him, one year later, to destroy the Republic and have himself elected Emperor Napoleon III.

However, despite the fact that L'éducation is an historical documentation of the political events of 1848 and 1851 by a contemporary writer, it remains a fictional narrative. Within the novel there is an antagonism between the historical reality and the fictional characters which Flaubert himself encountered as a major difficulty in writing:
J'ai bien du mal à emboîter mes personnages dans les événements politiques de 48. J'ai peur que les fonds ne dévorent les premiers plans; c'est là le défaut du genre historique. Les personnages de l'histoire sont plus intéressants que ceux de la fiction, surtout quand ceux-là ont des passions modérées; on s'intéresse moins à Frédéric qu'à Lamartine. Et puis, quoi choisir parmi les faits réels? Je suis perplexe; c'est dur! (8)

The opposition of the plans inventés and the fonds réels provides another contradiction in the novel which serves to emphasise Frédéric's alienation. Flaubert stated that his aim in writing the novel was to portray the emotional reaction of the men of his times ("je veux faire l'histoire morale des hommes de ma génération"). His roman de moeurs modernes analyses the responses of a large variety of representative characters to the severe social and political changes. And yet, in particular, it is the story of one man, Frédéric Moreau, whose desperately useless attempts to organize his reality contrast with the disorganization of the society around him.

Frédéric's lack of achievement and lack of self-knowledge are far more poignant when seen against the political instability of the age and the failure of the 1848 revolutions. Moreover, the meaning of Frédéric's own failure as an individual can only be understood in terms of the society which is disintegrating about him. Delauriers sought power; Frédéric sought love. Both men failed to

(8) G. Flaubert, Correspondance, lettre à Jules Duplan, 14 mars, 1868.
realize their ambitions because, Flaubert suggests, both these
notions of human relations are no more than false illusions in
a society whose only reverence is money and whose only faith
is materialism. Frédéric's story is paralleled in history in
a way which serves to emphasize the failure of both the
historical and the personal events. (9)

Although the political turbulence is constantly present
in the background of L'éducation, there are four occasions where
the historical events appear to dominate the life of the novel
and dwarf the characters involved. It is on these four occasions,
the February Revolution of '48, the formation of the Provisional
Government after the success of the revolution, the June

(9) Peter Cortland, in The Sentimental Adventure, (1967)
pp. 41-45, states that the parallel between the develop-
ment of the revolution and Frédéric's affairs not only
reveals the power of the environment on the characters
involved but also suggests that the movement of European
history depended on personalities represented by those in
the novel (for example, Frédéric, Dambreuse, Sénécal etc.).
For a contrary view, that is, that there is little
importance in tracing a parallel between historical events
and the major affairs of Frédéric's life, see Martin Turnell,
The Novel in France, (1950), who says "The social life, the
political meetings and the revolutions which Flaubert des-
cribed so laboriously are no more than a drab and uninter-
esting background for what is after all a series of not very
exciting liaisons", p.295. There is of course some point in
tracing the movement of history and the personal story of the
hero. It is not coincidental that Frédéric's major personal
crises occur at politically critical times (e.g. the Febru-
ary revolution, the June riots and Bonaparte's coup d'état).
However, the warning is given in the epilogue to the novel not
to blame the times for the failure of the hero's life and
Flaubert, while stressing the pressures placed on men living
in an era of political and social flux, is more concerned
about how characters equipped with the ideas and attitudes of
a past order fail to cope with the demands of a new, changing
world. The novel really focuses on the question of romant-
icism as an adequate response to a world of social upheaval
and revolution rather than the effect of environment on
characters.
insurrections of the same year and the coup d'État in 1851, that the affairs of Frédéric's life are accentuated. Against the chaotic confusion of the revolutionary times, the obscurity of his life becomes conspicuously obvious and all his efforts appear to disintegrate into useless gestures in opposition to the unstable environment. Frédéric himself is impersonalized during the revolutions. He becomes merely another one of the mob milling about the streets of Paris. His efforts appear to be reduced to matters of no consequence and his concerns and beliefs, his goals and his aspirations are revealed in all their shallowness and superficiality.

Frédéric is aware of the political situation without involving himself in it. Deslauriers' prophetic warning in 1840 that another revolution is brewing does little to the lovelorn Frédéric who is concerned only with the state of his future romances, the materialization of his dreams and Mme Arnoux, the woman he has just met and to whom he will dedicate his entire life. It is the story of his affair with Mme Arnoux which is paralleled by the political events of the same time. Before the February Revolution, Frédéric has established a relationship with Mme Arnoux which is trusting and secure, and because it is understood that the relationship will not be sexual, the affair becomes the romantic situation which is all that Frédéric dreamed of. However, he finds the situation frustrating and tedious and is constantly confused by his preoccupation with consummating his romantic love ("loin d'elle, des convoitises furieuses le devoraient"). The political unrest prior to the February
revolution is used as an excuse for Frédéric to vent his personal discontent and unhappiness.

Frédéric se soulageait en déblatérant contre le Pouvoir; car il souhaitait, comme Deslauriers, un bouleversement universel, tant il était maintenant aigri. (p.309)

He is incapable of analysing his own circumstances in isolation from the overpowering social context and of concluding that his romantic philosophy is inadequate. Instead of facing the problem created by the discrepancy between the reality of his desire and his romantic image of love, Frédéric directs his personal frustration towards the turbulent political scene. Flaubert seems to suggest often throughout this novel the tenuous relationship existing between political causes and the people who involve themselves in supporting such causes. (10)

It is disillusioning to find, Flaubert appears to say, that great events in history have perhaps occurred despite the commitment and dedication of those involved in such projects. But then, the February Revolution was an illusory success as the June days proved and the débâcle that was 1848 led only to the establishment of a reactionary government in 1851 under Louis Bonaparte. (11)

(10) I have discussed this aspect of the novel - the personal interest involved in political commitment - in Chapter II.

(11) As Karl Marx states "the class wars in France created circumstances and relationships that enabled a grotesque mediocrity to strut about in a hero's garb." The Eighteenth Brumaire (1943), p.18.
Frédéric is invited by Deslauriers to meet at the Place du Panthéon to demonstrate but he has "un rendez-vous plus agréable". He has planned to seduce Mme Arnoux in a hired room. The shattering of Frédéric's hopes is very skilfully portrayed in a scene in which the action takes place on three different levels simultaneously: at the time when Frédéric is anticipating sex with her, Mme Arnoux is involved in an unforeseen personal crisis nursing her small son with croup from near death. At his successful recovery from the illness, she offers her love for Frédéric as a sacrifice to God. At the same time, Frédéric himself, after waiting in the streets filled with National Guards, students and workers, swears that he will never again desire her and satisfies his lust and appeases his hurt ego by taking Rosanette to the room prepared for Mme Arnoux. Dominating these two intense personal dramas, the beginning of the violence of the February days is erupting in the streets of Paris. Despite a longing to indulge in violent action because Mme Arnoux does not appear at the appointed time and place, Frédéric is completely estranged from the political events and he listens to the fighting around him with indifference:

-Ah! on casse quelques bourgeois, dit Frédéric tranquillement, car il y a des situations où l'homme le moins cruel est si détaché des autres, qu'il verrait périr le genre humain sans un battement de cœur. (p. 320)

During the abdication of Louis-Philippe, the sacking of the Palais-Royal and the proclamation of the Republic, Frédéric's
indifference changes to a detachment of another kind. He watches
the events like a spectator at a sports match and is swept away
by the anonymous but unified feeling of the crowd. The superf-
ficial empathy for the workers' cause in the February days
replaces his equally superficial daily concern for romantic
love with Mme Arnoux. It also inspires him to present himself
at the political clubs in order to gain a place in the newly
formed Provisional Government, but, because his motivation is
based on momentary feelings of elation rather than a deep-felt
loyalty to an ideal, he fails at this enterprise as well.

Before the June insurrections, Frédéric takes Rosanette
for a holiday out of Paris to Fontainebleau. The idyllic,
pastoral setting and the contentment of the two lovers are a
severe contrast to the turmoil of the city which is under siege.
Cavaignac ordered the troops against the industrial workers
and quelled the uprisings by mass slaughtering of the insurr-
ectionists in the streets.\(^{(12)}\) The scene at Fontainebleau,
removed from the bloody battles in Paris, creates an illusion
of peace and security which protects Frédéric from the reality
of having to make a decision about the workers' revolt.
Fontainebleau is in a sense a symbol of Frédéric Moreau's
disengagement. He encases himself in his own romantic envelope
with all his illusions and false expectations of life.
Occasionally, the real world impinges on his consciousness but
only rarely does he feel the need to acknowledge this other
existence or to engage himself in directing the course of\(^{(12)}\)

* Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France 1848-1850,*
events which may affect his life. One of these occasions occurs on the holiday at Fontainebleau: Frédéric is jarred into acknowledging the presence of the raging battles in Paris when he hears that his friend Dussardier has been wounded. He is shocked by Rosanette's philosophy of chacun pour soi and senses a feeling of responsibility to be with his fellow countrymen in Paris.

Il fut indigné de cet égoïsme; et il se reprocha de n'être pas là-bas avec les autres. Tant d'indifférence aux malheurs de la patrie avait quelque chose de mesquin et de bourgeois. Son amour lui pesa tout à coup comme un crime. (p.371)

However, once in Paris, he does little but visit the wounded Dussardier each day.

Flaubert's impartiality in describing the fruitless political upheavals of 1848 can be seen when one compares the description of the unnecessary ransacking of the Palais-Royal by the workers in February with that of the National Guard, the mainstay of the bourgeoisie, suppressing the workers in June. Both appear as barbaric and senseless acts of political violence. Neither achieves anything for the liberation of man as the 1848 revolutions are eventually overshadowed by the farcical ascension of Louis Bonaparte to the seat of Emperor on December the second, 1852, and the beginning of a reign which will attempt to re-establish the conservative values of the Ancien Régime, thus attempting to negate any social progress which had been made since the French Revolution.
The description of the National Guard in action is as horrific as that of the workers in February:

C'était un débordement de peur. On se vengeait à la fois des journaux, des clubs, des attroupements, des doctrines, de tout ce qui exaspérait depuis trois mois; et, en dépit de la victoire, l'égalité (comme pour le châtiment de ses défenseurs et la dérision de ses ennemis) se manifestait triomphalement, une égalité de bêtes brutes, un même niveau de turpitudes sanglantes; car le fanatisme des intérêts équilibra les délires du besoin, l'aristocratie eut les fureurs de la crapule, et le bonnet de coton ne se montra pas moins hideux que le bonnet rouge. La raison publique était troublée comme après les grands bouleversements de la nature. Des gens d'esprit en restèrent idiots pour toute leur vie. (p.377)

With this impartial treatment of two opposing political interests, Flaubert reveals his own sceptical view of the political situation. Both sides are culpable. Neither side is worth the effort of commitment because, as history proves retrospectively, the workers' victory of February and the bourgeoisie's triumph of June were equally futile and short-lived. Frédéric in a sense exemplifies this political futility as he oscillates between the two classes while remaining completely detached from either. He leaves the deceptive euphoria of the political vacuum at Fontainebleau to align himself with the worker Dussardier and then, after Cavaignac's suppression of the June riots, he secures himself a comfortable niche with Dambreuse and the bourgeoisie. The change is remarkable and characteristic of Frédéric Moreau, "homme de toutes les faiblesses" (p.336). Although he had felt the heart of all mankind...
beating in his breast during the February revolution, he can
feel equal empathy for the bourgeoisie after the June defeat:
"il se sentait dans son vrai milieu, presque dans son domaine,
comme si tout cela, y compris l'hôtel Dambreuse, lui avait
appartenu" (p.389). As he has no substantial core of belief,
he is tossed from one emotion to the next, one fantasy to
another. His shallowness is emphatically stressed by the
contrast between the scenes of the streets of Paris and the
dinner party at the Dambreuses. The confusion and violence
of the streets and the intense fervour of the participants
of the insurrection are the very things which attract Frédéric
during the February days and yet, four months later, he
attends the sumptuous victory banquet at the banker's house.
Flaubert describes the banquet table in absolute detail with
almost photographic precision and, in this detached treatment,
the scene becomes a severe accusation of the bourgeoisie
indulging themselves in the midst of devastation and death
in the streets:

Sous les feuilles vertes d'un ananas, au milieu
de la nappe, une dorade s'allongeait, le
museau tendu vers un quartier de chevreuil
et touchant de sa queue un buisson d'écrevisses. Des figues,
des cerises énormes,
des poires et des raisins (primeurs de la
culture parisienne) montaient en pyramides
dans des corbeilles de vieux saxe; une
touffe de fleurs, par intervalles, se mêlait
aux claires argenteries; les stores de soie
blanche, abaissés devant les fenêtres,
emplissaient l'appartement d'une lumière
douce; il était rafraîchi par deux fontaines
où il y avait des morceaux de glace; et de
grands domestiques en culotte courte servaient.
Tout cela semblait meilleur après l'émotion
des jours passés. On rentrait dans la
jouissance des choses que l'on avait eu
peur de perdre. (p.382)
Frédéric's affair with Mme Arnoux comes to its empty conclusion at the same time as the inauguration of Bonaparte's dictatorship. The workers are abandoned when their leaders are dismissed and the bourgeoisie witness the passing of their power with Louis Bonaparte's take-over in 1851. It is a period of disillusionment and despair which is reflected in the stagnation of Frédéric's life. In a moment of positive action, he walks away from marriage to Mme Dambreuse and his affair with Rosanette in order to preserve his dream of romantic love with Mme Arnoux, whom bankruptcy has forced from the city. It is a positive gesture but a futile one as the response is made to an illusion and not to any real situation. He is also so preoccupied with his own despair that he does not notice the political events, "les affaires publiques le laissèrent indifférent, tant il était préoccupé des siennes" (p.460), but the intense affinity between Frédéric's ruined hopes and shattered illusions and those of the Republic is obvious. The hopes of both have come to nothing and all previous action has proved pointless. Frédéric's dissatisfaction continues over a period of 15 years, from December 1851 until March 1867, during which time he sustains his empty, embittered life with the memory of his love for Mme Arnoux. This period of progressively intensifying disillusionment corresponds politically to the period of Napoleon III's Empire and the time when the French people, the many disparate sections of society who had elected Bonaparte, resigned themselves to the disappointment of unfulfilled expectations and the frustrations of a
government which attempted to represent the interests of both the bourgeoisie and the working class while, in actual fact, achieving nothing for either. Frédéric loses his ability to respond to situations which had previously had his commitment, however momentarily, but his disenchantment with life does not prevent him from maintaining his faith in romantic dreams.

Il fréquenta le monde, et il eut d'autres amours encore. Mais le souvenir continué du premier les lui rendait insipides; et puis la vénération du désir, la fleur même de la sensation était perdue. Ses ambitions d'esprit avaient également diminué. Des années passèrent; et il supportait le désœuvrement de son intelligence et l'inertie de son coeur. (p.463)

In fact, his loss of illusions is not completed until Mme Arnoux visits him in 1867 and Frédéric is faced with the dilemma of submitting to a lifelong passion or of degrading his ideal. He chooses not to destroy his romantic concept of the woman he loves but, one suspects, his motives for so doing are ambiguous. It is not out of a desire to preserve his illusions but, because he has lost his passion for life, the whole thing would prove useless. ("D'ailleurs, quel embarras ce serait!")

Flaubert places his characters against a transient stage of political change and instability, but the historical context, the violence of the times, is not sufficient reason alone to account for the failure of the individuals involved. In the Correspondance, Flaubert writes to Mme Roger des Genettes:
Frédéric Moreau's failure cannot be explained away by the overpowering social and political environment. (14) He is alienated from his own class because he lacks the initiative and ambition to make money that inspires the bourgeoisie and because his inherited wealth ensures that he need not acquire money for his livelihood. He is an anachronism, a man of means schooled in romantic notions living in an age of materialism and bourgeois values. Frédéric's alienation enables him to remain apolitical and outside any class - he moves from one class to another with ease and from one political cause to another without feeling compromised. Despite being an outsider, Frédéric's one link with society is money. Flaubert shows how the

(13) G. Flaubert, Correspondance, lettre à Mme des Genettes, octobre, 1864.

(14) It is interesting to compare Flaubert's idea with the concept of Karl Marx concerning man's ability to shape his environment and determine his own existence: "Men make their own history but not just as they please. They do not choose the circumstances for themselves, but have to work upon circumstances as they find them, have to fashion the material handed down by the past". The Eighteenth Brumaire, (1943), p.23.
influence of money on human relationships is false and destructive, never allowing Frédéric to recognize the nature and quality of his own experiences or those of his friends. In the epilogue to the novel, Deslauriers and Frédéric review their unfulfilled lives. The retrospective analysis is superficial and naive. To the end, Frédéric cannot recognize the gap between the romantic fantasies which motivate most of his actions and the actual reality of his circumstances, the relationships he has with other people and the nature of love. At each moment in his life when his dreams fail to materialize or when he is confronted with another anti-climax to his expectations, we expect him to review his situation, to become cautious in his expectations. His detachment from the lives of the people around him and his non-involvement in political affairs place him in an unrealistic vacuum which protects him from experiencing awareness and self-knowledge.

Frédéric's sentimental education takes him from the end of his schooldays with his romantic illusions of the future to maturity when, 28 years later, his illusions take the form of creating myths of the past. In retrospect, the happiest time in his life is the bungled schoolboy escapade in a local brothel. Not even the changing political scene has intruded on his sentimental approach to life - the death of the loyal Dussardier, the political expediency of M. Dambreuse, Arnoux's dishonesty, Deslauriers' disloyalty, the February Revolution, the proclamation of the Republic,
the June days, Bonaparte's coup and the re-establishment of the Empire, none of these has any critical effect on Frédéric's view of himself or his assessment of his situation. His education has not provided him with the wisdom or self-knowledge to allow him to recognize the error of his mistaken judgements. Frédéric is an individual who has been caught in an historical change-over and is not prepared for change. His unfulfilled life cannot be blamed on the instability of the social order, but the fact that the political and social structures around him were in a period of flux is an important contribution to his failure. Romanticism, Flaubert understands from his own experience and his novel clearly demonstrates, is an unsatisfactory emotional stance in contemporary life.
Chapter 4

The Unsentimental Artist: Novelist as historian
In an age of illusions, the one constant belief for Flaubert was Art. His disgust for the banality and stupidity of the middle-classes, his rejection of the materialism of the new industrial age and his despair at "un monde, nouveau et laid" left him no alternative but to detach himself from the main-stream of life and immerse himself in his work. This single-minded devotion to his artistic career is misleading; it is an obvious mistake to conclude that such an uncompromising dedication to art is an escape from the real world and that the type of escapist art that would result from this attitude would be self-indulgent, fantastic, highly imaginative, in a word, romantic. In fact, in the type of literature he produces, Flaubert exhibits one of the characteristic contradictions of both his age and his art. His detachment from the vulgar affairs of life is manifested in his writing by his attempt to portray in detail exactly what he perceives around him, truthfully and without any artistic distortion which might make the subject more appealing to the reader. Thus, L'éducation sentimentale is both romance, the story of a young man, Frédéric Moreau, and history, the depiction of Paris during the turbulent decade 1840 to 1851. As a result of his aesthetic theory, Flaubert becomes, not merely artist, but a chronicler of modern history whose efforts can be judged in comparison with professed contemporary historians. Flaubert's record in the novel of the revolutions of 1848 corresponds uncannily with the historical account given by the contemporary writer, Karl Marx, not only in
factual information but in perspective and tone. And the modern French historian, Jacques Droz, when discussing the French revolutions of 1848, states that "il est indispensable de se reporter aux œuvres littéraires, en particulier à L'éducation sentimentale de Flaubert".

In his accounts of the political situation and the descriptions of the events of 1848, Flaubert maintains a severe and uncompromising impartiality, recording both the February revolution and the June insurrection as they happened, with no apparent political bias or personal prejudice. He himself had doubts about the reception this non-partisan view would have on his reading public. In various letters written to friends over the period he was writing L'éducation (September 1864 to May 1869), Flaubert expresses his fear that neither Government supporters nor Republican advocates would approve of his novel which presented "les choses comme je les sens, c'est-à-dire comme je crois qu'elles existent".

(1) See above, Introduction pp. 3 - 9.

Flaubert felt that his detachment from the events he portrayed would be offensive to his countrymen. Unlike Marx, whose motives in recording the French revolutions of 1848 were to further the cause of the proletariat in the class struggles and, ultimately, to encourage the spread of world revolution and the expected emergence of socialism, Flaubert portrays the plight of factory-workers, prostitutes, the haute bourgeoisie, arrivistes, employees and employers with the same scientific indifference. He appears to support no party, to take no side. Is *L'éducation*, then, a judicious critique of revolution, presenting every point of view in an open-ended analysis and leaving the final judgement to the reader of the novel? If this were so, the novel would be only the story of Frédéric's sentimental education and the historical perspective just a violent, social backdrop against which he haphazardly performs. As it is, Flaubert's detailed reports of the social and political upheavals place Frédéric in a definite and particular historical context. The result of the precise and accurate descriptions of the revolutions is that the primary concern

(3) Jean Vidalenc suggests that Flaubert is exact and accurate in what he does record, but it is what he chooses not to refer to which reveals his bias. "Il apparaît ainsi comme un témoin précis, exact, mais non impartial. Il est révélateur de ses convictions qu'il n'y ait dans le roman aucune attaque contre Barbès, un des dirigeants les plus en vue des clubs, le rival de Blanqui dans l'opinion d'extrême-gauche...". "Flaubert, historien de la Révolution de 1848" in *Europe, Revue Mensuelle*, Sept., Oct., Nov., 1969, p.66.
of the novel, the characters, is given an objectivity which would not have been there otherwise. Frédéric, in particular, has a detachment from his social milieu and political affairs which allows him to move freely from one class to the next and from one political side to the other without having to confront his own conscience.

However, employing the methods of the historian does not insure that the novelist makes an impartial comment. The objective viewpoint is not an unbiased criticism. The seemingly neutral chronicling of historical incidents reveals Flaubert's scientific interest in what is happening but also his distrust of all sides involved in politics. For him, there is no cause worth fighting for, no political philosophy worthy of commitment. It is not that he is not concerned, but that he is not concerned about the particular alternatives facing him. This cold objectivity does much in *L'éducation* to show the futility and waste involved in the revolutions of 1848. The worker's victory was brief; the reign of the bourgeoisie was equally short-lived. Both sides, after Paris had witnessed street-fighting and blood baths, lost to the reactionary take-over of Bonaparte in 1851. Nothing was achieved. As Karl Marx states "thus is the coup de main of February 1848 answered by the coup de tête of December 1851. Thus do losses follow gains."(4) Flaubert's impartial treatment of the senseless killings and the wholesale slaughter in the city during the revolutions is a condemnation of his whole age. Rather than engage himself in direct verbal combat,

he remains detached and aloof from the particular events, but he is certainly critical in his attitude to the history of his era. (5) The disillusionment at the crassness of the bourgeoisie, the ineffectual theories of socialism and the inappropriateness of romanticism in the modern world is exhibited in the objectivity he employs while writing the novel.

Flaubert's aesthetics involve him in a constant battle to present meticulously the truth, as he sees it. "Je crois que le grand Art est scientifique et impersonnel", (6) he writes. This theory of impassibilité in which the author attempts to remove all traces of his own personality from his material results in a subtle and scrupulous depiction of external social phenomena and a careful attempt to portray the psychological make-up of the characters. It is this same thorough attention to external and internal detail which enables L'éducation to be acknowledged by historians as a trustworthy social documentary. Georg Lukács sees Flaubert's aesthetic theory as being the romantic's response to the dilemma posed by the developing capitalist ideology; the author attempts to compensate for the disappointment and disillusionment of his generation with an over-attentive concern for the minutia of life.

(5) Priscilla P. Clark states that "writers had to come to terms with society, and even someone ostensibly so uninvolved, so aloof as Flaubert had no choice but to render judgment. His dreadfully pessimistic assessment does not negate his involvement; on the contrary it proves the concern that led to alienation". The Battle of the Bourgeois, Paris, Didier, 1973, p.19.

(6) G. Flaubert, Correspondance, lettre à George Sand, 15 décembre, 1866.
Rather than involve himself in social affairs, which he finds abhorrent, Flaubert detaches himself from them by becoming a solitary observer and critical commentator of life around him. (7) It is not only the picture of Paris during the Revolutions which is presented factually. Flaubert has taken utmost care to authenticate various other aspects of *L'éducation*, for example, the medically correct analysis of Madame Arnoux's small son's illness, the description of Rosanette's life as a daughter of a silk-weaver at La Croix-Rousse and Frédéric's financial affairs on the stock market. However, in a letter to George Sand, Flaubert states that, while he believes in revealing the truth as a scientist would, without fear of the consequences and without authorial prejudice, his theory of writing does not exclude a sympathetic attitude for those who suffer social injustice:

> Je ne crois même pas que le romancier doive exprimer son opinion sur les choses de ce monde. Il peut la communiquer, mais je n'aime pas à ce qu'il la dise. (Cela fait partie de ma poétique, à moi). Je me borne donc à exposer les choses telles qu'elles me paraissent, à exprimer ce qui me semble le vrai. Tant pis pour les conséquences. Riches ou pauvres, vainqueurs ou vaincus, je n'admettons rien de tout cela. Je ne veux avoir ni amour, ni haine, ni pitié, ni colère. Quant à de la sympathie, c'est différent : jamais on n'en a assez. Les réactionnaires, du reste, seront encore moins ménagés que les autres, car ils me semblent plus criminels.

Est-ce qu'il n'est pas temps de faire entrer la Justice dans l'Art? L'impartialité de la peinture atteindrait alors à la majesté de la loi, - et à la précision de la science! (8)

Flaubert's lack of concern for the consequences of his writing such a socially damning novel as *L'éducation* was a buffer against the adverse critical response he received after the publication of the book in 1869. His contemporaries attacked the author for his detachment and scientific account of the historical events and for the detail of the lives of the characters which, in contrast, appeared to be less important than the history and the historical personalities involved. Flaubert's critics misunderstood completely the meaning of *L'éducation sentimentale* with its indictment against modern society and the soullessness of materialism.

On the 3rd December, 1869, Flaubert writes to George Sand about the reception he is receiving in the newspapers and regretfully notes that, because of the literary censorship in effect at the time, none of his friends who he might count as being sympathetic to his socially conscious work are prepared to compromise themselves by defending him.

Votre vieux troubadour est fortement dénigré par les feuilles. Lisez le *Constitutionnel* de lundi dernier, le *Gaulois* de ce matin, c'est carré et net. On me traite de crétin et de canaille. L'article de Barbey d'Aurevilly (*Constitutionnel*) est, en ce genre, un modèle, et celui du bon

(8) G. Flaubert, *Correspondance*, 10 août, 1868.
Sarcey, quoique moins violent, ne lui cède en rien. Ces messieurs réclament au nom de la morale et de l'I'Idéal! J'ai eu aussi des éreintements dans le Figaro et dans Paris par Cesena et Duranty. Je m'en fiche profondément! ce qui n'empeche pas que je suis étonné par tant de haine et de mauvaise foi.

La Tribune, le Pays et l'Opinion nationale m'ont en revanche fort exalté... Quant aux amis, aux personnes qui ont reçu un exemplaire orné de ma griffe, elles ont peur de se compromettre et on me parle de tout autre chose. Les braves sont rares. Le livre se vend néanmoins très bien malgré la politique, et Lévy m'a l'air content. Je sais que les bourgeois de Rouen sont furieux contre moi, "à cause du père Roque et du can-can des Tuileries". Ils trouvent qu'on devrait empêcher de publier des livres comme ça (textuel), que je donne la main aux Rouges, que je suis bien capable d'attiser les passions révolutionnaires, etc! Bref, je recueille, jusqu'à présent, très peu de lauriers, et aucune feuille de rose ne me blesse.

Je vous ai dit, n'est-ce pas, que je retravaillais la Féerie? (Je fais maintenant un tableau des courses et j'ai enlevé tout ce qui me semblait poncif). Raphaël Félix ne m'a pas l'air empressé de la connaître. Problème.

Tous les journaux citent comme preuve de ma bassesse l'épisode de la Turque, que l'on dénature, bien entendu, et Sarcey me compare au marquis de Sade, qu'il avoue n'avoir pas lu!...

Tout ça ne me dévisse nullement. Mais je me demande à quoi bon imprimer? (9)

It is interesting to note that Flaubert was not so completely oblivious to his public as one might suppose as, like any other bourgeois artist, he was pleased that his novel was selling in spite of the bad reviews. However, it remained in his own time a critical

(9) G. Flaubert, Correspondance, 3 décembre, 1869.
and popular failure and it was not until the twentieth century, the age of materialism, that Flaubert has received recognition as one of the first realist writers to reveal the futility and meaninglessness of a society whose spiritual values have been replaced by those of a modern capitalistic system.\(^{(10)}\)

There is an inherent morality in the novel which is revealed by the author's own detachment and his scientifically, objective method of writing fiction. Flaubert's fears that he would offend his countrymen with his novel are sufficient evidence that there is a harsh indictment of his generation, the bourgeoisie and the revolutions of 1848, but there is a further indication that the novel is not merely an ill-fated love story, or a social record of life in Paris in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1871, the Blanquists and Socialists established a revolutionary power in Paris which held out against the army for two months. The price paid for such a brief victory in terms of destruction and deaths

\(^{(10)}\) See Ernest Jackson, *The Critical Reception of Gustave Flaubert in the United States 1860-1960*, Paris, Mouton & Co., 1966, who notes that the meaning of *L'éducation* was not obvious to the nineteenth century reader, who was too close to the new changing society to distinguish its evils. He suggests that it was not until the first English translation in 1922, published in New York, that critics became interested in the social conscience of Flaubert and his ability to show the conflict which exists in modern society between spiritual values and a materialistic environment. "The twentieth century has tried materialism and science. American philosophers are again searching for new ways in which one can live in a world of science and retain the spiritual values he needs. Interest is turning to books such as *L'éducation sentimentale* and *Bouvard et Pécuchet* in which the reader today may begin to understand the implications of the society which he has formed and in which he must live", p.92.
was very high, and the establishment of the Commune of Paris became an essentially futile act. Flaubert, horrified at the ruins of Paris and the stupidity of those involved writes that "tout cela ne serait pas arrivé si l'on avait compris L'éducation sentimentale". He further explains his statement of the lesson involved in his novel in a letter to Ernest Feydeau on the 29th June 1871:

Il y a quinze jours, j'ai passé une semaine à Paris et j'y ai "visité les ruines"; mais les ruines ne sont rien auprès de la fantastique bêtise des Parisiens. Elle est si inconcevable qu'on est tenté d'admirer la Commune. Non, la démence, la stupidité, le gâtisme, l'abjection mentale du peuple "le plus spirituel de l'univers" dépasse tous les rêves.

Flaubert sees the waste and meaninglessness of the workers' victory in February 1848 repeated in the events of May 1871, and it is as much the stupidity of the people as the senseless destruction which appals him, this same stupidity which he portrayed in L'éducation with his cynical descriptions of political clubs, revolutionary artists, committed socialists, bourgeois' dinner parties and, ultimately, the life of his hero, Frédéric Moreau. Nonetheless, Flaubert's critical portrayal of a revolutionary society remains as an insoluble situation. He is not asking of what use is revolution in the historical course of humanity, but what is the point of the lower classes ever attempting to overthrow the established class? For, in the final analysis, Flaubert's contempt for the banality of the middle-classes is as strong as
his belief that the masses must be dictated to and led, ignoring their political and social consciousness completely. He maintains, both in letters and in the novel, that the only hope for France is in a government by a cultured, educated minority.

Ah! lettrés que nous sommes, l'humanité est loin de notre idéal! et notre immense erreur, notre erreur funeste, c'est de la croire pareille à nous et de vouloir la traiter en conséquence. (11)

Qui sait? Le Progrès, peut-être, n'est réalisable que par une aristocratie ou par un homme? L'initiative vient toujours d'en haut! Le peuple est mineur, quoi qu'on prétende! (p.411)

L'éducation sentimentale expresses Flaubert's own despair and disappointment with the age in which he lived. It is a novel of disillusionment and failure which appears to suggest that the alternatives offered by democracy in a capitalist society are depressing and limiting. Given the particular situation, Frédéric Moreau is posed with the question of meaning which he must extract from the contradictions of modern life. His ineffectual attempts to come to terms with his environment are sufficient evidence of the discrepancy between the oppositions facing him - romanticism and industrial society, passive acceptance and active political philosophy, imagination and ambition, dream and reality. The novel successfully demonstrates that modern society as an organization works for the interest of the group and not the individual ambition of each member: the

(11) G. Flaubert, Correspondance, lettre à George Sand, 3 août, 1870.
middle-class, as a class, retain power. Frédéric achieves nothing. Deslauriers, Dambreuse, Arnoux and indeed, even the loyal Dussardier, along with all the other individuals presented in the novel are equally unsuccessful in achieving an integrated, fulfilled existence.

In his *roman du raté*, Flaubert's alternatives lie outside the framework of his presentation of democracy, revolution, bourgeois values, and socialism. His answer is *L'éducation sentimentale* itself, his art. Salvation for modern man is available only through the cultivation of an élite who can guide the majority and the encouragement of an environment which allows art for its own sake.

Je suis accablé, moins par les ruines de Paris que par la gigantesque bêtise de ses habitants. C'est à désespérer de l'espèce humaine...Il faut, plus que jamais, songer à faire de l'Art pour soi, pour soi seul. (12)

(12) G. Flaubert, *Correspondance*, lettre à Mme Régnier, 11 juin, 1871.
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**JOURNAL ARTICLES**

