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HALLUCINATION AND POINT OF VIEW IN *LA TENTATION DE SAINT ANTOINE*

Marshall C. Olds

“... dans l'hallucination pure et simple, on peut très bien voir une image fausse d'un œil, et les objets vrais de l'autre. C'est même là le supplice.”

—Letter to H. Taine, Dec. 1, 1866¹

Over the past twenty-five years, as readings of Flaubert's texts have become increasingly concerned with the definition of various narrative structures, the study of point of view has been inextricably tied to determining how his narratives generate (or, to some minds, subvert) meaning.² Thus it is that almost all hermeneutical approaches have been concerned with point of view in one way or another, the procedure usually being to establish the principal or authoritative narrational axis (or perhaps a pseudo-authoritative one) and then to plot and analyze the departures from it. Point of view is not a new concern, of course, and has occupied readers of Flaubert for as long as there have been studies on *style indirect libre* and irony. Nor does this question originate in critical debate; Flaubert's manuscripts show him aware of changes in perspective.³

Despite the excellent and numerous analyses of this topic already in print, we need to take a further look at point of view in *La Tentation de saint Antoine*. The reason is simply (and perhaps not surprisingly) that the preoccupation in Flaubert studies with structure is with *narrative* structure and that this has informed the discussion of a work that only partly qualifies as narrative. Given the theatrical origins of this text and the cross-fertilization that occurs in it between theatrical and narrative forms, this approach is too narrow.⁴ With respect to point of view particularly, little attempt has been made to look at the work's hybrid nature, at the structures inherited from the theatrical as well as from the novelistic sides of its parentage, in order to describe more clearly some of its fundamental characteristics.

Where the work's problematical nature is most apparent is in the construction of the non-dialogic passages, which printing tradition has rendered in

italics. Because of the work's evolution through its various revisions, such portions reflect a progressive distancing from the original theater project by the incorporation of elements more appropriate to narrative.⁵ The result is not prose narrative, however, at least not entirely. There seems instead to be in these italicized passages a constant modulation between what we might call the *didascalical* and *narrational* modes. The text adopts both the instructional, non-narrative, narrator-less, language of stage directions and performance as well as the narrated, focalizing language of the novel. In each of these two modes, point of view is conveyed in very different ways: either impersonally in the various aspects of the staging, or personally through voice.⁶ The principal result of this sliding is the disruption of the axis particular to either mode in favor of a new authority that will govern both. Specifically, the point of view that emerges from this procedure is the *comparative figuration* generated by the text's use of hallucination and simile.

The shifts between the didascalical and narrational modes are most apparent in the passages involving Anthony's hallucinations because such distorted perception and the way it is to be read underscore a fundamental difference between Flaubert's novels and his theater, at least as far as the *féerie* or *mystère* are concerned. The term "hallucination" here is not to be understood in a strictly psychological sense, but in one that incorporates visionary passages and apotheosis as well. It is used to describe any unusual form of perception or representation which signals a shift from the realistic-mimetic axis of narration or action. For our purposes, then, hallucination is to be understood independently of cause. It is neither a specifically psychological nor a mystical event but rather a fictive one that at times may be attributed to either of these two causalities or to neither. The hallucinatory experiences of Emma, Félicité, Frédéric and Bouvard are clearly associated with altered psychological perception. In a different mode, Julian's ascent with Christ, the apotheosis of Pierrot in the early pantomime *Pierrot au sérail*, and the scenic changes in *Le Château des cœurs* are presented as interventions of the divine or the fantastic. Finally, as we are able to infer from Pierre-Marc de Biasi's genetic study of *La Légende de saint Julien l'hospitalier*, Flaubert can scrupulously write causality out of his texts altogether by allowing both paradigms to coexist as possible explanations while attributing the action to neither.⁷

It is clear from the notes to the novel's third version that Flaubert was aware of the problematic nature of Anthony's hallucinations. He evidently contemplated having the visions stem from a source with a medical or pseudo-medical explanation, and made note of a variety of intoxicants and hallucino-

genic substances with which Anthony might come into contact. "Quelle est la plante en Egypte dont la fumigation peut être stupéfiant [?]" (N.A.F. 23.671 f. 53),⁸ he wrote at one point, noting on another leaf from the same *dossier*, "la vin d'Aterea . . . procure la folie aux hommes et la stérilité aux femmes," and appending a list of foods purported to have similar effects (f. 60 verso). This kind of medical specificity does not find its way into the final version of the novel, however. Flaubert seems to have preferred a different solution, indicated by the following notes (all emphasis is Flaubert's):

Les pechés [sic] ne doivent pas paraître . . . [les visions inspirées par les Péchés] arrivent par suite de lectures faites dans la Bible ou l'évangile. observer partout une gradation psychologique.

Is Flaubert referring solely to human psychology or to the "psychology" that lends coherence to characters and action? Both are involved, undoubtedly, and it would seem that Flaubert's concern is every bit as much with the latter as with the former: "Tout doit être réaliste. [E]nlever tout ce qui peut rappeler un théâtre, une scène, une rampe" (f. 64). The problem that Flaubert wants to solve here, and does in fact eventually solve, is esthetic. Realistic presentation is not opposed to a naïve sense of psychological causality. It is in contrast to poorly disguised technique, where the convincing nature of the illusion is ruined by obvious artifice. The character Anthony must have the sense that all is really happening to him, and this sense must be conveyed to the reader. But this is a compositional problem to be solved by creating a structure of dramatic necessity:

Avoir soin d'observer la logique des faits—qu'ils soient amenés. Aussi les visions de la 2e partie doivent dériver 1° des réflexions d'Antoine 2° des Péchés 3° des faiblesses et pechés d'Antoine. (f. 164)

Though small portions of the work are based on Flaubert's own hallucinatory experiences,⁹ *La Tentation* is predominantly a literary vision, based extensively on his readings, on his understanding of theatrical space and on the Saint Anthony legend. In fact, the legendary context of the work serves as a disclaimer that the authoritative axis should be realism.

The consequences of the above with respect to representation should be clear. In most instances throughout Flaubert's narrative fiction, the hallucinatory image is presented as a focalized spectacle and occupies the same narrative "ground" as do the indications of a character's inner thoughts. Using Gérard Genette's distinction between the subjective and objective narrative

registers,¹⁰ these passages that are the extra-diegetic “middle distance” to the narrated action fall into the former category. An example that is as typical as it is consciously scrutinized is the scene where Frédéric and Rosenette walk through the forest at Fontainebleau:

Ils arrivèrent un jour à mi-hauteur d'une colline tout en sable. Sa surface, vierge de pas, était rayée en ondulations symétriques; çà et là, tels que des promontoires sur le lit desséché d'un océan, se levaient des roches ayant de vagues formes d'animaux, tortues avançant la tête, phoques qui rampent, hippopotames et ours. Personne. Aucun bruit. Les sables, frappés par le soleil, éblouissaient; —et tout à coup, dans cette vibration de lumière, les bêtes parurent remuer. Ils s'en retournèrent vite, fuyant le vertige, presque effrayés. (2: 127)¹¹

As in other such instances, a variety of factors have led to a sense of vertigo. Aspects of the physical environment, the thematic content (in the Fontainebleau chapter it is historical retrogression), and the characters' hyper-active consciousness (here eroticized) all contribute to the sense of the transformation of the landscape. However, the *parurent remuer* (functioning in part like the famous *crut voir* of Félicité's dying vision) along with the series of similes preceding it, places the incident in the objective register and, in the split that this creates, it defines the difference between the authoritative narrative point of view and that of the characters.

An example of the didascallic mode is found in the closing scene of *La Tentation*, where factors similar to those in the Fontainebleau passage come together but with strikingly different results:

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

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

Antoine fait le signe de la croix et se remet en prières. (1, 571)

Light, the similarity between the form of the ciliated cells that Anthony has been contemplating and that of the shining sun, the thematic culmination of the double quest for renewed faith and finding the link between thought and matter, all unite in this final vision. Yet, we are asked to read this passage in a very different manner than we are the Fontainebleau hallucination or Félicité's death scene; we have to make an imaginative projection into theatrical space and envision this scene as if it were really “staged” and not as if it were “really” happening.¹² The didascallic mode suspends the consideration of causal interpretation and treats the event in its purely *phenomenal* aspect.¹³ There is no shifter phrase, such as *parurent remuer* or *crut voir*, marking the

intervention of a narrator and a move into the subjective register, focalized representation, thereby establishing different points of view.¹⁴ There is the language of the didascalía, however, which in its notation projects a generalized point of view of what has to be taken as (textual) fact. There simply is no mediating point of view to indicate otherwise. In short, what happens on stage, or on the "stage" we create imaginatively, is what happens. The important thing to keep in mind here, though, is that what happens happens *on stage*. With respect to representation, the dramatized revelation in the last scene of *La Tentation* differs significantly from the inner vision at the end of *Un cœur simple*. It is clear that Félicité dies beatifically, but the psychological source of the "miracle" does not permit her to be saved in any sense beyond this personal one. Flaubert seems to have sensed other possibilities offered by dramatic representation and wrote in the manuscripts an outline for the conclusion to the third version: "Mais l'Aube paraît . . . etc. & la tentation est finie. il est sauvé" (N.A.F. 23.671 f. 106). Unlike narrative which is attentive to questions of causality, the theatrical conception that informs *La Tentation* exteriorizes events and so suspends those questions, or at the very least problematizes them.

* * *

Now that we have drawn the parameters for the didascalíic and narrational modes as they operate generally in Flaubert's *œuvre*, it remains to demonstrate how they co-exist within *La Tentation de saint Antoine*. Again, the representation of hallucination provides the most ready access to the crux of the problem. A clear example of the sliding between the two modes occurs toward the outset of Anthony's delirium. If we take for a moment Genette's two categories of narrative register, we see how a passage may begin in the objective register:

[Les] objets se transforment. Au bord de la falaise, le vieux palmier, avec sa touffe de feuilles jaunes, devient la torse d'une femme penchée sur l'abîme, et dont les grands cheveux balancent.

and then continue in the subjective one:

Antoine se tourne vers sa cabane; l'escabeau soutenant le gros livre, avec ses pages chargés de lettres noires, lui semble un arbuste tout couvert d'hirondelles. (1: 526)

Genette's discussion is focused on narrative irony and the extremely subtle shifts in point of view found in *Madame Bovary* where Emma's perspective may be given but where "Flaubert n'est pas entièrement absent" (229-30). He further muses on what seems to be Flaubert's occasional inability to change registers effectively, giving passages where "l'interprétation psychologique paraît donc quelque peu boiteuse" (225-26). According to Genette, such is the case when Emma, at the theater in Rouen, "se cambra la taille avec une désinvolture de duchesse." If at first glance the passage from *La Tentation* seems awkward, it is not because of an inadequate psychological rendering, however, and we see that Genette's notion of register is not finally applicable to *La Tentation*. The striking feature of this passage is not a change of register, a simple divergence from the authoritative representational axis. It is the change of the authoritative axis itself, and the irony it produces cuts deeper than that mentioned by Genette. Anthony's hallucination has "slid" from the foreground of realized action to the middle distance of internalized perception. Which axis is it, we ask? Obviously it is both, and our answer points to how causal indeterminacy will help establish the representational axis that finally prevails throughout *La Tentation*. Yet it is alternately both, not simultaneously both as we would find in "pure" narration or theater. This alternation, which can be traced in various forms throughout the work, has a cancelling effect with respect to causality and shows that attribution of cause is mere speculation.

That this is a major consideration in *La Tentation* is made clear in the sixth tableau when Anthony and the Devil go off on their metaphysical ride through the cosmos. Until this point, the Devil's presence in the work has been firmly foregrounded in the didascallic mode. He animates the spectacle comprising most of Anthony's hallucinations (though the final visions cannot be attributed to him), takes part in the action and appears "on stage" before Anthony is aware of him. He is a character in this work in precisely the way that the God of Emma's religious vision is *not* a character in *Madame Bovary*. Certainly, Anthony is in an enfeebled spiritual state; he is all too susceptible to Satan's lures and to having his own desires made manifest. But to read the Devil solely as a projection by Anthony of his own thoughts does violence to the representational modality of the text in that it presupposes the authority of the narrational mode. The text will not permit such simplification:

[*Le Diable*] vole sous lui, étendu comme un nageur; —ses deux ailes grandes ouvertes, en le cachant tout entier, semblent un nuage.

ANTOINE

Où vais-je?

Tout à l'heure j'ai entrevu la forme du Maudit. Non! une nuée m'emporte. Peut-être que je suis mort, et que je monte vers Dieu? . . .

Je tâche de découvrir les montagnes où le soleil se couche chaque soir, va se coucher.

LE DIABLE

Jamais le soleil ne se couche!

Antoine n'est pas surpris de cette voix. Elle lui semble un écho de sa pensée, — une réponse de sa mémoire.

Cependant, la terre prend la forme d'une boule; et il l'aperçoit au milieu de l'azur qui tourne sur ses pôles, en tournant autour du soleil. (1: 563-64)

The question of causality is directly addressed in the dialogue and becomes a major theme. In a sense, Anthony says, it matters little how I got here; what does matter is the phenomenon of being here. The modulation in the passage, however, has far more important effects on how we are to read the rest of the tableau and, by extension, the entire work. Through the point of Anthony's lack of surprise, the text has been operating in the didascallic mode, with Anthony's hallucination foregrounded in the action of what could certainly be a staged scene. It then modulates, shifting the authoritative axis to psychological realism and informing us that what we have taken for the action may be really in the middle distance of Anthony's mind. In a complicated twist, we are told (now by a narrator) that Anthony is fully aware that all of what he sees and hears seems to come from within him. Then comes the astonishing *cependant*, with its double sense of "however" (opposition) and "meanwhile" (continuation uninterrupted by the opposition). The mode changes and along with it the authoritative axis. The scene will go on in this way, as in a sense the text has gone on, with the dialogue continually modulating between two different axes.

Such passages demonstrate why *La Tentation* cannot be treated like Flaubert's narrative work and also why it is impossible as theater. More specifically, what we seem to have is a play that is unproduceable, not because of technical difficulties in staging, but because of a hybrid language whose properties have only in part a place in the theater. Like Mallarmé's *Hérodiane*, this is a text best suited to the imaginary "theater of the mind" and of the page, the only combination of literary spaces able to accommodate it.

The didascallic and narrational modulation of *La Tentation*, then, has as its principal effect the disruption of the authoritative axis associated with each mode. How can such shifting lend itself to the establishment of another axis

that will hold for either mode and allow us to come to a formulation of a coherent point of view (should it exist) in this work? Such an axis can be perceived once we determine what constitutes the foreground of each mode.

Accompanying the modulation described above, shifts occur also within the two modes. In the *didascalia*, they are seen in the modulation from realistic to hallucinated action; in the narration, they are in the change occasioned by figurative language. These shifts are linked together in two important ways. Firstly, they signal the presence of a "point of view" because what is purported to be objective reality has in some way been altered, either in the sense that such reality is literally transformed, or in the sense that an interpretative act has been performed which has changed the linguistic shape in which that reality is expressed and, consequently, understood. Secondly, since the *didascalia* represents action as it is happening in its eternal virtuality and narration is action as it is described, what is foregrounded in the *didascalia* is either realistic or hallucinatory *action* (or staging), and what is foregrounded in the narration is either literal or figurative *language*. Therefore, hallucination and figurative language, in their respective modes, can be said to occupy the same ground in this work.

For *La Tentation*, then, hallucination must be understood as a structuring device. We have already seen that it should be read as a phenomenon presented independently of causality. It is a fictive event the significance of which is grasped according to the principles of the text. As an element of structure, hallucination is the principal vehicle for diachronic movement and, as such, has unmistakably diegetic qualities. Of primary importance, however, is the fact that, in form and effect, hallucination resembles Flaubert's use of figurative language, particularly *simile*. Hallucination shares the form of *simile* and so is part of the formulation throughout the text of a *comparative figure*.

In narration, there are several broad contexts in which figurative language can be formulated. They may be defined by whether or not passages describe hallucination, and by whether the description is explicitly focalized or unfocalized with respect to Anthony's perception. In focalized passages describing hallucination, the terms of the comparison are meant to be taken at face value as *sight*. These have the form of a simile, *a* (the tenor) seems like *b* (the vehicle), but where the vehicle does not reflect an imaginative association on Anthony's part. In unfocalized hallucinatory passages, as in non-hallucinatory ones, the terms are to be understood as *insight*, where the vehicle is the product of an interpretative act. In all instances, the foregrounded structure of the formula remains constant: *a seems like b*.

Several examples of the above can be offered. Focalized hallucination is found in a passage quoted earlier:

... *l'escabeau soutenant le gros livre, avec ses pages chargées de lettres noires, lui semble un arbuste tout couvert d'hirondelles.*

C'est la torche, sans doute, qui, faisant un jeu de lumière . . .

What in another work might be the account of a creative association is here the record of what is actually perceived by Anthony, the didascalical foreground being only the bible with its prominent script. Anthony has a combined image before him. He sees both bible and bush together (or perhaps sees a bush while knowing it to be a bible), a conjunction analogous to that expressed in the comparison occupying the narrational foreground ("l'escabeau semble un arbuste").

For the term "unfocalized hallucination," the reader's indulgence is requested. As has been shown, what is foregrounded as hallucination is in the didascalical mode and so has no narrator, properly speaking. There are instances, though, where a brief modulation occurs, sometimes in the space of but a short phrase, with the irruption of a "narrator" who signals his presence by commenting on what is happening. In this text, his comments often take the form of a simile. An example that we have already seen is in the closing didascalia: "*le jour enfin paraît; et comme les rideaux d'un tabernacle qu'on relève, des nuages d'or en s'enroulant à larges volutes découvrent le ciel*" (emphasis added). Now, the importance of such passages as modulation which displaces the authoritative axis should not be exaggerated, and for that reason they were not discussed in the first part of this essay. They are so brief as to pass almost unnoticed and so do not significantly disrupt the authority established by the didascalia. Yet, they do interject a point of view, much on the order of a stage director's, and it is one that, while consistent with what Anthony could think, cannot be attributed specifically to him.¹⁵ A second example will show this more clearly. It is the incident of the shadow of the cross. In the 1849 and 1856 versions, the growing shadow is used to mark the passage of time toward the hour of prayer; it is noted in the stage directions and commented on by Anthony. In the manuscript to the final version, it becomes part of Anthony's first hallucination. As in the earlier versions, Flaubert tried to keep within the traditional didascalia-dialogue format of the theater:

Les bras de la croix, derrière lui, se relèvent en manière de cornes. L'ombre se projette devant lui. Il les aperçoit, en est effrayé, puis se rassure. "Je me suis trompé, ce n'est rien. La pensée seule n'est pas un péché . . ."

In the margin, we read the following, all of which has been crossed out:

D'ailleurs l'ombre est dans le sens inverse. "Comment se fait-il que l'ombre de la croix ne réponde pas à la forme de la croix? Les deux branches devraient se dessiner droites et elles sont courbes. Donc c'est le Diable." (N.A.F. 23.671 f. 90r)

The printed version reads:

A lors les deux ombres dessinées derrière lui par les bras de la croix se projettent en avant. Elles font comme deux grandes cornes; Antoine s'écrie:

Au secours, mon Dieu!

L'ombre est revenue à sa place.

Ah!... c'était une illusion! pas autre chose!... Cependant... j'avais cru sentir l'approche...

Mais pourquoi viendrait-Il? (1: 525)

As in a passage discussed earlier, Flaubert's revisions here effectively eliminate any firm sense of causality. In terms appropriate to our discussion of narrational simile, Anthony's reflection on the form of the shadows is suppressed as monologue and is placed within the didascalia as a modulated, narrated remark. Specific attribution of the remark, whether as coming from a source totally outside of Anthony's consciousness or whether as an instance of *style indirect libre*, cannot be satisfactorily determined. What is clear, though, is that, for this brief moment and many similar ones Flaubert has created a "narrator," but this is a narrative voice that is embedded within the didascalia and reflects its impersonal language. While the structure is in place to offer a point of view different from Anthony's, the interpretative attitude toward events remains constant.

The mechanism just studied also holds for instances of simile in non-hallucinatory passages, a context to be discussed again further on. For the moment, let it suffice to mention that simile creates a particular "voice" which the didascalia does not have (though certainly will tolerate in small doses). It may be a report of what Anthony is thinking or of what he could have thought, as in the description of Hilarion: "*Cet enfant est petit comme un nain, et pourtant trapu comme un Cabire*" (1: 533). Or, it may be a remark wholly independent of Anthony, as in the opening paragraphs where suddenly the clouds are said to be "*disposés comme les flocons d'une crinière gigantesque*" (1: 523).

In addition to occupying the foreground of their respective modes, hallucinations and simile share the important characteristic of framing, and so combining, unrelated forms into a new composite entity. This structural similarity

is the “bridge” between the two modes that establishes the authoritative representational axis for the whole of *La Tentation*.

The multiform does in fact dominate Anthony’s visions. The god Oannès is a fish who walks “comme un homme” on his tail; Montanus emasculates himself and dons female dress; Satan appears in the dual guise of the feminine forms of Luxury and Death; the Sphinx and Chimera are forever flirting yet unable to unite; there are lions’ bodies with human heads, buffalo with the heads of pigs; and in the final devolutionary visions, animals are said to look like plants and plants like stones. In a different way, the sequences of sins, heresies and gods convey a sense of the multiform through the diachronic juxtaposition of endless and exotic permutations. Few of Anthony’s visions are not in fact part of such a syntagma or the transformation of a familiar object.

As for the specific contexts outlined earlier, the multiform certainly characterizes hallucination. In focalized hallucination, usually expressed in the terms of simile, we read both terms as Anthony sees both the real and the hallucinated. In the didascalía, there are several kinds of “hallucination.” One of them is where the realistic axis has been abandoned for the duration of the vision, as in the transformation of the palm tree in the first tableau: “*le vieux palmier, avec sa touffe de feuilles jaunes, devient la torse d’une femme penchée sur l’abîme, et dont les grands cheveux se balancent*” (1: 526). Her size and location certainly keep the vision within the fabulous: we are unable to see a “real woman” and consequently cannot help but see her in terms of the tree she once was and by comparison (as big as, leans over the abyss as does, with her hair like, etc.) *still is*. It should be recalled that Flaubert often gave scenery polysemantic value in his fairy plays. In *Le Château des cœurs*, as in the extant fragments of the uncompleted projects, scenery frequently is used for verbal-visual puns as when, on *l’île de la toilette*, an oversized mushroom is used as a coat rack, also a *champignon* (2: 340). Too, in these plays Flaubert did not vary from the convention of having the scene changes be *à vue* (2: 340), giving the décor the unstable, “hallucinatory” quality of sets changing into other sets.

In other hallucinations there may only be a momentary shift in axis and then an extended “dream” sequence, as in Anthony’s fantastic voyage to Alexandria and the court of Nebuchadnezzar. The stage directions can present this change only as an abrupt change of scene that will then be enacted according to the tenets of realism, with further possible shifts from that axis, as when Anthony becomes Nebuchadnezzar. The multiform is in the sequence of tableaux, in the discrete moments of a single “life” open to transformation.

In simile, comparative figuration occurs through the co-presence of the tenor and vehicle in the same foregrounded expression: *a seems like b*. Unlike metaphor, simile does not slide representation from the mimetic axis to the figurative, and it is perhaps for this reason that it barely qualifies as a trope.¹⁶ It places the two axes side by side and creates a "split" point of view that simultaneously embraces both. The result is a collage-like effect that stresses the multiform over formal and semantic unity.

The most frequently used figure in *La Tentation*, simile covers a wide range of expressive possibilities.¹⁷ Some of the comparisons (20) might be called weak in that the vehicle represents no change of species or kind from that of the tenor. Examples include Anthony speaking of Apollonius and Damis, "Ils parlent abondamment comme des gens ivres" and "La pluie [tombait] comme une cataracte" (1: 548 & 545). The greatest number bring together forms of different species or kinds (34) or forms that cross over between the animate and the inanimate (28). It is these latter two types that most closely parallel Flaubert's literary use of hallucination. While some are part of the narrational representation of hallucination (e.g., *comme les rideaux d'un tabernacle*, or *comme des cornes*), many are not (*petit comme un nain, et pourtant trapu comme un Cabire*). All types contribute, however, to the basic comparative figuration of the text and join with hallucination to promote multiple, unstable and thus inherently ironic identities.¹⁸

We have already cited the first instance of modulation in the opening pages, a brief shift from the didascalical to the narrational which is also a shift from the literal to the figurative: "[*les nuages*] *disposés comme les flocons d'une crinière gigantesque.*" As an isolated example, it is not particularly significant. However, it does inaugurate a series of comparisons that will occupy much of the italicized passages prior to Anthony's first hallucinations:

Ces rais de flamme se rembrunissent, les parties d'azur prennent une pâleur nacrée; les buissons, les cailloux, la terre, tout maintenant paraît dur comme du bronze; [emphasis added]

and soon thereafter,

Le ciel est rouge, la terre complètement noire. Sous les rafales du vent des traînées de sable se lèvent comme de grands linceuls, puis retombent. Dans une éclaircie, tout à coup, passent des oiseaux formant un bataillon triangulaire, pareil à un morceau de métal, et dont les bords seuls frémissent. [emphasis added]

Antoine les regarde.

Ah! que je voudrais les suivre! (1: 524)

Benjamin Bart has shown that Flaubert's landscapes often reflect his youthful pantheistic enthusiasms.¹⁹ Most of the similes here do bring together the animate with the inanimate, and Anthony's exclamation seems to share with others throughout the book the Spinozistic desire to seek redemption by merging with nature. To follow the birds, Anthony in some sense must become one. Yet these images, unlike those found in Chateaubriand, for instance, do not uniformly express the oneness of all nature. Especially in the somewhat forced terms of the last comparison, the effect is unsettling and tends to emphasize the striking visual conjunction of very disparate things. None of these images is directly attributable to Anthony, but at the outset they subtly establish the point of view that he will share and which soon will dominate the rest of the work. Indeed, it is the unusual strength of this book that point of view should remain so constant in light of the many shifts in mode and axis. We might say more accurately that the uniformity of these shifts tends to generate a new point of view.

Pantheism may in fact be only a thematic part of a broader concern which, like this philosophical inclination, also has its place in the author's personal experience, though in a manner specifically related to his early fascination with the visions of Saint Anthony. Even at the celebrated first contact in Genoa with Breughel's painting, his imagination was struck by the multiform, grotesque nature of the representation. In May, 1845, he wrote in his travelogue:

La Tentation de Saint Antoine, de Breughel: au fond, des deux côtés, sur chacune des collines, deux têtes monstrueuses de diables, moitié vivants, moitié montagnes . . . En face du spectateur, . . . la Gourmandise nue jusqu'à la ceinture, maigre, la tête ornée d'ornements rouges et verts, figure triste, cou démesurément long et tendu comme celui d'une grue . . .

Homme à cheval dans un tonneau; têtes sortant du ventre des animaux; grenouilles à bras et sautant sur les terrains . . . Ensemble fourmillant, grouillant, et ricanant d'une façon grotesque et emportée, sous la bonhomie de chaque détail. (2: 465-6)

Wanting to keep these visions before his eyes after his return to France, though unable to find a reproduction of the painting, Flaubert acquired a different work, the engraving by Callot. He described the reason the image had such an effect on him in an August 22, 1846, letter to Louise Colet:

J'aime beaucoup cette œuvre. Il y avait longtemps que je la désirais. Le grotesque triste a pour moi un charme inouï. Il correspond aux besoins intimes de ma nature bouffonne-ment amère . . . Ce qui m'empêche de me prendre au sérieux . . . c'est que je me trouve très ridicule, non pas de ce ridicule relatif qui est le comique théâtral, mais de ce ridicule intrinsèque à la vie humaine elle-même et qui ressort de l'action la plus simple ou du geste

le plus ordinaire . . . Tout cela est fort difficile à expliquer. Tu ne le sentiras pas, toi qui es d'un seul morceau, comme un bel hymne d'amour ou de poésie. Moi je suis une arabesque en marqueterie; il y a des mocreaux d'ivoire, d'or et de fer; il y en a de carton peint; il y en a de diamant; il y en a de ferblanc.

These personal reflections are of more than passing interest; they point to the sense of irony that informed Flaubert's earliest thoughts about Saint Anthony. Of key importance here is the understanding that *le ridicule intrinsèque* is communicated through the multiform, specifically, through the composite *arabesque en marqueterie*. What better term than that for this literary work, structured as it is along the lines of the multiform grotesque, from its generic suppositions through its ambiguous formulation of causality down to the basic units of its language? The point of view of *La Tentation* is, then, an ironic one, but of a different irony from that which makes us smile at Emma as she takes her theater seat. That is a specifically *narrative* variety, seen in the different attitudes held by narrator and character. No such difference is perceptible in *La Tentation*, where the comparative figuration of the text and the modulation of its languages join with the unstable, multiform identities of the saint's hallucinatory *supplice*.

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1. The dates for Flaubert's letters come from the five-volume *Correspondance in Œuvres complètes de Gustave Flaubert*, 16 vols. (Paris: Club de l'Honnête Homme, 1974).

2. Studies on this topic are too numerous to attempt a comprehensive list. Two of the earliest to analyze the structures associated with point of view are: Gérard Genette, "Silences de Flaubert," *Figures* (Paris: Seuil, 1966) 223-43; and Jean Rousset, "Madame Bovary," *Forme et Signification* (Paris: Corti, 1962) 109-33. Recent examples of different critical approaches are: Pierre-Marc de Biasi, "L'Elaboration du problématique dans *La Légende de saint Julien l'hospitalier*," *Flaubert à l'œuvre*, ed. R. Debray-Genette (Paris: Flammarion, 1980) 69-102; Frank Paul Bowman, "Flaubert et le syncrétisme religieux," *RHLF*, 81 (1981) 612-36; Jonathan Culler, *Flaubert: The Uses of Uncertainty*, 2nd edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Claude Duchet, "Pour une socio-critique ou variations sur un incipit," *Lit*, 1 (1971) 5-14; Michal Peled Ginsburg, *Flaubert Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986); Fredric Jameson, "Flaubert's Libidinal Historicism: *Trois Contes*," *Flaubert and Postmodernism*, ed. N. Schor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984); Diana Knight, *Flaubert's Characters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Gerald Prince, "On Attributive Discourse in *Madame Bovary*," *Pre-text/Text/Context*, ed. R.L. Mitchell (Columbus: Ohio State University

Press, 1980) 268-75; Michael Riffaterre, "Flaubert's Presuppositions," *Flaubert and Post-modernism*, ed. N. Schor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) 177-91; Marthe Robert, *En haine du roman* (Paris: Balland, 1981).

3. We will have occasion to study two such examples in this essay under the heading of attribution of causality: pp. 171-72 and 178-79. See also P.-M. de Biasi, "L'Elaboration du problématique dans *La Légende de saint Julien l'hospitalier*."

4. The few notable exceptions to this practice are those studies which discuss theatrical space or formal properties that are not specific to a particular genre. For the former, see Jacques Neefs, "L'Exposition littéraire des religions," *Travail de Flaubert*, ed. G. Genette and T. Todorov (Paris: Seuil, 1983) 123-34. For the latter, see F.P. Bowman, "Flaubert et le syncrétisme religieux."

5. The early influences of Guignol and Goethe's *Faust*, the dramatic dialogue *Smarrh*, the May 13, 1845 letter to Le Poitevin specifically tying Breughel's painting to a project for the stage, all point to an originally theatrical inspiration. Yet, the label *Mystère* really was applied only to the 1849 version and, once the third version was finished and off to the editor, Flaubert made no attempt to have the work performed (contrary to his repeated efforts on behalf of *Le Château des cœurs*, for instance). Far more significant, though, are the conceptual changes that differentiate the third version from the first two. The opening paragraphs provide a striking example. In the 1849 and 1856 versions, we read conventional didascalia: scenery and stage settings with the expected indications of left, right and center. In the third version, there are many changes. B.F. Bart has pointed out how the earlier landscape sketch of the clouds at sunset will be incorporated from the notebooks (*Flaubert*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1967, 574). I will read this later on as a narrational modulation within the didascalia. As for the stage indications, we still read *à gauche, à droite, au fond*, but also the surprising "*En face, le soleil s'abaisse*" (1: 523). While Flaubert has retained the language of the didascalia, he has brought back the "fourth wall" and *eliminated the theater*.

6. See Michael Issacharoff, "Inscribed Performance," *Rivista di letteratura moderna e comparata*, 39 (1986) 93-105.

7. See de Biasi and also A.E. Pilkington, "Point of View in Flaubert's *La Légende de saint Julien*," *FS*, 19 (1975) 266-279. This is not exactly de Biasi's argument, which follows Pilkington's and outlines the coexistence of medieval belief in the divine and a modern reliance on psychology. One should note, though, that what happens in *Saint Julien* is part of the broader pattern undermining *any* systematic understanding of causality, as seen in *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, for instance, where modern medicine cannot explain the heroes' successes at phrenology nor can the scribes cure Pécuchet's syphilis.

8. All references are to the *dossiers manuscrits* of the *Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises*, housed at the Bibliothèque Nationale.

9. The one passage that does reflect Flaubert's personal experience is the brief description at the end of the first tableau describing the detached images and the epigastric contraction (1: 526-7). For a description of Flaubert's own hallucinations as they appear in his work, see John C. Lapp, "Art and Hallucination in Flaubert," *FS*, 10 (1956) 322-34.

10. Genette, "Silences de Flaubert," 223-243.

11. Flaubert, *Œuvres complètes*, 2 vols, L'Intégrale (Paris: Seuil, 1964). Unless specified otherwise, all further references will be to this edition.

12. Part of the difficulty that many readers have had with this passage in *La Tentation* and with similar ones in other works, stems from a reading for which the presupposition is some form of realism. See Ginsburg (190-91) and Jameson (80).

13. "Pas de réflexion! copions!" shouts either Bouvard or Pécuchet in the sketches for the unfinished conclusion to their novel. Then follows a note with impossible attri-

bution (narrator? scribes? author?), "*Il n'y a de vrai que les phénomènes*" (emphasis added). Quoted in *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, ed. Claudine Gothot-Mersch, Folio (Paris: Gallimard, 1979) 443. Also, see *supra*, note 8.

14. Genette's term "unfocalized," or "zero focalization," applies only to narrative (*Figures III*, Paris: Seuil, 1972, 206).

15. With respect to similes in *Madame Bovary*, Jacques Neefs has corrected and widened Auerbach's notion that such comparisons are generated by the character in whose range of competence they fall. For Neefs, they come from the world the text is describing. See "La Figuration réaliste: l'exemple de *Madame Bovary*," *Poétique*, 16 (1973) 466-76.

16. Fontanier does not even discuss it. *Les Figures du discours* (Paris: Flammarion, 1968).

17. In the final version of *La Tentation*, I have counted 82 similes and only 28 metaphors. Of these latter, a fair number are catachrestic. Nominal metaphor where the vehicle replaces the tenor is rare, whereas adjectival and adverbial metaphor, which allow for juxtaposition, are more frequent. Synecdoche is all but absent. Metonymy in the sense of a semantic syntagma referring to the cultural and literary underpinnings of the work is, of course, inevitable, though this strikes me as more of a thematic concern.

18. See Nathaniel Wing, *The Limits of Narrative* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 19-40.

19. See B.F. Bart, *Flaubert's Landscape Descriptions* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956).