Anti-Psychiatry and Literature:
A Laingian Analysis of Balzac's *Louis Lambert,* Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir,* the Goncourts' *Renée Mauperin,* and Zola's *L'Œuvre*

Colin Faulkner

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University of Edinburgh
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Abstract

This thesis centres on the intersection between four French nineteenth-century novels and the writings of the Scottish psychiatrist R. D. Laing, work which appeared in the 1960's and early 1970's and which has been given the label 'anti-psychiatric' because of its hostility to established psychiatric practices. The aims of this thesis are, firstly, to demonstrate that a congruence of concerns exists between the two domains in spite of the wide distance which may seem to separate them, and, secondly, to examine the extent to which Laingian anti-psychiatry may be used as an analytical framework within which to examine the de-motivated turning point of each novel - for example, why Julien Sorel attempts to kill Madame de Rênal in *Le Rouge et le Noir* or why Claude Lantier commits suicide in Zola's *L'Œuvre*.

In part one, I lay out the founding principles of the anti-psychiatry movement as well as its many shortcomings, focussing both on Laing's writings and his involvement with the ultimately ill-fated anti-psychiatric therapeutic community at Kingsley Hall in London. I argue that although anti-psychiatric practice has today fallen into disrepute among mainstream psychiatric clinicians - in part because of the failings of Kingsley Hall - it nonetheless offers the critic a fruitful if vastly under-utilised interpretative framework within which to analyse literary texts.

In the first chapter of part II, I demonstrate the relevance of anti-psychiatric theory to the four novels under consideration through analysing each novel's de-motivated turning point. I argue that the congruence of concerns shared by anti-psychiatry and the four novels centres on foregrounding notions of authenticity and on questioning received views of madness. I also outline in the conclusion to part II chapter one a series of questions which ask why the main protagonist of each novel, much like the schizophrenic as described by Laing, acts in a manner which is seemingly inexplicable and contrary to their self-interest, particularly at the moment in the text when it is least expected or least 'vraisemblable'. In the second chapter of part II, I review the approaches other critics have taken to these questions, enabling me to situate my proposed Laingian anti-psychiatric approach within the critical field.

In the three chapters which make up part III, I borrow concepts proposed by Laing in his 1960 best-selling ontology of schizophrenia *The Divided Self* in order to analyse the existential positions of the four protagonists. I adopt a diachronic approach, analysing in chapters one and two the period leading up to their unexplained and unexpected actions. I demonstrate that the mental processes undergone by a schizophrenic – such as 'depersonalisation' and 'disembodiment' - each have their counterparts in the protagonists' lives, on both a literal and a figurative level. In the third chapter of part III, I extend this Laingian analysis to include the portion of the novels subsequent to their apparently irrational actions. I show that these actions end up enabling the protagonists to gain access to a privileged, quasi-messianic mode of existence similar to that which anti-psychiatrists believed their patients were able to reach as a result of their schizophrenic condition. I argue, in conclusion therefore, that the four protagonists can be seen as anticipating and realising within a fictional context the goals of Laingian anti-psychiatric therapy which its practitioners failed to translate into clinical reality at, for example, Kingsley Hall.

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Acknowledgements and declaration

Sections of this thesis have appeared in the following publication: 'Julien Sorel's Insane Route to Insanity: An 'Anti-Psychiatric' Analysis of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir*', in *(Ab)Normalities*, edited by Catherine Douyesstier-Khoze and Paul Scott (Durham: Durham University Modern Languages Series, 2001), pp. 87-102.

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

List of abbreviations

In this thesis I have used the following abbreviations:

IP: R. D. Laing, H. P. Phillipson and A. R. Lee, *Interpersonal Perception: A Theory and a Method of Research* (London: Tavistock, 1966)

LL: Honoré de Balzac, *Louis Lambert*, in *La Comédie humaine*, 12 volumes, edited by Pierre-Georges Castex (Paris: Gallimard, 'Pléiade', 1976-81), XI (1980): *Etudes philosophiques, études analytiques*

LO: Emile Zola, *L'Œuvre*, in *Les Rougon-Macquart: Histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le Second Empire*, 5 volumes, edited by Armand Lanoux and Henri Mitterand (Paris: Gallimard, 'Pléiade', 1960-67), IV (1966): *L'Œuvre, La Terre, Le Rêve, La Bête Humaine*

PE: R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968)

RM: Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *Renée Mauperin* (Paris: Flammarion, 1990)

RN: Stendhal, *Le Rouge et le Noir*, in *Romans et Nouvelles,* 2 volumes, edited by Henri Martineau (Paris: Gallimard, 'Pléiade', 1948-52), I (1948)

SO: R. D. Laing, *Self and Others: Further Studies in Sanity and Madness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961)

TDS: R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (London: Tavistock, 1960)

WMF: R. D. Laing, *Wisdom, Madness and Folly: The Making of a Psychiatrist 1927-1957* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1998)

Page references to these works are included parenthetically in the main body of the text, preceded by the relevant abbreviation.

Any emphasis in quotations throughout this thesis appears in the original, unless otherwise stated.

Introduction

Farewell to a warrior,
the world is a better place for your being here.[1]

Les hommes sont si nécessairement fous, que ce serait être fou
par un autre tour de folie, de n'être pas fou.[2]

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[1] Spoken by Paul Laing at his father's memorial service in 1990. Quoted in John Clay, *R. D. Laing: A Divided Self* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997), p. 265.
[2] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, in *Œuvres complètes*, edited by Jacques Chevalier (Paris: Gallimard, 'Pléiade', 1954), p. 1134.

This thesis centres on the intersection between four nineteenth-century French novels and the writings of the Scottish psychiatrist R. D. Laing, work which has been given the label 'anti-psychiatry' because of its hostility to established psychiatric practices. The fields of nineteenth-century French literature and 'anti-psychiatry' may at first seem to have little in common with one another. However, I wish to demonstrate through this thesis that there exists between the two spheres what could be termed a 'congruence of concerns'. Furthermore, I wish to examine the extent to which 'anti-psychiatry' may be used as an analytical framework within which to examine controversial events in four novels: Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830), Honoré de Balzac's *Louis Lambert* (1832), Edmond and Jules de Goncourt's *Renée Mauperin* (1864), and Emile Zola's *L'Œuvre* (1886). These novels may at first appear to have little in common with one another - as well as with 'anti-psychiatry' - beyond belonging to the tradition of the nineteenth-century Realist / Naturalist novel. They do, however, share two features which are central to this thesis. Firstly, the event on which each novel turns and which brings about each novel's closure – Louis Lambert's attempted self-castration and subsequent collapse into catatonia; Julien Sorel's attempted murder of Mme de Rênal; Renée Mauperin's incrimination of her brother and her overtly beatified death; and Claude Lantier's suicide - is left either entirely unexplained or else explained in multiple, contradictory or inadequate ways by the narrator and / or character concerned. Secondly, each of these de-motivated or confusingly motivated incidents seems irrational, out-of-place or 'invraisemblable' in the light of preceding events in the novel. On a first reading at least, the reader could well be forgiven for concluding that the actions of the four chief protagonists run directly contrary to what might reasonably and rationally be expected of them at that point of the narrative. In *L'Œuvre*, for example, Claude Lantier commits suicide at the very point when he appears to have the possibility for personal happiness and security within his grasp for the first time, having abjured his previously all-compassing passion for art which has caused both him and his family only misery and poverty. The central goal of this thesis is thus to respond within an 'anti-psychiatric' framework to the following series of questions: why does Julien Sorel try to kill Mme de Rênal when he appears to have no need to do so? Why does Louis

Lambert attempt to castrate himself just a few days before his much-anticipated wedding, and why, by extension, does he collapse into what appears to be incurable madness and die at the age of 28? Why does Renée Mauperin incriminate her brother? Furthermore, why does she die at such a young age and why does she take on such god-like qualities in death? Why does Claude Lantier commit suicide?

In order to shed new critical light on these questions, I examine them from the stand-point of 'anti-psychiatry', a body of psychiatric theories on mental illness developed by disparate groups of dissident psychiatrists, cultural theorists and political activists in the 1960's and 1970's. I concentrate specifically on the work of the Scottish psychotherapist Ronald Laing (better known as R. D. Laing) not only because he was 'anti-psychiatry's hero',[3] 'the arch-seer and prophet-in-chief of anti-psychiatry'[4] and 'the most widely read psychiatrist in the world in the 1970's'.[5] More important in the present context, however, are the facts, firstly, that there is a demonstrable 'congruence of concerns' between Laing's work and the four novels, and, secondly, that his writings, in particular *The Divided Self* with its ontology of schizophrenia, provide us with easily comprehensible descriptions of the specific processes a mad person undergoes in going mad. These descriptions can then be used as an interpretative matrix for examining the questions outlined above in relation to the four novels. This fact distinguishes his work from that of Foucault or Deleuze and Guattari, for example, whose writings, despite being immensely productive and provocative in their own right when read in conjunction with literary texts, do not broach the psychological processes undergone by a mentally ill individual.[6]

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[3] Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Introduction', in *Cultures of Psychiatry and Mental Health Care in Post-War Britain and the Netherlands*, edited by Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Roy Porter (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1998), pp. 1-7 (p. 5).

[4] Peter Sedgwick, *Psycho Politics: Laing, Foucault, Goffman, Szasz and the Future of Mass Psychiatry* (London: Pluto Press, 1982), p. 67.

[5] M. Guy Thompson, 'The Fidelity to Experience in R. D. Laing's Treatment Philosophy', *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 33 (1997), 595-614 (p. 595).

[6] Deleuze and Guattari's work has given rise to a small, but growing field of study known as schizoanalysis. See for example Charles Stivale, 'Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: Schizoanalysis and Literary Discourse', *Sub Stance*, 29 (1981), 46-57; André Colombat, *Deleuze et la littérature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990); Eugene W. Holland, *Baudelaire and Schizoanalysis: The Sociopoetics of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); John Marks, 'Deleuze and Literature: Metaphor and Indirect Discourse', *Social*

Moreover, as shall emerge from the review of Laing-inspired literary criticism which I carry out towards the end of part I, the 'grille de lecture' which Laing's work offers has been vastly under-utilised by critics, particularly within the field of French studies. One exception is the parallel drawn by Ann Duncan between Laing's theories and the Goncourts' *Germinie Lacerteux*. Duncan concludes her study of the novel, which otherwise makes no reference to Laing's work, by commenting on the 'astonishing accuracy with which the Goncourts, through insight rather than wide-scale observation, analysed the dynamics of [...] interpersonal situations',[7] and by suggesting that their analysis 'is borne out by the work of several modern psychiatrists, in particular R. D. Laing'.[8] She concludes:

> there are close similarities between the Goncourts' account of Germinie's development of behavioural disturbances under stress, and the conclusion drawn by Laing from his observations of the relationship between neurosis and family conflicts. [...] The parallels between the Goncourts' insights into the psychology of their heroine and the conclusions drawn by Laing and others from their extensive observation of schizophrenics and their families suggest that, through sheer intuition, the Goncourts hit on some very astute perceptions, almost a century before these were formulated by psychologists.[9]

Duncan's comments aside, no further work has been devoted to the confluence of French literature with the works of R. D. Laing. It is this gap which I aim, at least in part, to fill through demonstrating that 'anti-psychiatry', and Laing's work in particular, is of relevance to the concerns raised in several French nineteenth-century Realist novels.

This thesis is divided into three parts. Part I is devoted to an exposition of the founding principles of the 'anti-psychiatry' movement and the objections it raises to the psychiatric orthodoxy. Such an exposition is required because, despite its immense popularity in the 1960's and early 1970's, 'anti-psychiatry' is an almost

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Semiotics, 7 (1997), 233-46; Eugene W. Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's 'Anti-Oedipe': Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1999).

[7] J. Ann Duncan, 'Self and Others: The Pattern of Neurosis and Conflict in *Germinie Lacerteux*', *Forum for Modern Languages Studies*, 13 (1977), 204-18 (p. 217).

[8] *ibid.*, p. 218

[9] *ibid.*, pp. 217-8.

entirely forgotten phenomenon today, even among members of the psychiatric profession. I also focus on its therapeutic objectives and techniques, as exemplified by the Kingsley Hall therapeutic community which was established by Laing and his colleagues in London in 1965. I demonstrate that the Bakhtinian conception of the carnival provides an instructive analogy for the history and practice of 'anti-psychiatry'. I argue that although it is regarded by the few members of the mainstream clinical psychiatric profession who have any knowledge of the field as little more than a slightly embarrassing and best forgotten 'fête des fous', 'anti-psychiatry' nonetheless provides us with a set of metaphors and an interpretative framework which lends itself particularly well to the analysis of literary texts.

Having outlined in part one the methodological approach adopted in this thesis, I devote part two, divided into two chapters, to a 'rapprochement' between 'anti-psychiatry' and the four novels under consideration. In part II chapter one, I demonstrate through a detailed analysis of the textual inscription of the de-motivated or ambiguously motivated status of each novel's central event that 'anti-psychiatry' and the four novels arguably share a similar vision of madness: that is, that madness is but a series of actions which run contrary to received codes of behaviour. In parallel to this congruence of concerns, I produce a detailed series of questions relating to the 'invraisemblance' of each novel's key event. Part II chapter two then reviews the responses other critics have proposed to these questions, a review which enables me to situate my 'anti-psychiatric' approach within the wider critical field.

Part III centres on an analysis of the four novels through the lens of Laingian 'anti-psychiatry' and, in particular, Laing's 1960 work *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*. Part III therefore brings together the 'problématique' outlined in part II and the methodology described in part I. I adopt a diachronic approach, examining in chapters one and two of part III only the events which precede the protagonist's seemingly illogical acts. From *The Divided Self*, I borrow the concepts of 'ontological insecurity', the resultant fears of engulfment and implosion, and the defence mechanisms of isolation, depersonalisation and

disembodiment in order to undertake a psychological re-construction of the four protagonists in the period which precedes their allegedly illogical and irrational actions. In the third chapter of part III, I extend this diachronic analysis to include the period subsequent to these acts and draw on Laing's notorious but vastly successful 1967 work *The Politics of Experience*, in addition to *The Divided Self*, to help formulate 'anti-psychiatric' responses to the questions outlined in part II. I demonstrate that the four protagonists' irrational actions end up enabling them to gain access to a privileged, quasi-messianic mode of existence similar to that which anti-psychiatrists believed their patients were able to reach as a result of their schizophrenic condition. I argue, in conclusion, that the four protagonists can be seen as anticipating and realising within a fictional context the goals of Laingian anti-psychiatric therapy which its practitioners failed to translate into clinical reality at, for example, Kingsley Hall.

Limits must necessarily be placed on the scope of any thesis. Although the point of departure of this thesis is madness, if viewed from an 'anti-psychiatric' perspective, I do not provide a study of the inscription of madness in nineteenth-century French literature, of which Shoshana Felman's work on the manipulation of the signifier 'folie' and its cognates in the works of Stendhal remains a classic.[10] I also do not aim to examine allegedly 'mad' French nineteenth-century authors such as Nerval or Lautréamont[11] nor the rise of 'hysteria', that stock trope of nineteenth-century literature, because it plays no part in three of these four novels and only a tangential one in *Renée Mauperin*.[12] Similarly, because none of the four writers examined here fell victim to sustained periods of what could be termed 'clinical madness' during

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[10] Shoshana Felman, *La « folie » dans l'œuvre romanesque de Stendhal* (Paris: Corti, 1971). See also Gwenhaël Ponnau, *La Folie dans la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1987); and Tony James, *Dream, Creativity and Madness in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).

[11] See for example Jean-Pierre Soulier, *Lautréamont – génie ou maladie mentale?* (Paris: Minard, 1978); Peter Dayan, *Nerval et ses pères: Portrait en trois volets avec deux gonds et un cadenas* (Geneva: Droz, 1992); Laure Murat, *La Maison du docteur Blanche: Histoire d'un asile et de ses pensionnaires de Nerval à Maupassant* (Paris: Lattès, 2001).

[12] For a solid analysis of views on hysteria in nineteenth-century France, see Janet Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies: Narratives of Hysteria in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

their own lives, I do not discuss the relationship between madness and the creative processes.[13] In a wider sense, I approach these authors' works not from the biographical level, a 'piste de recherches' already well trodden by critics of the nineteenth century,[14] but almost exclusively from the level of close textual analysis.

The second mainstay of this thesis is the body of psychiatric theory known as 'anti-psychiatry' and, in particular, the work of R. D. Laing. Although I discuss in part I the roots of 'anti-psychiatric' thought, I do not examine in detail the heavy existentialist,[15] psychoanalytic[16] or other philosophical influences[17] weighing down on Laing and other like-minded thinkers. The fraught relationship between Laing's work and the New Left of the 1960's and 70's has already been the subject of several

[13] See here Jean Oury, *Création et schizophrénie* (Paris: Galilée, 1989); and Frédéric Gros, *Création et folie: Une histoire du jugement psychiatrique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997).

[14] To give just one example of biographically oriented criticism on each author, see André Maurois, *Prométhée ou la vie de Balzac* (Paris: Hachette, 1965); Jean Prévost, *La Création chez Stendhal: Essai sur le métier d'écrire et la psychologie de l'écrivain* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1951); Robert Ricatte, *La Création romanesque chez les Goncourt 1851-1870* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1953); F. W. J. Hemmings, *Emile Zola* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953).

[15] Douglas Kirsner, *The Schizoid World of Jean-Paul Sartre and R. D. Laing* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1976); Douglas Kirsner, 'An Abyss of Difference: Laing, Sartre and Jaspers', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 21 (1990), 209-15; Christian Delacampagne, 'De l'existentialisme à l'antipsychiatrie', *Temps modernes*, 46 (1990), 658-64; Alfons Griedler, 'On the Existential-Phenomenological Background of R. D. Laing's *The Divided Self*', *Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, 2 (1991), 8-15.

[16] Daniel Burston, 'Conflict and Sociability in Hegel, Freud and Their Followers: Tzvetan Todorov's "Living Here Together"', *New Literary History*, 27 (1996), 73-82; M. Guy Thompson, 'Deception, Mystification and Trauma: Laing and Freud', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 83 (1996), 827-47; Thompson, 'The Fidelity to Experience in R. D. Laing's Treatment Philosophy'; M. Guy Thompson, 'The Heart of the Matter: R. D. Laing's Enigmatic Relationship With Psychoanalysis', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 87 (2000), 483-510.

[17] Martin Howarth-Williams, *The Work of R. D. Laing and its Relevance for Sociology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977); John M. Heaton, 'The Divided Self: Kierkegaard or Winnicott?', *Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, 2 (1991), 30-7; Daniel Burston, *The Wing of Madness: The Life and Work of R. D. Laing* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996) pp. 151-251; Gavin Miller, 'Transcendental Kinship in the Works of George Friel and Alasdair Gray' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1999); John M. Heaton, 'On R. D. Laing: Style, Sorcery and Alienation', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 87 (2000), 511-26; Daniel Burston, *The Crucible of Experience: R. D. Laing and the Crisis of Psychotherapy* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000); Daniel Burston, 'R. D. Laing and the Politics of Diagnosis', *Janus Head*, 4 (2001), 12-28; Gavin Miller, 'Cognition and Community: The Scottish Philosophical Context of "The Divided Self"', *Janus Head*, 4, (2001), 104-29.

studies[18] and are consequently not examined here. Similarly, I largely ignore the biographical side of Laing studies, a field which has seen much scholarly activity in the last decade.[19] I also do not touch on the relationship between Laing's work and that of the best-known American anti-psychiatrist Thomas Szasz,[20] and, more widely, I do not examine 'anti-psychiatry''s extensive implantation into the cultures of most Western nations in the 1960's and 1970's, particularly the UK,[21] the USA,[22] Germany,[23] Holland,[24] and, most successfully of all, Italy.[25]

[18] See Robert J. Antonio, 'The Work of R. D. Laing: A Neo-Marxist, Phenomenological Interpretation', *Human Context*, 7 (1975), 15-26; Andrew Collier, *R. D. Laing: The Philosophy and Politics of Psychotherapy* (Hassocks: Harvester, 1977); Scott Bortle, 'R. D. Laing as Negative Thinker', *Janus Head*, 4 (2001), 130-58.

[19] See Adrian C. Laing, 'R. D. Laing – The First Five Years', *Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, 2 (1991), 24-9; Adrian C. Laing, *R. D. Laing: A Life* (London: Peter Owen, 1994); Burston, *The Wing of Madness,* pp. 1-150; Bob Mullan, *Mad to be Normal: Conversations with R. D. Laing* (London: Free Association Books, 1995); John Clay, *R. D. Laing: A Divided Self*; Bob Mullan, *R. D. Laing: A Personal View* (London: Duckworth, 1999); Joseph H. Berke, 'Trick or Treat: The Divided Self of R. D. Laing', *Janus Head*, 4 (2001), 49-53; Theodor Itten, 'Laing in Austria', *Janus Head*, 4 (2001), 69-89.

[20] For a comprehensive survey of Szasz's work, see Richard E. Vatz and Lee S. Weinberg, 'The Rhetorical Paradigm in Psychiatric History: Thomas Szasz and the Myth of Mental Illness', in *Discovering the History of Psychiatry*, edited by Roy Porter and Mark S. Micale (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) pp. 311-30. A less enthusiastic view can be found in Rael Jean Isaac and Virginia C. Armat, *Madness in the Streets: How Psychiatry and the Law Abandoned the Mentally Ill* (New York: Free Press, 1990).

[21] For cogent surveys, see Digby Tantam, 'The Anti-Psychiatry Movement', in *150 Years of British Psychiatry 1841-1991*, edited by German E. Berrios and Hugh Freeman (London: Gaskell, 1991), pp. 333-47; Roy Porter, 'Two Cheers for Psychiatry! The Social History of Mental Disorder in Twentieth-Century Britain', in *150 Years of British Psychiatry, Volume II: The Aftermath*, edited by Hugh Freeman and German E. Berrios (London: Athlone, 1996), pp. 383-406; Nick Crossley, 'R. D. Laing and the British Anti-Psychiatry Movement: A Socio-Historical Analysis', *Social Science and Medicine*, 47 (1998), 877-89.

[22] For studies which take in the wider anti-psychiatric scene in the USA beyond Szasz, see Norman Dain, 'Critics and Dissenters: Reflections on "Anti-Psychiatry" in the United States', *Journal of the History of Behavioural Studies,* 25 (1989), 3-25; Norman Dain, 'Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry in the United States', in *Discovering the History of Psychiatry*, edited by Porter and Micale, pp. 415-44; David A. Powlinson, 'Competent to Counsel? The History of a Conservative Protestant Anti-Psychiatry Movement' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1997).

[23] H. Spandler, 'To Make an Army out of an Illness: The History of the Socialist Patients' Collective', *Asylum*, 6 (1992), 4-16; Iris Hölling, 'Three Years of Anti-Psychiatric Practice at the Berlin Runaway-House', *Changes*, 17 (1999), 278-88.

[24] Gemma Blok, '"Messiah of the Schizophrenics": Jan Foudraine and Anti-Psychiatry in Holland', in *Cultures of Psychiatry and Mental Health Care*, edited by Gijswijt-Hofstra and Porter, pp. 151-67.

[25] For more on the anti-institutionalisation campaigns led by Franco Basaglia, see T. Becker, 'Psychiatric Reform in Italy – How Does It Work in Piedmont?', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 147 (1985), 254-60; R. Mollica, 'From Antonio Gramsci to Franco Basaglia: The

A further sphere which I do not treat in this thesis, even though it represents exciting and as yet largely unexplored critical terrain, is the relationship between, on the one hand, 'anti-psychiatry' and Laing's theories and, on the other, late twentieth-century French culture. One might think that there is in fact very little to explore in this area given that Elisabeth Roudinesco claims that 'il n'y eut aucun véritable courant antipsychiatrique'[26] in France. Roudinesco attributes this to her belief that 'la gauche lacanienne occupait en partie le terrain de la révolte contre l'ordre psychiatrique, à travers le courant de la psychothérapie institutionnelle',[27] while, at the same time, the work of Foucault and Deleuze 'cristallisaient la contestation « antipsychiatrique » face à la double orthodoxie freudienne et lacanienne'.[28] On the other hand, Arthur Marwick takes a rather different view when he describes Laing as 'the one [British] individual to achieve guru status and fame on the Left Bank'.[29] This divergence between Roudinesco's and Marwick's positions, when taken along with the relative dearth of French criticism pertaining to Laing's life and work,[30] points to the fact that a detailed assessment of Laing's impact on French cultural life remains there for the writing. This thesis does not, and indeed could not, aim to plug this gap. I also leave to one side the intersection between Laing's work and, firstly, that of Jacques Lacan, the French intellectual most closely associated with 'anti-psychiatry';[31] secondly, that of Jean-Paul Sartre, an extremely heavy influence on Laing's intellectual

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Theory and Practice of the Italian Psychiatric Reform', *International Journal of Mental Health*, 14 (1985), 22-41; and Martin Donnelly, *The Politics of Mental Health in Italy* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[26] Elisabeth Roudinesco and Michel Plon, *Dictionnaire de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), p. 54.

[27] *ibid.*, p. 54.

[28] *ibid.*, p. 54.

[29] Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the US c. 1958-1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 313.

[30] Only two short studies, now both over a quarter of a century old, examine Laing's theories from a French perspective. See Gilbert C. Rapaille, *Laing* (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1972); Christian Delacampagne, *Antipsychiatrie ou les voies du sacré* (Paris: Grasset, 1974).

[31] Only one study has touched on the links between the work of Laing and Lacan. Judy Tame Wall and Del Loewenthal focus on the differing ways in which Laing, Lacan and Freud approach the question: 'when our clients speak to us [therapists], can their discourse be said to be true or false?' See their study 'The Saviour in the Gap: A Comparison of Lacan with Freud and Laing', *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 13 (1997), 451-60 (p. 451).

career;[32] thirdly, that of Michel Foucault whose *Histoire de la folie* can be seen as a classic founding text of 'anti-psychiatric' thought;[33] and, finally, that of Deleuze and Guattari with their anti-capitalist, anti-Freudian project as laid out in *L'Anti-Œdipe* and *Mille Plateaux*, even if the latter philosophers, similarly to Lacan, have been described as 'the rough equivalent in France of R. D. Laing or David Cooper in England'.[34] Nor will I examine Guattari's involvement with the innovative La Borde psychiatric clinic despite it making for another 'rough equivalent' of 'anti-psychiatry''s Kingsley Hall therapeutic community which I examine in some detail in part one.

My goal in this thesis is to examine the extent to which Laing's writings may be used as an interpretative framework within which to re-conceptualise the existential position of the chief protagonist of each of the four novels. Through this thesis I wish to demonstrate my belief that 'anti-psychiatry' presents a highly fruitful conceptual framework for the analysis of literary texts. As Elaine Showalter has said:

> if Laing's work lasts, it will not be in the realm of psychiatric practice or social style, but in art or literature, where it may provide instructive images and tropes for other imaginations. Laing created himself out of images and books and to images and books he has returned; literature gave him not only some of his models and incentives, but, in view of what the 60's failed to do, his destiny as well.[35]

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[32] For more on this important reciprocal Laing-Sartre influence, see D. Mackey, 'Sartre and the Problem of Madness', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 1 (1970), 80-2; Max Charlesworth, 'Sartre, Laing and Freud', *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry*, 17 (1980-1), 23-39; David Jopling, 'Anti-Psychiatry in Sartre's *The Family Idiot*', *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry*, 19 (1984-5), 161-87; David Jopling, 'Sartre's Anti-Psychiatry and Philosophical Anthropology', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 18 (1987), 6-13; Shlomit Schuster, 'Sartre's Freud and the Future of Sartrean Psychoanalysis', *Israeli Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences*, 35 (1998), 20-30.
[33] Relatively little is known about the personal relationship between Laing and Foucault. They certainly entered into considerable correspondence, much of which is held in Glasgow University Library's R. D. Laing Collection. Moreover, they took part in several public debates as Didier Eribon reports in *Michel Foucault (1926-1984)* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989), pp. 67; 148; 332-3. Yet little is known about their reading of each other's works.
[34] Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Œdipus,* p. vii.
[35] Elaine Showalter, 'Laing and the Sixties', *Raritan*, 1 (1981), pp. 107-27 (p. 127).

PART I:
'Une fête des fous?'
The Rise and Fall and Rise Again
of 'Anti-Psychiatry'

Carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions. Carnival was [...] the feast of becoming, change and renewal.[36]

Et qu'est-ce qu'un aliéné authentique? C'est un homme qui a préféré devenir fou [...] que de forfaire à une certaine idée de l'honneur humain. [...] Car un aliéné est aussi un homme que la société n'a pas voulu entendre et qu'elle a voulu empêcher d'émettre d'insupportables vérités.[37]

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[36] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 10.

[37] Antonin Artaud, *Œuvres Complètes*, 25 volumes (Paris: Gallimard, 1956-90), XIII (1974): 'Van Gogh: Le suicidé de la société', pp. 13-64 (p. 17).

Introduction to Part I

In his recent discussion of the historical significance of what has become known as 'anti-psychiatry', the Warwick historian Colin Jones suggests that the 'anti-psychiatry' movement can only be satisfactorily defined as 'the carnivalesque celebration of the symbolic inversion of medical authority and legitimacy'.[38] Jones's introduction of the carnival metaphor is significant on two levels. Firstly, it points to the difficulties inherent to defining 'anti-psychiatry' in anything other than negative terms: it is, after all, much more straightforward to describe what both the carnival and 'anti-psychiatry' are not or what they react against rather than what they do actively represent in a more positive sense. Secondly, the carnival is often mistakenly assumed to be the period during which all restrictions on normally forbidden licentious and debauched behaviour are temporarily lifted. In reality, however, individuals do not have licence to behave as they choose during the carnival and must instead abide by a series of strict codes and traditions handed down from one generation to the next. In a parallel sense, 'anti-psychiatry' is often mistakenly viewed as the 'sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll' era of psychiatric history in which it was forbidden to forbid. In reality, however, as I outline here in part I, the carnivalesque symbolic inversion of medical authority which was wrought by 'anti-psychiatrists' in the 1960's and early 1970's was founded on a set of codes and beliefs which were just as rigid, as revered and as strictly adhered to as any set of practices and traditions which characterise pre-Lenten carnivals. The aim of part one, then, is to outline the cultural and intellectual codes and foundations of the so-called 'anti-psychiatry' movement. I analyse the principal criticisms which the movement directed at mainstream psychiatric practices and the allegations which the latter in return threw back at their passionate disparagers; I also discuss the three models of Laingian 'anti-psychiatric' thought and the principal goals of its therapeutic practice. In the second half of part I in particular, I argue that the Bakhtinian metaphor of the carnivalesque can provide a useful analogy for our understanding of this important counter-cultural movement. Part I thus revolves around the question: did 'anti-psychiatry' merely represent a 'fête des fous'?

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[38] Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Introduction', p. 6.

If 'anti-psychiatry' can be seen in terms of the carnivalesque, R. D. Laing is its unrivalled 'carnival king'. Born in Glasgow in 1927, Laing studied medicine at the local university between 1945 and 1951, eventually choosing to specialise in psychiatry.[39] His brilliantly insightful analyses of the schizoid condition; his magnetic personality and outstanding empathy for schizophrenic patients; his penchant for fame and celebrity; and his extremely colourful private life which took in several wives and mistresses, ten children and an unquenchable thirst for single malt all contributed to him winning as many passionate acolytes as furious detractors. Since his untimely death on a St. Tropez tennis-court in 1989, he has variously been described as 'the most influential psychiatrist of his time'[40] and 'a pyrotechnically gifted analyst and writer',[41] or, less charitably, as 'a poor man's Jung'[42] and 'a semi-charlatan with only a genius for self-publicity'.[43] Despite the fact that Laing's work today is often subjected to scorn and derision from certain quarters of the psychiatric profession, one commentator nonetheless has sufficient confidence in Laing's worth and ability to be able to claim that 'more than anyone else in our time, Ronald Laing challenged the mental health professions and society at large to question prevailing models of madness and the nature and limits of psychiatric authority'.[44] Anthony Clare, the doyen of Radio 4 establishment psychiatry and certainly not someone who might be expected to be a friend of the Laingian enterprise, even goes as far as to declare that 'Laing influenced a whole generation of young men and women in their choice of psychiatry as a career. […] Everyone in contemporary psychiatry owes Laing something'.[45] A further aim of part I is to examine some of the misunderstandings surrounding Laingian 'anti-psychiatry' which have given rise to such opposing views.

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[39] For full details of Laing's family background and education in Glasgow, see WMF, 33-94; Adrian Laing, *R. D. Laing*, pp. 16-43; Burston, *The Wing of Madness*, pp. 1-42; and Clay, *R. D. Laing*, pp. 1-38.

[40] Anthony Clare, 'Ronald David Laing 1927-1989: An Appreciation', *Psychiatric Bulletin*, 14 (1990), 87-8 (p. 87).

[41] Carole Augier, 'R. D. Laing: A Divided Self', *New Statesman*, 26 July 1996, p. 46.

[42] Frank McLynn, 'Divided Opinions on the Two Ronnies', *The Herald*, 15 July 1999, p. 20.

[43] *ibid.*, p. 20.

[44] Burston, *The Crucible of Experience*, p. 1.

[45] Quoted in Clay, *R. D. Laing*, p. 268.

Let the carnival begin

So far in part I, I have placed the term 'anti-psychiatry' inside inverted commas. I have done so for the simple reason that the term was much disputed and indeed often resented by many of those most closely associated with it. R. D. Laing, for example, objected to the term, which was first coined by Laing's one-time close colleague David Cooper in his 1967 work *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry,*[46] on the grounds that he found the neologism as fundamentally illogical and meaningless as the terms 'anti-science' or 'anti-medicine'.[47] Instead, Laing preferred to be described as 'a true psychiatrist'.[48] Yet for all its inelegance and shortcomings, the term 'anti-psychiatry' retains the important merit of flagging up one of its practitioners' chief concerns. As a recent biographer of R. D. Laing writes: 'in one respect the term is accurate: it highlights the 'anti-' aspect of these thinkers. They were all against establishment psychiatry or against establishment *tout court'*.[49] Indeed, it is only this carnivalesque 'anti-' aspect of anti-psychiatry which gives any form of identity and purpose to an otherwise highly fractious and uncoordinated movement.

What do anti-psychiatrists reject or react against? The widest of their criticisms relates to the methodological principles on which establishment psychiatrists predicate their clinical diagnoses. In particular, it is the profession's aspiration towards a value-free, pseudo-positivistic objectivity which most angers anti-psychiatrists. This debate revolves around what can be termed as the 'biomedical' or 'positivistic' model of madness versus the 'social' or 'interpretative' model. In the words of one influential psychiatry text-book, a central tenet of the 'medical model' reads: 'the foundations of psychiatry have to be laid on the ground of natural sciences. […] It is only from an organic connection between the natural sciences,

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[46] David Cooper, *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry* (London: Tavistock, 1967).
[47] Kotowicz, *R. D. Laing and the Paths of Anti-Psychiatry,* p. 5. In his autobiography, Laing states: 'I have never called myself an anti-psychiatrist, and have disclaimed the term from when first my friend and colleague, David Cooper, introduced it', WMF, 9. Laing told Cooper in the 1960's that he judged the introduction of the term to be a 'fucking disaster'. Quoted in Mullan, *Mad to be Normal,* p. 356.
[48] Clay, *R. D. Laing,* p. 266.
[49] Kotowicz, *R. D. Laing and the Paths of Anti-Psychiatry,* p. 5.

biology, medicine and psychiatry [...] that lasting advances can be made'.[50] It is this model which has historically held sway in the psychiatric profession and which arguably still does so today. One of the core works recommended to current psychiatry students at the University of Edinburgh, for example, opens with the heavily Cartesian statement:

> students new to psychiatry often have concerns that the clinical skills required will be different from those of surgery and medicine. The skills required are in fact similar – careful history taking, systematic clinical examination and sound clinical reasoning. The only major difference is that the clinical examination includes the mental as well as the physical state of the patient.[51]

A patient's behaviour and symptoms must therefore be observed in a rigorous, detached fashion, or in the words of David Morgan: 'the diagnosis of mental illness is not seen as dependent upon the social character of behaviour, or upon others' evaluations and reactions to that behaviour, but upon the assessment of the structure and functioning of the individual organism'.[52] Anti-psychiatrists condemn such a diagnostic process, and Laing, ever ready with the snappy sound-bite, would riposte: 'consciousness won't be found at the end of a microscope'.[53] Elsewhere Laing argues that what he terms

> the psychiatric, 'diagnostic' look is itself a depersonalised and depersonalising cut-off look. It is an application of a highly sophisticated scientific look that is culturally deeply conditioned. It is a way of seeing things, and the relation between things, by subtracting all personal experience. [...] It is a look which is cultivated with the express intention of not seeing intentions out there. Things have no intentions.[54]

For Laing, this psychiatric 'look' strives towards an impossible degree of objectivity, preferring instead to deduct from a patient's case history all relevant social and

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[50] Willy Mayer-Gross, Martin Roth and Eliot Slater, *Clinical Psychiatry* (London: Baillière & Cassell, 1969), p. 3.
[51] Michael Gelder, *Psychiatry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 3.
[52] David Morgan, 'Explaining Mental Illness', *Archives européennes de sociologie*, 16 (1975), 262-80 (p. 265).
[53] Quoted in Mullan, *R. D. Laing: A Personal View*, p. 139.
[54] R. D. Laing, 'Laing's Understanding of Interpersonal Experience', in *The Oxford Companion to the Mind*, edited by Richard L. Gregory and O. L. Zangwill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 417-8 (p. 417). Laing contributed his own entry to this volume.

cultural variables. His criticism is simple: 'psychiatry tries to be as scientific and objective as possible towards what is most personal and subjective' (WMF, 158). Exploiting to the full this unfeasible objective gaze, the inherently comprehensible and sane clinician is accorded the right to act as the arbiter of absolute authority over the inherently incomprehensible and insane patient, the two of them separated forever by an 'abyss of difference'.[55]

If anti-psychiatrists criticise the methods by which establishment psychiatrists arrive at their diagnoses, they also express grave concerns about the diagnoses which are eventually passed. Put simply, anti-psychiatrists castigate the psychiatric profession for attributing much too willingly to mental health problems a biological rather than a social aetiology. They criticise their establishment colleagues for seeing mental illness as dependent more on the organic functioning of the brain and the body than on the family and social environment. As evidence for the social determinants of mental illness which anti-psychiatrists feel their more traditional brothers prefer to overlook in the name of an impossible aspiration towards objectivity, they point to the close correlation between mental illness and poverty / social class,[56] gender,[57] or belonging to a minority ethnic or national group.[58] Anti-psychiatrists also cite the infamous 1973 Rosenhan experiment in which it was demonstrated that their more mainstream colleagues had immense difficulty in telling schizophrenic patients apart from non-schizophrenic patients.[59] Among other significant evidence, they stress the

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[55] The phrase was first coined by the Swiss psychiatrist Karl Jaspers and is quoted in Kirsner, 'An Abyss of Difference', p. 209.
[56] See Richard Warner, *Recovering from Schizophrenia: Psychiatry and Political Economy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1994); Jennie Williams, 'Social Inequalities and Mental Health', in *This is Madness: A Critical Look at Psychiatry and the Future of Mental Health Services*, edited by Craig Newnes, Guy Holmes and Cailizie Dunn (Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books, 1999), pp. 29-50; G. Harrison et al, 'Recovering From Psychotic Illness: A 15- and 25-Year International Follow-Up', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 178 (2001), 506-17.
[57] For full surveys of this area, see Joan Busfield, 'Mental Illness as Social Product or Social Construct: A Contradiction in Feminists' Arguments?', *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 10 (1988), 521-42; Pauline M. Prior, *Gender and Mental Health* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); George Stewart, 'Machismo and Misery', *Openmind*, 104 (2000), 18-20.
[58] See Kobena Mercer, 'Racism and Transcultural Psychiatry', in *The Power of Psychiatry*, edited by Peter Miller and Nicholas Rose (Cambridge: Polity, 1986), pp. 112-42; Roland Littlewood and Maurice Lipsedge, *Aliens and Alienists: Ethnic Minorities and Psychiatry* (London: Routledge, 1997).
[59] David L. Rosenhan, 'On Being Sane in Insane Places', *Science*, 179 (1973), 250-8.

lack of a clearly defined 'norm' of health, the parameters for which are shifting constantly according to era, culture, and political and social priorities with the result that anti-psychiatrists berate practitioners working within the parameters of the 'medical model' for conceiving of mental illness only as a deviation from a norm, even though that norm is itself ultimately indefinable.[60] The discourse of psychiatry can speak only of mal-adaptations, failures to adjust, or a lack of insight, they claim: it is, in the words of Laing, 'a veritable *vocabulary of denigration*' (TDS, 27). Based on such evidence, anti-psychiatrists pose the question: if establishment psychiatry is to be accorded the legitimacy it claims for itself, why is it unable to predicate its judgements on independent and reliable criteria of health and illness, rather than on intuitive, moral and thus necessarily value-laden evaluations of a patient's behaviour?

Anti-psychiatrists further argue that putting forward a principally biological aetiology to mental illness robs the patient of his/her sense of intentionality and, consequently attributes to his/her behaviour motives beyond his/her individual control. Thomas Szasz, the most controversial American writer working in this field, declares: 'modern psychiatry dehumanise[s] man by denying – on the basis of spurious scientific reasoning - the existence, or even the possibility, of personal responsibility'.[61] In one of his most influential essays which poses the question 'what is schizophrenia?', Laing also argues that 'the 'committed' person labelled as patient, and specifically as 'schizophrenic', is degraded from full existential status as human agent and responsible person, no longer in possession of his own definition of himself'.[62] It is for this reason that anti-psychiatrists attack bitterly the terminology used by the psychiatric profession. They claim that the latter's mutation of 'madness' into 'mental illness' allows the profession, firstly, to reduce madness to a series of unmotivated acts which are devoid of any intrinsic, interpretable signification, and,

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[60] See in this connection Lucy Johnstone, *Users and Abusers of Psychiatry: A Critical Look at Traditional Psychiatric Practice* (London: Routledge, 2000).

[61] Thomas Szasz, *Ideology and Insanity: Essays on the Psychiatric Dehumanisation of Man* (London: Calders and Boyers, 1973), p. 11.

[62] R. D. Laing, 'What is Schizophrenia?', *New Left Review*, 28 (1964), 63-8 (p. 64).

secondly, to reduce the patient to an '*invalid*-ated',[63] intention-less and inexplicable vegetable. Such a reflex fortuitously allows the profession to subject the incapacitated individual to whatever degrading and dehumanising forms of treatment it sees fit. In the view of an anti-psychiatrist, this entire process serves only to aggravate rather than alleviate the condition they describe as 'mental illness'. It should be made clear, however, that Laing and most (if not all) anti-psychiatrists do not deny the existence of madness, or at least that they do not deny that there are often significant differences between two individuals' states of mind and that an individual may be 'dangerous to himself and others, and require care and attention in a mental hospital' (TDS, 27). What anti-psychiatrists do, however, raise fundamental objections to relates to the procedure by which the label 'mentally ill' is attributed and the way in which psychiatrists are accorded total control over their now socially ostracised patients.

This brief survey of anti-psychiatry's principal criticisms of the psychiatric profession has provided an insight into what anti-psychiatry rejects or does not stand for. To understand what Laingian anti-psychiatry represents in a more positive, constructive sense, it is useful to turn, firstly, to what represents a founding tenet of Laing's thought. In his 1966 work *Interpersonal Perception*, co-authored with H. Phillipson and A. R. Lee, Laing argues for the philosophical 'meaninglessness of the category "I" without its complementary category of "you"' (IP, 3). Expanding on this statement, he writes:

> over a hundred years ago Feuerbach effected a pivotal step in philosophy. He discovered that philosophy had been exclusively orientated around "I". No one had realised that the "you" is as primary as the I. It is curious how we continue to theorise from an egoistic standpoint. In Freud's theory, for instance, one has the "I" (ego), the "over-me" (super-ego) and "it" (id), but no *you*. Some philosophers, some psychologists, and more sociologists have recognised the significance of the fact that social life is not made up of a myriad I's and me's only, but of you, he, she, we, and them, also, and that the experience of you or he or them or us may indeed be as primary and compelling (or more so) as the experience of "me". (IP, 3)

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[63] R. D. Laing, 'The Invention of Madness', *New Statesman*, 16 June 1967, p. 843.

Keeping this statement in mind, it is illuminating to refer a study by Miriam Siegler which reconfigures within three distinct models Laing's thought as it evolved over the course of the 1960's. The point of linkage between these three models of madness – the 'psychoanalytic', 'conspiratorial' and 'psychedelic' models[64] - is the stress which Laing and his anti-psychiatrist colleagues lay on the social intelligibility of the symptoms of mental illness. As Thomas Szasz writes: 'what people now call mental illnesses are, for the most part, *communications* expressing unacceptable ideas, often framed in an unusual idiom'.[65] A further essential point of linkage between the three Laingian models is the firmly held belief that mental illness represents some form of 'existential crisis'. David Ingleby describes such a crisis as 'an intelligible response to the conflict between people's needs and the demands (or constraints) placed on them by their particular social roles.'[66] Laing, moreover, states categorically:

> In over 100 cases where we have studied the actual circumstances around the social event when one person comes to be regarded as schizophrenic, it seems to us that *without exception* the experience and behaviour that gets labelled schizophrenic is *a special sort of strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unliveable situation*. (PE, 95)[67]

It is this last sentence which acts as the crux to much of Laing's work, and one which, as we will find out in part III of this thesis, is of crucial importance to the lives of the four protagonists under examination. Laing goes on:

> in his life situation, the person has come to feel he is in an untenable position. He cannot make a move, or make no move, without being beset by contradictory and paradoxical pressures and demands, pushes and pulls, both internally, from himself, and externally, from those around him. He is, as it were, in a position of checkmate. (PE, 95)

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[64] Miriam Siegler, Humphry Osmond and Harriet Mann, 'Laing's Models of Madness', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 115 (1969), 947-58.

[65] Szasz, *Ideology and Insanity*, p. 19.

[66] David Ingleby, 'Understanding 'Mental Illness'', in *Critical Psychiatry: The Politics of Mental Health*, edited by David Ingleby (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), pp. 23-61 (p. 52).

[67] In an influential reformulation of this view, Sartre wrote in a 1964 preface to a work co-authored by Laing: 'je tiens – comme vous, je crois – la maladie mentale comme l'issue que le libre organisme, dans son unité totale, invente pour vivre une situation invivable'. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Foreword', in David Cooper and R. D. Laing, *Reason and Violence: A Decade of Sartre's Philosophy 1950-1960* (London: Tavistock, 1964), p. 7.

Turning to the first model outlined by Siegler – the 'psychoanalytic' model[68] –, we find that the unliveable situation which causes disturbed but still intelligible and 'context-sensible' behaviour is the social role of family member. Laing writes:

> to the best of my knowledge, *no* schizophrenic has been studied whose disturbed pattern of communication has not been shown to be a reflection of, and reaction to, the disturbed and disturbing pattern characterising his or her family of origin. (PE, 94-5)

Put simply, if 'patients [are] disturbed, their families [are] often disturbing' (PE, 93). As a means of understanding the development and modalities of such disturbed communication patterns, it is helpful to turn to Laing's 1961 work *Self and Others* in which he situates the development of schizophrenia within 'disconfirmatory' family interaction. To begin his explanation of this phenomenon, Laing argues that:

> any human interaction implies some measure of confirmation, at any rate of the physical bodies of the participants, even when one person is shooting another. The slightest sign of recognition from another at least confirms one's presence in *his* world. 'No more fiendish punishment could be devised', William James once wrote, 'even were such a thing physically possible, than that one should be turned loose in society and remain absolutely unnoticed by all the members thereof'. (SO, 98-9)

What Laing thus describes as 'schizogenic' forms of disconfirmatory behaviour are those which are 'destructive of self development' (SO, 99):

> the characteristic family pattern that has emerged from the studies of the families of schizophrenics does not so much involve a child who is subject to outright neglect or even to obvious trauma, but a child who has been subjected to subtle but persistent disconfirmation, usually unwittingly. (SO, 100-1)

How does such 'disconfirmation' work on a day-to-day level? In a 1956 study which exerted a heavy influence on Laing's thinking, Gregory Bateson proposed that the 'double bind' underlies the development of schizophrenia,[69] a simple summary of which is provided by Eve Johnstone:

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[68] Siegler, 'Laing's Models of Madness', pp. 952-3.
[69] Gregory Bateson and others, 'Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia', *Behavioural Science*, 1 (1956), 251-64.

> schizophrenia [can be] produced by the constant reception of
> incongruent messages from a key relative – to take a trite example,
> the verbal message "You know that Mummy loves you"
> accompanied by non-verbal behaviour implying something quite
> different.[70]

Thus, in a reformulation of Bateson's work, Laing contends:

> .   for many years a lack of genuine confirmation takes the form of
> actively confirming a false self, so that the person whose false self
> is confirmed and real self disconfirmed is placed in a false position.
> Someone in a false position *feels guilt, shame, or anxiety at not
> being false*. (SO, 101)

Psychosis thus arises out of a patient's guilt and anxiety over this enforced
abandonment of their real self or of their authenticity, as Laing also calls it with a
nod in the direction of Heidegger. As Daniel Burston makes clear, Laing is arguing
that 'the pathological signs of schizophrenia may be the result of prolonged anxiety
and confusion, not the other way round, and that standard psychiatric procedure can
only intensify them'.[71] Laing is at pains to point out, however, that the family does
not set out deliberately to 'cause' schizophrenia.

> Confirmation of a false self goes on without anyone in the family
> being aware that this is the state of affairs. The schizogenic
> potential of the situation resides in the fact that it is not recognised
> by another; or if the mother or father or some other member or
> friend of the family is aware of this state of affairs, it is not brought
> into the open and no effort is made to intervene. (SO, 101)

What happens is that the individual is unable to be 'true to himself' (SO, 129). Laing
borrows Heidegger's concept of 'aletheia', as expressed in *Existence and Being*, to
describe what the individual is unable to do or be: 'in this concept, truth is literally
that which is without secrecy, what discloses itself without a veil' (SO, 129). It is this
state of 'aletheia' or of 'being true to him/herself' that the individual schizophrenic

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[70] Eve C. Johnstone and others, *Companion to Psychiatric Studies* (Edinburgh: Churchill
Livingstone, 1998), p. 383.
[71] Burston, *The Wing of Madness*, p. 71.

has been prevented from accessing as a result of the double binds and mystifications his/her family inflicts, albeit mostly unwittingly.[72]

This view which attributes to the family much of the blame for the onset of schizophrenia may not initially seem enormously far removed from the classical psychoanalytic position which situates neuroses within the conflicts and tensions inherent to social and family life. However, whereas Freudian psychoanalysis viewed such tensions as intrinsic to civilisation, and therefore as inevitable and immutable, anti-psychiatrists, on the other hand, look on such conflicts as potentially alterable threads of the social fabric, but only if the consciousness of the public, the political classes and the psychiatric profession can be raised and influenced sufficiently. It is in this regard that anti-psychiatry's pronounced reforming and even revolutionary ethos becomes apparent, a zeal which psychoanalysis, its intellectual bed-fellow, lacks. The revolutionary fervour which characterises the rhetoric and practice of anti-psychiatry became much more virulent over the course of the 1960s, and by the end of the decade Laing was proposing that the schizophrenic had been propelled into an unliveable situation of inauthenticity not merely by disconfirmatory family interaction but also by the entire capitalist system. Siegler et al categorise such views under the heading of the 'conspiratorial model of madness'.[73] In his most controversial work, *The Politics of Experience* (1967), Laing writes:

> there is no such 'condition' as 'schizophrenia', but the label is a social fact and the social fact a *political event*. This political event, occurring in the civic order of society, imposes definitions and consequences on the labelled person. [...] The person labelled is inaugurated not only into a role, but into a career of patient, by the concerted action of a coalition (a 'conspiracy') of family, G.P., mental health officer, psychiatrists, nurses, psychiatric social workers, and often fellow patients. (PE, 100)

Out of this extract arise two significant points. Firstly, it demonstrates Laing's repugnance at the failings of drug therapy and 'institutionalisation' within mental

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[72] For more on Laing's continuing influence on debate on this subject today, see David W. Jones, *Myths, Madness and the Family: The Impact of Mental Illness on Families* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).
[73] Siegler et al, 'Laing's Models of Madness', pp. 948-52.

health primary care delivery. Such views had first been expressed in an anti-psychiatric context by Russell Barton in his ground-breaking 1959 study of 'institutional neurosis',[74] a condition in which the patient develops certain symptoms such as social withdrawal and passivity as a direct result of being trapped in an oppressive, inhumane and thereby 'symptom-inducing' asylum. Erving Goffman built on such work in his 1961 work *Asylums*, a study of the characteristics common to 'total institutions' - that is, any closed and highly regimented environment such as an asylum, a convent or a boarding school. After spending several months working in a Washington DC mental institution, Goffman observed that such institutions forced inmates to undergo a severe programme of 'disculturation'[75] or 'training in unfitness for the world outside',[76] an ''untraining' which renders him [the patient] temporarily incapable of managing certain features of daily life on the outside, if and when he gets back to it'.[77] He concluded that inmates were dispossessed of their sense of self through a series of 'status degradation ceremonies'[78] which left them condemned to play out the 'moral career of the mental patient'.[79]

The second point to emerge from Laing's statement concerns the inherently political nature of the attribution of the label 'mad' or 'schizophrenic'. Much work has been carried out in this domain by 'labelling theorists' such as Kai Erikson who argues that:

> deviance can be defined as a conduct which is generally thought to require the attention of social control agencies – that is, conduct about which "something should be done". Deviance is not a property *inherent* in certain forms of behaviour, it is a property *conferred upon* these forms by the audiences which directly or indirectly witness them. [...] The difference between those who earn a deviant label and those who go their own way in peace depends almost entirely on the way in which the community sifts

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[74] Russell Barton, *Institutional Neurosis* (Bristol: [n. pub.], 1959).

[75] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 23.

[76] Quoted in Tom Burns, *Erving Goffman* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 149.

[77] Goffman, *Asylums*, p. 23.

[78] The phrase was first coined in this context by Harold Garfinkel in his study 'Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies', *American Journal of Sociology*, 61 (1956), 420-4.

[79] The phrase is Goffman's. See his essay of this title in *Asylums*, pp. 13-116.

out and codes the many details of behaviour to which it is witness.[80]

The causes of deviance, crime and illness are thus not necessarily situated within the individual but instead within the way in which the individual is viewed and evaluated by the criminal justice system or the medical and psychiatric professions. Mental illness, it has been argued by Thomas Scheff in particular,[81] is little more than an unhelpful label applied to those who are socially bothersome and who contravene social norms and conventions. Attributing such a label is an inherently political act, in the view of Scheff, and, as such, is open to political manipulation. This fact found good illustration in 1973 when several million mentally ill Americans effected a miraculous overnight recovery as homosexuality was dropped, despite opposition from many in the psychiatric profession, as a category of mental illness from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders III*, the bible of American clinical psychiatric diagnoses.[82] The political nature of psychiatric diagnoses has been researched most fully by historians and sociologists keen to write 'the Great Revision'[83] of the history of the psychiatric profession.[84] According to this revisionist view, the psychiatric profession assumed its powers of segregation and incarceration as a means of dealing with and morally re-educating 'deviant' individuals: be it the economically unproductive, as Andrew Scull argues persuasively with the parallel he establishes between the rise of the psychiatric

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[80] Kai T. Erikson, 'Notes on the Sociology of Deviance', in *The Other Side: Perspectives on Deviance,* edited by Howard Becker (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), pp. 9-21 (pp. 10-2).

[81] See his studies *Being Mentally Ill: A Sociological Theory* (Chicago: Aldine, 1966); 'The Labelling Theory of Mental Illness', *American Sociological Review*, 39 (1974), 444-52. A rebuttal of such 'labelling theories' can be found in H. M. van Praag, 'The Scientific Foundation of Anti-Psychiatry', *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 58 (1978), 113-41.

[82] For a survey of the struggle to have homosexuality removed from the category of 'mental disorders', see Ronald Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

[83] As Porter and Micale describe it in 'Reflections on Psychiatry and its Histories', p. 7.

[84] Two indispensable overviews of the immense amount of literature in this field can be found in David Ingleby, 'Mental Health and Social Order', in *Social Control and the State: Historical and Comparative Essays,* edited by Stanley Cohen and Andrew Scull (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983), pp. 141-88; Porter and Micale, 'Reflections on Psychiatry and its Histories'.

profession with the rise of industrial capitalism,[85] or all 'asociaux' who offend bourgeois values, as Michel Foucault has claimed in his now canonical *Folie et déraison*.[86] Anti-psychiatry's importance in this domain (and arguably its most enduring legacy) has been to throw into serious doubt the benevolence and ideology-free status of psychiatric intervention.

In a significant development of the 'conspiratorial' model of madness, anti-psychiatrists came to argue that the schizophrenic's behaviour should be read as a sign of protest against a world which, perhaps more than the patients themselves, deserves the label 'mad'. David Cooper writes polemically: 'all delusion is political statement and all madmen are political dissidents'.[87] Cooper's credo is simple: his mission as an anti-psychiatrist is to work towards a 'genuine socialist revolution'.[88] Quaintly outlandish though such views might sound to Thatcher's and Blair's jaded children, they should not, however, be seen as isolated outbursts of political quackery given that they were shared by a wide range of intellectuals on the Left in the 1970's including many unconnected with the mental health professions such as Sartre and Marcuse. Anti-psychiatrists and left-wing intellectuals more widely argued that the principal objective of the psychiatric profession was to maintain the existing, repressive social order rather than to relieve suffering. Psychiatry was thus construed as modern capitalism's ultimate weapon of social control against dissidence: 'just as we fill our jails with those who transgress the legal order, so we partly fill our asylums with those who act unsuitably';[89] or, as Laing put it memorably, 'we put people into mental hospitals not because they are suffering but because they are

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[85] See for example his *Museums of Madness: The Social Organisation of Insanity in Nineteenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982); *Social Order / Social Disorder: Anglo-American Psychiatry in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Psychiatry and Social Control in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *History of Psychiatry*, 2 (1991), 149-69.

[86] Michel Foucault, *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Plon: 1961).

[87] David Cooper, *The Language of Madness: Explorations in the Hinterland of Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1978), p. 23.

[88] *ibid.*, p. 14.

[89] Erving Goffman, *Behaviour in Public Places* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), p. 248.

insufferable'.[90] With such statements, anti-psychiatry's close affinities with the counter-cultural movements of the 1960's and 1970's become apparent: both are characterised by a rebellion against authority; a disdain for establishment institutions of any kind; and a passion for expressive behaviour. Accordingly, the zenith of anti-psychiatry's popularity was reached in an era when civil rights movements and student 'revolutions' were sweeping across the Western world and when a carnivalesque inversion of authority seemed to be reaching every sphere of life, the field of psychiatry included. F. M. Martin has argued that anti-psychiatry's importance and attraction lay not in 'its manifest absurdity when approached in rational-scientific terms', but instead in 'its place in the history of attitudes and beliefs'.[91]

> Anti-psychiatry [...] harmonised with quite widely prevalent values and aspirations of the time. Models of mental illness which identified the patient (especially the sensitive young schizophrenic) with the radical critic of a dehumanising society, his family with the oppressive forces of the established order, and defined the collusive psychiatrist as an agent of control and coercion, were dramatically congruent with the sharp questioning of established institutions and the quest for solutions.[92]

In the same way that civil rights movements were one of the first global movements of protest, stretching from San Francisco to Sydney, anti-psychiatry's impact was also felt right across the (Western) world. The movement's rise to prominence is well summed up by Peter Sedgwick who has argued that by the late 1960's

> virtually the entire Left and an enormous proportion of the liberal-arts and social-studies reading public was convinced that R. D. Laing and his band of colleagues had produced novel and essentially accurate renderings of what psychotic experience truly signified.[93]

The carnival had undoubtedly reached its peak.

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[90] Quoted in Clay, *R. D. Laing*, p. 260.
[91] F. M. Martin, *Between the Acts: Community Health Services 1959-1983* (London: Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust, 1984), p. 33.
[92] *ibid.*, p. 33.
[93] Sedgwick, *Psycho Politics*, p. 6.

Thus far in part I we have seen which elements of more traditional psychiatric practice anti-psychiatrists reacted against as well as the two of the three models of Laingian anti-psychiatric thought. I wish now to turn to how such principles were translated into clinical reality, and, as a result, to the third model of madness which Siegler attribute to Laing.

If anti-psychiatrists attack the 'psychic violence' which a family or capitalist society inflicts on a child, what do they believe can be done to repair it? 'The task in therapy', Laing argues, 'comes to be to make contact with the original 'self' of the individual which, or who, we must believe is still a *possibility*, if not an actuality, and can still be nursed back to a feasible life' (TDS, 158-9). In sum, the patient must be freed from the disconfirmatory double binds in which s/he has become entangled thanks to the competing and contradictory demands of his/her family and the capitalist hegemony surrounding them. How can this happen in psychiatric practice? Proponents of anti-psychiatry argue that a meeting of clinician and psychotic patient across 'the abyss of difference' is manifestly possible but only if a radically different 'look' is adopted from the psychiatric, 'diagnostic look' examined earlier in part I. The psychiatrist must eschew a 'look [which] is adapted to the elimination of the conditions of the possibility of understanding',[94] and adopt instead a look which attempts to understand what is going on inside and between people through 'placing the interpersonal happenings within their social context [...] and recognising and sympathetically understanding the intentions of others, and their interconnections'.[95] Unlike those working within the confines of the medical model who act as the arbiters of absolute justice and authority over their dehumanised patient, anti-psychiatrists aim to treat their patients, very simply, as human beings, restoring to their behaviour its inherent explicability and making an effort to listen to and empathise with them and understand their 'being-in-the-world'. As Laing points out, 'one may see [a patient's] behaviour as 'signs' of a 'disease'; or one may see his behaviour as expressive of his existence' (TDS, 31). At the risk of over-simplifying somewhat, anti-psychiatry chooses the latter approach, more orthodox psychiatry the

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[94] Laing, 'Laing's Understanding of Interpersonal Experience', p. 417.
[95] *ibid.*, p. 417.

former. In the same way that the Bakhtinian carnival stipulates 'the suspension of all hierarchical rank [and] privileges',[96] the relationship between psychiatrist and patient must be a personal, human-to-human one, unencumbered by the professional persona of the doctor or the patient's 'role' as patient. Echoing Martin Buber's theology, Laing writes that it is a relationship which should be characterised by authenticity and genuine mutual relatedness and which must centre on 'the original bond of *I* and *You*' (TDS, 19). In essence, this bond should put the human back into the human science of psychiatry. The individual in psychiatric care can be brought back to a position of mental health not through the rectification of neurological imbalances but through the restoration of his/her sense of authenticity and genuine mutual relatedness with others.

The significance of the role within the therapeutic process to be played by genuine relatedness and kinship, or an I-You relationship predicated on mutual recognition, was first impressed upon Laing during his formative years at Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow. In his 1985 autobiography, he describes a project he co-established at Gartnavel which became known as the 'Rumpus Room'. This was a bright, spacious and well furnished room where twelve of the most intractable chronic patients were allowed to stay from nine to five, Monday to Friday; were provided with materials for crafts and other pastimes; and were allowed to wear their own clothes and make-up. Laing reports on one specific incident in the Rumpus Room which was to have a profound effect on his later thought:

> after several months, after a lot of heart-searching, matron and superintendent overruled misgivings and allowed the nurses and patients [in the Rumpus Room] to have a gas stove and oven. They could now make tea for themselves. This was unthinkable in the ward (danger of pouring scalding water over themselves or drinking it, etc.). They made tea and they made some buns. Ian Cameron, one of the psychiatrists, took some of the buns over to the doctors' sitting room and offered them around. There were seven or eight of us psychiatrists sitting around. Only two or three were brave, or reckless, enough to eat a bun baked by a chronic schizophrenic. This incident convinced me of something. Who was crazier? Staff or patients? Excommunication runs deep. A companion means, literally, one with whom one shares bread.

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[96] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 10.

> Companionship between staff and patients had broken down. The psychiatrists were afraid of catching schizophrenia. Who knows? It might be contagious, like herpes, through mucous membranes. (WMF, 126)[97]

Genuine relatedness has broken down entirely in this example. For it to be restored again, authentic encounters need to take place. Laing describes witnessing one instance of an authentic encounter when he was on duty at Gartnavel one Hogmanay.

> The New Year is the biggest celebration in Scotland. It is marked by prolonged carousing on the part of the alcoholic fraternity, but many teetotallers celebrate the spirit of the New Year contentedly sober. There is no 'religion' about it. There is a special spirit abroad – 'Auld Lang Syne'. 'A man's a man for a' that.' In Gartnavel, in the so-called 'back wards', I have seen catatonic patients who hardly make a move, or utter a word, or seem to notice or care about anyone or anything around them year in and year out, smile, laugh, shake hands, wish someone 'A Guid New Year' and even dance […] and then by the afternoon or evening or next morning revert to their listless apathy. The change, however fleeting, in some of the most chronically withdrawn, 'backward' patients is amazing. If any drug had this effect, for a few hours, even minutes, it would be world famous, and would deserve to be celebrated as much as the Scottish New Year. The intoxication here however is not a drug, not even alcoholic spirits, but the celebration of a spirit of fellowship. (WMF, 31-2)

In the third model of madness which Siegler et al attribute to the evolution of Laing's thought - the 'psychedelic' model[98] – Laing takes much further the goals of authentic disclosure and the restoration of genuine mutual relatedness which he claims to have witnessed at Gartnavel. This model is founded on the principle that madness can act as a gateway to potentially Promethean discoveries and thus not merely represent a politically revolutionary act. The Promethean qualities of the schizophrenic's journey are evidenced by David Cooper's explicit linking of psychosis to the messianic:

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[97] Laing and his colleagues present the findings of their research in the 'Rumpus Room' in J. L. Cameron, R. D. Laing, A. McGhie, 'Effects of Environmental Changes in the Care of Schizophrenics', *The Lancet*, 31 December 1955, pp. 1384-6. For a less generous view of events in the Rumpus Room, see Jonathan Andrews, 'R. D. Laing in Scotland: Facts and Fictions from the Rumpus Room and Interpersonal Psychiatry', in *Cultures of Psychiatry and Mental Health*, edited by Gijswijt-Hofstra and Porter, pp. 121-50.
[98] Siegler et al, 'Laing's Models of Madness', pp. 953-7.

'madness [...] is a matter of voicing the realisation that I am (or you are) Christ'.[99] Undoubtedly, this psychedelic model can claim a long and illustrious cultural pedigree as the view which sees madness as a source of prophetic or divine inspiration extends from Antiquity to Shakespeare to Surrealism and beyond. In an anti-psychiatric context, it first re-surfaced in Gregory Bateson's 1961 re-edition of *Perceval's Narrative*. Bateson, an American psychiatrist who exercised a heavy influence on Laing, wrote in his introduction to this work:

> it would appear that once precipitated into psychosis the patient has a course to run. He is, as it were, embarked upon a *voyage of discovery* which is only completed by his return to the normal world, to which he comes back with insights different from those of the inhabitants who never embarked on such a voyage. Once begun, a schizophrenic episode would appear to have as definite a course as an initiation ceremony – a death and re-birth – into which the novice may have been precipitated by his family life or by adventitious circumstances, but which in its course is largely steered by endogenous process.[100]

As Bateson hints in this quotation, the traditional hierarchical relationship between sanity and insanity ought to be inverted. Laing exemplifies this position when he claims that 'what we call 'normal' (sane) is a product of repression, denial, splitting, projection, introjection and other forms of destructive action on our experience' (PE, 23-4). In other words, 'our collusive madness is what we call sanity' (PE, 62). Furthermore, he formulates in his preface to the 1964 edition of *The Divided Self* one of his most famous sound-bites: 'our 'normal', 'adjusted' state is too often the abdication of ecstasy, the betrayal of our true potentialities. [...] Many of us are only too successful in acquiring a false self to adapt to false realities' (TDS, 12). In other words, we, the sane, are radically estranged from our 'inner world', fooled into accepting as sanity a consensually validated world view which is, in Laing's view, but a 'pseudo-sanity'. The flip-side to this controversial argument is that what others call 'madness' is in fact the only true form of sanity. David Cooper writes: 'psychotic

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[99] David Cooper, 'Introduction', in Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, translated by Richard Howard (London: Tavistock, 1967), pp. vii-ix (p. vii).

[100] Gregory Bateson, 'Introduction', in *Perceval's Narrative: A Patient's Account of His Psychosis 1830-1832*, edited by Gregory Bateson (London: Hogarth, 1962), pp. v-xxii (p. xiv), my italics.

experience may, with correct guidance, lead to a more advanced human state but only too often is converted by psychiatric interference into a state of arrest and stultification of the person'.[101] As this statement suggests, disturbed behaviour should be seen not only as a 'context-sensible' form of protest against the schizophrenic's family or the dehumanising capitalist system but also as a healing voyage on which s/he will discover new insights which are blocked off to the rest of humanity and from which s/he should not be diverted by institutionalisation, psychosurgery or medical intervention of any form. 'Madness need not be all breakdown', writes Laing in one of his most oft-quoted remarks, 'it may also be breakthrough. It is potentially liberatory and renewal as well as enslavement and existential death' (PE, 110). The role of the anti-psychiatric therapist should therefore be to guide the patient through this voyage, accompanying them on their journey back into their inner selves and to existential rebirth. 'Psychotherapy must remain *an obstinate attempt of two people to recover the wholeness of being human through the relationship between them*' (PE, 45), Laing writes. The therapist must aid the patient to 'un-learn' the false selves which s/he has been forced to project by a 'disconfirmatory' family and social environment. In the next section, I examine the Kingsley Hall therapeutic community in London – 'one of the most famous but least analysed social experiments of our time'[102] - which was co-established by Laing specifically as a means of expediting just such controversial goals.

R. D. Laing, the carnival king

One of Laing's most significant contributions to the anti-psychiatric enterprise came through his involvement with the 'therapeutic communities' which anti-psychiatrists established as a means of developing alternative proposals for treating the mentally ill. Along with David Cooper and other like-minded colleagues, Laing founded in

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[101] Cooper, *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry*, p. 93.

[102] L. R. Mosher, 'An Anti-Psychiatrist's Contribution to Contemporary Psychiatry: A Personal Memoir', *International Journal of Therapeutic Communities*, 12 (1991), 43-51 (p. 44).

April 1965 the Philadelphia Association with the idea of establishing 'anti-hospitals'[103] or 'therapeutic communities' in which some of the 'violence' which had been perpetrated on the mentally ill in traditional mental institutions and in their family environment could be un-done. Given that anti-psychiatrists viewed traditional psychiatric treatment methods such as ECT and drug therapy as barriers to a patient's recovery and impediments to their 'healing voyage', they argued that what was required was a special place where, very simply, people could go to have a breakdown. Such places were to act as 'asylums' in the truest sense of the word: a sanctuary which would provide refuge and protection, precisely that which anti-psychiatrists felt mainstream forms of mental health therapy failed to guarantee those in their care. One of the most (in)famous such communities was founded in 1965 by Laing and his colleagues at Kingsley Hall in East London. The Kingsley Hall venture provides us with a helpful insight into the wider objectives of anti-psychiatric therapeutic practice, goals which Laing had formulated in part as a result of his experience of witnessing authentic encounters in the Rumpus Room at Gartnavel. In the previous section, we gained some insight into the objectives of anti-psychiatric therapy in our discussion of the psychedelic model of madness. Here, however, I want to extend this examination to the later, most popular, but by far most controversial aspects of Laingian thought because, as will become apparent in part III of this thesis, it is these elements of Laing's work which resonate most loudly with the existential positions of the chief protagonists of the four novels under analysis, despite their being the most discredited.

The founding principle of institutions such as Kingsley Hall was not to 'cure' but to 'heal' a disturbed individual. This could be done by guiding them towards a position of genuine brotherly and authentic mutual relatedness with others and by attempting to un-do the knots, double binds and disconfirmations inflicted on the schizophrenic by his/her family and/or a capitalist society. In essence, Kingsley Hall would restore individuals to the position of 'aletheia' discussed earlier, one in which the individual could be 'true to him/herself', and relate to others 'without secrecy [...], without a

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[103] A phrase first coined by David Cooper in 'The Anti-Hospital: An Experiment in Social Psychiatry', *New Society*, 11 March 1965, pp. 11-8.

veil' (SO, 129). 'Curing' could never be on the anti-psychiatric agenda as 'to cure' implies rendering the individual acceptable to others and restoring them to what anti-psychiatrists viewed as the inherently flawed state of sanity and normality. After all, they would argue, anyone who tries to match their behaviour to what is expected of them by society or their family is the one who is really mentally ill. Instead, anti-psychiatry can be seen as taking its inspiration from the Bakhtinian description of the Medieval carnival, a period during which 'people were, so to speak, reborn, for a new, purely human relations. These truly human relations were not only a fruit of imagination or abstract thought; they were experienced'.[104] By extension, as if out of a desire to recreate the kind of 'voyage of discovery' which characterised Bateson's view of *Perceval's Narrative*, Kingsley Hall would provide 'a sort of re-servicing factory for human breakdowns, [...] a place where people who have travelled further, and, consequently, may be more lost than psychiatrists and other sane people, can find their way *further* into inner space and time, and back again' (PE, 105-6). Laing continues:

> instead of the *degradation* ceremonial of psychiatric examination, diagnosis and prognostication, we need, for those who are ready for it (in psychiatric terminology those who are about to go into a schizophrenic breakdown) an *initiation* ceremonial, through which the person will be guided with full social encouragement and sanction into inner space and time by people who have been there and back again. (PE, 106)

Based on the premise that psychotic break-down should be seen not as a symptom of a genetic abnormality or neurological disorder, but instead as evidence of a existential crisis, the aim of anti-psychiatric therapy was to facilitate an existential re-birth 'in an attempt to reconstitute the self in a more authentic and integrated way'.[105] 'Psychosis', wrote Joseph Berke, a long-standing colleague of Laing's, 'is potentially growth-promoting and ego integrative'.[106] As such, the process of self-healing or 'positive disintegration'[107] would lead to the destruction of one's false selves and

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[104] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 10.

[105] Burston, *Crucible of Experience*, p. 6.

[106] Joseph H. Berke, 'Therapeutic Community Models: II Kingsley Hall (UK)', in *The Therapeutic Community Outside the Hospital*, edited by Elly Jansen (London: Croom Helm, 1980), pp. 95-101 (p. 95).

[107] *ibid.*, p. 96.

inauthentic identities and to the repairing of the damage wrought by socialisation within a 'corrupt' capitalist society. As Morton Schatzman writes: 'lost souls may be cured by going mad among people who see madness as a chance to die and be reborn'.[108]

One of the key characteristics of the therapy available at Kingsley Hall centred on what Laing was later to term 'autorhythmia'. This was seen as the principle 'of enabling individuals to find their own authentic rhythm, rather than fitting them into a communal pattern,'[109] and rather than initiating them into the role of mental patient from which they may never re-emerge. Leon Redler describes how this principle was put into practice on a daily basis:

> in terms of respecting your own way and your own time, you should not have to be bound by unnecessary restrictions as to what time you must get up in the morning, what time you must have your meals, when you can bathe, when you must go to sleep, when it is "lights out" time, all the sort of stuff that most of us take for granted. We *might* take it for granted, but most of us aren't really free to do that because we live by the clock and by the requirements of our work and other responsibilities. But I think at a time when that structure breaks down, it really is very helpful to be able to be free of any constraints of those sorts and to be able to "play it by ear" – helpful to let something be in play, rather than have the play killed off.[110]

Redler goes on to say that this was to be a place 'where people were more into a mode of *being with* than one of *doing to*'.[111] Similarly, one Kingsley Hall resident told Morton Schatzman:

> here you find various people and you can open up and talk to them, and relate, and build up understanding. Not where one person tells another what he should want, how he should dress, and eat. [...] Here [unlike in a mental hospital] a person can do something and

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[108] Morton Schatzman, 'Madness and Morals', in *Laing and Anti-Psychiatry*, edited by Robert Boyer and Robert Orrill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 181-208 (p. 194).
[109] Burston, *The Wing of Madness*, p. 80.
[110] Leon Redler, 'R. D. Laing's Contribution to the "Treatment" of "Schizophrenia": Responsible Responses to Suffering and Malaise', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 87 (2000), 561-90 (p. 571).
[111] *ibid.*, p. 570.

isn't made to conform his behaviour in relation to a model of what others think is right or wrong.[112]

The only restriction placed on a resident was that their behaviour should not deliberately harm another resident. As a result, the fact that one member of the community spent most of her time covering the walls of her room with her own faeces or that another sat in his room for twelve months communicating with no-one was not, in itself, a problem. Anti-psychiatric philosophy dictated that no treatment – at least no treatment in the conventional sense of the term – should be on offer at Kingsley Hall. Available instead was a kind of 'benign neglect', a concept based on 'a fundamental respect for personal freedoms [...] which the residents of Kingsley Hall had all too often experienced as under threat from a medical establishment which served only to invalidate their sense of self'.[113] Zbigniew Kotowicz's recent study of anti-psychiatry provides us with a useful description of this principle in operation.

> [The therapists] would attempt to create an environment in which the traditional roles of staff and patient would not be played out. Although medically trained people were the driving force behind the project no such qualification would be required of anyone who wanted to join the community as a helper.[114]

Such a description is once again reminiscent of Bakhtin's conception of the carnival, a feast which aimed above all to overcome the 'consecration of inequality'[115] characteristic of official Medieval feasts. In the same way that 'the suspension of all hierarchical precedence during carnival time was of particular significance',[116] 'all the members of the [Kingsley Hall] community would live together in the same place without any distinction of role'.[117] In sum, Kingsley Hall was to provide a living proof of the key anti-psychiatric belief that the 'abyss of difference' between

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[112] Quoted in Schatzman, 'Madness and Morals', p. 200.

[113] Mullan, *R. D. Laing: A Personal View*, p. 98.

[114] Kotowicz, *R. D. Laing and the Paths of Anti-Psychiatry*, pp. 75-6.

[115] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 10.

[116] *ibid.*, p. 10.

[117] Kotowicz, *R. D. Laing and the Paths of Anti-Psychiatry*, p. 76. For a fuller account of a resident's daily life at Kingsley Hall, see Mary Barnes and Joseph Berke, *Mary Barnes: Two Accounts of a Journey Through Madness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

psychotic and doctor could be bridged in the same way that the carnival allowed the abyss between serf and 'seigneur' to be bridged.

A second key principle of Laingian anti-psychiatric therapy is 'metanoia'. This term provides a useful insight into Laing's thought as, derived from the Greek for penitence or repentance, it is normally used within a religious context to imply a Christian conversion or evangelical re-birth which will lead to 'a new quality of thought that is beyond everyday thought'.[118] Such religious overtones to the word dovetail neatly with the aims of anti-psychiatry: that is, the bringing about of a re-birth or a 'return to sanity, to wholeness'.[119] The Laingian interpretation of 'metanoia' therefore represents a spiritual journey which enables the individual to divest him/herself of collective identity and thus join the elect who have reached a position of authenticity and who have escaped from the double binds an unliveable environment has imposed. The metanoic conversion will lead to a 'true sanity' (PE, 119), saner than the pseudo-sanity which we take to be the only possible sanity and which is a reflection of the divine. The madman can act, in Laing's evocative phrase, as 'the hierophant of the sacred' (PE, 109-10):

> true sanity entails in one way or another the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self competently adjusted to our alienated social reality: the emergence of the 'inner' archetypal *mediator of divine power*, and through this death a rebirth and the eventual re-establishment of a new kind of ego-functioning, the ego now being *the servant of the divine, no longer its betrayer*. (PE, 119, my italics)

Laing also stresses the divine characteristics of this 'transformation of a potentially liberatory kind'[120] which metanoia entails. He argues that all the therapists at work in Kingsley Hall were in fact 'attendants upon the divine [who] saw the divine as manifesting itself in the relationships that they had among themselves'.[121]

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[118] John Pettavel, *Metanoia: Essays in the Interpretation of Certain Passages in the Gospels* (Haslemere: Phene, 1983), p. 8.

[119] *ibid.*, p. 27.

[120] R. D. Laing, 'Madness or Metanoia: Some Experiences at Kingsley Hall, London. Read at the Paris Conference, [1967]', R. D. Laing Collection, Glasgow University Library, MS Laing A278.

[121] R. D. Laing, 'Draft of a Lecture Entitled "The Fourfold Foundation of Psychiatry" [1973?]', R. D. Laing Collection, Glasgow University Library, MS Laing A441.

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A crucial element in Kingsley Hall of facilitating a metanoic voyage was LSD. Laing describes thus the beneficial effects hallucinogenic drugs could have on residents:

> an LSD or mescaline session in one person, with one set in one setting may occasion a psychotic experience. Another person, with a different set and different setting, may experience *a period of super-sanity*. [...] The aim of therapy will be to enhance consciousness rather than to diminish it. Drugs of choice, if any are to be used, will be predominantly consciousness expanding drugs, rather than consciousness constrictors – the psychic energisers, not the tranquillisers.[122]

If necessary, the therapist and patient would trip together, the former acting as the latter's guide on this transformatory journey. Laing argues that:

> the relevance of drugs is that they release the personal from being as it were imprisoned inside the ego [...]. What it seems to open out is a sort of relatively undifferentiated matrix of experience which is perhaps comparable to the way a child experiences itself in the first few months of life, and beyond that again. [...] Coming back from void into the matrix is what I would call *reincarnation* and from the matrix experience into the ego again is what I would call *re-birth*.[123]

It is this 'reincarnation' which would enable the schizophrenic to finally experience authentic mutual relatedness with others.

Laing's 1967 works *The Politics of Experience* and *The Bird of Paradise* represented the high water-mark of Laing's public enthusiasm for LSD. Furthermore, *The Politics of Experience* also quickly became a Bible of radical chic, selling over six million copies in the USA alone.[124] Laing himself soon reached demi-god status, being regarded by many as 'the shaman to the underground'.[125] He was revered in

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[122] Quoted in Adrian Laing, *R. D. Laing: A Life*, pp. 120-1, my italics. For a study of Laing's use of LSD, see Stephen Snelders, 'LSD and the Dualism Between Medical and Social Theories of Mental Illness', in *Cultures of Psychiatry and Mental Health Care*, edited by Gijswijt-Hofstra and Porter, pp. 103-20.

[123] Quoted in Antonio Melechi, 'Drugs of Liberation: From Psychiatry to Psychedelia', in *Psychedelia Britannica*, edited by Antonio Melechi (London: Turnaround, 1997), pp. 21-52 (p. 47).

[124] Burston, *The Crucible of Experience*, p. 7.

[125] *ibid.*, p. 47.

quasi-messianic terms by his acolytes who saw him as the thinker who held out 'the promise of helping us build new Paradises out of old Infernos'.[126] His followers would go on 'pilgrimages'[127] to meet him in London, speak of their 'faith'[128] in him, or of the 'revelations'[129] revealed to them upon reading his work. It would be misleading, however, to assume that Laing's fame was restricted to the purely counter-cultural: by 1970 he was being hailed as one of the leading figure-heads of the British Left,[130] and in 1972 he received the honour of becoming the youngest ever thinker, with the exception of Chomsky, to have a volume dedicated to his work in the Fontana Modern Masters series.[131]

'Une fête des fous'?

In his study of the carnivalesque, Bahktin points out that the 'enthronement' of the carnival king necessarily implies a simultaneous but reverse move towards the king's eventual 'dethronement'.[132] This 'en-de-thronement' metaphor can also be applied to anti-psychiatry and the work of R. D. Laing. While works such as *The Politics of Experience* and the accompanying accolades he received represented the apogee of the anti-psychiatric carnival, they also marked the first stage of Laing's ultimate dethronement as carnival king given that the increasing idolisation he enjoyed within counter-cultural circles was paralleled by a corresponding decline in his standing among his fellow professionals. As Bob Mullan writes in relation to the Kingsley Hall experiment: 'medical opinion was decisive and undivided in its condemnation of the project, and one well-known psychiatrist believed that Laing had, at last,

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[126] Benjamin Nelson, 'Afterword: A Medium with a Message: R. D. Laing', in *Laing and Anti-Psychiatry*, edited by Boyers and Orrill, pp. 224-7 (p. 224).

[127] James S. Gordon, 'Who is Mad? Who is Sane? R. D. Laing: In Search of a New Psychiatry', *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1971, pp. 50-66 (p. 57).

[128] Mark Vonnengut, 'Why I Want to Bite R. D. Laing', *Harpers*, 248 (1974), pp. 90-2 (p. 91).

[129] Mullan, *R. D. Laing: A Personal View*, p. viii.

[130] Rael Jean Isaac and Virginia C. Armat, *Madness in the Streets: How Psychiatry and the Law Abandoned the Mentally Ill* (New York: Free Press, 1990), p. 29.

[131] Edgar Friedenberg, *Laing* (London: Fontana, 1973).

[132] Bahktin, *Rabelais and His World*, pp. 18-21.

committed professional suicide'.[133] John Bowlby, the British psychoanalyst and a one-time colleague of Laing at the Tavistock Clinic, felt that 'although Laing could have been someone', he had quite simply 'blown it'[134] with *The Politics of Experience.* Others thought he had in fact merely gone mad: Nick Crossley reports that 'one [American researcher] even got a Federal grant to study the language of *The Politics of Experience* as a way of researching that very possibility'.[135] Laing was accused of offering his patients no more than a 'homage to catatonia'[136] and, as Anthony Clare surely justifiably argues, 'it is one of the most profound ironies of the 1960's that so many of the bitterest critics of drug therapy should have been so zealous in pushing acid as the cure of everything from schizophrenia to social isolation'.[137] The Kingsley Hall community had also not proved to be the runaway clinical success Laing had hoped for given that putting into practice its aims, however laudable they may have been on paper, proved immensely problematic. At times, the community descended into something resembling chaos, a hardly surprising fact given the relatively free availability of LSD. Local residents reacted particularly badly to having what they saw as a 'loony bin' next door and, on occasions, hurled verbal and physical abuse at the residents and premises.[138] If there was friction between the community and its neighbours, things were far from perfect inside the community either. Effecting a carnivalesque rupture of barriers of caste, property, profession and age between doctors and patients proved rather more difficult in clinical practice than in theory. Some patients insisted on being treated only by qualified physicians: Mary Barnes, for example, Kingsley Hall's most famous resident, would only desist from her refusal to eat on the advice of one of the physicians; secondly, the community still required some form of high command or medical director to actually run the place on a day-to-day basis. Furthermore, despite

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[133] Mullan, *R. D. Laing: A Personal View*, p. 102.

[134] *ibid.*, p. 201.

[135] Crossley, 'R. D. Laing and the British Anti-Psychiatry Movement', p. 884.

[136] Alan Tyson, 'A Homage to Catatonia', *New York Review of Books*, 11 February 1971, pp. 3-6.

[137] Anthony Clare, 'Anthony Clare', in *R. D. Laing: Creative Destroyer*, edited by Mullan, pp. 1-3 (p. 1).

[138] Schatzman, 'Madness and Morals', pp. 200-1. See also Mullan, *R. D. Laing: A Personal View*, p. 99-101.

their non-interventionist rhetoric associated, some Kingsley Hall therapists would occasionally fall back on more traditional treatment methods: the use of tranquillisers was not unknown for example,[139] or, as in the following case cited by Sedgwick, 'a refractory member of the community was put inside a sack which was carefully tied up and left at the bottom of the stairs'.[140] Finally, relapse rates for Kingsley Hall residents were shown to be remarkably similar to those for more traditional therapy techniques.[141] These examples of clinical shortcomings at Kingsley Hall are taken from the work of some of Laing's noisy detractors, and one is left with the suspicion that their negative views stem more from their prejudices against the anti-psychiatric enterprise and Laing himself than from any direct contact with the workings of the community. Be that as it may, even Laing himself would eventually admit that the community had not been 'a roaring success',[142] and it closed its doors in 1970 when the lease on its premises expired.

If the Kingsley Hall experience is symptomatic of anti-psychiatry's relative failure to translate its philosophical principles into clinical reality, it also points to another of its failings: that its excesses and more outrageous statements came to undermine the solidity of its intellectual and philosophical principles. For example, while Laing's first major work, *The Divided Self*, had met with a relatively unconcerned response from fellow psychiatrists,[143] his involvement with the Kingsley Hall experiment, on the other hand, brought him only scorn and derision. Over the next few years, Laing continued to provide his more staid enemies with plenty of ammunition with which to attack him: his links with the LSD guru Timothy Leary;[144] his research into re-birthing and adulthood grief over the loss of one's placenta; his obsession with

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[139] See Laing, *R. D. Laing: A Life*, pp. 123-4.

[140] Sedgwick, *Psycho Politics*, p. 118.

[141] For a summary of the debate on this point, see Sedgwick, *Psycho Politics*, pp. 118-20. Other radical communities arguably produced better results than Kingsley Hall. See for example, L. R. Mosher, A. Mann and S. M. Matthews, 'Soteria: Evaluation of a Household Treatment for Schizophrenia', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 45 (1975), 455-67.

[142] Quoted in Burston, *The Wing of Madness*, p. 92.

[143] Thomas Freeman, for example, writes: 'there is nothing in Dr Laing's presentation which is not recognised daily by the practising psychiatrist'. 'Review of *The Divided Self*, *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 34 (1961), 79-80 (p. 80).

[144] On Leary's deification of Laing, see his work *The Politics of Ecstasy* (London: Paladin, 1970).

Buddhism; his heavy drinking and arrest for cannabis possession which eventually led to him being struck off the General Medical Council's medical register; even the fact that he had abandoned his first wife and their five young children were taken as evidence for his unworthiness to be taken seriously as a thinker and practitioner. Laing also suffered through his association with other, more out-spoken anti-psychiatrists than himself. His once close colleague David Cooper, for example, claimed in his work *The Death of the Family* that

> it is fatuous to speak of the death of God or the death of Man [...] until we can fully envisage *the death of the family* – that system which, as its social obligation, obscurely filters out most of our experience and then deprives our acts of any genuine and generous spontaneity.[145]

Even though Laing detested this work - it led to a definitive rupture between Cooper and Laing[146] - Laing nonetheless became branded as an anti-Christ in the moral panic over the break-up of the nuclear family because of his earlier close association with Cooper (and not least because of his description of the family unit as a 'mutual protection racket' (PE, 55)). Similarly, the widespread use of LSD within anti-psychiatric treatment methods or their belief in the liberatory powers of madness handed their establishment critics a large and painful stick with which to beat them.

After having been the darling of the media and the New Left for much of the 1960s and early 1970s, Laing suddenly disappeared from view, spending several months of 1972, for example, in a Buddhist retreat in modern-day Sri Lanka. No longer in the public eye, Laing's meteoric rise to fame and fortune was followed by an equally swift fall from grace. If in anti-psychiatry's 1960's heyday he had been the carnival king, by the Lenten 1980's he had been dethroned with the same brutal predictability which characterises the closure of every carnival. As early as 1981, a mere nine years

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[145] David Cooper, *The Death of the Family* (London: Allen Lane, 1971), pp. 7-8.
[146] On this point, see Burston, *The Wing of Madness*, p. 58.

after Laing had been hailed as the 'new god of medicine',[147] Elaine Showalter could write: 'nobody, not even the mad, seems to take Ronald Laing seriously anymore'.[148]

It would be wrong to suggest, however, that anti-psychiatry's disappearance from the cultural radar can be attributed solely to its inability to translate its principles into clinical practice. The psychiatric profession did not take kindly to its fractious offspring with the result that it displayed a high level of 'passive aggression'[149] towards Laing and anti-psychiatry in their glory-days of the 1960's and 1970's, largely ignoring its challenge and huge popularity in the hope that the movement would implode in a haze of hallucinogenic smoke. One of the few instances in which the establishment psychiatric profession did emerge from its self-imposed silence and attack its virulent critics head-on can be found in a speech by Sir Martin Roth on the occasion of his 1973 Presidential Address to the Royal College of Psychiatrists. While Roth describes as 'manifestly absurd'[150] the view held typically by anti-psychiatrists that the mainstream psychiatrist is party to a sordid conspiracy against human freedom, he reserves his greatest wrath for the methods by which anti-psychiatrists arrive at their subversive opinions. Denouncing the way in which anti-psychiatry casts aside in a facile manner 'evidence patiently gathered over the centuries about the disorders with which he [the psychiatrist] is daily confronted',[151] Roth berates the lack of clinical evidence presented to back up anti-psychiatric theories. Instead of basing diagnoses on scrupulously gathered data, anti-psychiatrists, he argues, provide little more than 'isolated anecdotes and illustrative examples of a kind which can readily be found to buttress any view, no matter how false and irrational'.[152] Most significantly, he sees anti-psychiatry as an attack on 'the

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[147] Peter Mezan shrieked: 'after Freud and Jung, now comes R. D. Laing. Pop-shrink, rebel, yogi, philosopher-king? Latest reincarnation of Aesculapius, maybe?', in the article of that title in *Esquire*, 77 (1972), pp. 92-7, 160-78 (p. 92).

[148] Showalter, 'R. D. Laing and the Sixties', p. 107.

[149] Allan Dyer, 'R. D. Laing in Post-Critical Perspective', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 124 (1974), 252-9 (p. 252).

[150] Martin Roth, 'Psychiatry and Its Critics', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 122 (1973), 373-8 (p. 374). Roth provides a more detailed rebuttal of anti-psychiatry's accusations in a later work co-authored with Jerome Kroll: *The Reality of Mental Illness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[151] *ibid.*, p. 374.

[152] *ibid.*, p. 375.

place of science, and ultimately upon the place of reason, in the investigation of the phenomena with which psychiatry deals'.[153] No doubt piqued by the popularity of the anti-psychiatric position among the chattering classes of the day, Roth declares that 'diatribe and assertions unsupported by evidence are no longer acceptable as the foundation for policy-making in efforts to help those with mental disease'.[154] Yet it seems clear that whatever the validity of his contentions, the paradigm of psychiatric orthodoxy within which Roth operates is so antithetical to anti-psychiatry's overtly politicised philosophising that his engagement with Laing's work can only ever represent a 'dialogue de sourds'.

The force of the criticisms put forward by the psychiatric orthodoxy, when taken along with anti-psychiatry's ability to self-destruct, have resulted in a situation today in which anti-psychiatry would appear to exert little influence over contemporary psychiatric practice. Its failure to penetrate the psychiatric mainstream is evidenced by the textbooks currently recommended to students of psychiatry at the University of Edinburgh of which several make no reference whatsoever to anti-psychiatry or Laing.[155] The authors of the text-books in which Laing's name does appear accord him either only foot-note status, the occasional disparaging reference to the clinical unworkability of their theories, or the most damning of faint praise: one, for example, states that 'while anti-psychiatry was important in drawing attention to the limitations of psychiatric knowledge and the dangers of stigmatisation and institutionalisation, there is little evidence to support it and it is not helpful to patients'.[156] Another describes anti-psychiatry as a 'disconnected group of psychiatrists and others, influential beyond its size [which has] little influence on the day-to-day running of most psychiatric services'.[157] The biomedical paradigm would

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[153] *ibid.*, p. 374.

[154] *ibid.*, p. 377.

[155] See for example David Goldberg and others, *Psychiatry in Medical Practice* (London: Routledge, 1994); Nicholas D. B. Rose, *Essential Psychiatry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); Michael Gelder and others, *Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Tony Thompson and Peter Mathias, editors, *Lyttle's Mental Health and Disorder* (London: Harcourt, 2000).

[156] Paul Harrison and others, *Lecture Notes on Psychiatry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 52.

[157] Johnstone and others, *Companion to Psychiatric Studies*, p. 837.

appear to reign supreme today, a view exemplified by one recent contribution to the debate entitled 'biological psychiatry – is there any other kind?',[158] and by the excitement generated in clinical psychiatric circles by the imminent cracking of the human genetic code, an advance which some believe will lead to the pin-pointing of a 'schizophrenic gene'.[159]

Anti-psychiatry's role in bringing about the most notable shift in policy towards the care of the mentally ill over the last forty years – deinstitutionalisation – has similarly been called into question: two recent comprehensive studies of the history of deinstitutionalisation in the UK damningly make no mention whatsoever of anti-psychiatry.[160] It has also been argued that institutions were only able to throw open their doors because of the advances made in drug therapy over the past fifty years rather than because of any philosophical shift of emphasis in psychiatric practice which anti-psychiatry may have inspired.[161] Similarly, the move towards desinstitutionalisation and 'care in the community' is often attributed to the need experienced by fiscally pressurised governments to curb increasingly stretched social security budgets.[162] It could be argued, then, that anti-psychiatry has made only a very limited impact on contemporary psychiatric practice and that its call for a radical change in direction in psychiatric practice has either gone unnoticed or else was drowned out in the cacophony of scandal emanating from its proponents. Consequently, the analogy between anti-psychiatry and the carnival can surely be extended further. One oft-made criticism of the Bakhtinian vision of the carnival is

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[158] Samuel B. Guze, 'Biological Psychiatry – Is There Any Other Kind?', *Psychological Medicine*, 19 (1989), 314-22; see also Samuel B. Guze, *Why Psychiatry is a Branch of Medicine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Mervat Nasser, 'The Rise of Anti-Psychiatry', *Psychiatric Bulletin*, 19 (1995), 743-6.

[159] See for example Peter McGuffin and Neilson Martin, 'Behaviour and Genes' *British Medical Journal*, 319 (1999), 37-40.

[160] Douglas Bennett, 'The Drive Towards the Community', in *150 Years of British Psychiatry 1841-1991*, edited by Berrios and Freeman, pp. 321-32; Julian Leff, editor, *Care in the Community: Illusion or Reality?* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1997).

[161] Goodwin, *Comparative Mental Health Policy*, p. 30.

[162] See Andrew Scull's seminal criticism of the cost-cutting policies introduced by the New Right: *Decarceration: Community Treatment and the Deviant. A Radical View* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984). Unsurprisingly, his views have met with equally strong opposition: see Joan Busfield, *Managing Madness: Changing Ideas and Practice* (London: Hutchinson, 1986).

exemplified by Caryl Emerson's statement that 'in its functioning as society's safety valve, as a scheduled event that worked to domesticate conflict by temporarily sanctioning victimisation, medieval carnival in practice could be more repressive than liberating.'[163] Anti-psychiatry's attempt to invert medical legitimacy and authority could be said to have fulfilled a similar function: that is, to have functioned as a safety valve for establishment psychiatry's concerns about its objectives and treatment methods, and also, arguably, to have led to a parallel re-imposition of that same legitimacy and authority once the anti-psychiatric carnival interlude had passed. After all, if in 2001 one were to ask anyone under the age of 35-40 (and not merely non-medical professionals) whether they have heard of anti-psychiatry or the work of Laing, the answer would probably be 'no'. It is arguable, then, that anti-psychiatry ultimately failed in its bid to reform psychiatric practice. Indeed, many within the modern-day psychiatric establishment would plump for the view that anti-psychiatry represented little more than an embarrassing, inconsequential and best forgotten 'fête des fous'.

Rise now and be the notion again

In light of the apparent failure of anti-psychiatry to achieve its ideological and practical therapeutic goals, and in light of the derision with which it is viewed today by many in the psychiatric main-stream, the question therefore arises: are the works of R. D. Laing not better off left gathering dust in the library stacks of psychiatric history? One aim of this thesis is to argue that this should not necessarily be the case and to propose instead that the field of literary textual analysis could provide a more welcoming home for Laing's work than current establishment psychiatric practice. To lay the foundation for a justification of this view, it is worth bearing in mind that despite the apparently damningly conclusive nature of the remarks quoted earlier,

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[163] Caryl Emerson, *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 164-5. For a full discussion of the polemic surrounding the alleged 'safety valve' function of the carnivalesque, see Simon Dentith, *Bakhtinian Thought: An Introductory Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 70-87.

critical opinion over Laing's legacy nonetheless remains divided. While several Laing obituaries, for example, were certainly hostile to his work and suggested with ill-disguised glee that the ghost of anti-psychiatry could finally be exorcised,[164] others painted a more positive picture of his achievements. Anthony Clare wrote:

> I feel confident that, for some time to come, when people reach for a book which will help them understand what being in the throes of a severe mental illness might be like, they will not reach for one of the many weighty, researched and solid texts currently available, but for one of Laing's personal, passionately written and polemical books.[165]

John Clay has also recently suggested that: 'few psychiatrists, psychoanalysts and psychotherapists since the 1960's have not been affected by his pronouncements and modified their thinking and practice as a result'.[166] Furthermore, even if Laing today remains a persona non grata in the lecture theatres of undergraduate psychiatry, his discredited theories still echo in the on-going professional debate over the nature and causes of schizophrenia,[167] particularly among the many professionals 'who find that the diagnosis [of schizophrenia] lacks logical, moral, or clinical integrity'.[168] On a practical level, interest has recently snow-balled in the therapeutic applications of Laing's writings,[169] an interest in no small measure stimulated by the work of the

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[164] Such is the case of the obituary which appeared in *The Times*, 24 August 1989, p. 14.

[165] Clare, 'Ronald David Laing 1927-1989', p. 88.

[166] Clay, *R. D. Laing*, p. 268.

[167] Two indispensable summaries of this re-assessment of Laing's and anti-psychiatry's role in the debate on the causes and nature of schizophrenia are: T. M. Keen, 'Schizophrenia: Orthodoxy and Heresies. A Review of Alternative Possibilities', *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 6 (1999), 415-24; and Newnes, Holmes and Dunn, editors, *This is Madness: A Critical Look at Psychiatry and the Future of Mental Health Services*. Other studies to take a positive view on Laing's achievements and contribution to contemporary psychiatric practice include: Mary Boyle, *Schizophrenia: A Scientific Delusion?* (London: Routledge, 1990); F. A. Jenner et al, *Schizophrenia: A Disease or Some Ways of Being Human?* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); Peter K. Chadwick, *Schizophrenia: The Positive Perspective. In Search of Dignity for Schizophrenic People* (London: Routledge, 1997); Liam Clarke, 'Ten Years On: The Abiding Presence of R. D. Laing', *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 6 (1999), 313-20.

[168] Keen, 'Schizophrenia: Orthodoxy and Heresies', p. 415.

[169] See for example Anthony Lunt, *Apollo versus the Echomaker: Psychotherapy, Dreams and Shamanism - A Laingian Approach* (Longmead: Element Books, 1990); Justin A. Franck, 'Listening with the Big Ear: A Laingian Approach to Psychotic Families', *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, 18 (1990), 131-44; Redler, 'R. D. Laing's Contribution to the "Treatment" of "Schizophrenia"'; Kirk J. Schneider, 'R. D. Laing's Existential-Humanistic Practice: What Was He Actually *Doing*?', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 87

American psychoanalyst Guy Thompson.[170] Furthermore, while the move over the last forty years towards deinstitutionalisation within mental health primary care cannot be attributed to the influence of anti-psychiatry alone, it was still given a strong boost by the campaigns and polemics which Laing's work provoked.[171]

Why then has anti-psychiatry largely remained anathema to the mainstream psychiatric orthodoxy? Was it really all a mere 'fete des fous'? I would argue not. What seems to have happened is that practice over the last forty years mainstream psychiatric has come to meet many of the objections which anti-psychiatrists initially raised: community care, anti-institutionalism, patients' rights and advocacy groups all form an essential part of psychiatric policy today. Yet these were also moves for which Laing and his anti-psychiatric colleagues argued for vociferously and which at the time were met with hostility from some quarters of the psychiatric profession. However, in taking ownership of many of the principles which anti-psychiatry stood for (or at least a watered-down version of them) mainstream psychiatry has airbrushed out of its history the significant - if not decisive – contribution made by Laing and anti-psychiatry in the move to more patient-centred methods of mental health primary care delivery. As one observer has remarked cogently: 'Laing has suffered the indignity of becoming a climate of opinion – and survived'.[172] Anti-psychiatry thus acted as a wake-up call to the psychiatric profession, reminding it of

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(2000), 591-600; Brent Potter, 'Comprehending Madness: The Contextualisation of Psychotherapy in R. D. Laing', *Janus Head*, 4 (2001), 159-69.

[170] See 'The Fidelity to Experience in R. D. Laing's Treatment Philosophy'; 'M. Guy Thompson', in *R. D. Laing: Creative Destroyer*, edited by Mullan, pp. 325-39; 'Existential Psychoanalysis: A Laingian Approach', in *Psychoanalytic Versions of the Human Condition: Philosophies of Life and Their Impact on Practice*, edited by Paul Marcus and Alan Rosenberg (New York: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 332-61; 'The Heart of the Matter'.

[171] For positive views of Laing's and anti-psychiatry's contribution to the move towards deinstitutionalisation, see: Phil Brown, *The Transfer of Care: Psychiatric Deinstitutionalisation and its Aftermath* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 167-205; Graham Thornicroft and Paul Bebbington, 'Deinstitutionalisation – Freedom From Hospital Closure to Service Development', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 155 (1989), 739-53; Joan Busfield, 'Restructuring Mental Health Services in Twentieth-Century Britain', in *Cultural Psychiatry and Mental Health Care*, edited by Gijswijt-Hofstra and Porter, pp. 9-28.

[172] Hugh Barnes, 'The Many Faces of R. D. Laing', *Glasgow Herald*, 3 October 1987, p. 7.

the unfeasibility of the value-free objectivity to which it aspires. Peter Sedgwick writes:

> whatever exaggerations the more radical anti-psychiatrists and labelling theory sociologists have engaged in, they have shown convincingly that both diagnoses and treatment measures in psychiatry are founded on ethical judgements and social demands whose content is sometimes reactionary, often controversial and nearly always left unstated.[173]

Undoubtedly, the preference of most anti-psychiatrists for headline-grabbing sound-bites and their impassioned evangelising irritated their mainstream colleagues. Digby Tantam remarks: 'anti-psychiatrists were moralists first, and scientists second [...]. Critics of their position were enemies, not discussants'.[174] Moreover, the overt philosophising and moralising of Laing and his cohorts was intensely difficult to swallow for a profession whose dominant thought paradigm is predicated on the scrupulous accuracy and objectivity of a positivistic science. Interestingly, one of the founding theories of anti-psychiatric practice – Bateson's double bind theory[175] – has been criticised more for being an unresearchable construct, and therefore one which is impossible to test and verify, rather than for any alleged lack of foundation in clinical reality.[176] In a wider sense, John Clay makes the surely apposite remark that:

> Laing was often right about the big things – the need to listen extra carefully to patients, to respect their multi-layered communications and the inner world of a divided self – but he made errors for which his critics rarely forgave him, among which were [sic] his tendency to produce *aperçus* at the expense of accuracy.[177]

Despite the evidence cited from current psychiatry text-books, it would be wrong to suggest that interest in Laing's work has dried up: the publication of several Laing

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[173] Sedgwick, *Psycho Politics*, p. 25.

[174] Tantam, 'The Anti-Psychiatry Movement', p. 344.

[175] See p. 25.

[176] See in this connection the two studies by Mathijs Koopmans in the on-line journal *Dynamic Psychology*: 'Schizophrenia and the Family: Double Bind Theory Revisited' http://www.goertzel.org/dynapsyc/1997.Koopmans.html; and 'Schizophrenia and the Family II: Paradox and Absurdity in Human Communication Reconsidered', http://www.goertzel.org/dynapsyc/1998/KoopmansPaper.htm.

[177] Clay, *R. D. Laing*, p. 268.

biographies in the 1990's exemplifies an important resurgence of interest in Laing's life and work. While many of these concentrate on the gory details of Laing's colourful personal life,[178] others examine his role in the wider anti-psychiatry movement,[179] or the philosophical, political and religious roots of his thought.[180] Significantly, Laing's autobiography, first published in the mid-1980's, was re-issued by Canongate in 1998 while hard-back editions of seven of his key works were published by Routledge in 1998 and 1999. Laing has also been the object of attention from researchers in the field of Scottish studies with the argument that Laing warrants swift re-habilitation into the canon of twentieth-century Scottish thinkers having recently been put forward by Cairns Craig in his study of the modern Scottish novel.

> The model of the person that is provided by [John] Macmurray and used by Laing lies behind much of modern Scottish writing – in part because it derives from the same traditions of thought that are shared by those writers and in part because many of the writers of the past half century have been influenced by one or other of these thinkers, or by other writers who have been so influenced.[181]

A fine example of such an influence can be found in Gavin Miller's recent examination of Alasdair Gray's re-working of Laing's conceptual models within, for example, *1982 Janine* and *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*.[182] One aim of this thesis is to tap into this recent resurgence of interest in Laing's work in areas beyond the field of clinical psychiatry and to argue for its relevance not only to Scottish studies but also the field of French studies and textual analysis more widely.

One reason why Laing's work, more than that of other anti-psychiatrists, is pertinent to the literary lies in its heavy reliance on literary examples as a means of supporting his theories of schizophrenia. His work - in particular his early writing - is littered

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[178] Such is the case for: Adrian Laing: *R. D. Laing: A Life*; Burston, *The Wing of Madness*, pp. 1-150; Mullan, editor, *Conversations with R. D. Laing;* Clay, *R. D. Laing*; Mullan, *R. D. Laing, A Personal View*; Mullan, editor, *R. D. Laing: Creative Destroyer*.

[179] Kotowicz, *R. D. Laing and the Paths of Anti-Psychiatry*.

[180] Burston, *The Wing of Madness*, pp. 151-251; Burston, *The Crucible of Experience*. See also footnotes 15 and 18 in the thesis introduction.

[181] Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 114.

[182] Miller, 'Transcendental Kinship', pp. 112-83.

with quotations from writers such as Shakespeare, Kafka, Dostoevsky or Beckett with the result that the distance between Laingian anti-psychiatry and the literary is less than might be initially assumed. In fact, one of Laing's most powerful and insightful analyses centres not on a case-study drawn from his clinical experience but on an examination of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, and, specifically, on the collusive, mystifying 'psychic violence' Raskolnikov's mother inflicts on her son (SO, 164-73). Furthermore, Robert Coles has argued that the literary qualities of Laing's writing are all too often overlooked:

> what we ought to keep in mind is that Laing is a writer and a poet, an aphorist, a symbolist. And in that sense what he does to patients is what Flannery O'Connor or Faulkner does to the Southener in the courthouse. As a writer Laing etches out things, draws out things, emphasises, points up as artists always do, and makes larger than life so that we will be somehow responsive to qualities in people and situation that we might ordinarily miss.[183]

A further reason why Laing's work is instructive in the domain of literary analysis emerges from an examination of the impact on literary criticism of the work of Freud and Lacan. Freud-bashing has a long and illustrious pedigree (much longer than the history of Laing-bashing), Freud having been accused of being everything from 'a therapeutic danger and fraud' to 'an incestuous, murdering, masturbating and abortionizing cocaine addict'.[184] Lacan is also hardly short of detractors as evidenced by the recent polemic stirred up by Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont's *Impostures intellectuelles*.[185] Yet despite such slating, the work of Freud and Lacan still remains intensely productive within literary criticism. Moreover, psychoanalysis has made for such a powerful literary tool because of its insistence that an analysand's words, however confused and unintelligible they may initially appear, should in fact be seen as fully intelligible, albeit after a lengthy interpretative process. Laing and anti-psychiatry adopt a similar therapeutic approach towards the potential significance of

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[183] Robert Coles et al, 'R. D. Laing and Anti-Psychiatry: A Symposium', in *Laing and Anti-Psychiatry*, edited by Boyers and Orrill, pp. 157-87 (p. 176).
[184] Porter and Micale provide a handy summary of the enormous range of accusations Freud has been charged with over the years: 'Reflections on Psychiatry and Its Histories', pp. 18-9.
[185] Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, *Impostures intellectuelles* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1997), pp. 25-39.

a patient's utterances. In the next section, I will examine some of the uses to which Laing's theories have already been put within the sphere of literary analysis. We have already seen that a small number of studies have been carried out in the field of Scottish studies in relation to the Laingian analyses of literary texts and only one in the field of French studies.[186] Before progressing to my own extended Laingian analysis of four French nineteenth-century novels, I wish to examine the other studies devoted to the intersection between literary texts and the work of R. D. Laing. As far as I am aware, this is the first such survey to have been attempted to date.

Laingian interpretations of literary texts: a survey of criticism

Of the dozen or so Laingian analyses, most demonstrate how the work of a particular writer - Poe and Shakespeare figure highly among the authors examined - provides a case study for a specific notion within Laing's theories on psychiatric practice or schizophrenia. Andria Beacock, for example, discusses Hamlet's existential position within the Laingian context of 'ontological insecurity' and the consequent development of false self systems. This approach is perhaps not as novel as it might appear given Laing's insistence on his indebtedness to the work of Shakespeare.[187] Several other critics examine texts which, in their view, also offer literary exemplars of the Laingian condition of 'ontological insecurity' and its corollaries 'dehumanisation' and 'disembodiment',[188] while A. R. Atkins takes the concept of

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[186] See p. 9.

[187] Andria Beacock, 'Notes on Melancholia / Schizophrenia as a Social Disease: Robert Burton, R. D. Laing, and *Hamlet*', *Massachusetts Studies in English*, 6 (1979-80), 1-14.

[188] See David J. Kleinbard, 'Laing, Lawrence and the Maternal Cannibal', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 58 (1971), 5-13; David J. Kleinbard, 'D. H. Lawrence and Ontological Insecurity', *PMLA*, 89 (1974), 154-63; Charles B. Harris, 'Todd Andrews, Ontological Insecurity, and *The Floating Opera*', *Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction*, 18 (1976), 34-50; Michael Coulson Berthold, 'Ontological Insecurity in *Martin Chuzzlewit*', *Dickens Studies Newsletter*, 14 (1983), 135-42; Manfred Draudt, 'Reality or Delusion? Narrative Technique and Meaning in Kipling's *The Man Who Would be King*', *English Studies*, 65 (1984), 316-26; Michael Patterson, 'A "Laingian" Reading of Pirandello's *Henry IV*', *Modern Drama*, 27 (1984), 637-45; Fritz Oehlschlaeger, 'Willa Cather's *Consequences* and *Alexander's Bridge*: An Approach Through R. D. Laing and Ernest Becker', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 32 (1986), 191-202; Henry Kozicki, 'The "Unholy Battle" with the Other in George Meredith's *Modern*

'ontological insecurity' as the basis for a biographical study of D. H. Lawrence and, specifically, his often troubled personal relations with women.[189] Yet this clutch of articles appears oddly unsatisfactory because in each of them Laingian theory provides little more than background decoration to the text under examination. Indeed, it is arguable that the author of each study would have arrived at much the same conclusions without ever bringing Laing's work into play.

Works which engage more critically and fruitfully with Laingian theory take as their starting point the belief which is often – albeit in a somewhat misleading form - attributed to Laing that disturbed family behaviour induces the onset of schizophrenia. That madness is but a logical reaction to an unliveable family environment is taken as the starting point for Alan Sinfeld's illuminating study of *King Lear*[190] as well as of Wade Harrell's study of the plays of the English playwright David Mercer who, according to Harrell, portrays characters who undergo 'a process of psychological disintegration brought on by [their] inability to deal with the insanity of the world and people around them'. Harrell argues that 'Mercer's ideas of sanity parallel those of R. D. Laing'[191] because 'what both men seemed to be concerned with ultimately was offering an explanation in psychological

Love', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 23 (1987), 142-60; Lawrence R. Broer, *Sanity Pleas: Schizophrenia in the Novels of Kurt Vonnengut* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989), pp. 20-2; Jean-Luc Vandaele, 'La question du corps en poésie en hommage à R. Laing', *Psychologie médicale*, 22 (1990), 1062-6; John Guzlowski, 'Connectedness and Separateness in Anne Tyler's *The Accidental Tourist*: A Laingian Analysis', *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology*, 15 (1994), 63-74; Jane Unsworth, 'Why Does An Author Who Apparently Draws So Much On Autobiography Seem Committed to 'Alienating' the Reader? A Reflection on Theories of Autobiography With Reference to the Work of Janet Frame', in *The Uses of Autobiography*, edited by Julia Swindells (London: Taylor and Francis, 1995), pp. 24-30; Michelle Warner, 'The Development of the Psycho-Social Cannibal in the Fiction of Bret Easton Ellis', *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology*, 17 (1996), 140-6; Ed Moffatt, 'Grenouille: A Modern Schizophrenic in the Enlightening World of *Das Parfum*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 37 (2001), 298-313.
[189] A. R. Atkins, 'Recognising the "Stranger" in D. H. Lawrence's *The Trespasser*', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 20 (1991), 1-20.
[190] Alan Sinfeld, 'Lear and Laing', *Essays in Criticism*, 24 (1976), 1-16.
[191] Wade Harrell, 'A Laingian Schizophrenic in Mercer's *Ride a Cock Horse*', in *Within the Dramatic Spectrum*, edited by Karelisa Hartigan (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), pp. 88-96 (p. 88-9).

terms of the growing generation conflicts in Britain in the 1960's'.[192] Mercer's 1967 play *In Two Minds*, later filmed by Ken Loach under the apposite title *Family Life*, provides strong evidence of his wider indebtedness to Laing's writings, and in the apparently sole French-language Laingian analysis, Brigitte Gauthier writes: 'Mercer créa son héroïne Kate Winter (Janice dans le film) en rassemblant les faits à partir de différentes histoires de *Sanity, Madness and the Family* de R. D. Laing'.[193] Laing's broader belief that the psychiatric profession is complicit in conspiring to condemn to asylums these same individuals who find intolerable their family and social environment is explored by Pasquale Accardo in his comparative study of Karl Kraus and G. K. Chesterton.[194]

Of all the Laingian concepts to have caught the eye of critics, it is that of divided selfhood which has been taken up with the greatest success. Rodger Beehler, for example, suggests that Oliver Sacks' 1985 work *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* can be read fruitfully in conjunction with Laing's work as an exploration of

> what we awkwardly refer to as "selfhood" [and of] how far a person's own agency contributes to those various states (ranging from mute immobility to violent predatory frenzy) that we collect under the vague and shifting expressions 'psychosis', 'insanity', 'madness', and 'mental illness.[195]

Sam B. Girgus takes up this preoccupation with selfhood in his studies of the work of Edgar Allan Poe and argues that in Poe's story 'William Wilson', 'Wilson is presented [...] in a manner that makes him almost a casebook study of the false-self system as described by Laing'.[196] In a further Laing-inspired analysis of Poe's work, Girgus again proposes that 'Laing's approach can provide some insight into the

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[192] *ibid.*, p. 95. Showalter also draws attention to the heavy Laingian influence on Mercer's work in her study 'R. D. Laing and the Sixties', pp. 123-5.

[193] Brigitte Gauthier, 'Espaces asilaires: Techniques cinématographiques de l'aliénation dans *Family Life* de Ken Loach', *La Licorne*, 28 (1994), 101-11 (p. 101).

[194] Pasquale Accardo, 'Parallel Lives: The Anti-Psychiatry of G. K. Chesterton and Karl Kraus', *Chesterton Review*, 13 (1987), 333-9.

[195] Rodger Beehler, 'Madness and Method', *Philosophy*, 68 (1993), 369-88 (p. 369).

[196] Sam B. Girgus, 'R. D. Laing and Literature: Readings of Poe, Hawthorne and Kate Chopin', in *Psychological Perspectives on Literature: Freudian Dissidents and Non-Freudians. A Casebook*, edited by Joseph Natoli (Archon: Shoe String Press, 1964), pp. 181-97 (p. 189).

existential condition of many of Poe's characters in terms of their "schizoid way of being-in-the-world" as divided, disembodied and false selves'.[197] More significant, however, is his use of Laing's famous view - 'madness need not be all breakdown. It may also be breakthrough. It is potentially liberation and renewal as well as enslavement and existential death' (PE, 110) - as a basis for the argument that:

> Poe to some extent, of course, shares Laing's view of madness as breakthrough. But he seems far less certain about the nature of the reality beyond that breakthrough. [...] Poe also might have agreed with Laing when Laing says that we all have become in one way or another mad. But unlike Laing, Poe seems uncertain that there is anything else. He seems to feel that if, like the narrator of "Usher", we break through our prison, on the outside we will find only another prison.[198]

The notion that madness can lead to a metanoic re-birth – formulated in *The Bird of Paradise* and *The Politics of Experience* - is as fundamental to Laing's later thought as it was controversial in its day. Claude J. Rawson describes *The Bird of Paradise*, as 'a journey into the self, and an exploration of the radical madness of the human condition, of the kind (it might be said) which Swift's *Tale* [*of the Tub*] both mocks, and *is*';[199] while Denis McCort argues that with *The Politics of Experience*, 'Laing becomes heir to the tradition of the [German] Romantic quest for transcendence',[200] as explored by Schlegel, Hoffman or Novalis. The novelist perhaps most frequently associated with *The Politics of Experience* is Laing's contemporary Doris Lessing, a linkage made no doubt as a result of the close parallels between, on the one hand, the hope for re-birth which Laing laid out in *The Politics of Experience* and, on the other, Lessing's view of madness as revelation and cure first introduced in *The Golden Notebook* and explored more fully in *The Four-Gated City* and *Briefing for a*

[197] Sam B. Girgus, 'Poe and R. D. Laing: The Transcendent Self', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 13 (1976), 299-309 (p. 299). See also a further Poe study by Girgus entitled 'Poe and the Transcendent Self', in *The Law of the Heart: Individualism and the Modern Self in American Literature* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979), pp. 24-36.
[198] Girgus, 'Poe and R. D. Laing: The Transcendental Self', p. 309.
[199] Claude J. Rawson, ''Tis Only Infinite Below': Speculations on Swift, Wallace Stevens, R. D. Laing and Others', *Essays in Criticism*, 22 (1972), 161-81 (p. 166).
[200] Denis McCort, 'R. D. Laing and the German Romantic Quest for Transcendence', *West Virginia University Philological Papers*, 28 (1982-3), 23-7 (p. 23).

Descent into Hell. Vlastos feels able to contend that Laing and Lessing should not only be read in conjunction with one another but, more importantly, that both should be seen as 'social visionaries [and] prophets of contemporary culture'.[201] This point has been reiterated by Elaine Showalter:

> the evolution of Lessing's fiction in the 1960s parallels Laing's movement from an interpretation of schizophrenia as an intelligible and potentially healing response to conflicting social demands, to a view of madness as a form of rebellion, and the schizophrenic as the sanest person in a mad society.[202]

Showalter also believes that 'virtually all of Doris Lessing's fiction in the 1960's dramatizes Laing's theories; indeed Lessing and Laing seem often like collaborators writing the words and the music to some vast opera of inner space'.[203]

Such approaches to Lessing's fiction can also be situated within the significant camp of Laing-inspired feminist approaches to literary texts, feminism having initially found important ammunition in Laing's analyses of women's oppression, even though it was eventually to be left thoroughly disappointed.[204] Vlastos, for example, has put forward the argument that:

> for Lessing, as well as for Laing, fragmentation, compartmentalisation, splitting is seen as *the* essential problem of the makeup of our individual lives and of our society. Thus Anna in *The Golden Notebook* is consciously and perpetually tormented by the conflicts between her different roles as a woman – mistress, mother, friend – and by the painful discrepancies between her aspirations and her accomplishments as artist and as political activist. And, like the failures of all Lessing protagonists, Anna's failures are only partially personal. The division within herself as a woman are also socially determined – condoned or encouraged – by convention.[205]

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[201] Marion Vlastos, 'Doris Lessing and R. D. Laing: Psychopolitics and Prophecy', *PMLA*, 91 (1976), 245-58 (p. 246).

[202] Showalter, *The Female Malady*, p. 238.

[203] Showalter, 'R. D. Laing and the Sixties', p. 125. For a Laingian analysis of Lessing's novel *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, see Roberta Rubenstein, 'Briefing on Inner Space: Doris Lessing and R. D. Laing', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 63 (1976), 83-93.

[204] A good summary of the criticisms of anti-psychiatry which feminists have proposed, see Showalter, *The Female Malady*, pp. 220-47. For a less cutting analysis than Showalter's and one which is oriented towards clinical practice, see Jane M. Ussher, *Women's Madness: Misogyny or Mental Illness* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 129-209.

[205] Vlastos, 'Doris Lessing and R. D. Laing', p. 246.

Cynthia Griffin Wolff's impressive Laingian / feminist study takes a similar line with regard to Edna Pontellier, the chief protagonist of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, to that of Vlastos. Wolff argues that 'by using R. D. Laing's description of the "schizoid" personality, it might be possible to better assess the configuration of Edna's personality',[206] within the oppressive patriarchal environment from which she is only able to find ultimate release and escape in suicide.

If such views are of the highest interest in a literary study, they do, however, stir up a hornet's nest of controversy when applied to real patients in a clinical context. It is all very well to celebrate the triumph of an insane universe within a literary context but when one is faced with the nightmarish realities of caring for a mentally ill patient on a day-to-day basis, the lustre of insanity and the possibility of metanoic re-birth quickly fades. A critical view of Laing's belief in madness as re-birth is forwarded within a literary context by David Holbrook in his study of Sylvia Plath and Dylan Thomas whose work, Holbrook argues, echoes resonantly with Laing's analyses of the schizoid position. He draws close parallels between Laing's call in *The Politics of Experience* for 'the dissolution of the old normal ego' (PE, 119) and Plath's view of herself as 'Lady Lazarus, who commits suicide, regularly with joy, in order to be raised from the dead'.[207] Yet Holbrook goes on to castigate Laing for

> selling a schizoid fraud. His return ticket for many must prove, devastatingly, a single. Those who follow his social and psychedelic advocacy (rather than his poignant insights into schizoid experience) are likely to find that they have never left the platform.[208]

It seems clear from the preceding analysis that the studies which have been devoted to the confluence of literary texts with the psychiatric theories of R. D. Laing are not only relatively few in number when compared with, for example, psychoanalytic-

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[206] Cynthia Griffin Wolff, 'Thanatos and Eros: Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*', in *Contexts for Criticism*, edited by Donald Keesley (London: Mayfield, 1994), pp. 241-55 (p. 244).
[207] David Holbrook, 'R. D. Laing and the Death Circuit', *Encounter*, 31 (1968), 35-45 (p. 40).
[208] *ibid.*, p. 45.

inspired approaches, but are also relatively short on detail and often take a largely biographical approach to textual analysis. No extended analysis, such as that which I carry out in this thesis, has been undertaken of the possible interaction between French literary texts and Laingian theory. On this topic, there surely remains much to be said.

Conclusion to Part I

In part I, I have put forward the view that the Bakhtinian concept of the carnivalesque provides a useful analogy for our understanding of the rise and fall of the important counter-cultural movement of anti-psychiatry. I would suggest in conclusion that this analogy can be extended further. Earlier I described Caryl Emerson's view of the dethronement of the carnival king as a thoroughly reactionary event because of its re-confirmation and re-consecration of the existing social order and its provision of a social safety valve through which the discontented are presented with a controlled and short-lived opportunity to let off steam. Yet Emerson appears to overlook the fact that, in Bakhtin's estimation, carnival remains a fundamentally ambivalent event: the dethronement of the carnival king not only exemplifies the casting down and defeat of the carnivalesque insurgents, it also symbolises a fertilisation of the new. Carnival is 'the feast of becoming, change and renewal',[209] and, as such, the degradation of the king has as its principal function 'to bury, to sow and to kill simultaneously, *in order to bring forth something more and better.* [...] Degradation digs a bodily grave for a new birth; it has not only a destructive, negative aspect, but also a regenerating one'.[210] With regard to Laingian anti-psychiatry, if this 'something more and better' is perhaps unlikely to be found in the sphere of psychiatric practice, it is in the domain of literary analysis, I would argue, that the carnivalesque interlude arguably represented by Laingian anti-psychiatry will bring forth future regeneration and renewal.

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[209] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 10.
[210] *ibid.*, p. 21, my italics.

PART II:
Establishing a 'problématique'

Introduction to Part II

In part I, I put forward the argument that the field of literary criticism could provide a more welcoming home than contemporary psychiatric practice to the much-maligned body of thought developed by the anti-psychiatry movement and by R. D. Laing in particular. In part II, I lay the foundations for using Laing's work as an interpretative framework within which to analyse literary texts. The first stage in this procedure is to demonstrate that despite the intellectual and temporal distance which separates the two spheres there nonetheless exists a substantial congruence of concerns between Laingian anti-psychiatry and the four nineteenth-century novels under examination: Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir*, Balzac's *Louis Lambert*, the Goncourts' *Renée Mauperin*, and Zola's *L'Œuvre*. In the first of two chapters in part II, I therefore focus on each novel's de-motivated and seemingly 'invraisemblable' turning-point, examining the evidence presented in each work relating to why the four main protagonists commit their apparently illogical actions, all the time exploring the numerous contradictions and ambiguities surrounding these acts. In the conclusion to the individual section devoted to each novel, I draw up a series of questions which emerge from these ambiguities and contradictions and which form the basis of a 'problématique' I then attempt to resolve in part III by using as a conceptual framework the work of R. D. Laing.

The first text used in chapter one to demonstrate this 'congruence of concerns' is Balzac's novella *Louis Lambert*, 'the Ark of the Temple of the *Comédie Humaine* and its ostensible philosophical apex',[211] and the tale of a childhood genius who dies at the age of 28 after descending into a debilitating catatonic state and attempting to castrate himself a few days before his much anticipated wedding. I examine this novel before the three others under consideration - even though this means disregarding the chronological order in which the four novels were published - for the simple reason that anti-psychiatric issues impinge in a more obvious and direct manner on *Louis Lambert* than they do upon the other three novels. Indeed, many of the principal concerns of anti-psychiatry reviewed in part I - unreliable diagnoses of

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[211] Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 116.

madness; the view of madness as breakthrough as much as breakdown – arguably form the novel's principal focus. Having established the existence of a congruence of concerns between Laingian anti-psychiatry and *Louis Lambert*, I then move on to examine the other novels which do not seem to concern themselves at all with notions of madness.

The second stage in the procedure to lay the foundation for using Laing's work as an interpretative framework involves reviewing in part II the explanations which literary critics have put forward with regard to the questions raised in the first chapter of part II. Such a review does not, however, claim to be exhaustive given that producing a fully comprehensive survey of the critical literature relating to each of these four novels and novelists could account for an entire thesis in itself. I therefore focus on approaches which engage directly with the questions outlined in part II chapter one.

PART II Chapter One
A Congruence of Concerns:
Anti-Psychiatry and Four French
Nineteenth-Century Novels

En quelques minutes, la maladie, les signes et l'anxiété de la
souffrance s'étaient effacés sur la figure amaigrie de Renée. Une
beauté d'extase et de suprême délivrance, devant laquelle son
père, sa mère, son ami étaient tombés à genoux. La douceur, la
paix d'un ravissement était descendue sur elle. Un rêve semblait
mollement renverser sa tête sur les oreillers. Ses yeux grands
ouverts, tournés en haut, paraissaient s'emplir d'infini, son regard,
peu à peu, prenait la fixité des choses éternelles. (RM, 259)

Dieu seul sait qui du fou, qui du savant a été le plus près du vrai.[212]

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[212] Balzac, *Théorie de la démarche*, in *La Comédie Humaine*, XII, pp. 259-302 (p. 265).

Anti-psychiatry and *Louis Lambert*

At first glance, it seems clear that Louis goes, quite simply, spectacularly mad towards the end of his life. After all, Louis's uncle tells the narrator that following Louis's first 'accès de catalepsie', he remained 'pendant cinquante-neuf heures immobile, les yeux fixes, sans manger ni parler' (LL, 677), after which he fell into 'une mélancolie que rien ne put dissiper' (LL, 679). In the throes of such torment, 'il frottait habituellement une de ses jambes sur l'autre par un mouvement machinal que rien n'avait pu réprimer' (LL, 682), and would limit his speech to elliptical, seemingly incomprehensible utterances such as 'les anges sont blancs!' (LL, 682). To cap it all, Esquirol, the high priest of nineteenth-century French psychiatry, declares him incurable and advises he be kept in a quiet, darkened room (LL, 679). This diagnosis has since been corroborated by several modern-day psychiatrists: Jacques Borel insists on Louis's inherent incomprehensibility when he writes that 'le schizophrène s'y découvre [in Louis] tout entier, avec sa figure propre, sa singularité, son étrangeté et son mystère';[213] while Henri Claude and J. Lévy-Valensi suggest that Louis's condition is 'typique de la schizophrénie pure avec son développement progressif vers l'état démentiel'.[214] So impressed are these clinicians by Balzac's anticipation of the schizophrenic condition that they feel confident enough to claim that the protagonist Louis Lambert could not have been an invention of Balzac's imagination: 'tout nous permet de conclure que le condisciple de Balzac au collège de Vendôme a existé, qu'il fut un dément précoce dont l'observation a été minutieusement relevée'.[215] Other psychiatrists congratulate Balzac on having 'discovered' and provided an early literary representation of the schizophrenic

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[213] Jacques Borel, *Médecine et psychiatrie balzaciennes: La science dans le roman* (Paris: Corti, 1971), p. 105.

[214] Henri Claude and J. Lévy-Valensi, 'Un schizophrène dans « La Comédie Humaine »', *Le Progrès Médical*, 7 April 1934, pp. 585-90 (p. 590). Similar diagnoses can be found in: A. Devic and G. Morin, 'A propos de la démence précoce. Balzac précurseur de Bleuler', *Lyon médical*, 25 September 1927, pp. 305-11; F. Bonnet-Roy, *Balzac, les médecins, la médecine et la science* (Paris: Editions des Horizons de France, 1944), pp. 43-4; Henri Evans, *'Louis Lambert' et la philosophie de Balzac* (Paris: Corti, 1951), pp. 78-83; Moïse Le Yaouanc, *Nosographie de l'humanité balzacienne* (Paris: Maloine, 1959), pp. 348-61; Max Ridard, *'Louis Lambert' et la métapsychologie balzacienne* (Paris: Foulon, 1960), pp. 25-46; Robert Smadja, *Corps et roman: Balzac, Thomas Mann, Dylan Thomas, Marguerite Yourcenar* (Paris: Champion, 1998), p. 40.

[215] Claude and Lévy-Valensi, 'Un schizophrène dans « La Comédie Humaine »', p. 585.

condition some eighty years ahead of Bleuler.[216] Such textual evidence, when taken along with the corroboration provided by several clinical psychiatrists and literary critics, would appear to suggest that Louis does indeed go clinically mad. More significantly, it also suggests that he is beyond all comprehension, and, as such, that he is deserving of the kind of de-humanising, invalidating 'diagnostic look' which denies him any sense of intentionality and responsibility and which, as we saw in part I, Laing argues forms the characteristic approach adopted by mainstream psychiatry towards the mentally ill.[217]

Despite occupying such a prominent position in the novel and receiving solid endorsement from several sources, Louis's 'madness' nonetheless remains cloaked in ambiguity and 'invraisemblance'. This is particularly true when it comes to the reasons why Louis goes mad. If the raft of psychiatrists whose work has just been cited attribute Louis's strange behaviour or alleged schizophrenia to some form of biological impairment, the tale's narrator and one-time close friend of Louis posits a psychological cause.

> L'exaltation à laquelle dut le faire arriver l'attente du plus grand plaisir physique, encore agrandie chez lui par la chasteté du corps et par la puissance de l'âme, avait bien pu déterminer cette crise dont les résultats ne sont pas plus connus que la cause. (LL, 677)

The imprecision implied by the 'avait bien pu' verbal construction suggests that much uncertainty surrounds Louis's thought processes at this point. This ambiguity is exacerbated by the fact that the view centring on 'le plus grand plaisir physique' has been severely undermined by preceding events. Immediately before imparting the news of Louis's attempted castration[218] and descent into apparent insanity, the narrator quotes at length from several letters Louis sent Pauline de Villenoix in

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[216] Devic and Morin, 'A propos de la démence précoce', p. 307. Borel makes a similar point in *Médecine et psychiatrie balzaciennes*, pp. 102-5.
[217] See p. 20.
[218] Critics have questioned whether Louis castrates himself or instead commits some other form of self-mutilation: see, for example, Michel Lichtlé, 'Notes et variantes', in LL, 1588 on this point. Nonetheless, it is indisputable that physical castration remains one surely highly plausible interpretation of the phrase 'l'opération à laquelle Origène crut devoir son talent' (LL, 679).

which he expresses his boundless joy at the prospect of their imminent marriage. We read for example: 'vous serez toute ma famille, comme vous êtes déjà ma seule richesse, et le monde entier pour moi' (LL, 664); 'je vis par vous, et, pensée délicieuse, pour vous. Maintenant tout a un sens, pour moi, dans cette vie' (LL, 665); or finally: 'nous pourrons rester, pendant toutes les journées de notre vie, heureux comme nous le sommes furtivement en de rares instants! Quoi! nos sentiments si purs, si profonds, prendront les formes délicieuses des milles caresses que j'ai rêvées' (LL, 673). These are hardly the words, one might think, of a man on the verge of self-castration and the self-denial of the 'mille caresses' of which he speaks so expectantly. These letters testify to the fact that the prospect of marriage fills Louis only with intense pleasure: why then should he castrate himself so close to his wedding day and crumble into a state of incurable madness? Figuring highly among the novel's most 'invraisemblable' elements, therefore, is the curious timing of Louis's attempted self-castration.

Further ambiguity and 'invraisemblance' arise out of the fact that the three key events which bring about the novel's closure – madness, castration, death – are each associated with what could be termed textual silencing. Firstly, the majority of the period covering Louis's madness is narrated only retrospectively. Secondly, the word castration is not actually used in the text as Louis's uncle refers instead to 'l'opération à laquelle Origène crut devoir son talent' (LL, 679). This somewhat obscure reference to Origen - the third century AD Greek preacher who, according to legend, castrated himself to forestall any possible rumours regarding his teaching female catechumens - suggests that Louis's uncle prefers to keep Louis's act hidden under a shroud of silence and secrecy, and, at the very least, that naming the action of castration must remain taboo. While castration is the object of some form of overt authorial censorship in several nineteenth-century literary texts (such as Balzac's *Sarrasine*), it nonetheless remains true that for an unidentified reason it is the one act in *Louis Lambert* which dare not have its name spoken. Thirdly, after his death, Louis is buried on an island on the de Villenoix estate, his tomb being 'sans nom, sans date' (LL, 692). As a result of this series of 'textual silencings', the text seems

to be proposing some form of undefined and unexplained unwillingness to associate Louis with language. The questions therefore arise: why should Louis and language be incompatible? Why are his actions surrounded by such ambiguity and 'silencings'?

A further area of ambiguity centres on the way in which the text simultaneously asserts and undermines a diagnosis of 'madness'. One clear example of this phenomenon can be found in the clash between Louis's uncle's opinion that his nephew went mad a few days before his wedding to Pauline de Villenoix (LL, 676) and the narrator's subsequent argument that:

> en province, où les idées se raréfient, un homme plein de pensées neuves et dominé par un système, comme l'était Louis, pouvait passer au moins pour un original. [...] En province, un original passe pour un homme à moitié fou. Les premières paroles de M. Lefebvre [Louis's uncle] me firent donc douter de la folie de mon camarade. (LL, 677)

This under-cutting of the uncle's words also serves to weaken his argument that Louis had tried to castrate himself because he believed himself to be impotent (LL, 679). Indeed, on a practical level, one wonders how exactly he could have communicated his fears of impotency to his uncle given that he was at the time apparently in the depths of 'un accès de catalepsie'.

The one individual who know bests and empathises most with Louis – Pauline de Villenoix – casts the longest shadow of doubt over an un-nuanced or unqualified diagnosis of madness. She declares to the tale's narrator: 'sans doute [...] Louis doit paraître fou; mais il ne l'est pas, si le nom de fou doit appartenir seulement à ceux dont, par des causes inconnues, le cerveau se vicie, et qui n'offrent aucune raison de leurs actes' (LL, 683). In her opinion, there is an inherent logic and comprehensibility to Louis's actions and behaviour. 'Tout est parfaitement coordonné chez mon mari. [...] Aux autres hommes, il paraîtrait aliéné; *pour moi, qui vis dans sa pensée*, toutes ses idées sont lucides' (LL, 683, my italics). In making such statements, Pauline establishes a strong link between *Louis Lambert* and the key anti-psychiatric principle which states that what is often written off as madness, and

therefore as fully incomprehensible, is in fact context-sensible, comprehensible behaviour which is expressive of the individual's existential position. Through her adoption of an anti-psychiatric approach *avant la lettre*, Pauline proposes that understanding Louis requires above all the assumption of a viewpoint which permits and seeks out comprehension from the outset as opposed to one which excludes it automatically. This view that Louis is not as mad as he may at first appear and not incomprehensible or beyond the bounds of reason is backed up at least in part by the fact that Louis is clearly of sufficently firm mind to compose the series of complex but still comprehensible aphorisms included in the novel's final pages (LL, 684-91). Furthermore, the narrator suggests in his description of Louis's condition: 'peut-être calomnions-nous en la qualifiant sans la connaître' (LL, 680), once again echoing the anti-psychiatric principle that the label 'mad' is most often applied only to behaviour we are unable or, as is more likely, unwilling to understand.

A further tenet of anti-psychiatry which finds illustration in *Louis Lambert* reads that madness should not be seen as a form of disintegration and break-down but instead as a healing voyage of discovery and break-through which contains the potential to lead to prophetic insights and a more advanced mental state. This fact is best illustrated by way of a return to the diagnoses passed on Louis Lambert by the several clinical psychiatrists whose work was examined earlier. The most significant characteristic linking their diagnoses is that each of them employs what Laing terms a 'vocabulary of denigration' (TDS, 27) with respect to Louis's condition, the same type of vocabulary which Laing berated the psychiatric profession for adopting in relation to 'real-life' schizophrenics. Louis's fate is seen, variously, as 'un effondrement mental',[219] 'une catastrophe',[220] 'une chute',[221] or 'une désagrégation mentale complète':[222] it is a curse which must be exorcised, a state which can only shut off gateways rather than open them up. Each psychiatrist remains content to chart the ways in which Louis's condition converges with or diverges from pre-

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[219] Ridard, *'Louis Lambert' et la métapsychologie balzacienne*, p. 14.
[220] Le Yaouanc, *Nosographie de l'humanité balzacienne*, p. 348.
[221] Borel, *Médecine et psychiatrie balzaciennes,* p. 108.
[222] Devic and Morin, 'A propos de la démence précoce', p. 309.

existing ontologies of schizophrenia rather than examine the extent to which Louis's madness may be seen as a breakthrough and not a breakdown. Jacques Borel, for example, feels that Louis's attempted self-castration 'se comprend mal': it is, he believes, 'si inutile. Dans l'esprit schizophrénique, toujours indifférent au désir sexuel, ce geste n'a pas de signification aussi matérielle'.[223] Borel argues, then, that if Louis's castration makes little sense, it is because Balzac made an error in including it. Moïse Le Yaouanc's similar complaint runs that Esquirol would never have advised that Louis be kept in silent isolation as such a prognosis would have been reserved for 'les individus saisis d'un accès de manie aiguë et non pour les malades paisibles, chez qui la folie s'installe de façon durable, chronique'.[224] As a result of such inaccuracies, Le Yaouanc can only attribute Balzac's apparently blatant disregard for 'les leçons de la médecine' to 'la rapidité avec laquelle il a pris des notes avant de partir pour Saché'.[225] Both psychiatrists thereby commit the error which anti-psychiatrists find objectionable in their establishment colleagues: namely, permitting a pre-existent description of an illness to dictate their diagnosis rather than allowing their diagnosis to be led by the facts of the case. Indeed, most psychiatrists, with the exception of Borel, make no effort to explain why Louis attempts to castrate himself – the turning-point of the novel after all - and none shed light on the timing of Louis's self-castration and subsequent demise so close to his much-anticipated wedding.

To what extent, then, does the text confirm or reject these views that Louis's madness is a catastrophe? The narrator, certainly, appears to side with Pauline in underlining the inappropriate nature of any approach which sees Louis's condition as a debilitating affliction from which he must be cured. Far from casting him outwith the bounds of intelligibility and sanity, Louis's state imbues him instead with 'un bonheur divin' (LL, 683) based on which he is able to access 'une incomplète révélation d'un monde inconnu' (LL, 683). Laing's (in)famous sound-bite which

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[223] Borel, *Médecine et psychiatrie balzaciennes,* p. 106.

[224] Le Yaouanc, *Nosographie de l'humanité balzacienne*, p. 360.

[225] *ibid.*, p. 361.

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states that 'madness need not be all breakdown, it may be also breakthrough' (PE, 110) could almost have been formulated with Lambert in mind.

Further evidence for a rejection of the view that Louis's demise is a catastrophe is provided by Balzac in a series of statements he made in relation to *Louis Lambert*. In an 1835 letter to Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, for example, he explains that with 'le Livre mystique' (the collective name for his works *Les Proscrits*, *Louis Lambert* and *Séraphîta*) he had aimed to portray 'les grandes conceptions de l'extase humaine échauffée par le souffle divin';[226] moreover, he saw *Louis Lambert* specifically as the tale of 'le Voyant marchant à sa vision, conduit au Ciel par les faits, par ses idées, par son tempérament'.[227] Balzac thus emphasises that Louis's destiny is no 'descent' into an incapacitated oblivion – instead it should be seen as an ascension to an exalted, divine sphere of existence which remains inaccessible to all but the happy few. As a result, we should read as a salutary warning Balzac's statement that *Louis Lambert* is to be recommended 'aux esprits germaniques curieux d'examiner logiquement jusqu'à quel point le génie peut *ressembler à* la folie et vice versa la folie au génie:'[228] genius does not lead to madness *per se*, he warns, but one can easily be mistaken for the other if we fail to analyse them with sufficient care. The close resemblance between madness and divine prophecy which Balzac points to here finds echo in the novel itself where, even long before his ultimate descent / ascension into madness, Louis is described as being gifted with 'une âme sublime' (LL, 606), a '*mens divinor*' (LL, 594), and a 'goût pour les choses du ciel' (LL, 594), all of which 'élevèrent son cœur, le purifièrent, l'ennoblirent, lui donnèrent appétit de

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[226] Honoré de Balzac, *Correspondance*, 5 volumes, edited by Roger Pierrot (Paris: Garnier, 1960-9), II: *juin 1832-1835* (1962), p. 693.

[227] Honoré de Balzac, 'Préface du « Livre mystique »', in *La Comédie humaine*, XI, pp. 501-9 (p. 507).

[228] Honoré de Balzac, *Louis Lambert*, edited by Marc Bouteron and Jean Pommier (Paris: Corti, 1954), pp. 215-6, my italics. Although eventually removed from the final editions, Balzac included this statement in the final paragraph of the first draft of the text which was known as the *Notice biographique sur Louis Lambert*. With its reference to 'esprits germaniques', this statement is often cited as evidence for the view that Goethe's *Faust* may be read as a key intertext to *Louis Lambert*. See for example Evans, *'Louis Lambert' et la philosophie de Balzac*, p. 71; Le Yaouanc, 'Autour de *Louis Lambert*', pp. 526-8; Michel Lichtlé, 'Introduction', in *La Comédie humaine*, XI (1980): *Etudes philosophiques, études analytiques*, pp, 559-87 (p. 581-2).

la nature divine' (LL, 594). He also sees his quasi-Faustian goals as being to determine 'les rapports réels qui peuvent exister entre l'homme et Dieu' (LL, 652) and to lead mankind, Moses-like, towards the Promised Land of a new society which 'ne doit pas être constituée comme l'est la nôtre' (LL, 653). Although this divine, prophetic aspect of Louis's character will be examined in greater detail in part III, it is already evident that the close contiguity of Louis's alleged madness and his revelatory potential strengthens the claim that a real congruence of concerns exists between this novel and the anti-psychiatric principles outlined in part I. This congruence, despite it having been overlooked by Balzacian critics, revolves around both spheres contesting received notions of madness. Both argue, firstly, that behaviour which many write off as 'madness' may in fact be more comprehensible than it at first appears, and, secondly, that this behaviour we call 'madness' should not necessarily be seen as a tragedy, but instead as a release and even a god-send. A series of questions arises out of this congruence of concerns as a result of the numerous textual ambiguities and silencings surrouding the novel's key events, questions on which the novel turns and which resonate loudly with the concerns of anti-psychiatry. How should we interpret the physically debilitated state which Louis occupies towards the end of the novel and his subsequent death? Should he be regarded more as a divine visionary who succeeds in escaping from the limitations of the human form and who progresses to a quasi-messianic ascension and less as an intentionless, dehumanised failure who deserves to be locked up in a darkened room? If this is the case, why does he accede to this position of apparent divine contentment? What mental processes does he go through? Put more polemically, what drives him mad? What drives him to attempt to commit the act of castration so soon before his wedding given that at that point of the narrative it seems to represent a fundamentally illogical action?

Anti-psychiatry and *Le Rouge et le Noir*

What can anti-psychiatry bring to the work of a writer like Stendhal? One might initially think not much: he is, after all, the writer who famously immersed himself every day in the carefully reasoned prose of the 'Code civil'. Moreover, no characters in *Le Rouge et le Noir* exhibit overt symptoms of mental illness. Notwithstanding these facts, Shoshana Felman has demonstrated over several studies[229] the astonishing frequency with which the signifier 'la folie' and its cognates recur within Stendhal's novels.[230] In the course of one such examination, Felman stresses the culturally relative status of 'la folie''s signified, suggesting that in his novels 'la folie ne désigne rien d'autre que ce que les autres *traitent comme telle*, sans en avoir pour autant une existence réelle'.[231] Felman's argument establishes an immediate link between Stendhal's work and anti-psychiatry and, in particular, Kai Erikson's views on deviance discussed in part I: 'deviance is not a property *inherent* in certain forms of behaviour, it is a property *conferred upon* these forms by the audiences which directly or indirectly witness them'.[232] This conjunction between Felman's and Erikson's views provides at least an initial basis for the view that *Le Rouge et le Noir* and anti-psychiatry may share similar concerns. A firmer basis, however, can be established by examining the novel's key scene – Julien Sorel's shooting of Mme de Rênal – through the same lens as that which we have just viewed *Louis Lambert*: namely, in terms of textual de-motivation, ambiguity and 'invraisemblance'. It is to such an examination that I shall turn now.

The scene which recounts Julien Sorel's failed attempt on the life of Louise de Rênal presents the reader with a remarkable instance of textual de-motivation. Despite making for the novel's surely most significant scene and the one which brings about its closure, the shooting scene's most notable characteristic is its brevity as it

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[229] See her studies: 'La « folie » dans *La Chartreuse de Parme*', *Aurea Parma*, 51 (1967), 86-115; *La « folie » dans l'œuvre romanesque de Stendhal*; *La folie et la chose littéraire* (Paris: Seuil, 1978); 'La chose littéraire, sa folie, son pouvoir', *Tel Quel*, 80 (1979), 37-51; '*Armance* ou les ruses de la folie', *Stendhal Club*, 22 (1980), 366-72.
[230] Felman gives a full statistical survey of all the occurrences of such terms in *La « folie » dans l'œuvre romanesque de Stendhal*, pp. 14-26.
[231] *ibid.*, p. 44.
[232] See page 28.

occupies only seven short paragraphs in which the narrator gives a bald description of events without further analysis or comment. The narrator also withholds access to Julien's interior monologue which on many previous occasions has provided invaluable clues as to his motivations. On this point, Christopher Prendergast quotes Merleau-Ponty in order to make clear that 'much of the tension of Julien's return to Verrières arises from the suppression of the kinds of thoughts or interior detail that we could expect to find in such an account; we get in one page what might have taken up five'.[233] The effect of this conspicuous 'silence dédaigneux',[234] in Genette's words, is to cocoon the shooting, on first reading at least, in mystery and inexplicability.

If neither Julien nor the narrator propose an explicit motive during the shooting scene, several motives are, however, put forward in the chapters of the novel subsequent to the shooting, yet none of these explanations seem entirely adequate or satisfactory. One example of this inadequacy arises out of the fact that the reader remains in possession of one piece of crucial information throughout the shooting scene which influences his/her view of Julien's behaviour: knowledge of the existence and contents of Mme de Rênal's damning letter. Through its juxtaposition with the shooting scene, this denunciation appears to offer an immediate explanation for Julien's actions. Yet only a few characters in the novel such as Mathilde and the marquis de La Mole are aware of its existence. Neither Julien nor his lawyer cite the letter's explosive contents as a possible motive for his murder attempt, and, in fact, his lawyer and the audience at the Besançon trial seem unaware that the letter exists given that Mme de Rênal does not refer to it in the further letter she sends to the court begging for clemency. One could admittedly argue that neither Julien, Mme de Rênal nor Mathilde de La Mole would want the letter's existence to enter the public domain in light of its scandalous contents. Yet it remains undeniable that Julien makes no mention of the letter in his courtroom out-burst which, when taken together with the strikingly de-motivated and purely descriptive narrative stance adopted in

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[233] Prendergast, *The Order of Mimesis*, p. 142.
[234] Gérard Genette, *Figures II* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), p. 77.

the shooting scene, lends a sharp air of ambiguity and mystery to what represents the crucial event of the novel.

In other scenes subsequent to the shooting, Julien contributes to the confusion surrounding his actions. For example, in the chapter which immediately follows the shooting scene, Julien states unequivocally to the investigating judge - 'j'ai donné la mort avec préméditation […]; j'ai acheté et fait charger les pistolets chez Un Tel, l'armurier. L'article 1342 du Code pénal est clair, je mérite la mort, et je l'attends' (RN, 646). Yet he maintains a conspicuous silence as to what precisely caused him to act with premeditation in the first place. The investigating judge is understandably surprised by Julien's reactions and persists with his line of questioning 'pour faire en sorte que l'accusé *se coupât* dans ses réponses' (RN, 646): but the defendant's resolve remains firm - 'mais ne voyez-vous pas, lui dit Julien en souriant, que je me fais aussi coupable que vous pouvez le désirer? Allez, monsieur, vous ne manquerez pas la proie que vous poursuivez. Vous aurez le plaisir de condamner' (RN, 646-7). In refusing to betray his motives to the judge, Julien would prefer to be sent to his death rather than be forced to cobble together a cogent defence or even to take up one of the many possibilities of escape from his prison cell which are open to him. The reader might well be justified in therefore posing the question: why should the unspecified motivations for his premeditated act remain shrouded in silence?

Julien does eventually expand on his motives, albeit only to a limited extent. However, his words once again hardly dispel the sense of mystery surrouding his actions. Firstly, he claims to have not acted out of a desire for money (RN, 665); secondly, he reacts furiously to his lawyer's suggestion that he should cite jealousy as his motive: 'sur votre vie, monsieur, s'écria Julien, hors de lui, souvenez-vous de ne plus proférer cet abominable mensonge' (RN, 667). These two explanations serve only to eliminate possible motives rather than propose lines of enquiry in a more positive sense. Elsewhere Julien does provide some 'positive' reasons: in a letter to Mathilde de La Mole, he writes: 'je me suis vengé […]. La vengeance a été atroce' (RN, 647). He repeats this argument about vengeance during his impassioned court-

room speech: 'mon crime est atroce, et il fut *prémédité*. J'ai donc mérité la mort, messieurs les jurés' (RN, 674-5). Based on such a defence, the reader could surely be forgiven for concluding that Julien was driven by a sense of class warfare in light of the juxtaposition of this statement alongside the tirade he launches at the 'bourgeois indignés' of the jury whom he claims will convict him because he is but 'un paysan qui s'est révolté contre la bassesse de sa fortune' (RN, 675). Yet such an interpretation can be founded only on speculation as the text does nothing to confirm that a sense of class hatred may have motivated his murder attempt. Indeed, this line of argument is seriously undermined by the fact that Julien's career is ruined not by Louise de Rênal's letter, but by his specific act of attempted murder. Julien would have no doubt been able to save his career had he mounted a robust defence against the allegations either by putting forward the arguments which Mme de Rênal formulates in her letter to the jury or else by citing the 'certificat de bonne conduite' which M de Rênal has provided him with on his departure from Verrières in which his one-time employer had not been able to find 'de[s] termes assez magnifiques pour exalter sa conduite' (RN, 367). While Julien's societal ambitions may have suffered a set-back as a result of Mme de Rênal's letter, it was by no means an irreversible one. Julien's shooting of Mme de Rênal can therefore not be seen as an act of politically motivated vengeance of class warfare as it is only after the crime that his career nose-dives and not before.

What emerges from this analysis of *Le Rouge et le Noir* so far is that the motives behind Julien's crime appear, at the very least, to be surrounded by uncertainty and ambiguity. One might think that such ambiguity would be resolved once Julien's death sentence has been passed, yet this does not prove to be the case. When mulling over what he would say to Louise de Rênal were he to see her again, Julien thinks: 'après une telle action, comment lui persuader que je l'aime uniquement? car enfin j'ai voulu la tuer par ambition ou par amour pour Mathilde' (RN, 677). What seems to be most interesting about this extract is Julien's use of the word 'ou' which suggests that he is no longer able to make up his mind as to why he pulled the trigger

or, more significantly, as in Ann Jefferson's proposal, as if he no longer really cares why.[235] A satisfactory explanation for the shooting remains elusive.

Further confusion is sown, this time deliberately it seems, by M. de Frilair who tells Mathilde de La Mole that Julien acted out of jealousy even though he is far from certain whether this allegation contains any truth.

> Je ne serais pas surpris après tout, lui dit-il d'un air léger, quand nous apprendrions que c'est par jalousie que M. Sorel a tiré deux coups de pistolet à cette femme autrefois tant aimée. Il s'en faut bien qu'elle soit sans agréments, et depuis peu elle voyait fort souvent un certain abbé Marquinot de Dijon [...]. Pourquoi [...] M. Sorel aurait-il choisi l'église, si ce n'est parce que, précisément en cet instant, son rival y célébrait la messe? (RN, 660-1)

The notion of jealousy which Frilair develops here has little further textual evidence to cite in its favour. Moreover, Frilair proposes this idea not out of an honest desire to put forward a cogent, definitive motive for Julien's behaviour but out of a wish to invoke the jealousy of Mathilde over Julien's relationship with Mme de Rênal.

The one line of defence which Julien does repeat several times is that which relates to a thrist for revenge. Yet this defence also contributes to the confusion and inadequacy surrounding the explanation of his motives. Julien declares: 'j'ai été offensé d'une manière atroce; j'ai tué, je mérite la mort' (RN, 648). Does his behaviour therefore represent a violent reaction against the question mark which Mme de Rênal's allegations have placed over his honour? Such a view is far from implausible given that Julien's strong personal sense of honour and duty (mainly to himself, of course) has been a constant driver of his ascent through the various milieux of nineteenth-century France. Yet what exactly is Julien trying to avenge? There are two possibilities, but neither, I believe, is immediately satisfactory. Firstly, it could be that Julien acts to exact revenge for the personal 'offense' inflicted on him by Mme de Rênal's damning letter. Such an explanation seems insufficient, however, given that it overlooks the state of mind in which Julien finds himself upon reading

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[235] Ann Jefferson, *Reading Realism in Stendhal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 88.

Louise de Rênal's damning letter. Far from feeling his honour insulted, he appears to accept his expulsion from the Hôtel de La Mole: 'je ne puis blâmer M de La Mole', he declares, 'il est juste et prudent. Quel père voudrait donner sa fille chérie à un tel homme!' (RN, 644). One could admittedly argue on this point that even if Julien realises he has no right to condemn the marquis de La Mole's outraged reaction, he can still feel personally insulted by Mme de Rênal's allegations. While this point may be valid, it does not explain why Julien should feel the need to respond to this swipe at his personal, private sense of honour by taking such emphatically public revenge. After all, if Julien had merely wanted to avenge this slur on his honour, 'pourquoi […] M. Sorel aurait-il choisi l'église?', in the words of M. de Frilair, 'quoi de plus simple que de se cacher dans les jardins de M. de Rênal qu'il connaît si bien? Là, avec la presque certitude d'être ni vu, ni pris, ni soupçonné, il pourrait donner la mort à la femme dont il était jaloux?' (RN, 661). An alternative assumption is that in shooting Mme de Rênal Julien wants to avenge the public 'offense' his ex-mistress has inflicted on him. Yet this response remains similarly unsatisfactory as only a limited number of individuals are aware of the letter's existence and contents and therefore of the potential for public 'offense' which it may contain.

Thus far in this section we have seen that the various possible motives for Julien's attempted murder of Mme de Rênal are shrouded in ambiguity and silence. Significantly, however, the shooting also takes place at the point of the narrative where it is arguably least expected, coming at the very stage of his life when he appears to have realised all his societal ambitions. So successfully has he juggled the contradictory aims of mastering the linguistic and behavioural codes of Parisian salon society while still retaining enough 'singularité' to make him stand out from the crowd around him that he enters the church at Verrières resplendent in the title of 'M le chevalier Julien Sorel de La Vernaye'. As was also the case in relation to Louis Lambert's attempted self-castration, the 'invraisemblance' of Julien's behaviour is therefore particularly dependent on its timing. This fact is well exemplified in the chapter immediately preceding Mme de Rênal's denunciation which ends on Julien's realisation that his Napoleon-inspired ambitions of glory, rank and fame are finally

beginning to be satisfied: 'après tout, pensait-il, mon roman est fini, et à moi seul tout le mérite. J'ai su me faire aimer de ce monstre d'orgueil, ajoutait-il en regardant Mathilde; son père ne peut vivre sans elle, et elle sans moi' (RN, 639). Julien's 'novel' has thus seen him effect a successful transformation from a gauche and much derided country book-worm into a socially adroit and much desired golden-boy. The curious reader might therefore pose the question: why does Julien shoot Louise de Rênal at the very moment when he seems to most 'fit in'? Why does he put his hard-earned achievements at mortal risk? By extension, a reader might also ask: why does Julien try to kill Mme de Rênal in a crowded church where his immediate arrest is assured? Why should the Machiavellian brilliance which had hitherto characterised his rapid social ascent so unaccountably abandon him when it comes to his most audacious act to date? A further, perhaps more pertinent question which arises is why does Julien try to kill Mme de Rênal *at all*? As Richard Bolster points out: 'a rational and prudent policy for Julien would [have been] to play for time and to persuade the marquis that [Mme de Rênal's] allegation is untrue'.[236] Julien could have deployed his extensive rhetorical skills to convince the marquis of the spurious or exaggerated nature of the charges laid against him, thereby allowing him to ride out the storm unleashed by her damning accusations. Julien's attempt on the life of Mme de Rênal thus seems as unnecessary as it is senseless.

The questions which have just been outlined will be addressed in part III of this thesis within the interpretative framework of Laingian anti-psychiatry. More significant for the moment, however, is the fact that these questions point to the congruence of concerns which exists between anti-psychiatry and *Le Rouge et le Noir*. This is because these questions are united by the indisputable fact that in shooting Mme de Rênal Julien acts in a manner which is out of character, contrary to

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[236] Roger Bolster, *Stendhal: 'Le Rouge et le Noir'* (London: Grant & Cutler, 1994), p. 61. Other critics who make a similar point include: Moya Longstaffe, 'L'éthique du duel et la couronne du martyre dans "Le Rouge et le Noir"', *Stendhal Club*, 18 (1975-6), 283-306 (p. 286); D. A. Miller, *Narrative and its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 203; Sandy Petrey, *Realism and Revolution: Balzac, Stendhal, Zola and the Performances of History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 123; Allan H. Pasco, *Sick Heroes: French Society and Literature in the Romantic Age 1750-1850* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1997), pp. 157-8.

his personal sense of self-interest and self-preservation instinct as well as to the codes of behaviour which he had hitherto tried so hard to ape. By extension, his behaviour contravenes all codes of novelistic 'vraisemblance' and 'bienséance'.[237] In a parallel sense, we saw in part one that anti-psychiatry rests partly on the view that those deemed to be mentally ill are not in fact suffering from a series of neurological imbalances, as mainstream psychiatrists would claim in Laing's view, but are instead actings in ways which deviate from and contravene society's moral and behavioural codes. Anti-psychiatry views the symptoms of mental illness as 'wilful situational improprieties and […] as evidence that the individual is not prepared to keep his place',[238] or as 'an infraction of social rules and social expectations'.[239] These descriptions echo loudly with the position of Julien Sorel and the questions which have just been posed. The congruence of concerns between anti-psychiatry, on the one hand, and the evaporation of Julien's sense of self-interest and of his self-preservation instinct along with his contravention of novelistic codes of 'vraisemblance', on the other, coalesces around precisely this similarity. The actions of the committed psychiatric patient, when viewed from an anti-psychiatric stand-point, and those of Julien around the time of shooting Mme de Rênal can both be described as an attempt to 'strike at the syntax of conduct'.[240]

Earlier in this chapter, we saw how the congruence of concerns between *Louis Lambert* and anti-psychiatry turned partly on the fact that Louis's behaviour, which many observers write off as incomprehensible nonsense, may be more understandable than it at first appears. The congruence of concerns between anti-psychiatry and *Le Rouge et le Noir* outlined so far does not extend to the possible comprehensibility of Julien's 'mad' act of attempted murder. What I intend to show in the course of subsequent chapters, however, is that there does indeed exist a congruence of concerns of this form in relation to anti-psychiatry and *Le Rouge et le Noir*. At the same time, I will demonstrate that specific concepts drawn from Laing's

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[237] For a full investigation of this point, see Prendergast, *Order of Mimesis*, pp. 119-47.
[238] Erving Goffman, 'The Insanity of Place', in *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 389-450 (p. 411).
[239] *ibid.*, p. 400.
[240] *ibid.*, p. 411.

ontology of schizophrenia can be brought into play in order to formulate responses to the questions outlined above.

Anti-psychiatry and *Renée Mauperin*

Paralleling what we have seen in relation to *Le Rouge et le Noir*, anti-psychiatry may appear to have little relevance to the Goncourts' *Renée Mauperin*. Yet, in a similar manner, firmer evidence for the existence of a 'congruence of concerns' between anti-psychiatry and *Renée Mauperin* can be found if, once again, we examine the 'invraisemblance' and the textual de-motivation which, in common with *Louis Lambert* and *Le Rouge et le Noir*, characterise the key event of the novel: the eponymous heroine's death, and specifically, why she dies at such a young age and in such an overtly beatified manner.

Renée's demise is triggered off by her notifying the rightful and last-remaining holder of the de Villacourt title that her brother Henri intends to take on the de Villacourt 'particule' as a means of securing his engagement to the daughter of a wealthy business-man with whose wife he has been conducting a clandestine affair. Henri Mauperin had, however, been unaware of the existence of this holder of the title who, upon reading of Henri's intentions in the copy of *Le Moniteur* which Renée anonymously sends him, is so infuriated that he comes to Paris and challenges Mauperin to a duel in which the latter is killed. From the narrator we learn that Renée incriminated her brother in this way in order to 'provoquer une réclamation, empêcher son frère d'obtenir ce nom, faire rompre ce mariage' (RM, 222). A reader might wonder, however, *why* Renée should feel the need to put a stop to the impending marriage, and s/he might be justified in asking why she simply does not keep her principled objections to herself and enjoy the benefits of the social and financial capital her brother and family will accrue through their participation in this lucrative, high-society wedding. In incriminating her brother in this way, Renée breaks the rules of 'the syntax of behaviour' governing the milieu she inhabits, rules

which are seemingly predicated upon political expediency and the satisfaction of financial greed. Renée's behaviour could then be characterised as 'mad' if we adopt an anti-psychiatric perspective: one which sees 'madness' as behaviour which remains comprehensible despite it representing 'a wilful situation impropriety' which contravenes expected codes of conduct.

As a result of Henri's untimely death, Renée and her family are plunged into a state of advanced grief, and it is her guilt over both her brother's death and the grief she has inadvertently caused which would appear, at least initially, to cause her death. For example, when one of the succession of doctors who treats Renée asks her father whether she has suffered 'aucune grande émotion, aucun grand chagrin, […] un amour contrarié, par exemple' (RM, 223), the clear implication is that Renée's illness and eventual death can be explained away by her heart being broken by the death of her brother as well as by the guilt and shame she feels over the role she played in his untimely demise. This interpretation concerning by 'l'influence physique des passions sur le cœur' (RM, 224) is lent some support by the fact that the text offers no medical symptoms or specific aetiologies, unlike in the cases of Emma Bovary or Germinie Lacerteux. Indeed, her death recalls that of such Romantic heroines as Rousseau's Julie or Mme de Staël's Corinne, both of whom die in similarly mysterious, unexplained, but almost self-willed circumstances. The manner of Renée's death is particularly revealing in this regard. We read, for example, that 'elle se laissait entraîner à ce qui venait. La vie s'épanchait d'elle sans qu'elle parût la retenir et faire effort pour l'arrêter. […] Elle laissait la mort monter, comme un beau soir, sur son âme blanche' (RM, 239). Renée makes no effort to fight off death's encroachment; in fact, she seems to actively welcome it.

> Peu à peu elle laissait s'échapper et s'écouler d'elle la conscience
> de son être physique, le sentiment et la fatigue de vivre; et de
> délicieuses faiblesses la prenaient où il lui [M. Mauperin] paraissait
> qu'elle était à demi détachée de son être, et toute prête à se dissiper
> dans la divine douceur des choses. (RM, 243)

The manner of Renée's death would thus seem to represent another 'wilful situational impropriety' in as much as the reader might ask: why exactly does Renée

will herself to die? After all, she has no need to feel guilt over her brother's death given that no other characters in the novel are aware of why she has incriminated her brother - indeed, no-one is ever likely to find out as she cannot bring herself to confess to the role she has played (RM, 220). Her shame is thus an entirely self-imposed feeling, one which she is not pushed into by friends or family. In short, she has got away with it.

If the last extract cited from the novel points to the way in which Renée loses her will to live, it also demonstrates, most significantly of all, how death provides Renée with a release from the travails and disappointments which have previously characterised her life, and how it also bestows upon her a form of beatification and transcendence. The scene in which Renée's death is recounted provides more particularly revealing detail in this regard.

> En quelques minutes, la maladie, les signes et l'anxiété de la souffrance s'étaient effacés sur la figure amaigrie de Renée. Une beauté d'extase et de suprême délivrance, devant laquelle son père, sa mère, son ami étaient tombés à genoux. La douceur, la paix d'un ravissement était descendue sur elle. Un rêve semblait mollement renverser sa tête sur les oreillers. Ses yeux grands ouverts, tournés en haut, paraissaient s'emplir d'infini, son regard, peu à peu, prenait la fixité des choses éternelles. De tous ses traits se levait comme une aspiration bienheureuse. Un reste de vie, un dernier souffle tremblait au bord de sa bouche endormie, entr'ouverte et souriante. Son teint était devenu blanc. Une pâleur argentée donnait à sa peau, donnait à son front une mate splendeur. On eût dit qu'elle touchait déjà de la tête un autre jour que le nôtre: la Mort s'approchait comme d'une lumière. (RM, 259)

This is no squalid, agonising death in the manner of Emma Bovary or even Germinie Lacerteux, the eponymous heroine of the Goncourts' novel published, like *Renée Mauperin*, in 1864. Given that *Germinie Lacerteux* has been described as one of the three founding texts of French Naturalism,[241] and that *Renée Mauperin* and it were

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[241] According to David Baguley, the other two founding texts of Naturalism are Flaubert's *Education Sentimentale* and Zola's *Thérèse Raquin*. See *Naturalist Fiction: The Entropic Vision* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 74. Furthermore, Erich Auerbach famously uses the preface to the Goncourts' *Germinie Lacerteux* as a spring-board for his examination of the Naturalist novel. See *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, translated by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 493-524.

written concurrently, the messianic undertones to Renée's death, are thrown into even sharper focus when set along aside Germinie's horrid death. Renée's death is 'une mort édifiante'[242] as she undergoes a form of Christ-like transfiguration as if on the verge of an ascension into heaven. 'C'était la transfiguration de ces maladies de cœur qui ensevelissent les mourantes dans la beauté de leur âme, et emportent au ciel le visage des jeunes mortes!' (RM, 259). Her whole demeanour suggests a process of angelification, while the several imperfect verbs in the passage above denote an impressionistic and progressive invasion of her being by a Christ-like transcendence rather than the swift, harsh ravages of a life-destroying disease.

What relevance can anti-psychiatry possibly have to Renée's life and death? We have seen already that her behaviour in incriminating her brother could be viewed as a sign of her 'madness' from an anti-psychiatric perspective given that she contravenes received modes of behaviour. We have also seen in this section that her apparently losing the will to live and actively welcoming death seems entirely gratuitous and unnecessary given that she is not being blamed for her brother's death. A third congruence of concerns arises out of the transcendent state which she accesses as a result of her alleged 'madness' and which echoes with David Cooper's claim cited in part I: 'madness is a matter of voicing the realisation that I am (or you are) Christ'.[243] Renée's demise exemplifies the anti-psychiatric view that those who reach a state which some call madness have in fact embarked upon the royal road to discoveries of messianic proportions. The questions therefore arise: why should Renée incriminate her brother when she apparently has no need to do so? On a further level, why does Renée seemingly will herself to die? Why does she therefore act so 'madly', striking at the syntax of conduct? If shame and guilt over the role she has played in her brother's death really were the central factors determining her demise, why is she transformed into a divine, quasi-messianic conduit for the Infinite, inspiring in her cowering family reverential astonishment and veneration? Why or how would any feelings of guilt lead to quasi-divine transcendence? Furthermore, throughout the novel Renée is portrayed as a singular and highly

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[242] Cabanès, 'L'art de mourir dans *Renée Mauperin* et dans *Le Docteur Pascal*', p. 99.
[243] See p. 35.

unusual individual quite distinct from her peers. However, nothing from her earlier life presages the Christ-like images associated with her on her death-bed. Why, for what or for whom does she come to be martyred? Such questions remain unanswered in the text. With the aid of anti-psychiatry, however, I shall address these questions in the course of subsequent chapters, and demonstrate that Renée's behaviour is considerably more comprehensible than it at first appears.

Anti-psychiatry and *L'Œuvre*

As was the case in relation to *Le Rouge et le Noir* and *Renée Mauperin*, anti-psychiatry would appear to have only a limited relevance to *L'Œuvre*, the novel which has been seen time and time again as a 'roman à clef' describing the rise and fall of the Impressionist movement.[244] Yet, an investigation of the novel which focuses on the psychology of the main protagonist finds some initial justification in Zola's response to Edmond de Goncourt's allegation that in writing *L'Œuvre* Zola had plagiarised the Goncourts' 1866 novel *Manette Salomon*. In an indirect response to such allegations, Zola wrote in an 1885 letter to Joseph Gayda:

> *L'Œuvre* ne sera pas du tout ce qu'on a annoncé. Il ne s'agit nullement d'une suite de tableaux sur le monde des peintres, d'une collection d'eaux-fortes et d'aqaurelles [sic] accrochées à la suite les unes des autres. Il s'agit simplement *d'une étude de psychologie très fouillée* et de profonde passion.[245]

This link between *L'Œuvre* and psychology-based critical interpretations can be strengthened by an examination of the considerable degree of textual de-motivation which, in a similar manner to the three preceding cases, surrounds the key event of the novel: Claude Lantier's suicide. This event comes only a few hours after he and

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[244] A full survey of the critical literature on this point can be found in the next chapter.

[245] Emile Zola, *Emile Zola - Correspondance*, 10 volumes, edited by B. H. Bakker (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1985), V: *1884-1886*, p. 282, my italics. For a comprehensive survey of Edmond de Goncourt's allegations and Zola's subsequent responses, see the section entitled ' La réception des Goncourt' in Michel Crouzet's recent edition of the Goncourts' *Manette Salomon* (Paris: Gallimard, 'Folio', 1996), pp. 556-63.

his long-suffering wife Christine have experienced a night of passion with one another like none they have known in their entire relationship. At one point during this night:

> elle le fit blasphémer ensuite, provocante, dominatrice, avec un rire d'orgueil sensuel. « Dis que la peinture est imbécile. – La peinture est imbécile. – Dis que tu ne travailleras plus, que tu t'en moques, que tu brûleras tes tableaux, pour me faire plaisir. – Je brûlerai mes tableaux, je ne travaillerai plus. – Et dis qu'il n'y a que moi, que de me tenir là, comme tu me tiens, est le bonheur unique, que tu craches sur l'autre, cette gueuse que tu as peinte. Crache, crache donc, que je t'entende! – Tiens ! je crache, il n'y a que toi. » Et elle le serrait à l'étouffer, c'était elle qui le possédait. (LO, 350-1)

Claude would appear to have renounced his art, and, in so doing, have set out on a path which could lead him to security and happiness with Christine, the only individual in the novel to have shown him unquestioning love and loyalty. That Claude should commit suicide at this specific point in the narrative thus seems particularly 'invraisemblable'. After all, one could perhaps more plausibly have imagined him committing suicide when the first painting he exhibits in the 'Salon des Refusés' meets only with such mockery from 'une masse énorme, grouillante, confuse, en tas, qui s'écrasait devant son tableau. Tous les rires s'enflaient, s'épanouissaient, aboutissaient là' (LO, 126). One could have imagined Claude committing suicide after his portrait of his dead infant son is met only with indifference:

> après vingt années de cette passion, aboutir à ça, à cette pauvre chose sinistre, toute petite, inaperçue, d'une navrante mélancolie dans son isolement de pestiférée! Tant d'espoirs, de tortures, une vie usée au dur labeur de l'enfantement, et ça, et ça, mon Dieu! (LO, 295-6)

One would have thought that the perhaps most logical or 'vraisemblable' point of all in the narrative for his suicide comes in the scene where he runs wildly towards the Seine, in the petrified estimation of Christine, in order to drown himself. Claude has just overheard his one-time friends lambast him as a wretched failure and blame their lack of critical acclaim on their association with him: 'ils l'accusaient de les avoir paralysés, de les avoir exploités, parfaitement! Exploités, et d'une main si maladroite et si lourde, qu'il n'en avait lui-même tiré aucun parti' (LO, 335). Later that evening,

with this cacophony of insults still ringing in his ears, '[Claude] se penchait sur ce fossé si large [la Seine], d'une fraîcheur d'abîme [...]. Et le gros bruit triste du courant l'attirait, il en écoutait l'appel désespéré jusqu'à la mort' (LO, 341). Yet Claude does not commit suicide after any of these events. Each time he picks himself up from the depths of his despair and returns to his art. Instead, he commits suicide only after renouncing his life-long, previously all-consuming passion for art, the passion which until then had pushed his family into a spiral of poverty and destitution and which had been the principal source of the intense suffering depicted in the three scenes quoted above. Readers are therefore surely within their rights to wonder why Claude should commit suicide shortly after he appears to have taken up his last chance to 'se guérir' (LO, 350) and to find the peace and happiness which have so long eluded him. Why commit suicide immediately after experiencing this re-birth, around the time he feels furthest away from 'sa misère, oubliant, renaissant à une vie de félicité' (LO, 350)? Is the reader not justified in assuming that he should now put behind him the interminable travails of his artist-life and profit from his new-found happiness by building a painless, financially solvent future for Christine and himself far away from the squalor of his 'atelier maudit' and 'l'autre' who is 'bien morte' (LO, 351)? After all, early on in this crucial scene, Claude implores Christine:

> eh bien! sauve-moi, oui! prends-moi, *si tu ne veux pas que je me tue...* Et invente du bonheur, fais-m'en connaître un qui me retienne... Endors-moi, anéantis-moi, que je devienne ta chose, assez esclave, assez petit, pour me loger sous tes pieds, dans tes pantoufles... Ah! descendre là, ne vivre que de ton odeur, t'obéir comme un chien, manger, t'avoir et dormir, si je pouvais, si je pouvais! (LO, 350, my italics)

Christine appears to succeed in fulfilling this demand as a little later we read in the passage which immediately precedes the suicide:

> leurs ravissements recommençaient, trois fois il leur sembla qu'ils volaient de la terre au bout du ciel. Quel grand bonheur! comment n'avait-il songé à se guérir dans ce bonheur certain? Et elle se donnait encore, *et il vivrait heureux, sauvé, n'est-ce pas?* maintenant qu'il avait cette ivresse. (LO, 351, my italics)

Claude has surely been rescued from the verge of suicide. Yet despite the apparent closeness of salvation and safety, it is not enough, and only a few sentences later we read: 'il se décida, c'était fini, il souffrait trop, il ne pouvait plus vivre, puisque tout mentait et qu'il n'y avait rien de bon' (LO, 351).

What causes this swift and dramatic change of heart on Claude's part? The text seems unequivocal: Claude is driven to suicide by the triumph wrought by his love for art and the mystical female figure to whose perfect artistic representation he has devoted his life so deseperately over his love for life and the real-life female figure, *Christ*ine, the Christ figure who holds out the possibility of salvation and security. On discovering her husband's body dangling from the ceiling of his workshop - 'il pendait là, grandi affreusement dans sa raideur immobile, la face tournée vers le tableau, tout près de la Femme au sexe fleuri d'une rose mystique, comme s'il eût soufflé son âme à son dernier râle' (LO, 352) - Christine can only exclaim in impotency and defeat: 'Oh! Claude, oh! Claude… Elle t'a repris, elle t'a tué, tué, tué, la gueuse!' (LO, 352). 'Ecrasée sous la souveraineté de l'art' (LO, 352), she cowers miserably before her nemesis: 'au-dessus d'elle, la Femme rayonnait avec son éclat symbolique d'idole, la peinture triomphait, seule immortelle et debout, jusque dans sa démence' (LO, 353). Her earlier victory over her canvas rival was short-lived, thus reflecting Zola's desire expressed in the 'ébauche' that the novel should represent 'le triomphe absolu de la passion d'enfanter des œuvres d'art, contre le vrai enfantement de l'œuvre de chair'.[246]

If the text seems clear that it is the tyrannical call of his artisitic vocation which leads Claude to his death, it is much less clear, however, as to precisely *why* this must be so. We do admittedly know from key intertexts to *L'Œuvre* – such as Balzac's *Le Chef d'œuvre inconnu* or the Goncourts' *Manette Salomon* - that the artist's fate, in an almost clichéed sense, is death. As Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine writes: 'une sorte de loi exige, semble-t-il, que l'artiste transforme la femme en objet d'art ou bien périsse

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[246] Quoted in Brady, *L'Œuvre*, p. 430.

en disparaissant entre ses bras'.[247] On the other hand, Paul Cézanne rejected such a view, at least when translated into 'real life'. He asked exasperatedly why Claude should commit suicide at all, let alone do so at such an unexpected moment of the narrative:

> on ne peut exiger d'un homme qui ne sait pas, qu'il dise des choses raisonnables sur l'art de peindre; mais, n. de D., comment peut-il [Zola] oser dire qu'un peintre se tue parce qu'il a fait un mauvais tableau? Quand un tableau n'est pas réalisé, on le f... au feu, et on en recommence un autre![248]

Furthermore, the psychological processes undergone by Claude in the hours leading up to his suicide are also shrouded in silence. We learn merely that Claude finds himself in an intense state of confusion: 'une sourde poussée d'idées confuses remontait dans son hébétement'; and a little later, 'ses pensées étaient revenues toutes, débordantes, torturantes, creusant son visage' (LO, 351). We also learn nothing of why his suicide, which appears almost pre-destined in view of his literary avatars, comes at the very point in the narrative when Claude would appear to have found a route to happiness and salvation, and not at any earlier and perhaps more 'vraisemblable' stage of the novel. As was the case with regard to *Le Rouge et le Noir* and *Louis Lambert*, the timing of the key event of his novel is thus crucial. What specifically motivates him to commit suicide? Why should his self-preservation instinct desert him and a death drive take over? It is in relation to just such questions that certain similarities between Claude's behaviour and the principles of anti-psychiatry emerge. Although Claude takes on no signs of divine transcendence as we saw was the case in relation to Renée Mauperin, his unexplained, illogical behaviour nonetheless contravenes received codes of behaviour in a manner which recalls the anti-psychiatric principle that madness is but behaviour which is context-sensible and comprehensible even if it contravenes rationality and accepted codes of behaviour. As was also the case in relation to *Renée Mauperin* and *Le Rouge et le Noir*, the fact that Claude's behaviour is much more comprehensible than it may at first appear does not immediately emerge from an

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[247] Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine, 'Aspects de la genèse d'un discours mythique dans *L'Œuvre* d'Emile Zola', *La Licorne*, 18 (1990), 41-50 (p. 43).

[248] Quoted in Frederick Brown, *Zola: Une vie* (Paris: Belfond, 1996), p. 594.

analysis of the novel's turning point itself. Yet I want to show in relation to *L'Œuvre* that there does indeed exist a further aspect to this congruence of concerns, one which we saw initially in relation to *Louis Lambert*: namely, one which suggests that Claude's behaviour only starts to appear comprehensible and 'context-sensible' if we examine the wider existential position in which Claude finds himself in the period leading up to his death. In the following chapter of part II, however, I wish first to examine the responses which literary critics have proposed to the questions and difficulties which have been outlined here in part II chapter one.

PART II Chapter Two:
A Review of Criticism

The most fundamental dichotomy of the novel is that which exists
between true and false artists and true and false art. [...] It is the
problem of authenticity in art which forms the nucleus around
which the whole novel turns.[249]

Pourquoi tient-on tant à conférer à l'œuvre d'art [...] ce *statut
d'exception*, sinon pour frapper d'un discrédit préjudiciel les
tentatives (nécessairement laborieuses et imparfaites) de ceux qui
entendent soumettre ces produits de l'action humaine au
traitement ordinaire de la science ordinaire, et pour affirmer la
transcendance (spirituelle) de ceux qui savent en *reconnaître* la
transcendance?[250]

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[249] Thomas Zamparelli, 'Zola and the Quest for the Absolute in Art', *Yale French Studies*, 42
(1969), 143-58 (p. 144).
[250] Pierre Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art: Genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Paris: Seuil,
1992) p. 11.

Louis Lambert

In part II chapter one, the question was posed: how should we interpret the physically debilitated state which characterises Louis's final days? Should he be regarded as a divine visionary who succeeds in escaping from the limitations of the human form and who progresses to a quasi-messianic ascension or should he be viewed instead as an intentionless, dehumanised failure who deserves to be locked up in a darkened room and forgotten about? We also saw in the previous chapter that despite the ambiguity of the evidence presented by the text regarding these questions, the reader is nonetheless pushed further towards the first of these two options than the second by the opinions of the narrator and Pauline de Villenoix as well as by certain revealing statements made by the novella's author. How do literary critics interpret Louis's demise? One school of thought takes the same line as that adopted by the group of clinical psychiatrists whose work was cited early in the previous chapter in as much as they too adopt a purely descriptive approach and do not investigate the productive aspects of his final state. Such an approach is evident in the work of critics such as Graham Robb who declares in his recent majestic biography of Balzac that Louis goes 'spectacularly insane'.[251] Diana Festa-McCormick similarly points to Louis's collapse into 'a state of insanity';[252] while Christopher Prendergast says merely that Louis 'goes off his head'.[253] None of these renowned Balzac critics points to the 'bonheur divin' (LL, 683) which Louis accesses as a result of his 'collapse', nor to the intense ambiguity which surrounds his actions. Similarly, they shed no light on the reasons behind his failed castration attempt nor on its 'invraisemblable' timing.

A second school of critical thought approaches the series of questions by drawing up parallels between *Louis Lambert* and other Balzac texts also produced in the early 1830's such as *La Peau de Chagrin, Gobseck* or *Sarrasine* where the theme of the necessity to conserve one's stock of 'énergie vitale' takes centre stage. If, as Balzac proposes in *Physiologie du Mariage*, each of us possesses 'une somme donnée

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[251] Graham Robb, *Balzac* (London: Picador, 1994), p. 201.

[252] Diane Festa-McCormick, *Honoré de Balzac* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979), p. 39.

[253] Christopher Prendergast, *Balzac: Fiction and Melodrama* (London: Arnold, 1978), p. 182.

d'énergie', and if 'un boxeur la dépense en coups de poing, le boulanger à pétrir son pain, […] le danseur la fait passer dans ses pieds',[254] Louis expends his 'somme donnée d'énergie' on philosophical thought and contemplation. In Thomas Pavel and Claude Bremond's view, *Louis Lambert* and *La Peau de Chagrin* share a common theme: that 'la puissance de la pensée se révèle fatale'.[255] 'Tombé amoureux d'une belle et vertueuse jeune fille', they write, 'Louis Lambert ne peut supporter le surcroît d'énergie intérieure qui résulte du mélange explosif entre le génie et la passion, et sombre dans la folie'.[256] This second school of thought therefore parallels Louis's falling in love with Pauline de Villenoix and his plunge into madness. It does so not merely because of 'le surcroît d'énergie' Pauline provokes but because she, unlike any other woman, becomes 'une partenaire impossible' who is 'plus qu'une femme, un ange'. Consequently, 'le désir qui se fixe sur lui n'en est pas digne; d'où la tentative de Louis Lambert de s'émasculer'.[257] In other words, he castrates himself 'pour mettre fin au conflit de ses deux natures, angélique et charnelle'.[258] Such a conflict arises out of Louis's recognition that to possess Pauline would be to rob her of her angelic status and reduce it to an all too human form existing in one specific and, by definition, non-absolute moment in time. Through drawing an apposite parallel between *La Peau de Chagrin* and *Louis Lambert*, Pavel and Bremond put forward the argument that:

> physique pour Louis, morale pour Raphaël, la solution renouvelée d'Origène est envisagée par tous deux comme un recours désespéré contre une passion qui les conduit à leur perte, encore que l'objet de cette passion (intentionnellement nommée « Pauline » dans les deux livres) soit une créature angélique éminemment digne d'être aimée.[259]

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[254] Balzac, *Physiologie du mariage*, in *La Comédie humaine*, XI, p. 1027.

[255] Claude Bremond and Thomas Pavel, *De Barthes à Balzac: Fictions d'un critique, critiques d'une fiction* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998), p. 203. A similar view is put forward by Flaubert who describes *Louis Lambert* as 'l'histoire d'un homme qui devient fou à force de penser aux choses intangibles'. *Correspondance*, 4 volumes, edited by Jean Bruneau (Paris: Gallimard, 'Pléiade', 1980), II: *juillet 1851-décembre 1858*, pp. 218-9 (27 December 1852).

[256] Bremond and Pavel, *De Barthes à Balzac*, p. 203.

[257] *ibid*., p. 205.

[258] *ibid*., p. 206.

[259] *ibid*., p. 206.

Adam Bresnick puts this view most succinctly of all when he claims: 'Lambert's body gets in the way of his spiritual expansion'.[260] Linking these critics' views is the belief that Louis's life takes on tragic proportions as a result of falling in love with Pauline: Bremond and Pavel, for example, view Louis's madness as a 'perte'[261] and an 'échec'.[262] Other critics adopt a similar 'vocabulary of denigration' (TDS, 27) towards Louis's state: Bettina L. Knapp believes that Louis merely 'withers and dies';[263] Pierre-Georges Castex regards Louis as 'une victime particulièrement pitoyable';[264] Harry Levin believes that 'it is thought which undoes the precocious Louis';[265] while Adam Bresnick describes the end of the novel as 'a fragmentary testimony to a dangerous, indeed lunatic absolute beyond the divisions of gender and conventional philosophical thinking'.[266] Yet we saw in part II chapter one that any view which regards Louis's madness as a *descent* into catatonia or as a failure and curse is seriously flawed and over-emphasises only one side of the story given that the text provides considerable evidence – principally from the mouth of Pauline de Villenoix – to suggest that Louis is anything but an incapacitated failure. Accordingly, a third school of criticism argues, in the words of Arthur Holmberg, that 'to read the end of the novel as a tragedy is to overlook the deepest implications of Balzac's story. Louis's life is a tragedy only when measured against a mediocre norm'.[267] If Louis's state is far from a happy one, it is because

> he could never be happy as men know happiness. The final destruction of his body frees his spirit to soar above the shackles of earthly existence. [...] By overcoming the flesh he liberates his soul to rejoin the infinite, his true home and only happiness. The end of Louis Lambert is not a tragedy but a victory – the triumph of man's spirit to transcend the confines of physical reality.[268]

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[260] Bresnick, 'The *Origen* of the Work of Art?', p. 86.

[261] Bremond and Pavel, *De Barthes à Balzac,* p. 206.

[262] *ibid.*, p. 207.

[263] Bettina Knapp, 'Louis Lambert: The Legend of the Thinking Man', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 6 (1977-8), 21-35 (p. 21).

[264] Pierre-Georges Castex, *Le Conte fantastique en France de Nodier à Maupassant* (Paris: Corti, 1987), pp. 202-3.

[265] Harry Levin, *The Gates of Horn: A Study of Five French Realists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 174.

[266] Bresnick, 'The *Origen* of the Work of Art?', p. 81.

[267] Arthur Carl Holmberg, 'Louis Lambert and Maximilian Rubin: The Inner Vision and The Outer Man', *Hispanic Review*, 46 (1978), 119-36 (p. 129).

[268] *ibid.*, p. 130.

Holmberg's view of Louis's end as a triumph therefore stands in contrast to the critics cited above who, like Henri Evans, believe that Pauline is 'l'instrument de sa [Louis's] ruine finale'.[269] Robert Smadja concords with Holmberg in this more positive assessment of Louis's lot but factors Pauline de Villenoix out of the equation entirely, focussing instead on Louis's 'madness' as the logical and successful culmination of his life-long desire to bring about 'la séparation de l'esprit et du corps'.[270] The end of the novel therefore represents 'l'aboutissement naturel et logique de l'intense *négativisme corporel* du héros',[271] a 'négativisme' which springs from 'l'aspect prométhéen, rimbaldien, pourquoi pas nietzschéen, de la démarche de Louis'.[272] Such a 'démarche' is summed up neatly in Smadja's phrase 'l'homme est quelque chose qui doit être dépassé'.[273] Louis's success in this domain, Smadja argues, should be seen as a cause for celebration rather than despair.

Within this third school of critical thought a division becomes apparent between, on the one hand, those like Smadja and Holmberg who place Louis's Promethean ambitions to 'dépasser l'homme' on a philosophical plane and, on the other hand, Pierre Barbéris who sites Louis's desire to reach a pre-lapsarian absolute mode of existence within a socio-historical context. Barbéris argues that *Louis Lambert* 'ne se comprend que dans la perspective dialectique individu-société'[274] given that it tells the tale of 'l'inadaptation au monde des êtres d'élite'.[275] Barbéris places the novel, first published in 1832 after all, firmly within the context of Balzac's disappointed personal reaction to 'la consolidation de la monarchie de Juillet, l'échec des rêves'.[276] He claims that all Balzac's writing in the period 1832-3 can be summed up within the following schema: 'poésie, souvenirs, utopies, vont recueillir toute une

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[269] Evans, *'Louis Lambert' et la philosophie de Balzac*, p. 75.
[270] Smadja, *Corps et roman*, p. 39.
[271] *ibid.*, pp. 41-2.
[272] *ibid.*, p. 43.
[273] *ibid.*, p. 43.
[274] Pierre Barbéris, *Balzac et le mal du siècle 1799-1832 - Contribution à une physiologie du monde moderne*, 2 volumes (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), II: *1830-1833: Une expérience de l'absurde: de la prise de conscience à l'expression*, p. 1627.
[275] *ibid.*, p. 1648.
[276] *ibid.*, p. 1618.

énergie qui se voit condamnée, si elle veut agir dans le monde, aux compromissions et aux reniements'.[277] Accordingly, *Louis Lambert* revolves around the desire to create 'un [sic] intense, une totalité, qui sont d'un autre ordre que celui du vulgaire bourgeois. Balzac, comme tous les hommes d'élite, alors, se sent seul dans le monde des hommes'.[278] While emphasising the autobiographical aspects of the novel – a common theme within *Louis Lambert* criticism[279] - Barbéris nonetheless sites Lambert's defining quality in his 'profond besoin de vérité, d'authenticité',[280] a need unsated in a world characterised by 'l'utilitarisme et le prosaïsme petit-bourgeois'.[281] In order to retreat from this world, Louis withdraws into a deep contemplation of the Infinite 'pour juger un monde dont il ne se sent pas totalement être'.[282] Such a withdrawal proves to be untenable, and he is plunged into madness as a result of his inability to juggle his need to participate in society with his desire to escape from it, thereby demonstrating the impossibility that the 'homme d'élite' can survive in this earthly world.

If the schools of critical thought which have been reviewed so far in this section see Louis's relationship with Pauline either as an obstacle to the realisation of his absolutist desires or as irrelevant to such desires, as in the case of Barbéris, a further critical node coalesces around the view that Pauline represents the indispensable spring-board with which Louis can reach a position of happiness. Stratton Buck, for example, writes:

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[277] *ibid.*, p. 1618.

[278] *ibid.*, pp. 1618-9.

[279] The novel's autobiographical aspects have caught the attention of many critics, no doubt inspired by Laure Surville, Balzac's sister, who stated: 'le souvenir de ce temps [at the Collège des Oratoriens de Vendôme] lui inspira la première partie du livre de *Louis Lambert*. Dans cette première partie, Louis Lambert et lui ne font qu'un, c'est Balzac en deux personnes'. Laure Surville, *Balzac, sa vie et ses œuvres: D'après sa correspondance* (Paris: Jaccottet & Bourdilliat, 1858), p. 20. For accounts of Balzac's time at the Collège des Oratoriens de Vendôme along with the many similarities with those described in the novel, see Hubert-Fillay, *Balzac au Collège de Vendôme: Souvenirs sur Maurice Rollinat, clairvoyance de Pascal Fortheny* (Blois: Editions du Jardin de la France, [1940?]); Daniel Vannier, *En marge de 'Louis Lambert': Balzac au Collège de Vendôme* (Beaugency: [n. pub.], 1945); Géraud Venzac, 'Balzac au Collège de Vendôme', *Le Courrier Balzacien*, 77 (1999), 3-31.

[280] Barbéris, *Balzac et le mal du siècle*, p. 1728.

[281] *ibid.*, p. 1734.

[282] *ibid.*, p. 1747.

the love of Pauline has let him glimpse divine love and has become the means of his elevation. [...] The crisis, the catalepsy, the attempt at self-mutilation, becomes, then, a voluntary renunciation of this earth in favour of the life angelic. Pauline's love was a necessary preparation for his celestial phase. But human love, having fulfilled its role, now gives way to love divine.[283]

Establishing a marked contrast with other critics, Buck sees Louis as 'the hero [who] transcends the limitations of the human comedy'.[284] Similarly, Arlette Michel writes: 'Lambert comprend [...] qu'il ne pouvait se marier; il doit aimer, mais pour dépasser l'amour'.[285]

From this short review of the criticism on *Louis Lambert*, it appears that critics remain divided over many of the key questions posed in part II chapter one such as the role played by Pauline de Villenoix and by love in Louis's ascent / descent into madness. Moreover, most do not address the timing of his action nor the specific mental processes Louis undergoes in allegedly going mad and in attempting to castrate himself. Other issues over which no critical consensus has emerged include the role of 'the body' – why must it be sacrificed? What role do his attempted castration and the enforced submission of his body play in Louis's thinking and the realisation of his philosophical aims? In part III and in the thesis conclusion, I wish to propose responses to these questions from within an anti-psychiatric framework.

Le Rouge et le Noir

In the previous chapter, two principal questions arose out of our analysis of the shooting scene in *Le Rouge et le Noir*: why does Julien Sorel attempt to kill Louise de Rênal so soon after he appears to have realised all his societal ambitions? Why

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[283] Stratton Buck, 'The Uses of Madness', *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 3 (1958), 63-71 (p. 65).
[284] *ibid.*, p. 65.
[285] Arlette Michel, *Le Mariage et l'amour dans l'œuvre romanesque d'Honoré de Balzac*, 4 volumes (Paris: Champion, 1976), p. 582.

does he try to kill her at all given that the murder attempt seems both unnecessary and senseless? We saw also in part II chapter one that a high degree of textual ambiguity and confusion surrounds these questions. Do critics attempt to illuminate these blind-spots? The answer is an emphatic yes given that the shooting scene constitutes surely one of the most analysed seven paragraphs in literary history: several critics have already attempted summaries of critical opinion on the subject, including Roger Pearson and Horst Lederer with this assessment of 'la psychocritique stendhalienne'.[286] How does this plethora of critics approach the ambiguities and 'invraisemblance' surrounding the shooting scene? In the most comprehensive of the synopses of critical opinion, Roger Pearson outlines the 'four principal reactions to Julien's murderous act: it is implausible; mad; an act of vengeance; inexplicable and therefore true to life'.[287] Within our stated context of an anti-psychiatric analysis, the second and fourth of these reactions seem most significant, and it is these reactions which I examine first.

The disregard which Julien shows for 'la bienséance' and his self-interest in shooting Madame de Rênal has led many critics to answer the questions above by suggesting that he simply goes mad, albeit temporarily. One psychiatrist, for example, diagnoses Julien as a 'paranoid psychopath';[288] while Jean-Pierre Richard describes him as 'un aliéné provisoire';[289] and Henri Martineau writes that on reading Louise de Rênal's letter, Julien is 'en proie à une sorte d'hypnose'.[290] Yet, if we return briefly to the part I review of the principles of anti-psychiatry, it becomes clear that such views of Julien's condition suffer from serious deficiencies. There we saw that diagnosing an

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[286] Roger Pearson, *Stendhal's Violin: A Novelist and His Reader* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), pp. 135-42; Horst Lederer, 'Un cas difficile: Stendhal vu par la psychocritique', *Stendhal Club*, 25 (1983), 379-88. Two further summaries to be recommended are Longstaffe, 'L'éthique du duel'; Carol Mossman, *The Narrative Matrix: 'Le Rouge et le Noir'* (Lexington: French Forum, 1984), pp. 11-22.

[287] Pearson, *Stendhal's Violin,* p. 136.

[288] Jerome Schneck, 'Legal Insanity, Moral Insanity and Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir'*, *Medical History*, 10, (1966), 281-84 (p. 283).

[289] Jean-Pierre Richard, *Littérature et sensation* (Paris: Seuil, 1954), p. 35.

[290] Henri Martineau, 'Introduction', in Stendhal, *Le Rouge et le Noir: Chronique du XIX siècle* (Paris: Garnier, 1960), pp. i-xxxiv (p. xxv). These quotations are but a few examples of this view. Pearson and Longstaffe cite many other critics who have put forward similar opinions. See respectively *Stendhal's Violin*, pp. 137-8, and 'L'éthique du duel', pp. 283-4.

individual as 'mad' has a dehumanising effect, robbing them of their sense of intentionality. Thus to suggest that Julien is clinically 'mad' is to argue that he shoots Mme de Rênal involuntarily, as if under the malign influence of a medico-physiological deficiency beyond his control. Yet there is little evidence in the novel to back up such a claim: Julien may well be far from forthcoming with details about his motives, but his insistence on the premeditated status of his act surely undermines the view that he had lost control of his mental faculties, no matter how temporarily.

If the second of the four critical approaches which Pearson outlines shows signs of weaknesses, what of the other principal line of argument adopted by Stendhal critics which seems to be most pertinent to an anti-psychiatric interpretation? This reaction – that Julien's shooting is inexplicable and therefore true to life – is of considerable relevance to the questions outlined above given that it goes hand in hand with the opinion that the de-motivated status of the shooting in fact represents the novel's greatest virtue. This view therefore sits rather uncomfortably alongside my stated aim of motivating Julien's actions even though they are presented in the novel as explicitly de-motivated. A useful example of this stance can be found in Peter Brooks's claim that critics have 'failed to find convincing reasons for Julien's excessive and self-destructive acts'.[291] More significant, however, is his assertion that any such act 'can never be and *should* never be covered up by recourse to ingenious psychological explanations'.[292] This view is taken up by Gérard Genette who writes:

> ces actions brutales ne sont pas, en elles-mêmes, plus 'incompréhensibles' que bien d'autres [...]; mais on dirait que Stendhal a choisi délibérément de leur conserver, ou peut-être de leur conférer, par son refus de toute explication, cette individualité sauvage qui fait l'imprévisible des grandes actions - et des grandes œuvres.[293]

The weakness in Genette's argument, however, lies in the phrase 'par son refus de toute explication'. Rather than being under-determined, 'if anything Julien's crime is

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[291] Peter Brooks, 'The Œdipal Crisis', in *A New History of French Literature*, edited by Denis Hollier (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 649-56 (p. 655).
[292] *ibid.*, p. 655, my italics.
[293] Quoted in Pearson, *Stendhal's Violin*, p. 141.

over-determined',[294] as D. A. Miller has convincingly demonstrated. Moreover, the various surveys of critical opinion described earlier in this chapter testify to the fact that a seemingly infinite array of motives can be and has been attributed to Julien's behaviour.

Two further well-known critics take a similar line to that adopted by Brooks and Genette. Christopher Prendergast sees Julien's crime as 'the most spectacular instance of Stendhalian silence [...], the triumph of spontaneity over calculation'.[295] Yet Julien's journey from Paris to Verrières would have taken several days to complete in pre-railway nineteenth-century France with the result that one wonders just how spontaneous and un-calculating such an act can really be. Prendergast goes on to praise the lack of motivation and intelligibility attributed to the crime: 'the garrulous narrator simply shuts up shop, abandons the *doxa* at the very moment it is most needed, for he knows that to make sense of it in these terms would be to betray its meaning'.[296] This meaning, in Prendergast's view, centres on 'the disdainful refusal of given codes of 'vraisemblance' [....] [and the desire to] pose questions about the foundations and constraints of representation, verisimilitude'.[297] Prendergast also takes a decidedly sniffy attitude towards the substantial numbers of Stendhal critics who have tried to motivate Julien's de-motivated behaviour: 'the paradoxical outcome of Stendhal's silences has been to spawn critical and interpretative discourse on a large scale; around those gaps the languages of criticism has garrulously swarmed, usually in the mode of uncritical celebration'.[298] Michel Crouzet, the controversial doyen of Stendhal studies, takes one step further these views when he argues that the critic robs the shooting scene of its sublime 'imprévisibilité' by grafting his/her voice onto its 'rhétorique du non-dit'.[299] The critic should instead 'renoncer à rendre explicable Julien, et surtout à le rendre

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[294] Miller, *Narrative and its Discontents*, p. 219.

[295] Prendergast, *The Order of Mimesis*, p. 141.

[296] *ibid.*, p. 142.

[297] *ibid.*, pp. 142-3.

[298] *ibid.*, p. 144.

[299] Michel Crouzet, 'Julien Sorel et le sublime: Etude de la poétique d'un personnage', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 86 (1986), 86-108 (p. 105).

cohérent ou clair en termes de psychologie'.[300] Crouzet attacks critical approaches, in particular psychoanalysis, which aim to 'explain' Julien.

> Une fois admis que le *Rouge* était un roman psychologique, ou une fois admises les méthodes d'interprétation plus « modernes » qui se croient en droit de ne pas tenir compte vraiment des textes, et de déployer à leur place une grille psychologique qui dit hautement et clairement le « non-dit », et en fait reconstitue le texte tel qu'il devrait être pour confirmer la méthode, nous perdons la possibilité de suivre justement le non-dit du texte, de respecter ses ombres et ses hiatus comme des données qui lui sont propres et indispensables.[301]

In Crouzet's view, it is within these 'ombres' and 'hiatus' that lurks the 'Sublime'. To shed light on these shadows is to diminish the grandeur of Julien's sublime status.

> La critique se trompe quand elle veut rendre explicable ce qui ne l'est pas nécessairement et surtout en supprimant ce qui nous est donné comme non explicable ou à peine explicable; nous perdons le texte, et surtout les effets sublimes, en méconnaissant qu'il y a une discipline de l'irrationnel, une rhétorique du non-dit. [...] La psychanalyse, peut-être parce qu'elle travestit et aplatit ou trahit le Sublime semble mortelle pour ce concept-forme propre à la modernité romantique.[302]

Crouzet's argument seems misguided, however, as there is little textual evidence to suggest that Julien's crime is inexplicable – indeed, as we saw in part II chapter one, Julien himself proposes a wide range of possible (if confusing) motives for his behaviour. In a wider sense, Prendergast's and Crouzet's arguments provoke a question which is relevant to each of the novels under examination: should the silence of the text impose a reciprocal silence on the critic? I would argue that this should not be the case for the simple reason that textual silences make for the most fecund of all sources of literary value as, for example, the poetry of Mallarmé demonstrates. Furthermore, so much within *Le Rouge et le Noir* remains 'unexplained' and potentially inexplicable – Julien's behaviour at the trial; the bizarre and sometimes fictitious epigraphs; the lack of references to the 1830 Revolution in a novel published in 1830 purporting to provide 'une chronique du

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[300] *ibid.*, p. 104.
[301] *ibid.*, p. 104.
[302] *ibid.*, pp. 104-5.

XIX siècle'; the silence veiling Julien's decapitation – that one wonders whether Crouzet and Prendergast believe analysis of these unexplained areas should be similarly censored.

In the introduction to this thesis, I suggested that my anti-psychiatric approach is founded on the principle that the actions of the main protagonist of each novel are considerably more logical and 'context-sensible' than they at first appear if they are placed within the protagonist's existential context. It would be disingenuous to suggest that anti-psychiatry represents the only critical approach to argue for the inherent comprehensibility of Julien's actions. Allan H. Pasco, for instance, situates Julien's behaviour within the wider political context of its day and sees the shooting as fully intelligible 'given the powerful forces at work in Romantic France'.[303] Pierre-Georges Castex also writes: 'en se vengeant de celle qui l'a perdu et qui représente alors à ses yeux une caste maudite, il [Julien] permet à son orgueil d'avoir le dernier mot'.[304] Yet such a view that Julien is driven to commit his crime for similar reasons – disappointed ambition or class envy – is not without its problems. We have seen in the previous chapter that this is the case in relation to the evidence which the novel itself puts forward yet this fact has not, however, prevented many critics from proposing just such a view. Yet as Roger Pearson makes clear, the idea that Julien wishes to take revenge on the social class which has thwarted his plebeian ambitions stands clearly 'at odds with the nobility of soul which Stendhal is at pains to show in Julien'.[305] Leo Bersani also writes in this regard that Julien is ultimately uninterested

> in changing "the whole way of life in a great country", neither does he really care [...] for the recognitions he appears to be seeking. He is fit to be neither a revolutionary nor a parvenu because his social ambitions include very little interest in society; instead, he wants to be powerful enough to do without society. Julien sees

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[303] Allan H. Pasco, *Sick Heroes: French Society and Literature in the Romantic Age 1750-1850* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1997), p. 158.

[304] Pierre-Georges Castex, *'Le Rouge et le Noir' de Stendhal* (Paris: Société d'édition d'enseignement supérieur, 1967), p. 149. Summaries of the critical approaches which propose class-oriented views can be found in Pearson, *Stendhal's Violin*, p. 139, note 22, and in Longstaffe, 'L'éthique du duel', p. 284, notes 6 and 7.

[305] Pearson, *Stendhal's Violin*, p. 139.

Napoleon not as the man who changed society, but rather as a historical metaphor for his own dream of a secure solitude in which people will no longer be able to hurt him.[306]

Also rejecting a class warfare motivation is the critic Moya Longstaffe who points out that 'un assassin politique aurait dû choisir comme victime non pas une pauvre mère de famille, mais un homme public, Frilair, par exemple'.[307] By the same token, she goes on to argue that: 'quant au discours prononcé devant les jurés, il est dû à une inspiration subite, provoquée par l'idée de ce que Mme Derville va dire à Mme de Rênal'.[308]

A further line of criticism which foregrounds the comprehensibility of Julien's behaviour is 'la psychocritique'. Allan H. Pasco describes Julien, like so many of his Romantic brothers, as 'paternally challenged'[309] and puts forward the view that:

> Romantic heroes had fathers [who] were cruel, capricious, stupid, or brutish, and they behaved in ways that kept their children from accomplishing their greatest potential. Such fathers were regularly rejected by the main characters of Romantic literature. [...] What has not been pointed out, however, is that the offspring of such paternity tend to be, like Julien, selfish and violent. [...] Julien's relationship to his father is to a large degree the reason that Julien behaves as he does.[310]

While Julien certainly acts selfishly on many (indeed, perhaps most) occasions, there is surely insufficient textual evidence to back up Pasco's claim. We see Julien in the presence of his father on only a limited number of occasions, such as in the sawmills at the beginning of the novel and in the prison cell towards the end. On these occasions, M. Sorel inspires feelings of 'haine' (RN, 233) and 'désespoir' (RN, 688) in his son, yet to suggest that Julien's behaviour is determined in large measure by this troubled relationship with his father is to take a very long jump in the analytical dark.

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[306] Leo Bersani, *Balzac to Beckett: Centre and Circumference in French Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 95-6.
[307] Longstaffe, 'L'éthique du duel', p. 286.
[308] *ibid.*, p. 286.
[309] Pasco, *Sick Heroes,* p. 161.
[310] *ibid.*, p. 169.

While Pasco emphasises the role of the father within Julien's thought processes, Gilbert D. Chaitin, the author of perhaps the best known psychoanalytic study of Stendhal's work, foregrounds the role of the mother-figure and builds his interpretation of the novel on a biographical analysis of Henri Beyle. Chaitin equates the shooting scene's intrusion into the novel with the

> sudden death of Beyle's mother [which] put an abrupt end to the romance of his childhood [and which] not only ruined his chances for future happiness by making his childhood fixation to her definitive, thus barring the normal transfer of his love and desire during puberty onto another woman, it also set up within him a compulsion to repeat her "murder".[311]

This compulsion, in Chaitin's view, left Beyle particularly receptive to the stories of Antoine Berthet and Adrien Lafargue, tales in which a man killed his mistress. He concludes:

> it was this very ending, planned from the outset, which gave rise to his [Beyle's] creative efforts in writing *Le Rouge et le Noir*. The only two avenues of libidinal gratification open to him were the sadistic murder of his love object or the masochistic reversal of this same desire, death at her hands or suicide, due to his guilt feeling. Both of these conditions find their optimum satisfaction in the dénouement of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, where Julien murders Mme de Rênal and is executed because of this crime.[312]

Chaitin's interpretation, for all its attractiveness, has the misfortune of being more interested in that most elusive of literary subjects, Henri Beyle, than in his fictional creation, Julien Sorel, even if this is one trait Chaitin shares with many other psychoanalysis-minded critics such as Robert André who writes that with his novels Stendhal does nothing but 'donne[r] un champ opératoire à la thématique profonde de sa conscience'.[313] Likewise, Geneviève Mouillaud states that the subject of her

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[311] Gilbert D. Chaitin, *The Unhappy Few: A Psychological Study of the Novels of Stendhal* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 85.
[312] *ibid.*, p. 85.
[313] Robert André, *Ecriture et pulsions dans le roman stendhalien* (Paris: Champion, 1997), p. 14. See also in this regard Micheline Levowitz-Treu, *L'Amour et la mort chez Stendhal: Métamorphoses d'un apprentissage affectif* (Aran: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1978); Béatrice Didier, *Stendhal autobiographe* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983); Juliet Flower MacCannell, 'Œdipus Wrecks: Lacan, Stendhal and the Narrative Form of the Real', *Modern Language Notes*, 98 (1983), 910-40; Jean Bellemin-Noël, *L'Auteur encombrant: Stendhal / 'Armance'* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1985); Carol

work on *Le Rouge et le Noir* is a composite of three entities: Henri Beyle, Stendhal and Julien Sorel.[314] Such approaches seem unhelpful therefore when responding to the questions outlined in the previous chapter which focus purely on Julien Sorel and his thought processes before, during and after the shooting scene.

In this short discussion of some of the voluminous critical literature devoted to *Le Rouge et le Noir*, it has become apparent that many of the responses to the questions regarding Julien Sorel's attempt to kill Louise de Rênal at such an 'invraisemblable' moment in the narrative are characterised by inconsistencies and shortcomings. Once my anti-psychiatric analysis of the shooting scene is complete, I shall return to these various schools of critical thought and demonstrate how an anti-psychiatric approach contradicts or reinforces certain of these strands of Stendhal criticism.

Renée Mauperin

The final decade of the twentieth century witnessed an energetic burst of critical interest in the life and work of Edmond and Jules de Goncourt which gave rise to, for example, much needed re-editions of the *Journal,*[315] several of their novels[316] and sections of their correspondence;[317] the establishment in 1992 of the *Cahiers Edmond*

Mossman, *The Narrative Matrix*; Maryline Lukacher, *Maternal Fictions: Stendhal, Sand, Rachilde and Bataille* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 17-60; Grazia Merler, 'Stendhal dans la perspective adlérienne', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 23 (1994-5), 108-26.

[314] Geneviève Mouillaud, *'Le Rouge et le Noir' de Stendhal: Le roman possible* (Paris: Larousse, 1973), pp. 199.

[315] Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *Journal: Mémoires de la vie littéraire*, three volumes, edited by Robert Kopp and Robert Ricatte (Paris: Laffont, 1989). A CD-ROM version of the *Journal* is also currently in production.

[316] For example: *Renée Mauperin* (1989), *Charles Demailly*, (1990), *Sœur Philomène* (1996), *Manette Salomon* (1996).

[317] Maria Luis Cappello, editor, 'Louis Bouilhet et les Goncourt: Relations épistolaires et littéraires [Lettres inédites]', *Cahiers Edmond et Jules de Goncourt*, 3 (1994), 78-90; Pierre-Jean Dufief, editor, 'Correspondance E. de Goncourt – Labille, inédit', *Cahiers Edmond et Jules de Goncourt*, 3 (1994), 91-103; Pierre-Jean Dufief and Anne-Sophie Dufief, editors, *Correspondance Edmond de Goncourt et Alphonse Daudet* (Geneva: Droz, 1996); Silvia Disegni, editor, 'J. Primoli et E. de Goncourt: Lettres et textes inédits', *Cahiers Edmond et*

et *Jules de Goncourt*; the organisation of several 'colloques' devoted to their
work;[318] the publication of several important scholarly monographs;[319] and finally
the issue in 2000 of an edition of the prestigious *Revue des Sciences Humaines*
devoted to the brothers' work.[320] It would seem reasonable to expect then that this
wave of critical interest should have also washed over *Renée Mauperin*, a novel
which, after all, was so warmly received by its authors' literary contemporaries:
Flaubert, for example, declared himself 'charmé'[321] and Bouilhet 'toqué'[322] by the
novel, while Zola enthused: 'pour bien des personnes, [...] *Renée Mauperin* est le
chef d'œuvre de MM. de Goncourt'.[323] One might also expect that the questions
outlined in part II chapter one would have been discussed at some length in some of
the recent Goncourt analyses. This, however, has not proven to be the case given that
almost no critical work has been devoted to *Renée Mauperin*, let alone to the manner
of Renée's death.[324]

Jules de Goncourt, 5 (1997), 254-81; Pierre-Jean Dufief, editor, *Correspondance: Gustave Flaubert - Les Goncourt* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998); Silvia Disegni, editor, 'Une correspondance Alexis – Goncourt', *Cahiers Edmond et Jules de Goncourt*, 7 (1999-2000), 11-68; Pierre-Jean Dufief, editor, 'Correspondance Goncourt - Montesquiou', *Cahiers Edmond et Jules de Goncourt*, 7 (1999-2000), 69-96; Pierre-Jean Dufief, editor, 'Correspondance Goncourt - Nadar', *Cahiers Edmond et Jules de Goncourt*, 8 (2001), 213-27; Jean-Michel Pottier, editor, 'Le Persan et la « Terre natale ». Lettres d'Edmond de Goncourt à J. - H. Rosny', *Cahiers Edmond et Jules de Goncourt*, 8 (2001), 228-42.

[318] A conference was held at the Sorbonne in 1989 to celebrate Kopp's and Ricatte's new edition of the *Journal* and the *Histoire de la société française pendant la Révolution*. The proceedings were published in the spring and autumn 1990 editions of *Francofonia*. A further 'colloque' was held in 1996 in Bordeaux to commemorate the centenary of Edmond de Goncourt's death. Edited proceedings can be found in Jean-Louis Cabanès, editor, *Les Frères Goncourt: Art et Ecriture* (Talence: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 1997).

[319] See Jean-Louis Cabanès, *Le Corps et la maladie dans les récits réalistes (1856-1893)*, two volumes (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991); Michel Caffier, *Les Frères Goncourt: « Un déshabillé de l'âme »* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1994); Bernard Vouilloux, *L'Art des Goncourt: Une esthétique du style* (Paris: Harmattan, 1997); Stéphanie Champeau, *La Notion d'artiste chez les Goncourt* (Paris: Champion, 1999).

[320] See *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, 259 (2000).

[321] Dufief, editor, *Correspondance: Gustave Flaubert - Les Goncourt*, pp. 124-5.

[322] Quoted in Cappello, 'Louis Bouilhet et les Goncourt', p. 83.

[323] Emile Zola, 'Edmond et Jules de Goncourt', in 'Les Romanciers naturalistes', in *Œuvres complètes*, 15 volumes, edited by Herni Mitterand (Paris: Cercle du livre précieux, 1966-70), XI: *Œuvres critiques II*, (1968), pp. 157-75 (p. 169).

[324] The one exception in this regard is Amy Reid's recent examination of the novel's representation of platonic friendship between women. See Amy Reid, '*Amitié Féminine*, Naturalism's Blind Spot: The Case of the Goncourts' *Renée Mauperin*', *Women in French Studies*, 7 (1999), 88-99. It is interesting to note that of the thirty-one papers collected in Cabanès's *Art et écriture*, none addresses *Renée Mauperin* directly while five are devoted,

It is, however, disingenuous to claim that no critics investigate the curious manner of Renée's death. Although many Goncourt critics ignore the circumstances surrounding Renée's death[325] - a surprising omission given that this event leads to the novel's closure – a few do, however, address the issue. Several attribute Renée's death to a simple Romantic 'maladie de cœur': François Fosca, for example, focuses purely on the grief and guilt she suffers as a result of having inadvertently brought about her brother's death. He writes:

> Denoisel, qui a été le témoin d'Henri et ignore comme tout le monde que c'est Renée qui a envoyé le journal, lui [à Renée] révèle ce qui a causé la mort de son frère. Désespérée, Renée est atteinte d'une maladie de cœur qui l'emporte en quelques mois.[326]

What is interesting about such views is the heavy emphasis they place on the physiological aspect of Renée's death. Robert Ricatte writes:

> après la mort d'Henri, quand la machine infernale a rempli son office, les Goncourt, peu soucieux de varier leurs dénouements, laissent lentement se désintégrer le personnage qui reste en cause [Renée]; comme dans leurs romans antérieurs, la physiologie triomphe alors, puisque c'est à elle d'étudier les effets de la folie sur Demailly, de l'alcool sur Barnier, d'une hypertrophie de cœur sur Renée.[327]

Ricatte is particularly illuminating in this regard as he berates the Goncourts for their lack of scientific accuracy and fidelity to the medical theories of the day.

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for example, to the *Journal*, three to *Germinie Lacerteux*, and two each to *Charles Demailly*, *Madame Gervaisais* and *La Faustin*. The recent issue of the *Revue des Sciences Humaines* shows a similar emphasis, concentrating on the brothers' early works as well as on the novels composed by Edmond alone, with almost no references made at all to *Renée Mauperin*.

[325] Such is the case in Marcel Sauvage, *Jules et Edmond de Goncourt* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1970); Lazare Prajs, *La Fallacité de l'œuvre romanesque des frères Goncourt* (Paris: Nizet, 1974); Jean-Louis Cabanès, editor, *Les Frères Goncourt: Art et Ecriture*; Champeau, *La Notion d'artiste chez les Goncourt*.

[326] François Fosca, *Edmond et Jules de Goncourt* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1941), p. 183. Other critics to take the same line include Alfred-Auguste Cuvillier-Fleury, 'Les mœurs parisiennes', in *Etudes et portraits* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1865), pp. 380-7 (p. 380); F. de Lagenevais, 'Le petit roman', *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, 15 February 1865, pp. 1061-9; Alidor Delzant, *Les Goncourt* (Paris: Charpentier, 1889), p. 1067; Pierre Sabatier, *'Germinie Lacerteux' des Goncourt* (Paris: SFELT, 1948), p. 28.

[327] Ricatte, *La Création romanesque chez les Goncourt*, p. 194.

Les Goncourt ont lu et annoté l'*Essai sur les Maladies du Cœur* de Corvisart, et surtout le *Traité des Maladies de Cœur* de Bouillaud. […] Je ne suis pas médecin, mais, ayant lu Corvisart et Bouillaud, j'ai pu me rendre compte que les auteurs de Renée leur ont demandé bien peu.[328]

The scandalised Ricatte complains that 'le roman lui-même n'indique pas de quelle maladie précise souffre Renée',[329] and that 'l'agonie de Renée est une agonie très décorative; celles que décrit Bouillaud sont autrement effrayantes'.[330] One wonders why then Ricatte does not conclude that there may be some more important if as yet unspecified aspects to Renée's death other than the authors' fidelity to nineteenth-century medical theories. In a similar vein, Robert Baldick writes: 'shocked and grief-stricken [at Henri's death], Renée falls ill, and after a few months, she dies of a hypertrophied heart';[331] while Jean-Louis Cabanès claimed in 1991 that:

la plupart de leurs [Goncourt] récits se fondent sur la description de cas pathologiques: folie de Charles Demailly, puberté maladive de sœur Philomène, crise cardiaque de Renée Mauperin, hystérie de Germinie Lacerteux, de la fille Elisa, névrose de Chérie Haudancourt'.[332]

Cabanès's views on *Renée Mauperin* are of particular interest not merely because he is one of the leading French critics currently working on the Goncourts, but, more significantly, because his views undergo a noticeable evolution over the course of the 1990's, as if in a demonstration of the shift he can arguably be said to have made between two schools of critical thought on Renée's death. The first such school is that which we have just seen and which focuses both on the 'idée reçue' that Renée dies as a result of the guilt she feels over her brother's death and on the extent to which the symptoms of her illness conform to the descriptions of a 'maladie de cœur' available to the Goncourts in nineteenth-century medical text-books. One further particularly instructive example in this regard is provided by Richard B. Grant who writes:

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[328] *ibid.*, p. 240.
[329] *ibid.*, p. 241.
[330] *ibid.*, p. 242.
[331] Robert Baldick, The Goncourt Brothers (London: Bowers and Bowers, 1960), p. 28.
[332] Cabanès, *Le Corps et les maladies dans les récits réalistes*, p. 10.

once she falls ill, […] her death is very decorative. One might even say that her death has a decidedly literary flavour (only slightly disguised by medical terminology) reminiscent of many another heroine dying of a broken heart. Once again the Goncourts have inadvertently flawed their novel, which is in many ways a superior creation.[333]

The second school of critical thought on Renée's death focuses specifically on this 'decorative' or 'literary flavour' to her death and examines what could be termed as its 'productive' aspects. Cabanès writes in 1995 that the manner of Renée's 'mort édifiante' demonstrates 'l'exemplarité de l'agonie, hors de toute référence explicite aux rites religieux, est manifestation et dévoilement d'une intériorité'.[334] Yet he makes no suggestion as to what exactly this 'intériorité' might be. Caramaschi takes a similar line when he argues: 'Renée, pour mourir, s'y prend autrement que Barnier ou Germinie: la souffrance la change, la purifie, la mûrit, la dépouille de toutes les scories de l'humain'.[335] Another critic and a contemporary of the Goncourts, Paul de Saint-Victor, points out that in death Renée undergoes 'des changements divins'[336] yet he still attributes her death purely to 'le remords et la douleur lorsqu'elle a provoqué, sans le vouloir, le duel où son frère succombe'.[337]

The most obvious fact to emerge from this short review of *Renée Mauperin* criticism is that analyses of Renée's demise are few in number. Nonetheless, two schools of thought have emerged on the subject: one which accepts as an 'idée reçue' the fact that Renée dies of a broken heart caused by the grief and guilt she suffers as a result of having inadvertently brought about the death of her brother; and one which focuses instead on the productive effects of her death and on the messianic status she assumes on her death-bed. I shall return to these two schools of thought in the thesis conclusion to examime how they correspond with or contradict the anti-psychiatric analysis I undertake in part III.

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[333] Richard B. Grant, *The Goncourt Brothers* (New York: Twayne, 1972), p. 61.

[334] Cabanès, 'L'art de mourir dans *Renée Mauperin* et *Le Docteur Pascal*', p. 100.

[335] Caramaschi, *Réalisme et impressionnisme dans l'œuvre des frères Goncourt*, p. 241.

[336] Paul de Saint-Victor, 'Renée Mauperin', *La Presse*, 11 April 1864, quoted in 'Documents', RM, 265-71 (p. 269).

[337] Saint-Victor, 'Renée Mauperin', p. 268.

L'Œuvre

If the key question of *Renée Mauperin* – why Renée dies in such a beatified manner – remains relatively under-explored by critics, one can perhaps attribute such an oversight to the relative lack of critical studies devoted to the brothers. Such an explanation does not hold, however, when we turn to Zola's *L'Œuvre* which has been analysed extensively by literary critics.[338] Nonetheless, the key question of the novel - why Claude commits suicide at such an 'invraisemblable' point of the novel – has been largely neglected by critics. The majority of the vast amount of work devoted to the novel concentrates instead on its possible significance for the art historian, examining, for instance, whether *L'Œuvre* should be read as 'the novel in which Zola travestied Impressionism',[339] or the one in which he proposes 'a condemnation [not] of Impressionism but of its aftermath'.[340] Similarly, much detective work has been devoted to unearthing the various real-life figures who could have acted as the models for Sandoz or Claude Lantier. While critical opinion has assumed an unusual degree of unanimity in decreeing that Sandoz represents the voice of Emile Zola[341] (a not altogether surprising conclusion in view of Zola's statement: 'Sandoz n'est là que pour donner mes idées sur l'art'[342]), critics are more deeply divided over which artist could have provided the inspiration for Claude

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[338] Useful summaries of the voluminous criticism on the novel can be found in David Baguley, '« Zola et les arts » (1966-1991)', *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, 66 (1992), 337-46; and William J. Berg, *The Visual Novel: Emile Zola and the Arts of His Times* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), pp. 12-18.

[339] Phoebe Pool, *Impressionism* (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 217. Similar points of view are put forward in: Pierre Aubrey, 'Zola peintre et la littérature', in *Zola and the Arts: Centennial of the Publication of 'L'Œuvre'*, edited by Jean-Max Guieu and Alison Hilton (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1988), pp. 1-8; Joyce Medina, *Cézanne and Modernism: The Politics of Painting* (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), p. 88.

[340] Berg, *The Visual Novel*, p. 44. An illuminating analysis of the historical roots of this entire field of criticism is to be found in Robert J. Niess, 'Another View of Zola's *L'Œuvre*', *Romanic Review*, 39 (1948), 282-300 (pp. 282-4).

[341] F. W. J. Hemmings, *Emile Zola* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), p. 213; Allan H. Pasco, 'The Failure of *L'Œuvre*', *Esprit Créateur*, 11 (1971), 45-55 (p. 54); Naomi Schor, *Zola's Crowds* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 179-80; Brady, *'L'Œuvre'*, pp. 258-77.

[342] Emile Zola, 'Notes autographes de Zola sur le personnage de Pierre Sandoz', in *Emile Zola: Exposition organisée pour le cinquantième anniversaire de sa mort*, edited by Julian Cain (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1952), p. 53, a view given further bolstering by Zola's editor and son-in-law Maurice Le Blond: 'nul n'ignore que Zola s'est mis lui-même en scène sous les traits de Sandoz'. Quoted in Robert J. Niess, 'Zola's "L'Œuvre" and "Reconquista" of Gamboa', *PMLA*, 61 (1946), 577-83 (p. 578).

Lantier. The model most commonly cited is Zola's close childhood friend Paul Cézanne,[343] an argument lent credence not only by evidence from the novel's 'dossier préparatoire',[344] but also by Zola's daughter's 1931 statement: 'Claude Lantier, c'est Paul Cézanne. Evidemment, tout le monde le sait'.[345] Close behind Cézanne in the identification stakes come Manet[346] and Monet,[347] while other critics, Patrick Brady and Joy Newton foremost among them, have adopted F. W. J. Hemmings' line that it is too reductive to suggest that Claude is modelled on one single artist alone. Instead Hemmings believes that 'there remains much in Zola's portrait of Claude that reminds us of quite different painters',[348] with the result that the list of painters from whose lives and work Zola allegedly borrowed elements extends to include Pissarro, Guillmet, Gill, Moreau, Redon, Duranty, Gaston Jourdan, Mirbeau, Roybet, Jongkind, Holtzapfel or Lépine.[349] L'Œuvre is but a 'roman à clef' in the view of many critics: all we have to do is find the correct combination of real-life equivalents of Claude and/or the secondary characters, the key will turn, and the code to the novel will be cracked.[350]

This biographical approach is not without its shortcomings, as one might expect. For example, one would have thought that the considerable number of potential real-life models for Claude Lantier would have critically undermined such a biographical approach. Furthermore, as one critic points out, this is a 'roman à clef' for which 'les clefs […] s'ouvrent mal'.[351] The most obvious demonstration of this fact is surely

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[343] For useful summaries of the history of this view, see Niess, 'Another View', pp. 282-4; and Patrick Brady, 'Claude Lantier', *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, 17 (1961), 10-19 (p. 10).

[344] Zola lays out his plans for chapter two of the novel thus: 'Claude, moi, plus l'architecte. Le tableau pose. Toute notre amitié [i.e. that between Zola and Cézanne] à Plassans'. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Manuscrits Nouvelles acquisitions françaises, Ms. 10316, fol. 2.

[345] Denise LeBlond-Zola, *Emile Zola raconté par sa fille* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1931), p. 141.

[346] For a useful summary of the numerous critics to have seen Manet as a key inspiration, see Margaret Armburst-Seibert, 'Victoirine Meurent, prototype d'Irma Bécot dans L'Œuvre', *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, 66 (1992), 113-22.

[347] See for example Rodolphe Walter, 'Emile Zola and Claude Monet', *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, 26 (1964), 51-61.

[348] Hemmings, *Emile Zola*, p. 222.

[349] For a full summary see Brady, 'L'Œuvre', pp. 225-57.

[350] Patrick Brady's article is a classic example of such an approach: 'Les clefs de L'Œuvre', *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 1 (1964), 257-71.

[351] Bruno Foucart, 'Préface', in Emile Zola, L'Œuvre (Paris: Gallimard, 'Folio', 1983), pp. 7-25 (p. 9).

that neither Monet, Manet nor Cézanne committed suicide. Secondly, despite his initial rejection from the Salon and his ultimate miserable demise, Claude Lantier can be seen as the leader of the 'Ecole du Plein-air' in view of the seminal influence he comes to exert over the artistic world. Cézanne, on the other hand, could never be described as leader of the Impressionist movement. Thirdly, the final painting to which Claude devotes himself with such fatal consequences is, in Robert Niess's estimation, 'certainly not typical of the works of the mature Cézanne: it is […] the exact opposite, in short, of the kind of composition Cézanne had been attempting for some fifteen years before 1885'.[352] Finally, as Jean-François Thibault points out, Zola is highly reluctant to describe in technical terms any of the pictures presented in *L'Œuvre*.[353] Indeed, for a novel which allegedly documents the history of the Impressionist movement, there are remarkably few references to real paintings and real political or historical events such as the siege of Paris or the Commune. Contrast that situation with, for example, the Goncourts' *Manette Salomon* in which artistic and political references abound. Reading *L'Œuvre* as a history of the Impressionist movement and / or the lives of its painter-members is an intensely problematic enterprise, and as such, the primary function of *L'Œuvre* is surely not to serve as a document of interest only to the art historian. As Antoinette Ehrard makes clear (if perhaps a little too polemically): 'lire *L'Œuvre* comme un roman 'à clef' est la lecture la plus réductrice qu'on puisse en faire'.[354]

What other routes have critics taken when dealing with Claude's suicide and the questions raised in part II chapter one? One has answered these questions through equating Claude's obsession with his painted 'femme fatale' with some form of clinical madness, thus establishing an immediate parallel with some of the critical approaches taken to the lives of Julien Sorel and Louis Lambert. Adolfo Fernandez-Zoïla, a practising psychiatrist who has long held a keen interest in the 'Rougon-

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[352] Niess, 'Another View of Zola's *L'Œuvre*', p. 286.

[353] Jean-François Thibault, 'La peinture en marche: Académie et modernité chez Claude Lantier', in *Emile Zola and the Arts*, edited by Guieu and Hilton, pp. 25-33 (pp. 25-6).

[354] Antoinette Ehrard, 'Emile Zola: L'art de voir et la passion de dire', in *La Critique artistique: Un genre littéraire*, edited by Jean Gaulmier, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983), pp. 101-22 (p. 101).

Macquart' cycle, describes Claude as suffering from 'une « hallucinose » psychédelique',[355] and as prone to 'des moments « maniaques »'.[356] Significantly Fernandez-Zoïla describes Claude's entrapment within

> le labyrinthe d'une psychose maniaco-dépressive qui le mènera pas à pas au suicide. Issue banale dans des cas cliniques. [...] En bon *psychotique*, il ne peut pas, il ne sait pas, élaborer les médiations et les *médiatisations* (cognitives, psycho-amoureuses, sociales, artistiques, picturales...) qui chez l'homme « ordinaire » parviennent à se constituer en savoir-faire, en savoir-pouvoir, en savoir-être.[357]

Yet to blame Claude's suicide on a 'psychose' surely replicates a critical error which we saw in relation to Julien Sorel: namely, it robs him of his intentionality when there is no specific textual evidence to suggest that he kills himself involuntarily, as if under the influence of the malign forces of a clinical insanity.

Other critical approaches to the question of Claude's suicide include that by Robert Niess who suggests that Claude hangs himself on an impulse after hearing Christine's bitter words on the subject of his failed final painting.[358] Yet such a view overlooks the facts that Claude appears to have abjured his artistic obsessions in the hours following Christine's dismissal of his efforts and that he appears to take the opportunity for salvation which Christine offers him. The author of several studies of *L'Œuvre*, Patrick Brady compares Claude Monet's 1868 attempted suicide with Claude Lantier's successful suicide: 'la tentative de suicide de Monet est provoquée par son renvoi de l'auberge où il avait pris pension avec sa compagne et son fils en juin 1868, les causes immédiates du suicide de Claude [Lantier] ne sont pas d'ordre matériel'.[359] Yet Brady gives no indication as to the 'ordre' of the immediate causes for Claude's suicide. A further study by the prolific Brady takes a psychoanalytical approach to the novel by paralleling Claude's life with that of his creator - a common

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[355] Adolfo Fernandez-Zoïla, 'Les inapparences de la création dans *L'Œuvre*', *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, 60 (1986), 139-56 (p. 156).
[356] *ibid.*, p. 152.
[357] Adolfo Fernandez-Zoïla, 'Le système écriture-peinture et le figural dans *L'Œuvre*', *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, 66 (1992), 91-103 (p. 92).
[358] Niess, 'Another View of Zola's *L'Œuvre*', p. 298.
[359] Brady, 'Claude Lantier', p. 13.

trait of psychoanalytic criticism as we have already seen in our analysis of Stendhal criticism.

> In *L'Œuvre*, the novelist [Sandoz] gives himself more and more obsessively to his work; in real life, Zola does the same until, less than three years after finishing his autobiographical novel (22 February 1886) [*L'Œuvre*], he makes Jeanne Rozerot his mistress (11 December 1888). […] It seems […] he went to her because she provided him with a sexual relationship free of the incest taboo that had soon come to inhibit him with his wife.[360]

As we saw in relation to *Le Rouge et le Noir*, approaches which relate the plot of the novel to the writer's life are unhelpful when responding to the questions outlined in the first chapter of part II which focus on Claude Lantier's thought processes both throughout the novel and, specifically, in the period leading up to his suicide.

Other critics to tackle the issue of Claude's suicide include J. A. Hiddleston who equates Claude's demise with Zola's personal intellectual difficulties. He poses the question: 'does not the gruesome and essentially realist suicide by hanging of Claude Lantier point […] to certain fundamental contradictions at the heart of Zola's thinking and novelistic universe?'[361] While keeping to a biographical approach, Hiddleston's response to this question promises more than the routes adopted by Brady and Niess. He concludes:

> one wonders if the suicide is not that of Zola himself, or rather if it is not more like a murder of Zola the Romantic by Zola the Naturalist, […] involving an abortive attempt at purgation which, no doubt fortunately, does not extend beyond the novel itself.[362]

Hiddleston thus suggests that at the heart of *L'Œuvre* lies, in Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine's words, 'une allégorie des difficultés et de la misère auxquelles sont en butte les créateurs'.[363] While both Hiddleston and Leduc-Adine reduce *L'Œuvre* to the status of a socio-historical and/or biographical document, they nonetheless raise the

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[360] Patrick Brady, 'Scripting, Surrogate Mothers, Incest Taboo, and Creativity: Zola's Twofold Self-Betrayal in *L'Œuvre*', *Neophilologus*, 69 (1985), 533-8 (p. 537).

[361] Hiddleston, 'Literature and Suicide', p. 222.

[362] *ibid.*, p. 223.

[363] Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine, 'Aspects de la genèse d'un discours mythique dans *L'Œuvre* d'Emile Zola', *La Licorne*, 18 (1990), 41-50 (p. 48).

valuable point that the central theme of the novel rests on the psychological torture over the artistic and ideological choices which the creative act necessarily engenders.

In a further small group of studies, the extra dimension of 'the absolute' is factored into the notion of reading *L'Œuvre* as an examination of the travails of the artist in general rather than of any specific, historically identifiable group of artists. In one of the few extended critiques of the novel not to stem from the field of word and image studies, James Reid suggests that *L'Œuvre* may be read as 'an allegory of how late nineteenth-century France confronted, in order to question, the fear that history was ironically effacing, rather than inscribing, the past'.[364] Reid views Claude's suicide as 'an allegory not only of his forgetting contemporary reality, but of his being forgotten by it'[365] which arises as a direct result of his life-long search for a de-historicized artistic absolute which would surpass the depressing limitations of contemporary reality. For this heresy, his punishment is to leave no trace of his existence on this earth after his death. Robert Niess, in his comparison of *L'Œuvre* and Balzac's *Le Chef d'œuvre inconnu*, also suggests that 'the pursuit of the absolute is quite evidently the theme of both works, the typically romantic quest for the "distant princesses" of art'.[366] Max Milner expands on this point in a further comparative study when he suggests that the key to such works is to be found in the artist's desire to become a new Prometheus: 'l'artiste qui s'est élevé au-dessus de la condition humaine, qui a voulu rivaliser avec Dieu'.[367] It would seem, then, that the psychology lying behind the creative act and the desire for self-deification is the more important but, as yet, less investigated facet of the novel.

While both Milner and Niess engage with this idea from the point of view of art aesthetics, other critics confront the psychological battle going on within Claude's mind from a slightly modified angle. Philip D. Walker describes Claude and Sandoz's attraction to two mutually exclusive artistic poles: 'chacun d'eux est un

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[364] James H. Reid, *Narration and Description in the French Realist Novel: The Temporality of Lying and Forgetting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 116.
[365] *ibid.*, p. 142.
[366] Niess, 'Another View of Zola's *L'Œuvre*', p. 292.
[367] Milner, 'Le peintre fou', pp. 19-20.

esprit double, déchiré entre les deux tendances romantiques contradictories [...] mais, en chacun, l'une de ces deux tendances, finit par prendre le pas sur l'autre'.[368] For Claude, it is 'l'orgueil romantique et l'ambition'[369] which wins over the realist desire to paint a faithful depiction of nature: 'non seulement il veut laisser son empreinte sur l'histoire, mais il veut devenir semblable à Dieu, parfait, immortel, tout-puissant, il veut créer la vie; et c'est ce qui le mène à son ultime défaite et à sa mort'.[370] Although Walker uses this analysis to draw parallels with Zola's own life, his study nonetheless remains a powerful one, and it is one which finds strong resonance in an equally significant study by Thomas Zamperelli who puts forward the case that 'Zola is more concerned with depicting the agonising process of artistic creation than with defining the exact nature of the product. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the aesthetic problem per se is a secondary consideration for Zola'.[371] What the critic and reader should focus on instead is 'the most fundamental dichotomy of the novel' which, in Zamparelli's view, 'is that which exists between true and false artists and true and false art. [...] It is the problem of authenticity in art which forms the nucleus around which the whole novel turns'.[372] Zamparelli defines the authentic artist, seen in L'Œuvre in the guise of Claude and Sandoz, as 'proud, fiercely idealistic, victimised by romanticism, burning with boundless ambition and insatiable appetites'.[373] Moreover, for such artists, 'there is no masterpiece without physical pain. The anguish of creation is a prerequisite for the production of authentic art'.[374] Zamparelli argues that a preoccupation with authenticity is central to Zola's L'Œuvre. If Zola tells us little about the political events of the day, it is because he concentrates on the mental suffering, torture and anguish which accompanies the desire to remain true to an Absolute and to place authenticity and adherence to ideals above all else. Zamparelli argues that although Zola sets his drive for authenticity within an artistic milieu simply because it is one he knew well,

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[368] Philip D. Walker, 'Zola et la lutte avec l'Ange', *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, 42 (1971), 79-92 (p. 87).

[369] *ibid.*, p. 87.

[370] *ibid.*, pp. 87-8.

[371] Zamparelli, 'Zola and the Quest for the Absolute in Art', pp. 154-5.

[372] *ibid.*, p. 144.

[373] *ibid.*, p. 152.

[374] *ibid.*, p. 155.

Claude's search for authenticity could be that of any 'artist' in the widest sense of the word or that of any individual seeking an authentic 'mode de vie'. The one drawback to Zamparelli's persuasive study is that it does not focus on the day-to-day psychological processes which Claude goes through, the processes within this mental torture and anguish which he so rightly points to and which eventually become so untenable that they provoke Claude's suicide.

Part II Conclusion

In part II, several important assertions have been made which provide a foundation on which to construct a Laingian analysis of literary texts. Firstly, we have seen that a congruence of concerns does indeed exist between anti-psychiatry and the four novels in question. It is one which revolves around, firstly, questioning received notions of madness and the necessarily negative status which is attributed to 'madness'; and, secondly, the equation of textual 'invraisemblance' with the anti-psychiatric view of 'madness' as that which strikes at the syntax of accepted behaviour. In relation to *Louis Lambert*, if not to the other three novels, we saw that a further congruence of concerns exists: namely, that both the alleged madman and the protagonists may well be behaving in more logical, comprehensible ways than it first appears if we examine their respective existential situations. Secondly, a series of questions has emerged in relation to the key event of each novel. These questions revolve around why each protagonist carries out an action which is detrimental to their self-interest at such an unexpected moment of the narrative - why they in effect act so 'madly'. With the help of the anti-psychiatric theories of R. D. Laing, I will attempt in part III to propose answers to these questions. In so doing, I will demonstrate that the view which suggests that Louis Lambert may be acting in a more comprehensible manner than it first seems is also applicable to *Le Rouge et le Noir*, *Renée Mauperin* and *L'Œuvre*. Finally, some of the interpretative approaches which other critics have taken to this series of questions have been reviewed. In relation to *Louis Lambert*, we have seen that critics remain divided over, firstly, whether Louis's condition represents a tragic failure or a cause for celebration; secondly, the role played by Pauline de Villenoix and by love more widely in Louis's down-fall / ascent; and, thirdly, the role played by the body in Louis's philosophical pursuits. With respect to *Le Rouge et le Noir*, we have seen that some critics view Julien's actions as inherently inexplicable and, as such, symptomatic of his clinical madness while others propose explanations based on the political situation of the day or on analyses of his family background. All these approaches, it appears, are characterised by inconsistencies or drawbacks. Turning to *Renée Mauperin*, it is clear that although relatively little critical work has been devoted to the novel and therefore to the questions outlined in part II chapter one, two schools of critical

thought do nonetheless emerge with regard to her series of mad actions and overtly beatified death. The first attributes without any further discussion Renée's death to feelings of guilt and grief over her brother's untimely death, while the second focuses on the quasi-messianic transformation of transfiguration she undergoes in her death throes. With regard to Zola's *L'Œuvre*, much of the enormous level of critical interest inspired by the novel has been directed towards establishing its importance as a document of art history while the psychological aspects of Claude's demise have been, in relative terms, overlooked. The schools of thought which do emerge in this domain, however, vary from that which sees Claude's suicide as symptomatic of his clinical insanity to those which relate the novel's central act to Zola's personal, fraught mission as a novelist or to Claude's desires to put himself on a par with God and reach an impossible absolute of artistic perfection and authenticity. In part III, therefore, I undertake a detailed analysis of the four protagonists' existential positions from an anti-psychiatric perspective in order, firstly, to put forward an anti-psychiatric response to the questions raised in part II chapter one and, secondly, to show how any such anti-psychiatric analysis reinforces or contradicts certain of the schools of critical thought outlined in part II chapter two.

PART III:
'Two Souls in One Breast'

Introduction to part III

A Laingian approach to literary analysis must be founded on two methodological principles which form the basis to Laing's approach to schizophrenia and which he first outlined in his 1960 work *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*. The first of these principles reads: 'the other as person is seen by me as responsible, as capable of choice, in short, as a self-acting agent' (TDS, 22). Not only does Laing herein demonstrate his difference from his mainstream psychiatric colleagues who, as we saw in part one, rob the schizophrenic of his intentionality, but he also illustrates the substantial existentialist influence weighing down on his thought. Indeed, Laing admits that in formulating his ontology of schizophrenia he was influenced less by the observation and analysis of experiments, case studies and control groups than by 'the works of Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Heidegger, Sartre, Binswanger, and Tillich' (TDS, 9). Given that the patient is seen as a 'self-acting agent', the analyst must aim to 'reconstruct the patient's way of being himself in his world' (TDS, 25) [375] to have any chance of grasping the magnitude of the existential crisis into which the schizophrenic has been plunged. A patient's behaviour should not be reduced to a series of neurological imbalances but should instead be read 'as expressive of his existence' (TDS, 31): the patient is thus no longer a mere 'object-to-be-changed' but 'a person-to-be-accepted' (PE, 45).

The second methodological foundation to Laing's approach arises out of this desire to 'reconstruct the patient's way of being himself in the world'. He writes that 'in describing one way of going mad [in *The Divided Self*], I shall try to show that there is a *comprehensible transition* from the sane schizoid way of being-in-the-world to a psychotic way of being-in-the-world' (TDS, 17, my italics). In the three chapters which make up part III, I undertake a similar venture to that which Laing describes here given that I reconstruct the protagonists' 'ways of being themselves in their worlds'. I carry out a diachronic examination of the protagonists' existential positions, examining in chapters one and two only their behaviour prior to the largely

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[375] As is clear from this quotation, Laing only uses the masculine third person personal pronoun when referring to his patients, both male and female. In my discussion of Laing's work, I will attempt, where possible, to use gender-inclusive personal pronouns.

de-motivated turning point of each novel. In the third chapter, I extend this diachronic analysis to include the period surrounding and subsequent to their irrational deeds. Through this reconstruction of their 'ways of being themselves in their worlds', it will become clear that for these protagonists, much like for the Laingian schizophrenic, there is a comprehensible transition from their being-in-the-world in the early stages of each novel to their being-in-the-world at the point where they commit the actions which, as we saw in part II, seem strangely irrational and often inadequately explained. It is apposite to note at this point that in undertaking a Laingian analysis of the four novels, I have no intention of 'diagnosing' Louis, Julien, Claude and Renée as 'schizophrenic' on the basis of Laing's writings. Such a diagnosis would in fact be inaccurate as there are significant divergences between the Laingian ontology of schizophrenia and the existential positions of the four protagonists, as will become apparent in the course of the next three chapters. What is important, however, is that Laing's work provides an interpretative framework with which to scrutinise the protagonists' behaviour.

In the first chapter of part III, I structure my psychological reconstruction around the argument that the four protagonists are governed by two competing and mutually exclusive sets of compulsions and pressures. On the one hand, they are motivated by a series of 'separatist' ideals which impels them centrifugally towards a position of subversive marginality, a desire and capacity for authenticity and a quasi-messianic status. At the same time, however, an 'integrationist', centripetal set of forces exerts on them an opposite pressure pulling them back from such authenticity and Promethean ventures and, by definition, directing them towards conformity and mediocrity. This division characterising each of the protagonists, I argue, parallels that which lies at the heart of the schizophrenic's life as described by Laing in *The Divided Self.* I rely most upon this work in my examination of the novels because of the telling insights it offers into the psychology of the schizophrenic and because of its relatively straightforward descriptions of what it is like to be schizophrenic. Such descriptions can then be used as a tool for literary analysis. Moreover, *The Divided Self* is the one work by Laing to remain a master-piece even in the eyes of his most

virulent critics. Frank McLynn, for example, admits grudgingly that it is 'the only decent book he ever wrote';[376] while Anthony Clare describes it as 'truly astonishing, [...] a brilliant, insightful and imaginative account of the disintegration of the self'.[377] In part III chapter two, I continue with my reliance on *The Divided Self* and borrow Laing's concepts of isolation, depersonalisation and disembodiment in order to reconceptualise the defence mechanisms which the four protagonists employ to protect their separatist ideals from the normalising, integrationist pressures at work on them. In the third chapter of part III, I extend the diachronic analysis of the four novels to include the period surrounding and subsequent to their irrational deeds. It is in this chapter that I propose anti-psychiatry-inspired responses to the questions concerning the irrationality of each protagonist's behaviour, demonstrating that their alleged 'madness' represents what Laing would call 'a special sort of strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unliveable situation' (PE, 95).

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[376] McLynn, 'Divided Opinions on the Two Ronnies', p. 20.
[377] Anthony Clare, 'Laing Returns to the Fold', *Spectator*, 3 February 1973, pp. 148-9 (p. 148).

PART III Chapter One:
Their Divided Selves

Ah! s'écria-t-il, que Napoléon était bien l'homme envoyé de Dieu
pour les jeunes Français! Qui le remplacera? (RN, 304)

The success of this idea is based not on its description of a
psychopathology but rather on the fact that 'ontological insecurity'
characterises ordinary human experience.[378]

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[378] Emmy van Deurzen-Smith, 'Ontological Insecurity Revisited', *Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, 2 (1991), 38-48 (p. 38).

Their separatist ideals

Lambert's separatist desires and capacities emerge early in Balzac's novella, right from Louis's days at the Collège de Vendôme. For instance, it becomes apparent that his difference from his school-boy colleagues extends well beyond his astonishing memory, 'ses goûts studieux et sa précoce intelligence' (LL, 590). As the narrator confides: 'pour exprimer en deux mots son talent, il eût écrit *Zadig* aussi spirituellement que l'écrivit Voltaire; il aurait aussi fortement que Montesquieu pensé le *Dialogue de Sylla et d'Eucrate*' (LL, 640). Arising out of such intellectual brilliance is his growing awareness that he may be on the verge of making momentous philosophical discoveries. He hints at what these might entail in his work entitled *Traité de la volonté* in which he describes his life goals as becoming a 'chimiste de la volonté' (LL, 623) and unearthing the secret of 'la génération de la pensée' (LL, 615). The quasi-Promethean qualities of these ambitions are amplified by the many messianic echoes which resonate throughout the text. Despite his diminutive stature, Louis is capable of summoning up a physical strength which is seemingly greater than that of any other human being and which is reminiscent of Christ working miracles: we read of him lifting a wooden table at his school, for example, which ten other boys working together could not budge. Elsewhere, he suggests he can undertake a form of re-modelling nature:

> quand je le veux [...], je tire un voile sur mes yeux. Soudain je rentre en moi-même, et j'y trouve une chambre noire où les accidents de la nature viennent se reproduire sous une forme plus pure que la forme sous laquelle ils sont d'abord apparus à mes sens extérieurs. (LL, 593)

Thirdly, Louis has the potential to act as a conduit for a form of higher, divine wisdom. He exclaims: 'je suis assurément occupé de pensées graves, je marche à certaines découvertes, une force invincible m'entraîne vers une lumière qui a brillé de bonne heure dans les ténèbres de ma vie morale' (LL, 651). This messianic topos is initiated by the incident in which Mme de Staël discovers Louis, Moses-like in the bulrushes, dressed in rags, his nose pressed deep into the philosophy of Swedenborg. Her words - '*c'est un vrai voyant*' (LL, 595) - inspire parallels not only with Moses, the Israelite chosen to lead his people towards the Promised Land, but also with the

Jesus who, as a mere twelve year old, amazed his teachers in the Temple 'with his understanding and his answers'.[379]

Parallels between Louis and Christ grow stronger by the time he reaches the Collège de Vendôme thanks to the patronage of Mme de Staël. Here, according to the narrator, he demonstrates evidence of 'une âme sublime' (LL, 606), a '*mens divinor*' (LL, 594), and a 'goût pour les choses du ciel' (LL, 594), all of which 'élevèrent son cœur, le purifièrent, l'ennoblirent, lui donnèrent appétit de la nature divine' (LL, 594). Living 'sous le joug d'une imagination presque divine' (LL, 611), he is capable of 'une patience divine' (LL, 638): even his physical features are endowed with an ineffable beauty (LL, 605), while his forehead is allegedly 'prophétique' (LL, 605). Louis's similarities with the Christian messiah are further reinforced by his echoing Jesus' designation as the 'light of the world': both act as seductive sources of spiritual illumination to those around them. In Louis's case, 'après l'avoir entendu parlant ainsi, après avoir reçu dans l'âme son regard comme une lumière, il était difficile de ne pas être ébloui par sa conviction, entraîné par ses raisonnements' (LL, 633). Radiating philosophical insights, he becomes one with his work and thought to the extent that 'ses yeux dardaient la pensée' (LL, 623). Louis evokes further parallels with the Christian messiah by way of the syntactic structure he employs in a letter to his uncle in which he places himself on an equal footing with the principal prophets of Islam and Christianity: 'à Mahomet le sabre, à Jésus la croix, à moi la mort obscure' (LL, 655). In view of his self-evident 'esprit supérieur' (LL, 657), he feels that he is left with no option but to withdraw, Jesus-like, into a self-imposed exile: 'des trente-trois années de Jésus, il n'en est que neuf de connues; sa vie silencieuse a préparé sa vie glorieuse. A moi aussi, il me faut le désert!' (LL, 657) for the simple reason that he wishes to find there 'les lois constitutives de l'humanité future, de la Jérusalem nouvelle'.[380] Louis's principal interest lies, therefore, in satisfying his quasi-Promethean desires to attain 'une connaissance parfaite des lois physiques et spirituelles de la Création'.[381] Like those other Balzacian heroes

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[379] Luke 2:47.
[380] Lichtlé, 'Introduction', p. 577.
[381] Robert, *Le Roman des origines et les origines du roman*, p. 281.

Frenhofer and Balthasar who are driven by the desire to 'dérobe[r] le secret de Dieu',[382] Louis wants to discover 'les rapports réels qui peuvent exister entre l'homme et Dieu' (LL, 652) and bring about a complete 'rénovation sociale' (LL, 645), thereby leading mankind, Moses-like, towards the Promised Land of a new society which 'ne doit pas être constituée comme l'est la nôtre' (LL, 653). In sum, he is 'le chercheur d'absolu, le solitaire contemplatif dont l'esprit exige la possession d'une vérité indétaillable, tenant ensemble l'Un et le Tout'.[383]

Of the three other protagonists under consideration, it is Claude Lantier in Zola's *L'Œuvre* who resembles Louis Lambert most closely in this respect given that his separatist desires are also oriented towards quasi-Promethean revolution, this time within the sphere of artistic achievement. With this desire he forms part of a line of nineteenth-century fictional artists, from Balzac's Frenhofer, Flaubert's Pellerin to the Goncourts' Coriolis, who are all constantly on the search for the absolute, living only for their art. Each one is, in Max Milner's words, 'un artiste qui s'est élevé au-dessus de la condition humaine, qui a voulu rivaliser avec Dieu'.[384] Claude's artistic ambition to 'tout voir, tout faire, tout conquérir' (LO, 203) thus also mirrors Zola's own stated wish to 'tout savoir, tout pouvoir, tout conquérir':[385] indeed, Zola's famous phrase – 'l'œuvre d'art [...] doit embrasser l'horizon entier'[386] – could just as easily be attributed to Lantier as to his creator. Claude aims to create 'un art révolutionnaire' (LO, 210) in which 'l'œil effaré ne trouvait aucune des conventions admises' (LO, 210); an art which will have a cataclysmic effect on existing institutions: he will 'écraser Paris' (LO, 160) through painting 'une sacrée suite de toiles à faire éclater le Louvre!' (LO, 47). This revolution will not lead to a staid, academic, institutionalised form of art conforming to the stultifying exigencies of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts; nor will it accept any compromise, neither artistic – 'est-ce qu'une botte de carottes, oui, une botte de carottes! étudiée directement, peinte

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[382] Balzac, *Le Chef d'œuvre inconnu,* in *La Comédie Humaine,* X, p. 416.

[383] Robert, *Le Roman des origines et les origines du roman,* p. 277.

[384] Milner, 'Le peintre fou', pp. 19-20.

[385] Emile Zola, 'Discours [au banquet de l'Association Générale des Etudiants],' in *Emile Zola: Œuvres Complètes,* 15 volumes, edited by Henri Mitterrand (Paris: Cercle du livre précieux, 1965-9), XII (1969): *Œuvres critiques III,* pp. 677-87 (p. 680).

[386] Zola, *Emile Zola - Correspondance,* I *1858-1867,* p. 380.

naïvement, dans la note personnelle où on la voit, ne valait pas les éternelles tartines de l'Ecole, cette peinture honteusement cuisinée d'après les recettes?' (LO, 44) - nor commercial - 'est-ce qu'il ne valait pas mieux détruire une œuvre que de la livrer médiocre? Oui, c'était dégoûtant, ce bas intérêt de commerce!' (LO, 73). As the narrator points out, Claude 'aimait mieux crever la faim, que de recourir au commerce, à la fabrication des portraits bourgeois, des saintetés de pacotille, des stores de restaurants et des enseignes de sage-femme' (LO, 42). Why should this be the case? John J. Duffy writes: 'the economy is a force that must always prevent artistic expression, attaching itself to the painter, using what it can of his work, then discarding him when he is of no further use. […] Commerce is a parasite on the body of artistic imagination',[387] a parasite which only saps his messianic vigour. The most significant characteristic of Claude's revolutionary art is that it represents his aspiration to be placed on a par with the Creator as he gives himself over to 'cet effort de création dans l'œuvre d'art, cet effort de sang et de larmes dont il agonisait, *pour créer de la chair, souffler de la vie*!' (LO, 245, my italics). In the same way that God breathed life into Adam, Claude desires above all to '*faire vivante* […] la Femme nue' of his final painting (LO, 343, my italics). Artistic creation for Claude Lantier is thus synonymous with procreation and with breathing life into his own artistic subjects. The procreative significance of Claude's ambitions is emphasised in Zola's 'ébauche' to the novel which opens with the lines 'avec Claude Lantier, je veux peindre […] *l'effort de la création* dans l'œuvre d'art, effort de sang et de larmes pour donner sa chair, *faire de la vie*'.[388] Philip Walker points out that the first line of the 'ébauche' to several of Zola's novels contains that novel's 'central theme in a nutshell'.[389] Accordingly, the highlighted portions of this extract from the 'ébauche' provide further backing for the view initially put forward in part II chapter two: namely, that *L'Œuvre* should be read not so much as a 'roman à clef' which charts the historical rise and fall of the Impressionist movement but instead as an

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[387] John J. Duffy, 'Sidelines: Art and Economy in Zola's *L'Œuvre*', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 24 (1995-6), 178-91 (p. 179).

[388] Quoted in Brady, *'L'Œuvre'*, p. 429, my italics.

[389] Philip Walker, 'Zola and the Art of Containing the Uncontainable', *in Zola and the Craft of Fiction*, edited by Lethbridge and Keefe, pp. 28-43 (p. 29). In addition to *L'Œuvre*, Walker notes that the central theme of the novel is also summed up in the first line of the 'ébauches' to *La Conquête de Plassans* and *L'Assommoir*.

exposition of Claude's desire to become an artistic Prometheus and to rival God through managing to 'faire de la vie'.

To satisfy these aspirations towards the divine, Claude uses as his spring-board his immediate physical surroundings, proclaiming:

> ah! la vie, la vie! la sentir et la rendre dans sa réalité, l'aimer pour elle, y voir la seule beauté vraie, éternelle et changeante, ne pas avoir l'idée bête de l'anoblir en la châtrant, comprendre que les prétendues laideurs ne sont que les saillies des caractères, et faire vivre, et faire des hommes, *la seule façon d'être Dieu*. (LO, 83, my italics)

It is entirely appropriate, then, that Claude should choose the city of Paris as the subject of his final ground-breaking painting. 'Paris, l'axe immortel, Paris, l'axe du monde'[390] is the one place he must capture and master for his Promethean ambitions to be fulfilled. In the post-Revolution nineteenth century, Paris had become France's undisputed capital, its royal rival at Versailles long since moth-balled. As Louis Veuillot wrote: 'par le fait, depuis 89, il y a toujours un roi de France, et il n'y en a eu qu'un seul: c'est Paris'.[391] Historians have commented on how nineteenth-century Paris functioned as a constant physical representation of revolution, be it the revolution which overthrew the Bourbon monarchy or that which was physically rising up at the command of Baron Haussmann. Priscilla Ferguson writes that in the nineteenth century: 'whatever other associations it might acquire, and whether it was feared or revered, Paris persisted as the city of the guillotine, the city of popular riots and coups d'état, the city that stages revolutions as a matter of course and of principle'.[392] Through capturing on canvas the essence of Paris, Claude would contribute to the prolonging of that staging or representation of revolution. Denis Hollier contends that in re-modelling the city-scape of Paris, Lantier 'becomes an

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[390] Alfred de Vigny, 'Paris', in *Œuvres complètes*, 2 volumes, edited by François Germain and André Jarry (Paris: Gallimard, 'Pléiade', 1950), I: *Poésie, Théâtre*, p. 107.
[391] Quoted in Priscilla Pankhurst Ferguson, 'Is Paris France?', *French Review*, 73 (2000), 1052-64 (p. 1061-2).
[392] Priscilla Pankhurst Ferguson, *Paris as Revolution: Writing the Nineteenth-Century City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 12.

unexpected comrade of Souvarine, the revolutionary from *Germinal*'.[393] In fact, Claude's revolution arguably assumes symbolically greater proportions than Souvarine's given that his insurrectional gaze falls on the very birth-place and religious and political epicentre of France - the Seine and the île de la Cité. It is no accident, then, that his ultimate artistic ambition should be to revolutionise and re-create the vista not of the Impressionist artists' stomping-grounds of Montmartre or the rue des Batignolles, but of 'ce cœur de Paris' (LO, 232). For Claude, 'rien n'existait que Paris, et encore, dans Paris, il n'existait qu'un horizon, la pointe de la Cité, cette vision qui le hantait toujours et partout, ce coin unique où il laissait son cœur' (LO, 312). To re-fashion the île de la Cité according to his personal design would equate to a symbolic and supreme reign over French life.[394] No other panorama could satisfy his ambition to 'tout voir, tout faire, tout conquérir' (LO, 203).

The third novel under examination – *Renée Mauperin* - presents a rather different range of separatist desires from those apparent in *Louis Lambert* and *L'Œuvre*. Even if in the early stage of the novel Renée is occasionally associated with imagery of the divine – she resembles 'ces divinités de la mer' (RM, 53), for example, and indulges in 'des bêtises divines' (RM, 62) with her father at Morimond – it is only towards the end of her life that her messianic qualities and aspirations come to the fore, as we saw in part II. What is visible from the first line of the novel and, indeed, what forms the novel's primary focus, is Renée's core of difference which can in turn be identified with her separatist desires. This core of difference leads Renée to behave

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[393] Denis Hollier, 'A Room with a View on the Wall', in *Emile Zola and the Arts*, edited by Guieu and Hilton, pp. 177-84 (p. 177).

[394] The prominence of the city of Paris on Zola's palette of imagery has long been a source of interest for Zola critics. See in this connection Stefan Max, *Les Métamorphoses de la grande ville dans les Rougon-Macquart* (Paris: Nizet, 1966); Nathan Kranowski and Jean-Albert Bede, *Paris dans les romans d'Emile Zola* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968); Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine, 'Paris et l'ordre spatial dans *L'Œuvre*', in *Emile Zola and the Arts*, edited by Guieu and Hilton, pp. 165-75; P. M. Wetherill, 'Flaubert, Zola, Proust and Paris: An Evolving City in a Shifting Text', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 32 (1996), 228-39; Colette Becker, '"On s'enferme à Aix, mais [à Paris], l'on marche"', in *Province-Paris: Topographies littéraires du XIX siècle*, edited by Amélie Djourachkovitch and Yvan Leclerc (Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 2000), pp. 251-60.

in an unorthodox manner which 'strikes at the syntax of conduct'[395] adhered to by her family and contemporaries. While the separatist desires experienced by Louis Lambert and Claude Lantier are of an intellectual nature, as we have just seen, relating primarily to their as yet unrealised philosophical or artistic promise, Renée Mauperin's separatism, on the other hand, filters down to a more practical level regarding how she should live her life on a day-to-day basis. This is perhaps most evident in her attitude towards marriage – the social institution which is central to the novel's development. Considered by her mother to be 'si difficile à marier' (RM, 76), Renée spurns the advances of at least a dozen suitors (RM, 197), each of whom, her mother insists could offer her 'un mariage où il y [a] tout... de la fortune, une famille honorable' (RM, 182-3). Yet it is precisely from within Mme Mauperin's description of the key attributes of any successful marriage - 'de la fortune', 'une famille honorable' – that Renée's reservations about marriage emerge as her personal priorities are ordered very differently from those of her mother. Her views on probity, for example, are trenchant and allow no room for moral relativism: 'moi, je ne connais que deux sortes de gens, d'abord: ceux qui sont honnêtes... et les autres...' (RM, 174). She goes on:

> toutes les fois que je vois quelqu'un que je connais... ou même que je ne connais pas... manquer à ce que vous, les hommes, vous appelez l'honneur... eh bien, c'est plus fort que moi... c'est comme si je voyais un crapaud! Ca me répugne, ça me dégoûte... et je marche dessus!... Voyons, est-on un homme d'honneur parce qu'on ne fait que les saletés qui ne mènent pas devant les tribunaux? Est-on un homme d'honneur quand on a dans sa vie une de ces actions qui font rougir quand on est seul? un homme d'honneur quand on a fait de ces choses que personne ne vous reproche, que rien ne punit, mais qui vous ternissent la conscience? (RM, 175)

Her values are absolutes, almost to the point of being simplistic: 'en art, en livres, je suis pour le beau... et pas pour ce qui est vilain' (RM, 176). Furthermore, Renée appears to feel an aspirational yearning for originality and authenticity: she therefore resents the fact that her family put pressure on her to try to '[la] faire vivre pour toute la vie, côte à côte avec [...] un homme qui ne répondrait pas du tout à certaines

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[395] Goffman, 'The Insanity of Place', p. 411.

petites exigences délicates de [ma] nature, qui ne [me] semblerait pas poétique' (RM, 179). She sees herself as someone who has no wish to 'se marier comme on se marie, avec un monsieur comme les autres, un homme qui n'a rien d'extraordinaire, qui entre simplement par la porte, qui vous est présenté par papa et maman' (RM, 178). Her ideal partner must be 'poétique', must live up to to her stringent definitions of honour and probity, and must exhibit 'la bonté', a quality which she has previously only encoutered 'à l'état vierge chez deux ou trois bourgeois de ma vie' (RM, 179). Authenticity, honour and 'singularité' are in short supply among her contemporaries, much to her chagrin.

One might think in this regard that if Renée resembles any character from the other three novels under consideration, it would be Mathilde de La Mole of *Le Rouge et le Noir*. Neither woman, after all, is content to 'se marier comme on se marie' (RM, 178), and Mathilde, much like Renée, berates her many suitors' 'manque de caractère' (RN, 528). Her opinion is instead:

> être dans une *véritable* bataille, une bataille de Napoléon, où l'on tuait dix mille soldats, cela prouve du courage. S'exposer au danger élève l'âme et la sauve de l'ennui où mes pauvres adorateurs semblent plongés; et il est contagieux, cet ennui. Lequel d'entre eux a l'idée de faire quelque chose d'extraordinaire? (RN, 511)

Any resemblance between the two protagonists is, however, illusory as Mathilde's search for 'singularité' is founded on 'toutes les descriptions de passion qu'elle avait lues dans *Manon Lescaut*, *la Nouvelle Héloïse*, les *Lettres d'une Religieuse portugaise*, etc. etc.' (RN, 512) and also on an attempt to recreate the destinies of her sixteenth-century ancestor Boniface de La Mole and his lover Marguerite de Navarre (RN, 504). Renée's drive for authenticity and originality, on the other hand, is founded not on second-hand romanticised imagery – she finds such novelistic figures 'écœurants' (RM, 179) - but on an urge to escape from such imitative practices and to experience some form of more authentic if as yet undefined mutual encounter. However, the range of suitors which have so far been presented to Renée are unlikely to fulfil this desire, as is exemplified by Reverchon who is introduced in the chapter one bathing scene: 'des jeunes Reverchon, ce n'est pas unique, on en retrouve, au

lieu que des filles comme ma fille...' (RM, 83), notes Renée's father sagely. Each of her colourless suitors, of whom Reverchon is but one representative example, 'n'a rien d'extraordinaire' (RM, 178) and would certainly fail to fulfil Renée's undefined or perhaps even indefinable desires for individuality. In Reverchon's case, he is not even accorded the distinction of a name until the final sentence of this chapter in a clear demonstration of the fact that his only role is to fulfil the function of wallet-provider and dowry-chaser. Renée's attitude towards marriage is thus symptomatic of the way in which she constantly attempts to avoid conforming to what 'one' does, in a Heideggerian sense, and seeks out instead a 'Dasein' of individuality and authenticity, 'an authentic own self no longer caught in the narrowed-down mentality of an anonymous inauthentic 'everybody''.[396] As the Goncourts said of Blanche Passy, the real-life model for Renée, she is 'un esprit enlevé, on ne sait comment, du milieu bourgeois dans lequel il a été élevé'.[397] By contrast, the 'Dasein' of those like Reverchon seems to be entirely dominated by the 'they-self'.[398] Each of them behaves in a particular fashion 'because that is what one does',[399] as Denoisel illustrates when he claims with regard to one of them: 'c'est une affiche de modes' (RM, 80). All the men presented to her are characterised only by 'la distinction commune, la distinction faite avec la vulgarité de toutes les élégances' (RM, 80), each lacks distinctive, individuating principles, always remaining content to 'satisfy the easily handled rules and public norms of the 'they''.[400] It is precisely this sense of inauthenticity which Renée, thanks to her core of separatist values, so emphatically rejects.

Renée's aspiration towards authenticity is also brought into focus by her views on language and communication. She is unique among the characters of the novel for producing unpremeditated, spontaneous utterances, and, at the time of the novel's publication in 1864, it was her use of language which most irked critics and which

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[396] Medard Boss, *Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis*, translated by Ludwig Lefebre (New York: Basic Books, 1963), p. 47.

[397] Goncourt, *Journal*, I, p. 202.

[398] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 167.

[399] Michael Inwood, *Heidegger* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 22.

[400] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 334.

led them to brand the novel 'invraisemblable'.[401] How, the critics cried, could a lady of Renée's breeding and social standing speak in such unbecoming and un-ladylike tones? To take the example of one critic, Cuvillier-Fleury of the *Journal des Débats* complains:

> c'est l'invraisemblance des caractères qui est choquante. [...] Je me demande ce que Renée Mauperin eût perdu si elle eût parlé la langue de son éducation littéraire au lieu de celle de sa fantaisie triviale, et si, étant plus agréable, mieux apprise et plus polie, elle eût été moins « inventée ».[402]

Renée is 'grossière' et 'mal embouchée' in his view because she insists on speaking 'la langue des rapins' and in 'le style le moins poétique'.[403] He ends his review by lamenting the lack of 'bon ton' which characterises her utterances: 'Renée Mauperin, dans le petit drame de MM. de Goncourt, me fait l'effet d'une charmante cantatrice, ayant un bon rôle, qu'elle chanterait faux d'un bout à l'autre'.[404] He is thus most upset by Renée's refusal to accept the role which her gender and social status dictate: she dares to act out of character, committing a series of 'wilful situational improprieties'.[405] Although Cuvillier-Fleury cites no specific examples of her inappropriate language, it is certain that her use of the word 'zut' in the first chapter, for example, would have been considered unsuitable for a girl of her standing as would 'la libre syntaxe et les idiotismes de la langue quotidienne' which Robert Ricatte claims are characteristic of her speech.[406] Secondly, Renée's speech, when typographically represented, is full of dots and ellipses: the scenes in which Renée and Reverchon are bathing in the Seine (RM, 51-3; 55) and that in which Renée and Denoisel are engaged in friendly banter (RM, 76) both make for salient examples in this respect. The significance of Renée's unusual speech patterns lies in the contrast they permit us to establish with the long, flowing, pre-meditated sentences produced

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[401] For a full summary of such views, see Ricatte, *La Création romanesque chez les frères Goncourt*, pp. 230-2.

[402] Cuvillier-Fleury, *Etudes de Portraits* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1865), pp. 380-7, quoted in 'Documents', RM, 278.

[403] *ibid.*, p. 278.

[404] *ibid.*, p. 279.

[405] Goffman, 'The Insanity of Place', p. 411.

[406] Ricatte, *La Création romanesque chez les frères Goncourt*, p. 232.

by the abbé Blampoix or M. Bourjot, characters who exist only 'grâce au dialogue'[407] and who appear to lack any further individuating characteristics. Similarly, Henri Mauperin only uses language which is carefully pre-prepared and hermeneutically sealed from all passion and spontaneity. Even his seemingly off-the-cuff remarks are well rehearsed: 'il récitait le discours qu'il avait improvisé la journée à son cercle' (RM, 169). Renée's contemporaries - 'des jeunes gens *à citations*' (RM, 51), she calls them – are characterised by speech which, as exemplified once again by Reverchon, is so formulaic and cliché-ridden that Renée is able to complete his sentences for him (RM, 52).

This contrast between Renée's spontaneous, unpremeditated utterances and the stultified speech of her friends and family is also significant for a second parallel which can be drawn between the novel and Heidegger's notion of authenticity. Linked to the desire to 'satisfy the easily handled rules and public norms of the 'they'' which is characteristic of the inauthentic Dasein already attributed to Renée's contemporaries is the concept of 'Gerede', translated variously as 'idle talk', 'chatter', or simply 'talk'. For Heidegger, this is pseudo-communication, 'an echo chamber of incessant, vacant loquacity',[408] an exchange

> in which the participants do not stand in any meaningful relation to one another and / or to the subject of their conversation, which leads to superficiality of discourse – speaking for the sake of speaking, and being spoken to, regardless of whether one has anything meaningful to say.[409]

The narrator describes an instance of such 'Gerede' arising out of a conversation between a group of women including Renée, her mother and sister. 'On se parlait, on se répondait, on ne s'écoutait pas. Toutes caquetaient ensemble. Les mots, les questions, les voix se croisaient dans le babillage: c'était le ramage d'une volière' (RM, 163). It is perhaps all too easy, however, to criticise Renée's contemporaries on this point because the obvious question which arises is does Renée herself really

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[407] *ibid.*, p. 215.
[408] George Steiner, *Heidegger* (London: Fontana, 1992), p. 95.
[409] Daniel Burston, 'Laing and Heidegger on Humanistic Alienation', *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 38 (1998), 80-93 (p. 86).

achieve any greater degree of authenticity or any greater avoidance of 'Gerede' than those around her? It would appear that she does not, and, more pointedly, that she *cannot* given that inauthenticity and its corollary 'Gerede', in Heidegger's view, 'are inevitable features of the human predicament; we cannot step outside our own condition to assess it by an external standard'.[410] It is the 'always already' from which Renée too cannot by definition be exempt. In the face of the 'babillage intarissable' (RM, 187) which surrounds her, one option open to Renée is to take refuge in silence. Her separatist tendencies therefore find eloquent expression in a significant aesthetic of silence which spans the entire novel. In the opening exchange of chapter one, for example, Reverchon asks Renée:

> « Vous n'aimez pas le monde, mademoiselle ?
> -- Vous ne le direz pas ? J'y avale ma langue ... Voilà l'effet que me fait le monde, à moi [...] Je suis tombée sur des jeunes gens sérieux, des amis à mon frère, des jeunes gens *à citations*, comme je les appelle. [...] C'est borné, l'entretien avec mes contemporaines. (RM, 51)

The thematic importance of Renée's unease with speech and the 'déjà-dit' along with her wish to 'avaler sa langue' surely cannot be over-emphasised given the prominence accorded to these themes through their position in the novel's opening lines. Jean de Palacio has recently argued that 'la communication entre les êtres demeure en effet le principal enjeu de l'œuvre des Goncourt'.[411] One should perhaps say instead that it is, more precisely, the impossibility of communication - or, at least, the difficulties inherent to communication - which remains the 'principal enjeu' of their work. One of these difficulties (and this point goes some way towards explaining Renée's reluctance to engage in speech) springs from one of the foundations to language which the linguistic theorist H. P. Grice points to in his discussion of 'the co-operative principle' on which 'talk exchange' (or conversation) is based. 'Our talk exchanges [...] are [...] co-operative efforts; and each participant recognises in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least

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[410] Inwood, *Heidegger*, p. 47.

[411] Jean de Palacio, 'Le silence des Goncourt: Du livre brûlé au livre interdit', *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, 259 (2000), 27-39 (p. 28).

a mutually accepted direction'.[412] This 'mutually accepted direction' which conversation implies only leads Renée away from and dumbs down her separatist desires. After all, as Michel Crouzet puts it: 'le langage dit moins ce que je suis que ce que je dois être'.[413] Isolation - or isolation and withdrawal from speech - offers her an opportunity, albeit a necessarily limited one, to protect her separatist desires from the highly corrosive, normalising impact of speech.

To surpass the limitations which speech places on her separatist desires, Renée develops a more abstract, extra-linguistic means of communication through her piano playing. Music enables her to circumvent language and access a means of expression which is more authentic than the necessarily constraining and pre-determining speech. We read, for example, in what makes for one of the novel's most poetic passages:

> son corps ondulait comme sous un enlacement, sa taille marquait le rythme. [...] [E]lle se retourna vers le piano; sa tête se mit à battre doucement la mesure; ses yeux coururent avec ses mains sur les touches noires et blanches. Penchée sur la musique qu'elle faisait, elle semblait battre les notes ou les caresser, leur parler, les gronder, leur sourire, les bercer, les endormir. Elle appuyait sur le tapage; elle jouait avec la mélodie; elle avait de petits mouvements tendres et de petits gestes passionnés. (RM, 74)

Renée's father is the only other individual capable of appreciating the extent of her physical and mental investment in her music, saying only 'et c'est d'elle...' (RM, 75), as if to echo Barthes's claim that 'on échoue toujours à parler de ce qu'on aime'.[414] Both he and Renée are incapable of speech in the face of the ethereal beauty of this 'primitif du plaisir qu'on cherche toujours à retrouver, jamais à expliquer'.[415] The immense value of music within Renée's life mirrors Schopenhauer's vision of music as the purest form of art because of its function as a non-referential and therefore

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[412] H. P. Grice, 'Logic and Conversation', in *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 22-40 (p. 26).

[413] Michel Crouzet, *Stendhal et le langage* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), p. 83.

[414] Roland Barthes, 'On échoue toujours à parler de ce qu'on aime', *Tel Quel*, 85 (1980), 32-8 (p. 38).

[415] *ibid.*, p. 34.

authentic 'copy of the will itself'.[416] Schopenhauer attributes music's singular power to the fact that 'it floats through our consciousness as the vision of a paradise firmly believed in yet ever distant from us', and because 'it restores to us all the emotions of our inmost nature, but entirely without reality and far removed from their pain'.[417] Music is therefore one of the few vehicles with which she can take forward – however briefly – her separatist desires and which offers her a 'vision of paradise'.

While the principal focus of *Renée Mauperin* rests on the chief protagonist's separatist urges, a rather different picture emerges in *Le Rouge et le Noir*. Here the narrative gaze is turned almost exclusively towards the numerous and powerful forces which militate against Julien Sorel's separatist agenda. His separatist desires are still visible all the same, and from his initial entry into the novel, it is his 'singularité' - physical, intellectual and emotional - which is constantly emphasised. Less brutally rugged than his brothers, Julien's passion for books and 'son air extrêmement pensif' (RM, 233) immediately accord him a marginal but privileged place in Verrières. Yet it is his aspirations towards the Infinite and authenticity which distinguish him most sharply from his contemporaries. One important example arises during a service in Besançon cathedral celebrating the feast of Corpus Christi. When Julien hears the cathedral bells, 'son imagination n'était plus sur la terre' (RN, 399): indeed, 'l'âme de Julien, exaltée par ces sons si mâles et si pleins, errait dans les espaces imaginaires' (RN, 399). The clearest illustrations of Julien's capacity for authenticity and authentic encounters emerge at the de Rênal's country retreat at Vergy, albeit only fleetingly. It is in the garden there that Julien and Louise de Rênal have the opportunity to join 'the realm of the "happy few" who attempt to defy relative social conventions for the sake of absolute personal happiness'.[418] Julien's inner sense of authenticity comes to the fore here, and his relationship with Mme de Rênal is characterised in only a few brief instances by 'a degree of the original, unselfconscious quality of prelapsarian nature, seemingly isolated from the effects of

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[416] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, 4 volumes, translated by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Tuebner, 1883), volume 1, p. 333.
[417] *ibid.*, p. 341.
[418] Gail Finney, *The Counterfeit Idyll: The Garden Ideal and Social Reality in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1984), p. 33.

civilisation'.[419] During all the time that M. de Rênal is preoccupied only by prosaic, materialistic concerns about 'chacun de ces maudits noyers […] [qui lui] coûte[nt] la récolte d'un demi-arpent' (RN, 262), his wife Louise is instead basking in Rousseau-esque raptures:

> pour Madame de Rênal, la main dans celle de Julien, elle ne pensait à rien; elle se laissait vivre. Les heures qu'on passa sous ce grand tilleul, que la tradition du pays dit planté par Charles le Téméraire, furent pour elle une époque de bonheur. Elle écoutait avec délices les gémissements du vent dans l'épais feuillage du tilleul, et le bruit de quelques gouttes rares qui commençaient à tomber sur ses feuilles les plus basses. (RN, 268)

Julien, too, is presented with the rare opportunity to 'se livr[er] au plaisir d'exister, si vif à cet âge, et au milieu des plus belles montagnes du monde' (RN, 264). The narrator tells us significantly: 'à Vergy, il ne trouvait point de ces souvenirs amers; pour la première fois de sa vie, il ne voyait point d'ennemi' (RN, 265). As Michel Crouzet has put it, life at Vergy provides Julien with the chance to experience 'l'unité de soi, hors de l'existence sociale'.[420] Julien and Louise would seem to effect very briefly the type of authentic encounter or genuine mutual relatedness which Laing saw as being essential to the restoration of the state of authenticity.[421] A heavy influence on Laing in formulating his views on genuine mutual relatedness was Martin Buber's distinction between I-You and I-It forms of relatedness, a useful summary of which is provided by Tamar Kron.

> I-You relationships are spontaneous, direct and authentic. They occur in the reality of the here-and-now. They are the 'between', the meeting between an authentic open I and a unique separate Other. There is no ulterior motive for the meeting, no objective other than the meeting itself. I-It relations are partial as the other is only an object for the I to use and categorise. The other is not perceived as a separate, independent being, but as a passive something either to possess or analyse.[422]

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[419] *ibid.*, p. 32, my italics.

[420] Michel Crouzet, *Nature et société chez Stendhal: La révolte romantique* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1985), pp. 52-3.

[421] See pp. 32-4.

[422] Tamar Kron, 'The 'We' in Martin Buber's Dialogical Philosophy and its Implications for Group Therapy and the Therapeutic Community', *International Journal of Therapeutic Communities*, 11 (1990), 13-20 (p. 14). Note that elsewhere in Laing's work and in this thesis this I-You relationship has been referred to as an 'I-Thou' relationship. The different terms reflect the two possible ways of translating Buber's original 'Ich-Du' formulation.

Julien and Louise have effected a shift from an I-It to an I-You relationship, albeit only briefly and only in the cloistered isolation of Vergy. The effect of such an authentic encounter on Julien's life is startling.

> Julien ne pensait plus à sa noire ambition, ni à ses projets si difficiles à exécuter. Pour la première fois de sa vie, il était entraîné par le pouvoir de la beauté. Perdu dans une rêverie vague et douce si étrangère à son caractère, pressant doucement cette main qui lui plaisait comme parfaitement jolie, il écoutait à demi le mouvement des feuilles du tilleul agitées par ce léger vent de la nuit, et les chiens du moulin du Doubs qui aboyaient dans le lointain. (RN, 279)

The capacity to achieve a state of authenticity which Julien demonstrates here, one which is stripped of ambition and which leaves him fleetingly 'réellement sans projets' (RN, 424), is precisely that which distinguishes him – and indeed distinguishes all four protagonists – from, for example, Emma Bovary whose separatist desires are constructed, at least in part, upon an obsession with Paris which has been inspired at second-hand by her reading of Romantic novels.

If the last lengthy extract from *Le Rouge et le Noir* exemplifies Julien's capacity for authenticity, its greatest significance lies in its being followed immediately by the narratorial revelation that 'cette émotion était un plaisir et non une passion. En rentrant dans sa chambre il [Julien] ne songea qu'à un bonheur: celui de reprendre son livre favori; à vingt ans, l'idée du monde et de l'effet à y produire l'emporte sur tout' (RN, 279). It is clear, then, that a second aspect to Julien's separatist leanings exists, unlike in the cases of Louis, Claude and Renée. In addition to the 'si délicieux plaisir à être sincère' (RN, 303) which he enjoys transiently in the company of Mme de Rênal, Julien also experiences a Napoleon-inspired yearning to become the 'maître du monde' (RN, 239). It is this desire which co-exists alongside but also partially obscures his drive towards the Infinite and authenticity for the majority of the novel. Julien is shown worshipping the cult of Napoleon from his first entry onto the narrative stage when the reader finds him perched aloft the machinery of his father's saw-mill, engrossed in the book 'qu'il affectionnait le plus, *Le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*' (RN, 233). While critics may quibble over which precise elements of

his life replicate the trajectory of Napoleon's career,[423] it remains unarguable that the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte from his relatively humble Corsican origins to a position of European political pre-eminence offers the 'plébéien révolté' in Julien an irresistible role model for the achievement of 'tous les rêves héroïques de sa jeunesse' (RN, 287) and of his goals of 'faire fortune' (RN, 259) and 'faire les choses extraordinaires' (RN, 287). For example, when Julien forms part of the guard-of-honour for the visiting king in Verrières, 'son bonheur n'eut plus de bornes' as he could indulge his fantasy of being an 'officier d'ordonnance de Napoléon [qui] chargeait une batterie' (RN, 312). This Napoleonic obsession materialises on many further occasions in the novel: for example, when walking back to Verrières from Vergy, he takes a circuitous route via the hills and rocks above the villages:

> Julien, debout sur son grand rocher, regardait le ciel, embrasé par un soleil d'août. Les cigales chantaient dans le champ au-dessous du rocher, quand elles se taisaient tout était silence autour de lui. Il voyait à ses pieds vingt lieues de pays. Quelque épervier parti des grandes roches au-dessus de sa tête était aperçu par lui, de temps à autre, décrivant en silence ses cercles immenses. L'œil de Julien suivait machinalement l'oiseau de proie. Ses mouvements tranquilles et puissants le frappaient, il enviait cette force, il enviait cet isolement. *C'était la destinée de Napoléon, serait-ce un jour la sienne?* (RN, 276-7, my italics)

It is not only in his early career in Verrières that he entertains notions of becoming a new Napoleon. In Paris, his thoughts turn to Napoleon when he needs to devise ruses to get himself out of potentially sticky situations (RN, 499); he desperately wants to learn how to ride a horse so he can strike that most Napoleonic of poses (RN,

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[423] Moya Longstaffe argues that 'la vie de Julien Sorel, consacrée à l'idéal héroïque, avait été une *imitation de Napoléon* même dans le détail'. 'L'éthique du duel', p. 300. This argument is seconded by many Stendhal critics, Maurice Bardèche among them who states surely rather too emphatically that 'la vie de Julien Sorel, c'est une imitation de Napoléon'. *Stendhal Romancier* (Paris: Editions de la Table Ronde, 1947), p. 200. By contrast, Roger Pearson contends: 'the memory of Napoleon […] is not imitated but travestied by Julien's story', an argument he corroborates by citing several divergences between the careers of Julien and Napoleon: 'a horse and a smart blue uniform may make Julien think he is an artillery officer in the Grande Armée but he is actually escorting a king, and the ranks of lieutenant and the prospect of marriage to a Parisian beauty come to him only because the lady is pregnant, as does his new title, which leads Julien to think he is descended from a nobleman exiled *by* Napoleon'. *Stendhal's Violin*, p. 127.

469);[424] and finally, he is reluctant to accept a military decoration unless it is one which was originally awarded by Napoleon (RN, 594). Indeed it is his similarity with Napoleon which first attracts admiring glances from Mathilde de La Mole: 'ce Sorel a quelque chose de l'air que mon père prend quand il fait si bien Napoléon au bal' (RN, 495).

On the basis of this last quotation, a counter-argument could be introduced, one which maintains that such Napoleon-inspired goals should not in fact be counted among Julien's separatist urges due to the imitative practices on which they are founded. After all, the citational modes of behaviour which Julien relies upon to realise his Napoleonic aims are antithetical to the authenticity and purity characteristic both of Julien's first set of separatist desires we saw coming to the fore at Vergy as well as of the separatist desires espoused by the other three protagonists. Despite these indisputable facts, Julien's Napoleonic goals do nonetheless deserve inclusion on his separatist agenda because they share two important features with the range of separatist desires discussed thus far. Firstly, Napoleon's personal odyssey has been coupled many times with imagery of the messianic: he styled himself, after all, as the 'saviour' of post-Revolution France, and while he certainly saw himself as a despot, it was nonetheless as 'an enlightened despot [...] exporting *lumière* to the dark continents of ignorance'[425] in the manner of Christ acting as 'the light of the world'. In art, David, Ingres and Gros all portrayed Napoleon not only as a vanquisher of foes - as in Gros's 'Napoléon visitant le champ de bataille d'Eylau le 9 février 1807' or David's 'Napoléon franchissant le Grand Saint-Bernard' - but also as a figure capable of Christ-like compassion laying his hands on the sores of the afflicted – as in Gros's 'Bonaparte visitant les pestiférés de Jaffa le 11 mars 1799'. Historians, too, have made the controversial analogy between Napoleon and Christ: in Henri Peyre's words, 'both were heroes, that is, daring conquerors, marching with

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[424] For a study of equestrian imagery in *Le Rouge et le Noir* and its considerable importance as a means of reinforcing this Napoleonic thematic, see Jean-Claude Rioux, 'Aspects du symbolisme équestre', in *Le Symbolisme stendhalien*, edited by Jean-Claude Rioux (Nantes: Editions ACL, 1986), pp. 257-75.

[425] Christopher Prendergast, *Napoleon and History Painting: Antoine-Jean Gros's 'La bataille d'Eylau'* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), p. 10.

their whole being, to meet God'.[426] The god-like status assumed by and attributed to Napoleon thus enables us to establish a parallel between Julien and the messianic qualities associated with Claude Lantier and Louis Lambert. Furthermore, it mirrors the sense of revolt and revolution which in Crouzet's estimation is characteristic of 'le beylisme', a 'révolte [qui] est d'abord métaphysique' and which constantly seeks out 'la candidature à la « divinatio »'.[427] Such a candidature is evident in Julien's declaration to Mme de Rênal: 'ah! [...], Napoléon était bien l'homme envoyé de Dieu pour les jeunes Français!' (RN, 304). He immediately goes on to pose the leading question: 'qui le remplacera?' (RN, 304), thereby sowing in the reader's mind the seed of the idea that the next god-sent Napoleon could well be a certain Julien Sorel. Julien's god-like characteristics are clearly visible in the pre-shooting stages of the novel: at Vergy, for example, we find him perched 'sur les sommets de ces rochers coupés à pic', feeling 'heureux, libre et même quelque chose de plus, *roi de la maison*' (RN, 264, my italics). Later, exhilarated at having seduced Mathilde de La Mole, he feels 'ivre de bonheur et du sentiment de sa puissance [...]. *Il était un Dieu*' (RN, 527, my italics). Among the other Christ-like imagery associated with Julien are the facts that M de Rênal's wealth is founded on the manufacture of nails, the instrument with which Jesus was to meet his death; and that Julien is brought up as the son of a carpenter named Joseph, yet his paternity is called into question on so many occasions that the reader is led to believe that Julien's real father, like that of Jesus, could be some greater, unnameable figure. Finally, Irène Simon points to one highly significant parallel between Julien and Jesus Christ which has not been brought out elsewhere. She argues that in 'l'épisode de la note secrète' where Julien is charged with being the messenger for the marquis de La Mole on a politically sensitive mission, the entire scene should be read 'comme une parodie politique de la dernière Cène'[428] given the presence of 'douze personnes assises autour du tapis vert'

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[426] Henri Peyre, 'Napoleon: Devil, Poet, Saint', *Yale French Studies,* 26 (1960-1), 21-31 (p. 29). It is surely significant that the now canonical history of the period by Jean Tulard is entitled *Napoléon ou le mythe du sauveur* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), my emphasis.

[427] Michel Crouzet, *Nature et société chez Stendhal: La révolte romantique* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1985), p. 18.

[428] Irène Simon, 'Religion et langage dans *Le Rouge et le Noir*', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 14 (1985-6), 201-13 (p. 207).

(RN, 575) whose destiny is dependent on Julien and from whose ranks a treacherous Judas eventually emerges (RN, 585).

The second reason why Julien's Napoleonic aspirations merit inclusion among his separatist ideals is that they in fact represent highly subversive values. They are not predicated on full integration into the doxa but instead revolve around taking control of the doxa given that Julien is, in Irène Simon's words, 'destiné à vivre dans une période historiquement sombre qui rejette son héros'.[429] Julien's sedition, covert though it may be, is all the more startling as it comes from the son of a provincial saw-mill owner who, in Restoration France, ought never to be able to lay a finger on the levers of power. The subversive nature of Julien's aspirations can be seen clearly at the Hôtel de La Mole, and, in particular, in his seduction of Mathilde, the motivation for which centres on his quest to triumph over his aristocratic colleagues. His affair with Mathilde fills him with 'le plus vif bonheur d'ambition' (RN, 541) because, as he realises only too well,

> je l'emporte sur le marquis de Croisenois […], moi qui ne dis que
> des choses sérieuses! Et lui est si joli! Il a des moustaches, un
> charmante uniforme; il trouve toujours à dire, juste au moment
> convenable, un mot spirituel et fin. Julien eut un instant délicieux;
> il errait à l'aventure dans le jardin, fou de bonheur. (RN, 523)

As a result, he feels 'ivre de bonheur et du sentiment de sa puissance' (RN, 527). Julien's Napoleonic goals deserve to be lined up alongside his separatist yearnings for authenticity because they all represent 'wilful situational improprieties',[430] or irrefutable evidence that Julien is very much not prepared to keep his place.

Thus far in this chapter we have seen that Julien, Renée, Louis and Claude espouse a range of separatist desires which arguably share two important characteristics: firstly, they could all be termed 'centrifugal' desires as they each propel the four protagonists away from conformity to the most socially acceptable values and practices of the day. In their differing ways, each protagonist pursues ambitions

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[429] *ibid.*, p. 205.
[430] Goffman, 'The Insanity of Place', p. 411.

which run contrary to the dominant doxai of every social milieu they encounter. In this way, each of them 'strikes at the syntax of conduct',[431] because their behaviour constitutes evidence of 'wilful situational improprieties [...] and evidence that the individual is not prepared to keep his place'.[432] It is their separatist ideals which push them towards committing these 'infractions of social rules and social expectations'.[433] Yet if the four protagonists are subject to centrifugal forces pushing them out towards a position of revolutionary marginality, is it possible to define more precisely where they are heading? The difficulty in responding to this question gives rise to the second characteristic of the four protagonists' separatist desires: that is, their ideals are all, by definition, extremely difficult to define and are without concrete existence in time and place. For example, Claude's artistic credo when translated into pictorial reality is by his own admission 'un art *incomplet* et révolutionnaire' (LO, 210, my italics) which is so complex and stuffed 'd'une si grande confusion de détails sommaires' (LO, 216) that it eventually becomes indecipherable. Christine berates him for just this failing in the hours before he commits suicide (LO, 347). Louis's new Jerusalem can be described only in terms of which elements of society it will reject rather than in more constructive terms of what it will positively represent or strive for. In a similar sense, Renée's core of difference and drive for authenticity help her focus on rejecting and escaping the mediocrity of her colleagues and suitors and can be expressed in the vaguest of terms, sometimes finding a voice extra-linguistically through the medium of her piano music. Finally, Julien's case is more complex given that his separatist desires comprise two competing elements. Yet this twin set of ideals is subject to the same principle of undefinability given that his yearning for some form of pre-lapsarian authentic existence which we witness during his stay at Vergy can only be alluded to in highly imprecise terms. Even his Napoleonic urges are surely better described as rebellious rather than revolutionary given that he turns away from and reacts against a particular value system, as represented by Valenod or the marquis de Croisenois rather than espousing or attempting to impose a new, revolutionary ideology. The

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[431] Goffman, 'The Insanity of Place', p. 411.
[432] *ibid.*, p. 411.
[433] *ibid.*, p. 400.

four protagonists' separatist desires thus surpass precise definition or representation; all can seemingly be defined or represented only in terms of what they react against. The defining characteristic of the protagonists' separatist ideals relates to an aspiration towards authenticity, or to the feeling which Laing termed 'aletheia', a being 'true to oneself'.[434]

While their centrifugal desires to remain true to themselves and to their ideals certainly distinguish the four protagonists from their families and immediate contemporaries, they nonetheless account for only one aspect of their existential positions. In essence, the focus of the four novels rests not on these separatist urges but on the conflict which arises between them and the many opposing 'integrationist' pressures which are at work on each protagonist. These forces aim to exert a sufficiently strong centripetal pressure on the protagonists to counter-balance and, where possible, out-weigh their centrifugal, separatist desires. The result is that if the centrifugal desires, as we saw earlier, push the four of them towards committing 'infractions of social rules and social expectations', the centripetal, integrationist forces aim to prevent these infractions, and, crucially, to prevent the protagonists' separatist goals from ever being achieved. Before turning to these integrationist forces, I wish first to outline the concept of 'ontological insecurity' which Laing describes in *The Divided Self* as a means of structuring my evaluation of these pressures and subsequently of examining the intense friction which is created by the clash between the two mutually exclusive sets of forces.

Ontological insecurity

At the root of schizophrenia, according to Laing, lies 'ontological insecurity'. Laing begins his explanation of this condition in *The Divided Self* by describing those who retain a firm sense of ontological security.

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[434] See p. 26.

A man may have a sense of his presence in the world as a real, alive, whole, and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person. As such, he can live out into the world and meet others: a world and others experienced as equally real, alive, whole, and continuous. Such a basically *ontologically* secure person will encounter all the hazards of life, social, ethical, spiritual, biological, from a centrally firm sense of his own and other people's reality and identity. (TDS, 39)

This 'presence in the world as a real, alive, whole continuous person' who is characterised by the ability to retain a 'firm sense of one's own and other people's reality and identity' is precisely the element which the schizophrenic lacks and which provides the source of all his/her anxieties and dangers.

The individual in the ordinary circumstances of living may feel more unreal than real; in a literal sense, more dead than alive; precariously differentiated from the rest of the world, so that his identity and autonomy are always in question. He may lack the experience of his own temporal continuity. He may not possess an over-riding sense of personal consistency or cohesiveness. He may feel more insubstantial than substantial, and unable to assume that the stuff he is made of is genuine, good, valuable. (TDS, 42)

In such a position, relatedness with other people can represent a potentially unnavigable mine-field.

We can say that in the individual whose own being is secure in this primary existential sense, relatedness with others is potentially gratifying; whereas the ontologically insecure person is preoccupied with preserving rather than gratifying himself: the ordinary circumstances of living threaten his *low threshold* of security. (TDS, 42)

The ontologically insecure individual's existence becomes characterised by a drive not towards self-gratification, as classical psychoanalytic theories would suggest, but only towards self-preservation. I want to argue in this chapter that the existences of the four protagonists are structured in a remarkably similar way to that which R. D. Laing describes in relation to the ontologically insecure individual. They too do not 'possess any over-riding sense of personal consistency or cohesiveness' (TDS, 42), so riven are their existences by the mutually exclusive sets of separatist desires and integrationist pressures at work on them. Two differences do arise, however, and these differences are crucial to the development of my argument in this and

subsequent chapters. Firstly, while the Laingian schizophrenic must constantly 'contrive ways of trying to […] prevent himself from losing his self' (TDS, 42-3) and of preserving his/her identity, Louis, Julien, Renée and Claude must constantly contrive ways of preventing themselves from losing their separatist desires, or from seeing these desires being rendered null and void. Furthermore, while the ontologically insecure individual's life is characterised by a drive towards self-preservation rather than self-gratification, our four protagonists must similarly direct their efforts towards the preservation of their separatist ideals and less towards the gratification or realisation of these ideals. Secondly, the aetiology or symptoms associated with Laing's descriptions of 'ontological insecurity' should not be seen as being directly applicable to the lives of the four protagonists. Instead, they provide us only with a parallel to the lives of the protagonists or with a framework within which to analyse their existential positions. To see this framework in action, we need first to turn to the potentially deadly threats which Laing argues assail those with a low threshold of ontological security. Laing describes such threats and their possibly devastating effects by outlining three fears which govern the everyday life of the schizophrenic – engulfment, implosion and petrification. The first two of these fears I will examine immediately, the third I will turn to in chapter two of part III.

By way of illustration of the fear of engulfment, Laing cites a revealing case drawn from his own clinical experience.

> An argument occurred between two patients in the course of a session in an analytic group. Suddenly, one of the protagonists broke off the argument to say, 'I can't go on. You are arguing in order to have the pleasure of triumphing over me. At best you win an argument. At worst you lose an argument. *I am arguing in order to preserve my existence*'. (TDS, 43)

Laing thus defines engulfment as a state in which 'the individual dreads relatedness as such, with anyone or anything or, indeed, even with himself, because his uncertainty about the stability of his autonomy lays him open to the dread lest in any relationship he will lose his autonomy and identity' (TDS, 44). Every relationship thus 'threatens the individual with loss of identity' (TDS, 44). In the period leading up to their allegedly mad or irrational actions, the four protagonists also suffer from

this fear of engulfment but with one crucial difference: they do not fear that their entire 'autonomy and identity' will be washed away, as the schizophrenic does, but, instead, that the 'autonomy and identity' of their separatist ideals will be engulfed if they enter into too great a degree of relatedness with others. In short, they fear that relatedness will prevent their ideals from ever being realised.

At this point it is constructive to note one particular phrase in Laing's description of the fear of engulfment: 'any and every relationship threatens the individual with loss of identity' (TDS, 45). This phrase is significant for the emphasis it places on the fact that the ontologically insecure individual is not an entirely insubstantial being: s/he has an *essence* which is under threat, an 'inner aliveness' (TDS, 45) which faces the possibility of extinction because of the dangers relatedness holds. S/he does retain a sense of selfhood, albeit one which must be protected and preserved by often increasingly desperate means: 'the individual experiences himself as a man who is only saving himself from drowning by the most constant, strenuous, desperate activity' (TDS, 44). The implication of such a statement is that the ontologically insecure individual does in fact retain a substantiality which is worth saving from drowning. This inviolable if threatened aliveness at the centre of the ontologically insecure individual's being can be equated with the core of authenticity which the schizophrenic has been forced to abandon in the face of constant 'disconfirmatory' behaviour and the resultant double binds in which s/he has become implicated, as was described in part I.[435] The existence of an 'inner aliveness' is further reflected in Laing's famous argument also cited in part I: 'our "normal", "adjusted" state is too often the abdication of ecstasy, the betrayal of our true potentialities, [...] many of us are only too successful in acquiring a false self to adapt to false realities' (TDS, 12). In claiming that the schizophrenic individual does indeed retain an independent sense of self (or 'true potentialities' as in the last quotation) Laing would appear to diverge from the Heideggerian notion of authenticity which we saw earlier in this chapter. Heidegger argued that we have already 'fallen' from our state of authenticity as a result of which fact inauthenticity is 'an inevitable feature of the human

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[435] See pp. 24-6.

predicament'.[436] Laing, on the other hand, would appear to hold out at least the possibility of a return to a state of authenticity, to one's 'true potentialities', and, it is this return which he posits as the ultimate goal of anti-psychiatric therapeutic practice: 'the task in therapy', he argues, 'comes to be to make contact with the original 'self' of the individual which, or who, we must believe is still a *possibility*, if not an actuality, and can still be nursed back to a feasible life' (TDS, 158-9).

I have placed some emphasis on the existence of this obscured core of substantiality or authenticity because it assumes considerable importance when we turn to the second fear by which the schizophrenic's life is wracked – that of implosion. This fear centres on the schizophrenic's terror that 'the world [is] liable at any moment to crash in and obliterate all identity as a gas will rush in and obliterate a vacuum' (TDS, 45). The ontologically insecure individual thus views 'any 'contact' with reality […] as a dreadful threat because reality, as experienced from this position, is necessarily implosive and […] a threat to what identity the individual is able to suppose himself to have' (TDS, 46). Contact with reality is thus a terrifying prospect, transforming the outside world into a constantly persecuting enemy. Yet despite the obviously frightening prospect held out by the risk of implosion, the schizophrenic retains a highly ambivalent attitude towards this fear because he suffers from an intense feeling of emptiness which s/he wishes to see filled. This sense of emptiness should not, however, be seen as a negation of the view which has just been outlined with regard to the core of inner aliveness animating the schizophrenic's existence. The emptiness which Laing evokes here stems not from the non-existence of the inner core but from its sense of impoverishment and under-nourishment in this hostile and potentially implosive environment. Yet while, on the one hand, the individual would like to see this impoverishment brought to an end and would like to see the 'vacuum' filled, 'he dreads the possibility of this happening because he has come to feel that all he can be is the awful nothingness of just this vacuum' (TDS, 45). The vicious circle in which the individual is trapped is thus one in which s/he most desires what s/he most dreads.

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[436] Inwood, *Heidegger*, p. 47.

As a result of these two fears – engulfment and implosion - and the underlying sense of 'ontological insecurity', the schizophrenic is left in a state of constant anxiety, unable to 'take the realness, aliveness, autonomy and identity of himself and others for granted' (TDS, 42). S/he must consequently 'become absorbed in contriving ways of trying to be real, of keeping himself or others alive, or preserving his identity, in efforts, as he will often put it, to prevent him losing his self' (TDS, 42-3). In essence, the ontologically insecure individual must devote him/herself to fending off a world which could potentially obliterate his/her entire identity if s/he does not try constantly to defend his/her core of being. We will see later in part III that despite the potentially engulfing nature of relatedness with the world and despite the schizophrenic's need to fend off this world, relatedness is paradoxically still required for the schizophrenics's sense of self to be sustained. Before turning to this paradoxical state of affairs, central to the Laingian ontology of schizophrenia, I shall first examine the ways in which 'reality' poses a potentially devastating, engulfing and imploding threat for our four protagonists through subjecting them to a range of 'integrationist' pressures which militate at all times against the separatist desires outlined in the first section of this chapter.

Integrationist pressures

A parallel was drawn earlier between Louis Lambert and Moses: this analogy can be extended if we remember that while Moses led the Children of Israel out of misery and bondage in Egypt, he was not permitted to enter the Promised Land for having doubted and disobeyed God while in the wilderness. Louis suffers an analogous fate in the period preceding his 'collapse into insanity' as he, too, is a tainted prophet with his Christ-like authenticity and integrity being compromised - albeit inevitably - by his involvement with the things of this world. Louis's separatist, quasi-messianic compulsions are counter-balanced by a series of integrationist forces which exert on

him a strong centripetal pull in order to divert him from, or in Laingian terms, to engulf his Promethean goals. This is the case in all four novels, each one a 'roman d'apprentissage', as the protagonists traverse a series of institutions and locations which each aims to obliterate the identity of their separatist desires and prevent such goals from ever being realised, mirroring the way in which the ontologically insecure schizophrenic's core of inner aliveness faces the prospect of engulfment by the outside world. A highly evocative appraisal of an institution where such integrationist forces are at their most concentrated can be found in the narrator's account of Louis Lambert's years at the Collège de Vendôme – 'a miniature description of Hell'[437] – and a place where Louis is expected to

> entrer dans le moule d'un collège auquel chaque intelligence, chaque corps doit, *malgré sa portée, malgré son tempérament*, s'adapter à la règle comme l'or s'arrondit en pièces sous le coup du balancier, Louis Lambert souffrit donc par tous les points où la douleur a prise sur l'âme et sur la chair. (LL, 612, my italics)

Constantly forced to run the gauntlet of 'des rires moqueurs, des interrogations, des impertinences' (LL, 604) at the hands of their class-mates, both he and the narrator are locked in a constant 'état de guerre' (LL, 613) with those around them. This war rages not only between the two groups of school-children but also between Louis and his school-teachers who, far from seeking to nurture their charge's intellectual gifts, see his prodigious abilities only as a threat to the carefully controlled uniformity they seek to impose. As a result, they burden him with endless disciplinary penalties, thus depriving him of the time and room he requires in order to devote himself to his Promethean ambitions. Louis's life at the Collège can be read as a literary representation of the normalising, disciplinary techniques which Foucault outlines in *Surveiller et punir*, techniques which '[ont] prise[s] sur le corps des autres, non pas simplement pour qu'ils fassent ce qu'on désire, mais pour qu'ils opèrent comme on veut'.[438] The various techniques Foucault outlines – 'la répartition des individus dans

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[437] Henry Miller, 'Balzac and His Double', in *Selected Prose*, 2 volumes (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1965), II, pp. 31-63 (p. 41).
[438] Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: La naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), p. 162.

l'espace', 'la clôture', 'le quadrillage', 'les emplacement fonctionnels' and 'le rang'[439] – each have their individual counter-parts in Louis's life. For instance,

> chaque élève possédait une niche de six pieds carrés, dont les cloisons étaient garnies de barreaux par le haut, dont la porte à claire-voie se fermait tous les soirs, et s'ouvrait tous les matins sous les yeux du Père chargé d'assister à notre lever et à notre coucher. (LL, 619)

Such niches, the narrator declares, 'nous servaient de prison' (LL, 619). The boys' strict separation into spatial categories is replicated in the academic sphere where they are 'hiérarchiquement casés' (LL, 600) into four separate 'divisions' in which they receive their education and in which every aspect of their lives is watched over and controlled. The effect on Louis (and, by extension, his separatist ideals) of such constant surveillance and of the required 'self-direction' is devastating.

> Il lui fallut prendre soin de sa baraque, de son pupitre, de ses habits, de ses souliers; ne se laisser voler ni son encre, ni ses livres, ni ses cahiers, ni ses plumes; enfin penser à ces mille détails de notre existence enfantine, dont s'occupaient avec tant de rectitude ces esprits égoïstes et médiocres auxquels appartiennent infailliblement les prix d'excellence ou de bonne conduite; mais que négligeait un enfant plein d'avenir, qui, sous le joug d'une imagination divine, s'abandonnait avec amour au torrent de ses pensées. (LL, 611)

It is just these 'pensées' and his 'imagination divine' - what we have identified with his separatist desires - which become so threatened with engulfment and annihiliation. The narrator suggests: 'attaché sur un banc à la glèbe de son pupitre, frappé par la férule, frappé par la maladie, affecté dans tous ses sens, pressé par une ceinture de maux, *tout le contraignit d'abandonner son enveloppe aux mille tyrannies du collège*' (LL, 613, my italics). Enormous tension necessarily builds up between Louis's own separatist inclinations and the stultifying conveyor-belt ethos of the Collège.

> Accoutumé au grand air, à l'indépendance d'une éducation laissée au hasard, caressé par les tendres soins d'un vieillard qui le chérissait, habitué à penser sous le soleil, *il lui fut bien difficile de se plier à la règle du collège*, de marcher dans le rang, de vivre entre les quatre murs d'une salle où quatre-vingts jeunes gens

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[439] *ibid.*, pp. 166-75.

étaient silencieux, assis sur un banc de bois, chacun devant son pupitre. Ses sens possédaient une perfection qui leur donnait une exquise délicatesse, et tout souffrit chez lui de cette vie en commun. (LL, 607, my italics)

Louis's separatist ideals are thus always under attack from the centripetal pressures applied by this constantly persecuting enemy. The invidious position in which Louis finds himself at the Collège parallels that of the Laingian schizophrenic: the latter fears that the outside world will engulf his core of existence while the former fears that the outside world, in this case in the form of the Collège, will douse the embers of his separatist fire.

A second situation in which Louis finds it 'bien difficile de se plier à la règle' arises when he follows that path so well trodden by Louis's 'arriviste' colleagues in the 'Comédie Humaine' by going up to Paris. Yet here, in common with Raphaël de Valentin in *La Peau de Chagrin* for example, Louis encounters as many barriers to the realisation and exploration of his separatist, philosophical goals as he had done at the Collège, and the threat that his separatist ideals will never be realised and will instead be engulfed by a hostile environment remains as pressing as ever. Earlier in this chapter, we saw Louis's conviction that 'une force invincible' was leading him 'vers une lumière qui a brillé de bonne heure dans les ténèbres de ma vie morale' (LL, 651). Yet a directly antithetical force counteracts that Promethean promise: 'quel nom donner à la puissance qui me lie les mains, qui me ferme la bouche, et m'entraîne en sens contraire à ma vocation?' (LL, 651) While the curbs placed on his Promethean task in the Collège had been of a physical nature – he had, for example, lacked a 'room of his own' – the restrictions and normalising influences he faces in Paris are of an ideological and financial nature: 'ici [Paris] tout décourage le vol en droite ligne d'un esprit qui tend à l'avenir' (LL, 648) and encourages instead slavish adherence to the prevailing doxa. He comes to the same realisation as so many other Balzacian heroes: 'ici [Paris] le point de départ de tout est l'argent' (LL, 647). Deprived of such resources, his messianic mission is severely undermined for he realises that: 'il faut de l'argent, même pour se passer d'argent' (LL, 647). Resistance to his separatist plans also comes in the form of that most invasive and potentially

devastating of techniques - mockery: 'l'on s'y moque des essais d'abord infructueux qui peuvent mener aux plus grands découvertes, et l'on n'y estime pas cette étude constante et profonde qui veut une longue concentration des forces' (LL, 648). Whether as a pupil at the Collège de Vendôme or as a student in Paris, Louis encounters, at best, only philistinism and mediocrity, or, at worst, outright hostility and opposition to his separatist ideals, all of which obstruct his path towards the realisation of his Promethean goals.

A similar dynamic to that which we have just seen in relation to Louis Lambert governs the life of Claude Lantier. Much like *Louis Lambert*, *L'Œuvre* is structured around a series of events and institutions which each contains the potential to engulf and triumph over his desires for artistic revolution. As a child, for example, the 'intelligence supérieure' (LO, 54) and 'ambition commune' which set him apart from everyone in his home town except Sandoz and Dubuche are threatened with the possibility of engulfment 'au milieu de la cohue brutale des abominables cancres qui les battaient' (LO, 35); all three future artists find themselves being almost overwhelmed there by the 'engourdissement invincible du milieu' (LO, 40); while their artistic, poetic sensibilities are left desiccated and un-nourished. Claude's artistic vigour is also sapped later in the novel at Bennecourt where he manages to paint nothing for over a year after arriving and where he comes to realise that 'le peintre en lui se dégoûtait de la contrée, ne trouvant plus un seul motif qui l'enflammât' (LO, 167). Eventually, he is even forced to conclude that 'il ne ferait plus rien de bon dans ce pays de chien!' (LO, 167).

The most significant and most 'totalising' of all the integrationist pressures which threaten to implode upon and engulf Claude's separatist desires, however, are relating to the 'Ecole des Beaux-Arts' and the 'Salon'. Dubuche describes the 'chienne de vie' (LO, 51) a student learning his trade at the Ecole must endure:

> cours de perspective, cours de géométrie descriptive, cours de stéréotomie, cours de construction, histoire de l'art, ah! ils vous en font noircir du papier, à prendre des notes… Et, tous les mois, un concours d'architecture, tantôt une simple esquisse, tantôt un projet. Il n'y a point à s'amuser, si l'on veut passer ses examens et

> décrocher les mentions nécessaires, surtout lorsqu'on doit, en
> dehors de ces besognes, trouver le temps de gagner son pain...
> Moi, j'en crève.... (LO, 52)

All the students must undergo a strict process of homogenisation 'sous la férule de professeurs qui vous entrent de force dans la caboche leur vision à eux' (LO, 83). Any student who dares to espouse revolutionary values similar to those held by Claude will certainly fail to graduate until their separatist ambitions have been defeated and until they have been engulfed by the rigid, reactionary vision their educators propose. As one novelist of the period noted in relation to the Ecole's 'grand concours' entrance examination: 'les élèves qui s'y attardent finissent par ressembler à certains aspirants bacheliers, plus soucieux du diplôme que du vrai savoir'.[440] Those who succeed at the Ecole will no doubt find their work selected for exhibition at the official Salon, works of art which the narrator tells us are 'trempés ensemble au fond du même cambouis de la convention. Une médiocrité uniforme suintait des œuvres, la salissure boueuse du ton qui les caractérisait, dans cette bonne tenue d'un art au sang pauvre et dégénéré' (LO, 131-2). Dumbing-down is the watch-word in this environment so hostile to Claude's ambitions, as Bongrand - the spiritual father of the 'plein air' movement – laments when he scrutinises a painting by Fagerolles which has won considerable critical and public acclaim:

> tout le truc consiste à lui voler son originalité et à l'accommoder à
> la sauce veule de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Parfaitement! on prend
> du moderne, on peint clair, mais on garde le dessin banal et correct,
> la composition agréable de tout le monde, enfin la formule qu'on
> enseigne là-bas, pour l'agrément des bourgeois. (LO, 185)

While Bongrand takes the uncompromising view that such work is artistic nonsense worthy of being 'punie du bagne' (LO, 185), he nonetheless provides an important insight into the way in which an artist may push back very gently the boundaries of artistic innovation without alienating the philistine viewing public. Fagerolles had learnt the value of this reflex at the first 'Salon des Refusés' where Claude's painting *En Plein Air* had met with such derision. He symbolically keeps one eye on the painting and another on the public:

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[440] Louis-Edmond Duranty, *La Nouvelle peinture: A propos du groupe d'artistes qui expose dans les galeries Durand-Ruel (1876)* (Caen: L'Echoppe, 1988), p. 16.

il examinait toujours la toile, il jetait des coups d'œil sur le public. Avec son flair de Parisien et sa conscience souple de gaillard adroit, il se rendait compte du malentendu; et, vaguement, il sentait déjà ce qu'il faudrait pour que cette peinture fît la conquête de tous, quelques tricheries peut-être, des atténuations, un arrangement du sujet, un adoucissement de la facture. L'influence que Claude avait eue sur lui persistait: il en restait pénétré, à jamais marqué. Seulement, il le trouvait archifou d'exposer une pareille chose. N'était-ce pas stupide de croire à l'intelligence du public? (LO, 129)

Several years later, when Fagerolles's 'Un Déjeuner' is exhibited at the Salon, Claude notices how successful his one-time acolyte has been in watering down the revolutionary promise they had once shared: 'il retrouvait son *Plein air*, dans ce *Déjeuner*, la même note blonde, la même formule d'art, mais combien adoucie, truquée, gâtée, d'une élégance d'épiderme, arrangée avec une adresse infinie pour les satisfactions basses du public' (LO, 286). Fagerolles's inauthentic art satisfies 'the public norms of the 'they'',[441] and it is up to Claude to decide whether he wishes to ape Fagerolles's courting of the 'they' or whether he wants instead to remain true to the exigencies of his authentic, revolutionary ideals to 'tout voir, tout faire, tout conquérir' (LO, 203). If he chooses to follow the former path, he will no doubt win similarly extensive acclaim to that which Fagerolles enjoyed thanks to his acclaimed 'Déjeuner'. Claude cannot avoid overhearing their appreciative comments and becomes intensely gloomy as a result.

> Claude […] écoutait des mots, autour de lui. Enfin, en voilà un qui faisait de la vraie vérité! Il n'appuyait pas comme ces goujats de l'école nouvelle, il savait tout mettre sans rien mettre. Ah! les nuances, l'art des sous-entendus, le respect du public, les suffrages de la bonne compagnie! Et avec ça une finesse, un charme, un esprit! (LO, 287)

Moreover, Claude realises that if he were to put up no resistance to the threatened engulfment of his separatist desires, a hefty financial reward would ensue. Naudet, the art dealer and his one-time friend, is after all nothing but 'un spéculateur, un boursier, qui se moquait radicalement de la bonne peinture' (LO, 185), yet one

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[441] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 334.

knows how to market his product so that it will 'faire prime sur le marché bourgeois' (LO, 185).

The situation in which Claude finds himself recalls that which Pierre Bourdieu outlines in his study of *L'Education Sentimentale* where he argues that Flaubert puts in place 'les deux pôles du champ du pouvoir [...] où s'exercent des forces sociales, attractions ou répulsions'.[442] As a result,

> Flaubert instaure les conditions d'une sorte d'expérimentation sociologique: cinq adolescents – dont le héros, Frédéric -, provisoirement rassemblés par leur position commune d'étudiants, seront lancés dans cet espace, telles des particules dans un champ de forces, et leurs trajectoires seront déterminées par la relation entre les forces du champ et leur propre inertie.[443]

Zola undertakes a similar type of sociological 'experiment' in *L'Œuvre* by describing the artistic field inhabited and, for a time, dominated by Claude. His experiment centres on observing which pole Claude and his one-time close artistic colleagues will be attracted to, which of them will remain loyal to their artistic, separatist revolutionary ideals, and which of them will sign up to the steadily growing band of 'peintres moqueurs' (LO, 187) through succombing to the strong integrationist pressures acting on them.

While the tales of Claude Lantier and Louis Lambert present in fairly equal measure the integrationist and separatist forces which govern their lives, no such equilibrium exists in relation to *Le Rouge et le Noir* and *Renée Mauperin* where the emphasis is placed largely on the integrationist forces at work on both main protagonists. In a similar manner to *L'Œuvre,* Stendhal's novel recounts the journey undertaken by an 'arriviste' through a series of institutions which each aims to curtail and, better still, nullify and engulf his difference. To borrow from Goffman's terminology, each of these instituions aims to 'disculture' him.[444] However, this 'disculturation' is directed not towards his compatibility with the outside world, as was the case in relation to

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[442] Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art,* pp. 30-1.

[443] *ibid.,* p. 31. For a wider and very illuminating Bourdieu-inspired study of *L'Œuvre,* see Duffy, 'Sidelines: Art and Economy in Zola's *L'Œuvre*'.

[444] Goffman, *Asylums,* p. 23.

the asylum inmate, instead it is directed towards his twin ideals of authenticity and Napoleonic pre-eminence. An immediate example emerges out of Julien's stay at the Besançon seminary where he realises that his fellow seminarists consider it to be 'un péché *splendide*' (RN, 384) to come top of the class in any examination. In their eyes, Julien is far too much the maverick: '*il pensait, il jugeait par lui-même*, au lieu de suivre aveuglément *l'autorité* et l'exemple' (RN, 386). In essence, Julien refuses here to keep to the 'place' he has been allocated by his birth, yet he realises that such 'singularité' must be un-learned quickly and that he must follow the example of his colleague Chazel 'qui […] jette toujours dans ses compositions quelque balourdise qui le fait reléguer à la cinquantième place' (RN, 387).

We have already seen in this section that Claude Lantier and Louis Lambert are subject to a range of powerful disculturing forces in the various institutions they encounter. A crucial difference, however, between their existential positions and that of Julien Sorel turns on the fact that the normalising forces acting on Claude and Louis remain principally external to them – for instance, Louis's teachers at the Collège or the rigid conventions governing acceptance of one's work for exhibition at the Paris Salon. Julien, on the other hand, has largely internalised the integrationist forces which weigh down on him. As a result, he actively regulates and normalises himself rather than wait to be regulated by others in a more passive sense, as was the case in the last quotation relating to his examination technique at the seminary. A further example arises out his realisation that 'partout' there is 'de la fausseté' (RN, 362), at which point he decides that he too must follow this path if he wants to see his ideals being achieved. Julien simply does not allow himself to act with authenticity: 'il manqua à notre héros d'oser être sincère […] [il] n'osa plus rêver avec abandon' (RN, 305). The obvious question which arises here is why does Julien refuse to allow himself to be 'sincere' or to dare to act in accordance with his authentic capacities? One clue is provided by the insight into the interaction between Julien's two sets of separatist desires which the following telling narratorial intervention regarding Julien's relationship with Mme de Rênal offers the reader:

> au lieu d'être attentif aux transports qu'il faisait naître, et aux
> remords qui en relevaient la vivacité, l'idée du *devoir* ne cessa

> jamais d'être présente à ses yeux. Il craignait un remords affreux et
> un ridicule éternel s'il s'écartait du modèle idéal qu'il se proposait
> de suivre. En un mot, ce qui faisait de Julien un être supérieur fut
> précisément ce qui l'empêcha de goûter le bonheur qui se plaçait
> sous ses pas. C'est une jeune fille de seize ans, qui a des couleurs
> charmantes, et qui, pour aller au bal, a la folie de mettre du rouge.
> (RN, 298)

This extract is of considerable significance as it points to how Julien censors his urge for authenticity – his 'couleurs charmantes' – for fear of ridicule or failure: in other words, Julien undertakes a process of what could be called deliberate 'self-inauthentication'. This holds particularly true at the Hôtel de La Mole where his drive for authenticity becomes almost entirely submerged by his ambitions which take him in the direction of the Napoleonic 'rouge' and the clerical 'noir'. Gone are the days when he would withdraw into deep contemplation in the hills above Vergy to enter into deep contemplation. Instead, 'dès qu'il pouvait disposer d'un instant, au lieu de l'employer à lire comme autrefois, il courait au manège et demandait les chevaux les plus vicieux' (RN, 469). Perhaps most disturbingly of all, when Julien's seduction of Mathilde de La Mole starts to go to plan, the narrator declares: 'excepté pour les matières de haute ambition, Julien était devenu un autre lui-même' (RN, 522). The aphorism by which he rules his life at this stage of the novel is no longer 'to thine own self be true', but instead 'chacun pour soi dans ce désert d'égoïsme qu'on appelle la vie' (RN, 524).

It is important to note, however, that Julien suppresses not only his quest for authenticity but also his Napoleonic separatist agenda. Yet while he hides the former to the point of their virtual extinction, he obscures the latter only from public view and continues to pursue it ruthlessly in private. In view of the political allegiances of the de Rênal and de La Mole households, Julien rightly understands that his Napoleon-inspired ambitions would be engulfed immediately were they ever to emerge into the open: 'toute ma réputation [serait] tombée, anéantie en un moment!' (RN, 273), he realises. As a result, when he lets slip to Mme de Rênal something of his admiration for Napoleon, he realises he must back-pedal quickly in the face of her 'air froid et dédaigneux' (RN, 304) and claim instead 'que les mots qu'il venait de répéter, il les avait entendus pendant son voyage chez son ami le marchand de

bois. C'était le raisonnement des impies' (RN, 304). Further evidence of Julien's public, but not private, suppression of his admiration for Napoleon emerges in the statement: 'personne ne put trahir l'ancienne passion de Julien pour Napoléon, il n'en parlait qu'avec horreur' (RN, 248). Julien's hot-and-cold attitude towards the Napoleonic legacy recalls one of Laing's patients who 'though sane outside has been becoming progressively insane inside' (TDS, 147). Such a patient seemingly lives a normal and successfully adjusted life but 'behind this sane façade an interior psychotic process may be going on secretly and silently' (TDS, 147). This person would therefore 'play at being sane' (TDS, 148). In a parallel sense, Julien 'plays at being sane', or, more precisely, plays at staying within the bounds of rationality and novelistic 'vraisemblance' by denying in public the Napoleonic ambitions he pursues so ruthlessly in private and by parroting what he (rightly) thinks others want to hear from him.

Even though Julien cannot allow the Napoleonic branch of his separatist desires to become known by others, he nonetheless continues to pursue them not only with a relentless and silent vigour, particularly at the Hôtel de La Mole, but also with a success so stunning that he rises to the position of 'lieutenant de hussards', resplendent in the title M le chevalier Julien Sorel de La Vernaye. Julien achieves this level of success through turning to his advantage thoroughly integrationist or self-normalising strategies. To see how this paradoxical situation of pursuing separatist goals by integrationist means works in practice, it is useful to revisit the Heideggerian analogy introduced earlier. It can be said that Julien's inauthentic 'Dasein' (or, to be more precise, his deliberately self-inauthenticated 'Dasein') 'understands itself from its ability to be that is determined by the success and failure, the feasibility and unfeasibility of [his] commerce with things'.[445] Charles Guignon glosses these words thus: 'everyday existence is fragmented into a series of means-ends strategies governed by the latest public attitudes about what constitutes

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[445] Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 289.

success'.[446] One of the chief 'means-ends strategies' which Julien employs in order to bring about the achievement of his Napoleonic goals is his studied manipulation of language. We saw earlier in this chapter that Renée Mauperin preferred to avoid speech because of the stultifying and pre-structuring effect it exerted over her life. The reverse is true in the Hôtel de La Mole where most speakers are only too keen to insert themselves into the pre-structured symbolic order which language dictates to them.

> Pourvu qu'on ne plaisantât ni de Dieu, ni des prêtres, ni du roi, ni des gens en place, ni des artistes protégés par la cour, ni de tout ce qui est établi; pourvu qu'on ne dît du bien ni de Béranger, ni des journaux de l'opposition, ni de Voltaire, ni de Rousseau, ni de tout ce qui se permet un peu de franc-parler; pourvu surtout qu'on ne parlât jamais politique, on pouvait librement raisonner de tout. (RN, 457)

Conversation is reduced to a series of seemingly content-less or phatic utterances because 'les jeunes gens, [...] ayant peur de parler de quelque chose qui fît soupçonner une pensée, ou de trahir quelque lecture prohibée, se taisaient après quelques mots bien élégants sur Rossini et le temps qu'il faisait' (RN, 457). If ever one needed a novelistic description of the 'echo chamber of incessant vacant loquacity' which Steiner attributes to the Heideggerian notion of 'Gerede',[447] then it can surely be found in the Hôtel de La Mole.

Despite detesting the 'ennui' and the 'asphyxie morale' (RN, 458) such interaction engenders, Julien nonetheless recognises that he must base his rise through the ranks of society largely on a mastery of the linguistic codes which govern each institution he encounters – that is, on largely integrationist strategies.[448] While Renée Mauperin preferred to 'avaler sa langue' because she was aware of the stultifying effect speech could have on her ideals, Julien is only too willing to recast his speech into more

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[446] Charles B. Guignon, 'Authenticity, Moral Values, Psychotherapy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, edited by Charles B. Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 215-39 (p. 227).

[447] See p. 134.

[448] For a full survey of the use of the citational and the 'déjà-dit' in Stendhal's work, see Jefferson, *Reading Realism in Stendhal*, pp. 93-112; and Prendgergast, *The Order of Mimesis*, pp. 127-36.

'convenables' codes as he thinks it will lead him closer to his goals of Napoloeonic success and glory. 'C'est le monde des mots qui crée le monde des choses',[449] Lacan writes, and for Julien, mastery of the former increases his control over the latter: he is appointed as 'précepteur' to the de Rênal children thanks to his prodigious ability to recite the New Testament by heart; he seduces Mathilde de La Mole by disgorging a few of his favourite, well-worn lines from *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (RN, 541), phrases he has already tried out to some effect on Amanda Binet (RN, 372); and finally, he woos madame la maréchale de Fervaques with a set of second-hand 'billets doux' given to him by the Prince Korasoff (RN, 595-619). The significance of Julien's mastery of the correct formula of words in this specific context is underlined by Sandy Petrey who judiciously points out:

> the most crucial single moment in Julien's ascendent career is his decision to employ Korasoff's letters according to the accompanying instructions. It is uniquely because of the letters that Julien conquers Mathilde and uniquely because of the conquest that he becomes the chevalier de la Vernaye.[450]

In the Stendhalian universe, mastery of the word confers on the speaker a 'un pouvoir absolu, irrémédiable':[451] it is the novel's integrationist force par excellence, and one which Julien fully internalises. As Michel Crouzet writes: 'le langage est la règle où il faut se mettre et se perdre, ordre lointain et *négateur du moi*. [...]. Comme toute institution, *il humilie le moi et le trahit*'.[452] Through a studied manipulation of speech, Julien manages to negate and betray his capacity for authentic encounters while at the same time both hiding from public view and still ruthlessly pursuing his Napoleonic agenda. The words of the epigraph to part 1, chapter 22 of the novel – 'la parole a été donnée à l'homme pour cacher sa pensée' (RN, 344) – could hardly ring truer.

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[449] Jacques Lacan, 'Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse', in *Ecrits 1* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), pp. 111-208 (p. 155).
[450] Petrey, *Realism and Revolution*, p. 143.
[451] Gérard Antoine, 'Le « Mot », agent de cristallisation psychologique chez Stendhal', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 66 (1965), 417-30 (p. 421).
[452] Crouzet, *Stendhal et le langage*, p. 18, my italics.

Turning to our fourth novel, one could easily be forgiven for thinking that few integrationist forces assail Renée Mauperin. After all, it is Renée's fundamental core of difference which forms the principal focus of the novel. As a result, it would be easy to envisage her as a highly non-conformist individual whose separatist tendencies are always given free rein. One nineteenth-century critic takes just such a view: 'cherchez bien, après avoir fermé le livre, dans vos souvenirs de romans, vous ne lui trouverez pas de soeurs. Elle est *fille unique*';[453] while another eulogises: 'aucun pli de convention n'a faussé sa [Renée's] svelte et vibrante nature'.[454] Such approaches are surely inaccurate, however, as they overlook the fact that Renée is subject to a weighty set of integrationist forces even if these do not account for the novel's principal focus. Renée is no alien figure who is entirely unlike her family or friends even if her essential alterity still clearly distinguishes her from all others in the novel. In reality, she simply must exhibit certain 'plis de convention' if she is to survive on a day-to-day basis, a fact demonstrated by her obviously continuing to be regarded as a prize asset on the marriage market. To exemplify the way in which Renée shares many of the attributes and values common to the rest of her family, gender and social class and the way in which she is as compliant with many of the integrationist pressures acting on her as Julien is, I shall undertake a brief analysis of the novel's opening chapter.

One critic has argued that this chapter fails to establish a sufficiently firm basis for the development of the novel's subsequent action: 'la scène du bain campe un personnage qu'on ne doit plus revoir [Reverchon]; le mariage qui s'apprêtait s'évanouit avant d'avoir pu entrer dans l'œuvre', complains Robert Ricatte, 'on est loin des préambules de Balzac, si nécessaires à l'action'.[455] Ricatte ignores the fact, however, that several of the novel's central themes - word-weariness, courtship rituals, marriage refusals - are introduced in this chapter. Most significant of all is the introduction of a fourth key trope when Renée complains of 'la scie d'être convenable' (RM, 52) and when she describes some of the unwritten rules she must

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[453] Saint-Victor, p. 265.
[454] *ibid.*, p. 265.
[455] Ricatte, *La Création romanesque chez les Goncourt*, p. 195.

obey if her behaviour is to be regarded as 'convenable': she must for instance 'pincer le monosyllable tout le temps'; 'faire la grue'; 'rester à bavardichonner avec les personnages de son sexe'; or 'peindre que des roses à l'aquarelle' (RM, 52-3). Renée herewith points to the full syntax of behaviour out of which she must generate suitable actions, and which, if contravened, will see range of sanctions and reprimands swiftly imposed. She confides for instance: 'j'ai été assez grondée pour ça par maman!' (RM, 52); and admits that on the occasions when she has used oil paints: 'ça désole ma famille' (RM, 53). Renée's self-normalising behaviour thus surely contradicts Saint-Victor's argument that 'aucun pli de convention n'a faussé sa [Renée's] svelte et vibrante nature'[456] – after all, how would she ever have reached this stage of her life and still remained a suitable bride-to-be without exhibiting at least some 'plis de convention'? From this river scene, we learn that despite finding conformity a 'scie', Renée still abides by what is expected of her and has largely accepted and internalised the norms which others lay out for her: for example, she still goes through the rituals of courtship even though she spurns her many suitors' propositions; and she still acquiesces with the view that the only types of 'spectacle' an unmarried woman should watch in Paris are those put on at the Opéra-Comique even if she would prefer to be reading or making her own music at her piano. From this short analysis of chapter one, it is clear that Renée spends her life, in large part, positioned well within the bounds of what is expected of her and of novelistic 'vraisemblance'. Yet this point tends to become obscured by the fact that, in terms of its narrative time of around two to three years, the novel focuses primarily on the few, brief manifestations of her core of difference. While Renée's separatist desires may become apparent – albeit fleetingly – through her piano playing, her refusal to marry, or her attitude towards language, she nonetheless recognises that when it comes to her non-conformity, 'il ne faut pas que ça dépasse une certaine petite moyenne' (RM, 53). When she does exceed that 'moyenne', external forces bear down on her to bring her back into line. Her father, for example, has banned her from playing Chopin's 'Funeral March' on the piano while her mother wishes to mould her into the kind of woman who will marry one of the 'partis les plus convenables'

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[456] Quoted in Delzant, *Les Frères Goncourt*, p. 98.

(RM, 97) courting her attention in a similar way to how her sister Henriette married 'le premier homme « bien » qu'on lui avait présenté, sans hésitation, sans trouble, du premier mouvement' (RM, 157). One telling example of the integrationist sanctions imposed on Renée can be found in the scene in which Renée and her mother are preparing to go to an art exhibition:

> Renée fut un peu étonnée de voir sa mère venir à sa toilette, s'occuper d'elle, lui faire mettre son chapeau le plus frais. « C'est que, vois-tu, maintenant, ces expositions, c'est si couru, lui dit Mme Mauperin, en lui refaisant son nœud de chapeau, *il faut que tu sois mise comme tout le monde* ». (RM, 155, my italics)

The phrase 'mise comme tout le monde' seems particularly significant in a symbolic rather than a literal sense. Renée must be put or placed physically within the bounds of the 'convenable' and must be subjected to what Foucault calls the 'sanction normalisatrice'.[457] Such 'codage instrumental du corps'[458] leads to every detail of her life being closely surveyed and checked upon, from the knot in her hat to the type of paints she may use, as if in an illustration of Foucault's thesis on 'la société disciplinaire'.

> Notre société n'est pas celle du spectacle, mais de la surveillance; sous la surface des images, on investit les corps en profondeur; derrière la grande abstraction de l'échange, se poursuit le dressage minutieux et concret des forces utiles [...]. La belle totalité de l'individu n'est pas amputée, altérée par notre ordre social, mais l'individu est soigneusement fabriqué selon toute une tactique des forces et des corps.[459]

The 'belle totalité' of Renée is thus 'soigneusement fabriquée' by others while, at the same time, she takes an active role in her own self-fabrication or self-normalisation. She is normalised by others such as her father and mother and directed towards integration into the prevailing doxa but, crucially, like Julien Sorel, she also normalises her own behaviour.

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[457] Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, pp. 209-16.
[458] *ibid.*, p. 179.
[459] *ibid.*, pp. 252-3.

In this chapter we have seen that the lives of the four protagonists are structured along similar lines to the life of the Laingian schizophrenic. All four hold separatist values, the force of which push them centrifugally away from the centre towards a position of subversive marginality. Indeed, their separatist desires are prone to the same fears of engulfment and implosion which Laing attributes to the schizophrenic. More precisely, they are each prey to the fear that their separatist ideals will be engulfed by a threatening, normalising outside world which exerts on them a strong centripetal force in an attempt to counter-act and nullify their difference. So strong and pervasive are these opposing, centripetal pressures that the four protagonists' separatist ideals would have little chance of survival and fulfilment in such a hostile environment if they did not adopt a range of defence mechanisms which are similar to those which Laing argues the schizophrenic employs as a means of fending off his/her fears of engulfment and implosion. In the next chapter of part III, I take each of these defence mechanisms - isolation, depersonalisation and disembodiment - and demonstrate that in the period leading up to each of their 'mad' actions, the four protagonists also employ these defence mechanisms as a means not of defending their entire beings, as is the case for the schizophrenic, but of protecting and also attempting to fulfil their separatist ambitions.

PART III Chapter Two:
Defence of the Realm

Ici tout décourage le vol en droite ligne d'un esprit
qui tend à l'avenir. (LL, 648)

You know you're walking around with a mask on, and you
desperately want to take it off and you can't because everybody
else thinks it's your face.[460]

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[460] Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 242.

Isolation

Laing argues that 'the main manoeuvre used to preserve identity under pressure of the dread of engulfment is isolation' (TDS, 44). This is the only position which can provide 'a measure of safety' (TDS, 45) from the fears of engulfment and implosion which relatedness to others necessarily incites. Turning first of all to *Louis Lambert*, it is evident that Louis's isolation comes about both by default and by choice. When in Paris, he is 'contraint de vivre sans cesse en lui-même' (LL, 645), and is 'forcé de [s]e replier sur [lui]-même' (LL, 646) because he shares 'avec personne ses exquises jouissances' (LL, 645): 'je n'y vois aucun homme aimer ce que j'aime, s'occuper de ce qui m'occupe, s'étonner de ce qui m'étonne' (LL, 646), he laments. At the same time, however, his isolation is also a partly self-imposed strategy which forms part of a reaction against 'le monde [qui] est impitoyable pour l'inventeur, pour tout homme qui médite' (LL, 648). Consequently, he spends much of his life 'comme un anachorète des premiers temps de l'Eglise' (LL, 645). This term 'anachorète' assumes a particular significance if we bear in mind that the Anchorites withdrew into the desert both to devote themselves to a deeper level of religious contemplation and to escape from the persecution inflicted by Roman emperors. Like them, Louis wishes to devote himself to the pursuit of his philosophical ambitions as well as, crucially, to escape the persecution or potential engulfment of his separatist beliefs: 'à moi aussi, il me faut le désert' (LL, 657), he declares, because in Paris 'l'homme éprouve une foule de besoins qui le rapetissent' (LL, 648). Isolation thus relieves Louis of some of the persecuting but still tempting and potentially implosive forces which he encounters in Paris: 'je ne me craindrais pas dans une grotte au désert, et je me crains ici [Paris]. Au désert, je serais avec moi-même sans distraction' (LL, 648), and thus fully able to devote himself to the pursuit and possibly eventual achievement of his separatist ideals. Isolation is thus synonymous with a form of liberation for Louis, albeit a freedom which is short-lived. We find a further example of the liberating function of isolation at the Collège de Vendôme where Louis and the tale's narrator are put 'en prison' as punishment for several minor class-room misdemeanours and thus find themselves cut off from their constantly mocking class-mates. 'In prison', they can both feel 'plus libres que partout ailleurs' (LL, 619).

Incarceration and liberation thus not only go hand in hand, but liberation seemingly comes about only as a result of the isolation which incarceration precipitates.

In Zola's novel, Claude Lantier also withdraws into isolation, albeit in the company of his partner Christine, largely as a consequence of his disastrous first showing at the Salon. In Bennecourt, he believes he will be 'si loin des autres' (LO, 143) who had mocked so scornfully his artistic efforts: 'saignant encore de son échec du Salon, ayant le besoin de se reprendre, [Claude] aspirait à ce grand repos de la bonne nature; et il aurait là-bas le vrai plein air, il travaillerait dans l'herbe jusqu'au cou, il rapporterait des chefs d'œuvre' (LO, 145). While Louis had hoped his withdrawal into the 'desert' would facilitate the protection and pursuit of his Promethean philosophical studies, Claude, as we can see from this last extract, expects this move to Bennecourt will both ring-fence his ambitions to 'tout voir, tout faire, tout conquérir' (LO, 203) from detrimental Parisian influences and open up a space in which they can finally be realised. Indeed, for a time, Bennecourt exercises the desired effect on him as he is able to paint 'avec une vision nouvelle, comme éclaircie, d'une gaieté de tons chantante. Jamais encore il n'avait eu cette science des reflets, cette sensation si juste des êtres et des choses, baignant dans la clarté diffuse' (LO, 155). What better place could there be, after all, for the leader of the 'école du plein air' to work than in the 'plein air' of Bennecourt, a place unsullied by the artistic and environmental contamination of Paris?

This dynamic whereby isolation provides protection and a space for potential self-realisation is visible in *Le Rouge et le Noir* and *Renée Mauperin*, although only to a more limited extent in both these novels because, as we saw in the last chapter, Julien and Renée are complicit with the integrationist forces surrounding them to a much greater extent than Claude and Louis. In relation to *Renée Mauperin*, Renée retreats into isolation only rarely in the chapters of the novel which precede her 'madness' because of her extensive self-normalising behaviour. In subsequent chapters, however, isolation becomes one of the essential characteristics of her existence. These instances of isolation will therefore be examined in greater detail in the

following chapter of part III. A few examples of Renée's isolationist tendencies do nonetheless early on in the novel: for example, Renée is seen at her happiest and most inspired when seated alone at her piano. Secondly, in rejecting the advances of so many suitors, Renée maintains a position of isolation out of a wish to defend her core of difference from engulfment by the waves of mind-numbing anonymity which would almost inevitably wash over her were she to be married to a man like Reverchon. Furthermore, her wish to spend as little time as possible in the company of her contemporaries is underlined right from the novel's opening line when she replies: 'j'y avale ma langue... Voilà l'effet que me fait le monde, à moi' to Reverchon's question 'vous n'aimez pas le monde, mademoiselle?' (RN, 51).[461] We saw in the previous chapter that this extract epitomizes Renée's unease with speech and the 'déjà-dit'; at the same time, however, her unwillingness to enter into the speech community can also be seen a wish to withdraw into physical seclusion and not merely linguistic isolation.

Turning to *Le Rouge et le Noir*, instances of Julien withdrawing into isolation in the pre-shooting chapters of the novel are fewer in number than those we have seen in relation to *Louis Lambert* or *L'Œuvre*. Yet they still occupy highly prominent positions in the novel, and none more so than Julien's first entry onto the narrative stage where we find him perched high above the machinery of his father's saw-mills reading the book 'qu'il affectionnait le plus, *le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*' (RN, 233). A little later he withdraws into isolation once again to read this 'livre inspiré' (RN, 265) which stokes up 'sa folle passion pour Napoléon' (RN, 265) and which acts as his 'unique règle de sa conduite et objet de ses transports' (RN, 265). Interestingly, isolation once again becomes explicit linked with liberation - 'il y trouvait à la fois bonheur, extase et consolation dans les moments de découragement' (RN, 265) - as it enables him to 'retremp[er] son âme' and 'se fortifier' (RN, 265). A further significant example of the liberatory potency of isolation arises shortly before

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[461] A similar exchange occurs much later in the novel when Renée is visiting an exhibition in the company of her mother and sister. 'Vous n'allez pas dans le monde, mademoiselle? demanda Mme de Saint-Sauveur à Renée, assise auprès d'elle.
- Non, madame, *je ne l'aime pas*, répondit assez sèchement Mlle Mauperin'. (RM, 160, my italics)

Julien's departure for the Besançon seminary. Relieved for a few weeks of his teaching responsibilities, Julien finds himself with unexpected time and space on his hands.

> Une chose étonnait Julien: les semaines solitaires passées à Verrières, dans la maison de M. de Rênal, avaient été pour lui une époque de bonheur. Il n'avait rencontré le dégoût et les tristes pensées qu'aux dîners qu'on lui avait donnés; dans cette maison solitaire, ne pouvait-il pas lire, écrire, réfléchir sans être troublé? A chaque instant, il n'était pas tiré de ses rêveries brillantes par la cruelle nécessité d'étudier les mouvements d'une âme basse, et encore afin de la tromper par des démarches ou des mots hypocrites. (RN, 362)

Isolation thus lifts some of the integrationist pressures off his shoulders and allows him to 'voir clair dans son âme' (RN, 275). A further example of this important recuperative effect of isolation can be found in his reaction to his initial seduction of Mathilde.

> Il monta à cheval et chercha les endroits les plus solitaires d'une des forêts voisines de Paris. Il était bien plus étonné qu'heureux. Le bonheur qui, de temps à autre, venait occuper son âme, était comme celui d'un jeune sous-lieutenant qui, à la suite de quelque action étonnante, vient d'être nommé colonel d'emblée par le général en chef; il se sentait porté à une immense hauteur. Tout ce qui était au-dessus de lui la veille était à ses côtes maintenant ou bien au-dessous. *Peu à peu le bonheur de Julien augmenta à mesure qu'il s'éloignait.* (RM, 543, my italics)

By way of contrast, the narrator offers this telling insight into the view of isolation which is held by those who do not share his separatist ideals.

> Si les cinq ou six complaisants qui témoignaient une amitié si paternelle à Julien eussent déserté l'hôtel de La Mole, la marquise eût été exposée à de grands moments de solitude; et, aux yeux des femmes de ce rang, la solitude est affreuse: c'est l'emblème de la *disgrâce*. (RN, 457)

The other item on Julien's separatist agenda - his capacity to reach an authentic form of genuine mutual relatedness – also benefits from periods of isolation, particularly in Vergy where Julien is, crucially, 'seul' and therefore 'loin des regards des hommes' (RN, 264). This in turn enables him to 'se livr[er] au plaisir d'exister [...]

heureux, libre' (RN, 264). It is there that 'pour la première fois de sa vie, il était entraîné par le pouvoir de la beauté' (RN, 279). Most significantly, it is also there, in a place where they are isolated from the petty political manoeuvrings of Verrières, that Julien's and Louise de Rênal's mutual love is born, a love which contained the potential to offer him a route towards the fulfilment of his yearning for authenticity: 'en un mot, rien n'eût manqué au bonheur de notre héros, pas même une sensibilité brûlante dans la femme qu'il venait d'enlever, s'il eût su en jouir' (RN, 299).[462]

It has become apparent in this section that isolation both protects the protagonists' separatist ideals and offers them a space in which they could potentially be realised. However, this situation only represents one part of the story for the four of them because, at the same time, isolation also causes them considerable pain and suffering. What makes for possibly the most starkly symbolic example in this respect can be found in the scene in *Le Rouge et le Noir* where Julien is first introduced, his nose pressed deep into the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*. This self-imposed isolation not only distracts him from fulfilling the role others have laid out for him, but it also leads him into conflict and potentially mortal danger - 'il allait tomber douze ou quinze pieds plus bas, au milieu des leviers de la machine en action, qui l'eussent brisé' (RN, 232) – a death which would have been inflicted, as if out of revenge, by the very mechanism he had been neglecting to supervise. While the consequences of isolation are perhaps less dramatically life-endangering elsewhere in the novels, they still remain an important preoccupation for the four protagonists. Because Louis has been pushed into isolation partly out of a lack of a kindred spirit with whom to share 'ses exquises jouissances' (LL, 645), he finds it an intensely painful position: 'forcé

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[462] Victor Brombert has written the best-known discussion of the motif of the prison cell as a source of liberation and happiness. (*The Romantic Prison: The French Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978)). In his chapter on Stendhal, he points to the prominent position occupied by this theme through *La Chartreuse de Parme*, even long before Fabrice del Dongo comes to be incarcerated. In his discussion of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, however, Brombert focuses only on the actual prison cell in which Julien is held after the shooting as providing the only source of liberation and would thus seem to overlook the many other instances of (admittedly temporary) liberation and isolation which foreshadow Julien's eventual epiphany in his prison cell, such as those which have been outlined in this section. We shall, of course, return to the significance of Julien's 'conversion' in the following chapter.

de me replier sur moi-même, je me creuse et je souffre' (LL, 646). Given that isolation provides Louis with a space and an opportunity to realise his ideals, it seems reasonable to ask why it should also cause him such suffering. To respond to this question, we need to turn again to *The Divided Self* and to Laing's descriptions of the consequences of the schizophrenic's self-imposed isolation.

Laing writes that while relatedness with other people presents a fundamental threat to the autonomy of the ontologically insecure individual, such a person finds himself in the paradoxical position of also requiring relatedness in order to have any firm sense of existence. Laing describes in the following terms the consequences endured by one patient of a period of self-imposed isolation which lasted for several months: 'he felt he was dying inside; he was becoming more and more empty, and observed a progressive impoverishment of his life mode' (TDS, 53). To fend off such impoverishment, this individual would then 'emerge into social life for a brief foray in order to get a 'dose' of other people, but 'not an overdose'. He was like an alcoholic who goes on sudden drinking orgies between dry spells, except that in his case his addiction [...] was to other people' (TDS, 53). Laing maintains that the schizophrenic is caught up in a double bind of not being able to sustain a sense of his own being *without* the presence of others, and also not being able to sustain it *with* the presence of others. By way of illustration, Laing describes the existence of two opposing poles within the ontologically insecure individual's being: one of complete isolation and one of complete merging of identity. Between these two poles the schizophrenic oscillates violently:

> he comes to live rather like those mechanical toys which have a positive tropism that impels them towards a stimulus until they reach a specific point, whereupon a built-in negative tropism directs them away until the positive tropism takes over again, this oscillation being repeated *ad infinitum.* (TDS, 53)

Of all the four novels, such a dynamic is most clearly visible in *Louis Lambert*, particularly in the several lengthy letters which Louis sends from Paris to his uncle in Blois.

> Je souffre obscurément. Ce résultat est aussi providentiel que peut
> l'être le sort de la fleur inconnue qui meurt au fond d'une forêt
> vierge sans que personne en sente les parfums ou en admire l'éclat.
> De même qu'elle exhale vainement ses odeurs dans la solitude,
> j'enfante ici dans un grenier des idées sans qu'elles soient saisies.
> (LL, 652)

Not only does Louis desperately want to share his discoveries with others, he finds that without them being known and developed by others they may as well not exist: without relatedness, his toils are largely in vain. The novel's narrator also suggests that 'son cœur, sans doute constamment froissé dans ce gouffre d'égoïsme, dut toujours y souffrir; il n'y rencontra peut-être ni amis pour le consoler, ni ennemis pour donner du ton à sa vie' (LL, 645). What emerges from these last two quotations is an awareness that, much like the Laingian schizophrenic, Louis requires relatedness to others for his ideals to be realised as without it, they become impoverished. He goes on to tell Pauline that he had spent his time in Paris 'désespérant d'être jamais écouté' (LL, 664). Yet in spite of the suffering which isolation brings with it, Louis still dreads and flees relatedness because of the engulfing effect it could have on his separatist ideals. In a significant parallel, then, with the Laingian schizophrenic's inability to sustain his sense of being both with and without the presence of others, that which represents the nemesis of Louis's ideals – relatedness – also acts as the prerequisite to their realisation. We shall see more of the devastating effect of this principle on Louis's life both later in this chapter as well as in the following chapter. For the moment, however, it suffices to make clear that in the period leading up to Louis's 'mad' and 'invraisemblables' actions, he finds himself in the invidious position of being unable to survive both with and without relatedness.

A further problematic aspect of relatedness concerns Louis's goal to 'déterminer les rapports réels qui peuvent exister entre l'homme et Dieu' (LL, 652). It is logical, given such aims, that he should know and understand the current 'rapports' before coming to any conclusions as to how such links might be improved. Similarly, if he wants to bring about 'une société [non pas] constituée comme la nôtre' (LL, 653), or if, as Michel Lichtlé purports, 'Louis ira chercher dans le désert les lois constitutives

de l'humanité future, de la Jérusalem nouvelle',[463] he needs to be fully conversant with the ways of the 'old' Jerusalem before he can build a new one. The 'world' around him thus exerts a strong attraction over him for what he can learn from and about it – he is after all carrying out 'une longue et patiente étude […] de cette société' (LL, 647). At the same time, this fecund source of learning shows him just how repellent and fundamentally unattractive the world is, but also, crucially, how potentially engulfing it can be. He fears, for example, that he could end up being contaminated by the money-obsessed ideologies which dominate the existence of the 'they' in Paris: 'ici, l'homme éprouve une foule de besoins qui le rapetissent' (LL, 648), he worries. Recognising that he must 'embrasser tout ce monde' even if it is only to 'l'étreindre pour le refaire' (LL, 655), Louis is stuck in the unenviable position of wanting to transform the world around him thanks to his superior philosophical insights and knowledge yet understanding at the same time that any foray in that world or any display of his separatist goals could well lead to their extinction through their being compromised by the ways of the world.

Another crucial manifestation of the double bind provoked by isolation and relatedness arises out of Louis's relationship with Pauline. We have seen already that Louis seeks out a position of isolation as a means of safeguarding the autonomy of his separatist ideals. One might wonder then why Louis should develop 'un amour sans bornes' (LL, 659) for Pauline de Villenoix given that such emotions necessarily exert a highly detrimental effect on his separatist ideals. As the narrator declares emphatically: 'cette passion fut un abîme où le malheureux [Louis] jeta tout, abîme où la pensée s'effraie de descendre, puisque la sienne, si flexible et si forte, s'y perdit' (LL, 659). With this love for Pauline, Louis establishes a clear parallel with a further aspect of Laingian theory in respect of isolation and relatedness: namely, that love and understanding, and not merely overt hostility or agression, can provoke engulfment. Laing writes: 'to be understood correctly is to be engulfed, to be enclosed, swallowed up, drowned, eaten up, smothered, stifled in or by another person's supposed all-embracing comprehension' (TDS, 45). Yet Louis goes one

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[463] Lichtlé, 'Introduction', p. 577.

step beyond the Laingian position as he appears to welcome this engulfment that could ultimately be fatal to his separatist ideals: 'en vous voyant je n'imaginais presque rien au-delà [...]. J'ai senti que ma vie n'était plus en moi, mais en vous. Il n'est plus pour moi qu'une femme dans le monde, comme il n'est plus qu'une seule pensée dans mon âme' (LL, 661). That love and understanding can lead to engulfment finds clear illustration in *Louis Lambert* at only a late stage of the novel - specifically at around the time of what we have been terming his 'mad' actions. For that reason, I will examine the double-edged nature of the relationship between Pauline and Louis in greater detail in the next chapter which deals with events subsequent to the protagonists' 'mad' actions.

Turning to Zola's *L'Œuvre*, Claude Lantier provides an informative case-study of the suffering isolation necessarily involves. We have already seen that isolation is a prerequisite to the completion of Claude's artistic revolution and that he moved to Bennecourt both to safeguard his ideals from the marauding integrationist forces at work on him in Paris and to carve out a space in which they might potentially be realised. The question arises: why does life in Bennecourt become untenable for Claude if the conditions necessary for artistic creation appear to be fulfilled there? Why does he yearn to return to Paris? He had, after all, discovered many years earlier that: 'Paris pourrissait tout, rendait tout à la terre qui, sans jamais se lasser, réparait la mort'.[464] Here, once again, Laing's argument regarding the simultaneous indispensability and impossibility of relatedness holds true: despite Claude's fighting talk about wanting to blow up the institutions of the Parisian artistic world, he still desperately seeks recognition and approval from those same institutions. For example, he continues to think of artistic achievement in terms of gaining public acclaim at the Salon and therefore persists in submitting works to the jury even though they are almost without exception ignominiously rejected. His reaction before the public mockery of his 'Plein air' painting at the first Salon des Refusés is particularly revealing in this regard. Despite being otherwise so scathing about the artistic philistinism of the viewing public, when 'une masse énorme, grouillante,

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[464] Zola, *Le Ventre de Paris*, in *Les Rougon-Macquart*, I, p. 802.

confuse, en tas, […] s'écrasait devant son tableau' (LO, 126), his distress becomes all too obvious: 'un grand froid le glaçait. Son cœur s'était arrêté un moment, tant la déception venait d'être cruelle' (LO, 126). Claude thus simultaneously despises and demands the approbation which Paris can accord. Further evidence as to why Claude leaves Bennecourt for Paris can be found in a later extract: 'Paris l'appelait à l'horizon, le Paris d'hiver qui s'allumait de nouveau. Il y entendait le grand effort des camarades, il y rentrait pour qu'on ne triomphât sans lui, pour redevenir le chef, puisque pas un n'avait la force ni l'orgueil de l'être' (LO, 168). Claude understands all too well that the city of Paris and the all-consuming, all-engulfing relatedness he encounters there has the potential to crush his artistic revolution; yet he also knows that he must nonetheless still return there both because his artistic ideals are founded on the re-modelling of the Parisian city-scape and because he demands to be the one to lead the artistic insurgents to victory.[465] A further clue as to why Claude's isolated position in Bennecourt ends up becoming untenable and why he must return to Paris lies in the second aspect of the Laingian view of isolation introduced in our discussion of *Louis Lambert*: namely, that engulfment can be brought about not only by hostile integrationist forces, but also by love and understanding. This is clearly exemplified in Claude and Christine's life at Bennecourt which had initially assumed idyllic proportions:

> des journées adorables se suivirent, des mois coulèrent dans une félicité monotone. […] Le matin, ils s'oubliaient très tard au lit, malgré les rayons qui ensanglantaient les murs blanchis de la chambre, à travers les fentes des volets. Puis, après le déjeuner, c'étaient des flâneries sans fin, de grandes courses sur le plateau planté de pommiers, par des chemins herbus de campagne, des promenades le long de la Seine. (LO, 146)

Yet this apparently paradisiacal bliss is far from propitious to Claude's work and artistic ideals.

> Il commença une étude du coteau du Jeufosse, avec la Seine au premier plan; mais, dans l'île où il s'était installé, Christine le suivait, s'allongeait sur l'herbe, près de lui, les lèvres

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[465] For a detailed study of the central paradox of Claude's life which Bennecourt symbolises, see the aptly titled work by Francine Huwart, 'Bennecourt: Paradis ou cimetière des illusions pour Claude Lantier' (Unpublished 'mémoire de D. E. A.': Université de Paris X – Nanterre, 1995).

entr'ouvertes, les yeux noyés au fond du bleu; et elle était si désirable dans ces verdures, dans ce désert où seules passaient les voix murmurantes de l'eau, qu'il lâchait sa palette à chaque minute. (LO, 147, my italics)

In the same way that Louis Lambert's love for Pauline de Villenoix spells potential disaster for his separatist ideals, the allure of Christine constantly serves to deflect Claude from his seditious projects and thereby threatens his artistic ideals with engulfment: 'c'était elle qui l'enveloppait de cette haleine de flamme, où s'évanouissaient ses volontés d'artiste' (LO, 147). Love and understanding, even in the seemingly blissful surroundings of Bennecourt, can also only consume Claude's separatist desires. As a consequence, he has no option but to flee their cloistered life at Bennecourt.[466]

The dynamic whereby 'to be understood correctly is to be engulfed, swallowed up, drowned' (TDS, 45) is also clearly visible in relation to *Le Rouge et le Noir*. For Julien, however, the sequestration which is so propitious to the pursuit of his ideals of authenticity and beauty and which he enjoys so briefly in the company of Mme de Rênal at Vergy only stands in the way of his second, Napoleonic set of separatist aspirations and the integrationist strategies he employs to bring these aspirations to life. Therefore, even if 'pour la première fois de sa vie, il était entraîné par le pouvoir de la beauté' (RN, 279) and even though his 'bonheur' is complete (RN, 299) when cloistered away with Mme de Rênal, he simply cannot allow himself to be 'sincère' in this state of isolation in case his ambitions to 'faire les choses extraordinaires' (RN, 287) end up becoming nullifed and engulfed. Julien thus transmutes his nascent love for Mme de Rênal into fears regarding the sustainability of his worldly, Napoleon-inspired ambitions:

mon Dieu! être heureux, être aimé, n'est-ce que ça? […] Comme le soldat qui revient de la parade, Julien fut attentivement occupé à repasser tous les détails de sa conduite. – N'ai-je manqué à rien de ce que je me dois à moi-même? *Ai-je bien joué mon rôle*? (RN, 299, my italics)

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[466] The dynamics of the relationship between Claude and Christine are, of course, crucial to the novel's dénouement and, as such, will be discussed further in the following chapter.

As will become evident in the next section of this chapter, this form of role-playing also assumes an enormous importance in all four novels.

Depersonalisation

The second defence mechanism which Laing argues a schizophrenic employs as a means of fending off the constant fear of engulfment and implosion is 'depersonalisation'. In this section, I will explore the extent to which Laing's views on this point find echo in the existential positions of the four protagonists. As with his explanation of ontological insecurity, Laing begins his exposition of the process of depersonalisation by examining first the role it plays in the lives of non-schizophrenic individuals. He argues that this technique is in fact 'universally used as a means of dealing with the other when he becomes too tiresome or disturbing. One no longer allows oneself to be responsive to his feelings and may be prepared to regard him and treat him as though he had no feelings' (TDS, 46). This universal aspect to the technique means that in every-day life 'a partial depersonalisation of others is [...] regarded as normal if not highly desirable' (TDS, 47). As such,

> most relationships are based on some partial depersonalising tendency in so far as one treats the other not in terms of any awareness of who or what he might be in himself but as virtually an android robot playing a role or part in a large machine in which one too may be acting yet another part. (TDS, 47)

Laing argues that in everyday interaction, individuals prefer to 'cherish if not the reality, at least the illusion that there is a limited sphere of living free from this dehumanisation' (TDS, 47). Yet based on the evidence of his therapeutic experience, Laing believes this to be one illusion which the ontologically insecure individual is unable to sustain.

> If one experiences the other as a free agent, one is open to the possibility of experiencing oneself as an object of his experience and thereby of feeling one's own subjectivity drained away. One is threatened with the possibility of becoming no more than a thing in the world of the other, without any life for oneself, without any

being for oneself. In terms of such anxiety, the very act of experiencing the other as a person is felt as virtually suicidal. (TDS, 47)

Experience of the other can feel 'deadening and impoverishing [...] Any other is then a threat to his 'self' (his capacity to act autonomously) not by reason of anything he or she may do or not do specifically, but by reason of his or her very existence' (TDS, 47). How does the schizophrenic individual react to the potentially deadening and impoverishing effect of relatedness with another? We have already seen in this chapter that isolation is one option. To explain a second option, Laing gives the example of one of his patients who was particularly prone to the fear of depersonalisation: 'he turned the other person into a thing in his own eyes, thus magically nullifying any danger to himself by secretly disarming the enemy' (TDS, 48). This individual lived in constant fear of being seen only as a thing by others and would consequently attempt to deflect and return that potentially petrifying and impoverishing gaze s/he so feared. Such a movement was indispensable to this particular patient because:

> by destroying, in his own eyes, the other person as a person, he robbed the other of his power to crush him. By depleting him of his personal aliveness, that is, by seeing him as a piece of machinery rather than as a human being, he undercut the risk to himself of this aliveness either swamping him, imploding into his own emptiness, or turning him into a mere appendage. (TDS, 48)

To what extent are these techniques of depersonalisation recognisable in the four novels? Claude Lantier surely makes for a text-book example when his dehumanising artistic gaze falls on his wife Christine. In a reflex which has understandably attracted the attention and ire of feminist critics, Christine 'perd toute identité et humanité au profit de la femme peinte toujours plus souveraine dans l'esprit et le cœur de l'artiste'.[467] From her first entry into the novel, she is stripped both physically of her clothes so she can act as Claude's model and symbolically of her status as a woman.

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[467] Christine Raynier-Pauget, 'L'Œuvre: La femme faite modèle', Les Cahiers Naturalistes, 73 (1999), 199-206 (p. 204).

> Il [Claude] se mit à dessiner, d'un air profondément heureux. Tout
> son trouble, sa curiosité charnelle, son désir combattu,
> aboutissaient à cet émerveillement d'artiste, à cet enthousiasme
> pour les beaux tons et les muscles bien emmanchés. *Déjà, il avait
> oublié la jeune fille,* il était dans le ravissement de la neige des
> seins, éclairant l'ambre délicat des épaules. (LO, 19, my italics)

Romana Lowe points out that Christine in fact shares her destiny with Nana: both exist 'to be merely a body'.[468] It is a destiny in which Christine, 'dédaignée et trahie' (LO, 346), ends up being sacrificed to Claude's artistic dreams and to his all-consuming 'métier où il la ravalait, un emploi de mannequin vivant, qu'il plantait là et qu'il copiait, comme il aurait copié la cruche ou le chaudron d'une nature morte' (LO, 240). This 'défaite de son corps' (LO, 243) which Christine must endure sees her reduced 'à son rôle d'objet, beau de couleur' (LO, 242) and 'à un rôle de servante […] jetée à l'écart' (LO, 344). If, then, the Laingian schizophrenic depersonalises others as a means of forestalling the petrifying gaze which he fears being turned on him/her, Claude, in a parallel sense, depersonalises his wife Christine in order to protect his ideals of artistic innovation and revolution from the threat of engulfment and petrification, and also to protect them from the possibility of never being realised. Claude's technique of depersonalisation thus not only helps him to ring-fence his ideals from nefarious outside influences, it also contributes significantly to expediting their realisation. This is exemplified by the fact that Claude's masterpiece *En plein air*, for which Christine posed as model on many occasions, comes to exercise many years later the kind of seminal influence over the artistic field which Claude could only have dreamt of, given the virulence of the scorn and mockery with which it was initially received. Sandoz tells him:

> Et regarde! Tu devrais être fier, car c'est toi le véritable
> triomphateur du Salon, cette année. Il n'y a pas que Fagerolles qui
> te pille, tous maintenant t'imitent, tu les as révolutionnés depuis
> ton *Plein air*, dont ils ont tant ri… Regarde, regarde, en voilà
> encore un de *Plein air*, en voilà un autre, et ici, et là-bas, tous,
> tous! (LO, 296)

Depersonalisation is thus one of the few techniques which Claude employs with any degree of success.

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[468] Romana W. Lowe, *The Fictional Female: Sacrificial Rituals and Spectacles of Writing in Baudelaire, Zola, and Cocteau* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 107.

Feminist critics have perhaps been a little too quick to overlook the fact that this depersonalised gaze is turned not merely towards Christine but also towards their son Jacques whom Claude undoubtedly comes to view 'as a piece of machinery rather than as a human being' (TDS, 48) in his dream of achieving his artistic ambitions. At Bennecourt, for example, Claude admonishes Jacques for daring to move when he should be sitting still and modelling for his father: Jacques must sit 'sage comme une image'. Highly disturbingly, his father 'ne le couvait plus que de ses yeux d'artiste, comme un motif à chef d'œuvre' (LO, 154). Indeed it is only after his premature death, when he is as fully and as literally 'depersonalised' as is possible, that Jacques provides the most fecund but macabre inspiration for his father's imagination and, indeed, satisfaction.

> Bientôt, il n'y eut plus là son fils glacé, il n'y eut qu'un modèle, un sujet dont l'étrange intérêt le passionna. Ce dessin exagéré de la tête, ce ton de cire des chairs, ces yeux pareils à des trous sur le vie, tout l'excitait, le chauffait d'une flamme. Il se reculait, se complaisait, souriait vaguement à son œuvre. (LO, 267)

Jacques's destiny, like that of his mother, is to become a depersonalised sacrifice on the altar of his father's separatist ideals. As Dominique Jullien puts it: 'la mort du petit Jacques prend dans ce contexte la valeur d'un sacrifice humaine à l'Idole. Dans le cerveau malade de Claude Lantier, il n'y a pas de place pour deux "enfants", et l'un doit donc céder place à l'autre'.[469]

Depersonalisation as a technique for guarding and fostering one's separatist ideals plays an equally significant role in *Le Rouge et le Noir* where Julien initially only sees Mme de Rênal only in starkly dehumanised terms. She is but 'un ennemi' (RN, 266), and a 'riche héritière' (RN, 258) whose function is little more than to provide him with fodder with which he can feed his voracious sense of Napoleonic 'devoir' (RN, 265, 273 or 294). Julien's depersonalisation of Louise de Rênal is so intense that for much of the novel he fails to grasp the magnitude of the opportunity for love

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[469] Dominique Jullien, 'Le "Ventre" de Paris: Pour une pathologie du symbolisme dans *L'Œuvre* d'Emile Zola', *French Forum*, 17 (1992), 281-99 (p. 295).

and authentic and genuine mutual relatedness on offer. The narrator makes this point clear: 'au lieu d'être attentif aux transports qu'il faisait naître, et aux remords qui en relevaient la vivacité, l'idée du *devoir* ne cessa jamais d'être présente à ses yeux' (RN, 298). Julien's affective myopia is soon emphasised again: 'en un mot, rien n'eût manqué au bonheur de notre héros, pas même une sensibilité brûlante dans la femme qu'il venait d'enlever, s'il eût su en jouir' (RN, 299).

Julien repeats this process of depersonalisation at the Hôtel de La Mole, only here with an increased intensity. Mathilde de La Mole in particular becomes 'a piece of machinery' (TDS, 48) in the complex mechanism he constructs to catapult himself to what he thinks will be Napoleonic glory. Indeed, the dynamics of the relationship between Julien and Mathilde are determined by the extent to which and the success with which one party manages to depersonalise the other. For example, Mathilde depersonalises Julien by having him live out her role-playing fantasies: reduced to a bit-part role in her eyes, Julien can play Boniface de La Mole to her Marguerite de Navarre (RN, 504); while elsewhere she likes to imagine him playing the role of Danton (RN, 514-5) or even of the revolutionary Roland to her Mme Roland (RN, 354).

> Triompher si complètement d'un penchant si puissant la rendait parfaitement heureuse. Ainsi ce petit monsieur comprendra, et une fois pour toutes, qu'il n'a et n'aura jamais aucun empire sur moi. Elle était si heureuse, que réellement elle n'avait plus d'amour en ce moment. (RN, 567)

It is this depersonalising 'mépris' stripping him of his 'singularité' which Julien can tolerate least. When Mathilde claims 'j'ai horreur de m'être livrée au premier venu' (RN, 546), Julien is so furious that 'il eût été le plus heureux des hommes de pouvoir la tuer' (RN, 547), such is the injury inflicted on his sense of honour by having been reduced to the lowly depersonalised status of 'premier venu'. Throughout his time at the Hôtel de La Mole, Julien becomes most swollen with pride and happiness when he succeeds, precisely like the schizophrenic, in diverting Mathilde's depersonalising gaze back onto herself. When 'cette orgueilleuse' (RN, 615) is at his feet, he is 'ivre de bonheur et du sentiment de sa puissance' (RN, 527). On such occasions, Mathilde

correspondingly see-saws to feelings of intense despondency: 'la vanité de Mathilde était furieuse contre lui. [...] Je me suis donné *un maître*! se disait mademoiselle de La Mole en proie au plus noir chagrin' (RN, 545, my italics). Her distress is thus greatest when she realises that she has allowed herself to become a depersonalised 'slave' to Julien, her master.

The process by which Julien depersonalises both Louise de Rênal and Mathilde de La Mole comes across perhaps most clearly of all in the way that he views his liaisons with them largely only in terms of 'devoir' (RN, 269 or 546). Yet this is a duty only to himself and his personal sense of 'amour-propre' given that he relegates both women to the status of dehumanised trophies in the private battle which he is waging against M de Rênal and, later, Mathilde's aristocratic suitors such as the marquis de Croisenois. The two women are transformed in Julien's eyes into mere stepping-stones which he believes will lead him to his ultimate goal of Napoleonic pre-eminence. '*Aux armes*!' (RN, 526), he cries out when he decides it is his duty to his sense of honour to seduce Mathilde de La Mole. As a result, he can gloat:

> je triomphe du marquis [de Croisenois] en ce sens qu'il sera très fâché d'avoir un successeur, et plus fâché encore que ce successeur soit moi. Avec quelle hauteur il me regardait hier soir au café Tortoni, en affectant de ne pas me reconnaître! avec quel air méchant il me salua ensuite quand il ne put plus s'en dispenser! (RN, 539-40)

From this analysis of *Le Rouge et le Noir*, it is clear that the degree of depersonalisation to which Julien subjects those around him increases as the novel progresses. As to why this might be the case, it is helpful to turn again to Laing's work as he offers us a cogent explanation for this element of Julien's behaviour in a later part of his discussion of the ontologically insecure individual's attitude towards depersonalisation.

> The more one attempts to preserve one's autonomy and identity by nullifying the specific human individuality of the other, the more it is felt to be necessary to continue to do so, because with each denial of the other person's ontological status, one's own ontological security is decreased, the threat to the self from the other is potentiated and hence has to be even more desperately negated. (TDS, 52)

Laing's words would seem to ring true, once again, with regard to the existential position of Julien Sorel.

We have seen so far in this section that Julien Sorel and Claude Lantier depersonalise others around them as a means of protecting their separatist ideals from the threat of engulfment, and even, where possible, as a means of reaching a position in which they believe those ideals could ultimately be realised. We have also seen that this mechanism replicates the Laingian schizophrenic's depersonalisation of others as a means of protecting the autonomy of his existence. This specific mechanism does not, however, seem to operate in *Louis Lambert* or *Renée Mauperin*. What can be established, on the other hand, is that many secondary characters in all four novels – thereby including *Louis Lambert* and *Renée Mauperin* - are presented narratorially as already fully depersonalised or as 'pieces of machinery' (TDS, 48) which necessarily lack any distinguishing characteristics. Louis Lambert's school-boy colleagues at the Collège de Vendôme provide a fine example in this respect as they are distinguished from one other only by age and are otherwise grouped into homogenised 'sections nommées les Minimes, les Petits, les Moyens et les Grands' (LL, 598). Their teachers, too, are apparently bereft of individualising traits, and are referred to only as 'les Pères' (LL, 599). In *Renée Mauperin*, Renée's suitors are presented as depersonalised and devoid of individuality as we saw in the previous chapter – Denoisel goes so far as to describe one representative such suitor as a mere 'mannequin de tailleur' (RM, 80). The same principle holds true in relation to several members of Renée's family: Henri Mauperin, for example, is 'un jeune doctrinaire' (RM, 103) who is 'médicore avec éclat' (RM, 107) - 'la froideur de la jeunesse […] marquait toute sa personne, il paraissait sérieux et on le sentait glacé' (RM, 103); while Renée's sister Mme Davarande is likewise presented in depersonalised terms. She is after all:

> par excellence « la femme du monde ». […] Donnant tout au monde, Mme Davarande lui empruntait tout, ses idées, ses jugements, ses manières de charité, ses formules de cœur, ses façons de sensibilité. Elle avait les opinions des femmes coiffées chez Laure. Elle pensait ce qu'il était distingué de penser, comme elle mettait ce qu'il était distingué de mettre. (RM, 157)

Both Henri and Henriette (and the diminuitive and derivative form of her name speaks volumes for the level of individuality she is accorded) actively participate in a lengthy and ultimately successful process of self-depersonalisation; both seem only too willing to act as 'an android robot playing a role or part in a large machine' (TDS, 47). In *Le Rouge et le Noir*, Julien Sorel is surrounded by feature-less, dehumanised 'ennemis' (RN, 382) and 'sales paysans' (RN, 195) in the Besançon seminary, while at the Hôtel de La Mole he must endure the tedious, supercilious, but always undifferentiated 'jeunes gens' (RN, 457). Finally, in Zola's *L'Œuvre*, Claude's detractors at the two Salons are presented as an amorphous 'masse grouillante' (LO, 126). What seems clear, then, is that those protagonists who are closely associated with the integrationist forces militating against the four main characters' separatist desires are presented in starkly depersonalised terms. Sometimes monstrous, sometimes banal beyond parody, they all the time retain the potential to engulf and normalise the four principal protagonists' centrifugal, separatist tendencies.

In this survey of the mechanisms of depersonalisation, we have so far seen three aspects: the fear which depersonalisation engenders among our protagonists; their consequent depersonalisation of others; and the narratorial presentation of other 'comparses' in a depersonalised light. There is one further and utterly crucial aspect which has not been examined: namely, that in the goal of preserving one's sense of ontological insecurity, the schizophrenic comes to precipitate the one fear he most dreads. Laing maintains that 'it seems to be a general law that at some point those very dangers most dreaded can themselves be encompassed to forestall their actual occurrence' (TDS, 51). While such a strategy may appear paradoxical and even potentially suicidal, it remains, in Laing's view, the most common and most effective approach for a schizophrenic to adopt.

> To forego one's autonomy becomes the means of secretly safeguarding it; to play possum, to feign death, becomes a means of preserving one's aliveness [...] To turn oneself into a stone becomes a way of not being turned into a stone by someone else.
> (TDS, 51)

We see, admittedly, little evidence of this reflex in the chapters of *L'Œuvre* which precede Claude's suicide because Claude constantly refuses to water down his artistic ideals at any stage of the novel. Nonetheless, we shall see in the following chapter of part III that this strategy of 'turning oneself into a stone' becomes vitally significant towards the very end of his life. In *Le Rouge et le Noir*, however, this aspect of depersonalisation assumes considerable importance. Firstly, at the Besançon seminary, it is vital that Julien should restrict the most attention-grabbing aspects of his 'singularité': 'il faut [...] surtout cacher ce que je sens' (RN, 377), he realises. A similar but more rapid process of self-depersonalisation or 'dé-singularisation' is also called for at the Hôtel de La Mole where Julien foregoes the autonomy of his capacity for authenticity and also hides from public view his Napoleonic desires as a means of protecting them both from the possibility of engulfment. 'Comment tuer cette sensibilité si humiliante?' (RN, 471), he asks himself, only too aware that such emotions are ultimately incompatible with the 'bon ton' and restraint which is expected of him in Parisian salon society. In a similar vein, he acquiesces with the marquis's suggestion that when he wears 'un habit bleu', his employer will consider him to be 'le fils cadet de mon ami le duc de Chaulnes' (RN, 482). In this regard, Victor Brombert argues in his canonical study of the Stendhalian novel that Julien's process of self-depersonalisation should be seen as a form of controlled dissemblance which is vital to the reader's appreciation of *Le Rouge et le Noir*.

> Almost prophetically, Stendhal seems to have diagnosed the despotism of a totalitarian world and the dilemmas of the oppressed spirit that chooses to "agree" in order to be able to think differently. The problem, as modern intellectuals have found out the bitter way, is how to maintain a private conscience and heretical views under oppressive regimes. Controlled dissembling may not be the noblest or most heroic weapon, but its artful practice can be made to serve noble resistance and secret liberty.[470]

Yet Julien becomes so adept at this 'controlled dissemblance' or this 'dé-singularisation' that he appears to convince himself that this self-depersonalised role is in fact the only possible role or route he can adopt during his 'voyage

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[470] Victor Brombert, *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom* (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 89.

d'apprentissage'. Indeed, it seems that his capacity for authenticity has become largely redundant and irrelevant by the time he is promoted to the rank of 'lieutenant de hussards' thanks to the string-pulling influence of the marquis de La Mole. Moreover, Julien can surely hardly be furthering his *Napoleonic* ambitions by becoming an officer in an army loyal to the *king* and by marrying into one of the richest *aristocratic* families in Paris. To return to Brombert's words above, one wonders just how much 'noble resistance' Julien really is putting up at this point, how much 'secret liberty' he really does succeed in conserving, and how much his integrationist strategies have in fact ended up taking up his life and choking off the flames of his separatist fires.

In *Renée Mauperin*, this 'self-normalising' aspect to depersonalisation also takes on great significance if we remember that Renée foregoes much of her own autonomy – or, more precisely, the autonomy of her separatist desires - through self-directing herself towards the integrationist goals which, in part at least, others have laid out for her. Laing's description of this self-depersonalising reflex therefore goes some way towards explaining why Renée should normalise herself in the manner which we saw in the previous chapter: she does so in order to anticipate and thwart the normalising and necessarily depersonalising and destructive gaze which she fears others will direct at her and at her separatist tendencies. She must forego the autonomy or pursuit of her separatist ideals because if she were to attempt to achieve them, they could easily end up being fully engulfed or 'turned into stone' by her hostile family and contemporaries. As Laing points out: 'the self dreads to become alive and real because it fears that in so doing the risk of annihilation is immediately potentiated' (TDS, 112).

By way of conclusion to this examination of the process of depersonalisation, we could turn to the pithy description proposed by Laing towards the end of *The Divided Self* of the basic defence mechanism which the schizophrenic employs in order to defend his core of inner aliveness and which entraps him/her within another double bind. Laing's description is one which has enormous resonance with the existential

position of Renée Mauperin as well with that of the other three protagonists in the period leading up to their seemingly irrational acts, and it is one which merely requires the substitution of the phrase 'their separatist desires' for the word 'being'. The basic defence mechanism 'can be stated in its most general form as: the denial of being as a means of preserving being' (TDS, 150).

Disembodiment

Earlier in this chapter, it was suggested that the existence of an ontologically insecure individual is characterised by a lack of 'an over-riding sense of personal consistency or cohesiveness' (TDS, 42). Such a lack of corporeal consistency is central to the third method of defence with which the schizophrenic attempts to fend off the fears of engulfment and implosion. Laing argues that as a general rule the ontologically insecure 'come to experience themselves as primarily split into a mind and a body. Usually they feel most closely identified with the 'mind'' (TDS, 65). In the final section of this chapter, I want to examine the relevance of this feeling of 'disembodiment' to the pre-turning point chapters of each novel.

As was the case when he began his description of the state of ontological insecurity by first outlining the opposing state of ontological security, Laing opens his exploration of the mechanisms of the process of disembodiment by first examining the individual's sense of 'embodiment'.

> Everyone, even the most unembodied person, experiences himself as inextricably bound up with or in his body. In ordinary circumstances, to the extent that one feels one's body to be alive, real, and substantial, one feels oneself alive, real, and substantial. Most people feel they began when their bodies began and that they will end when their bodies die. (TDS, 66)

As a result of feeling embodied, one

> has a sense of being flesh and blood and bones, of being biologically alive and real: he knows himself to be substantial […]. He is implicated in bodily desire, and the gratifications and

frustrations of the body. The individual thus has as his starting-point an experience of his body as a base from which he can be a person with other human beings. (TDS, 67)

Such certainties do not necessarily hold true, however, for an ontologically insecure person. Such an individual

experiences his self as being more or less divorced or detached from his body. The body is felt more as one object among other objects in the world than as the core of the individual's own being. Instead of being the core of his true self, the body is felt as the core of a *false self*, which a detached, disembodied, 'inner', 'true' self looks on at with tenderness, amusement, or hatred as the case may be. (TDS, 69)

This disembodied true self assumes the function of little more than an onlooker, watching all the body does and refusing to engage directly in any action. 'Its functions come to be observation, control, and criticism *vis-à-vis* what the body is experiencing and doing, and those operations which are usually spoken of as purely 'mental'' (TDS, 69). The ring-fenced true self enters into little or no relatedness with others because the job of 'managing' reality and communicating with the outside world has been delegated to a front-man, a 'personality' or a 'false self system' which is primarily identified with the body. This false self system is all that is seen by others and can consequently, but mistakenly, be adjudged to represent the entirety of that individual's being. As a result, the ontologically insecure individual who finds himself in a disembodied position may appear to others to be acting normally whereas in fact he is only 'maintaining his outward semblance of normality by progressively more and more abnormal and desperate means' (TDS, 138): for example, by taking refuge in lengthy bouts of isolation or in depersonalising others around him. The false self thus performs an act, but one with which his true self can never permit itself to become identified. It is an act on which 'no footprints or fingerprints of the 'self' shall have been left' (TDS, 89) for the simple reason that 'if the [ontologically insecure individual] were what his act was, then he would be helpless and at the mercy of any passer-by' (TDS, 88). In other words, without the retaining dam which the false self represents, the true self would face total engulfment.

In his discussion of disembodiment, Laing emphasises that these techniques of disembodiment are not restricted to schizoid individuals. For example, 'prisoners in concentration camps *tried* to feel that way, for the camp offered no possible way out either spatially or at the end of a period of time. The only way out was by a psychical withdrawal 'into' one's self and 'out of' the body' (TDS, 78). For schizoid individuals, however, there is one decisive difference: 'the splitting is not simply a temporary reaction to a specific situation of great danger, which is reversible when the danger is past. It is, on the contrary, a basic orientation to life' (TDS, 79). This sense of disembodiment as a 'basic orientation to life' is well illustrated by the words of one patient encountered by Laing, who, when set upon by armed attackers, saw the assault as entirely pointless. After all:

> he had no money on him. They could get nothing from him. '*They could only beat me up but they could not do me any real harm*'. That is, any damage to his body could not *really* hurt him. […] In such a situation he felt much less afraid than the ordinary person, because from his position he had nothing to lose that essentially belonged to him. (TDS, 68)

All that was essential to this man - his core of 'inner aliveness' or his authentic, true self - had already been protected from all possible harm by the buffer zone which his body acts as. He could experience reality only at one remove because of the existence of this intermediary false self which the true self would increasingly look on as both a foreign being and an indispensable protective shield. To further characterise the relationship between the true and false selves, Laing draws once again on the concepts put forward by Martin Buber in relation to the possibility of an authentic relationship between God and man. Laing writes: 'there is a quasi-it-it interaction instead of an I-Thou relationship' (TDS, 82) between the true and false selves.[471] We saw in the part I review of the founding principles of anti-psychiatric therapy that such a 'quasi-it-it interaction' had initially been triggered off by a family's or society's 'disconfirmatory' behaviour which actively disconfirmed the individual's true self or sense of authenticity and promoted in its stead a false self

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[471] Note that this I-Thou relationship has also been refered to elsewhere in this thesis as an I-You relationship.

whose existence provokes feelings of shame and guilt.[472] This 'it-it relationship', a source of guilt and shame though it may be, nonetheless becomes crucial to the schizophrenic's survival as it offers the true self a safe haven in which it may be protected from the potentially engulfing and devastating ravages of the outside world: 'he will never [have] to give himself away to others' (TDS, 71). 'He' and all that is essential to him has become inviolable.

In the examination of the other defence mechanisms which the ontologically insecure individual turns to, we saw that the processes of isolation and depersonalisation not only protect his sense of being and identity from engulfment and implosion, but they also act as a potential vehicle for self-realisation. So it is, too, with the defence mechanism of disembodiment as Laing argues that it both erects a protective shield around the unembodied true self and facilitates the realisation of the ideals of '*inner honesty, freedom, omnipotence* and *creativity*' (TDS, 89) – and note here that the italics are Laing's. To explain how this situation may come about, it should be remembered that because the 'true self' has become separated from the outside world, 'it is never revealed directly in the individual's expressions and actions, nor does it experience anything spontaneously or immediately' (TDS, 80). While the individual's exchanges with other people are therefore 'fraught with pretence, equivocation [and] hypocrisy' (TDS, 83), the schizophrenic individual seeks by contrast 'to achieve a relationship with himself that is scrupulously sincere, honest, frank' (TDS, 83). An inner honesty is thus both cherished and realised in the unobservable, unalienable sanctuary which disembodiment has established. The consequence is thus that the true self is able to sustain the phantasy of being 'omnipotent and completely free' (TDS, 84). In the final pages of this chapter, I will address the important fact that this omnipotence may only be experienced in the form of a phantasy and that 'the more this phantastic omnipotence and freedom are indulged, the more weak, helpless, and fettered it becomes in actuality' (TDS, 84). For the moment, however, I wish to focus on the fact that as a result of the process of disembodiment 'the [disembodied, true] self is able to enjoy a sense of freedom'

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[472] See pp. 24-6.

(TDS, 86) which it has no other means of experiencing: 'quite clearly, authentic versions of freedom, power, and creativity can be achieved and lived out' (TDS, 89). The schizophrenic thus believes that disembodiment offers him/her a chance to be 'true-to-him/herself' and that it could un-do some of the 'disconfirmatory' knots in which s/he has become bound up. Laing argues: 'without reference to the objective element it [the true self] can be all things to itself – it has unconditioned freedom, power, creativity' (TDS, 89). Later in *The Divided Self*, Laing reformulates this view as follows: 'there is a constant dread and resentment at being turned into someone else's thing, of being penetrated by him, and a sense of being in someone else's power and control. Freedom then consists in being inaccessible' (TDS, 113). I want to turn now to *Louis Lambert* and explore some of the points of convergence and divergence between the aspects of Laingian concept of disembodiment which we seen so far, on the one hand, and, on the other, the life of Louis Lambert in the portion of the novel which precedes his castration and collapse into insanity.

Laing's description of the co-existence of a false and true self would appear to have no *direct* parallel within Louis's life. If ever there were an individual whose self is not subject to the kind of fundamental split which Laing describes, it is surely Louis Lambert. His entire existence is given over to the pursuit of his separatist goals while all the time integrationist forces external to him attempt to block the achievement of these same goals. Louis does not therefore normalise his own behaviour nor does he project a false self which covers up the inviolable true self in the way that Laing describes in relation to the schizophrenic. Does this state of affairs invalidate our Laingian analysis of *Louis Lambert*? I believe not given that Laingian theory and Louis's life converge again around Louis's attempt to cut off from his body the pursuit of his separatist ideals in a parallel sense to that which Laing attributes to the disembodying schizophrenic. More importantly, the outcome of this disembodied state is the same for Louis as it is for the schizophrenic: both view disembodiment and the inaccessibility it provides, firstly, as a safe haven either for their authentic core of being as in the case of the ontologically insecure individual or for his separatist ideals as in the case of Louis Lambert, and, secondly, as a route towards

freedom and Promethean omnipotence. How is the process of disembodiment reflected in *Louis Lambert* in the pre-turning point chapters of the novel? An interest in separating his 'vie intérieure' from his outer body has been a constant theme of Louis's life. As children, for example, he and the narrator would enjoy acting out this suppression of the physical, taking their games almost to the point of sado-masochism:[473]

> nous nous passionnâmes pour la catalepsie, et, avec l'ardeur que les enfants mettent dans leurs entreprises, nous essayâmes de supporter la douleur *en pensant à autre chose*. […] Je montais sur l'estomac de Lambert, et m'y tenais plusieurs minutes sans lui causer la plus légère douleur. (LL, 678)

Furthermore, Louis tells the tale's narrator that his gift of re-modelling nature is predicated on an ability to withdraw from his physical presence into his innermost being.

> Quand je le veux […], je tire un voile sur mes yeux. Soudain je rentre en moi-même, et j'y trouve une chambre noire où les accidents de la nature viennent se reproduire sous une forme plus pure que la forme sous laquelle ils sont d'abord apparus à mes sens extérieurs. (LL, 593)

There emerge several further important instances of his ability to soar into the ether while his physical body remains grounded within the walls of the Collège: he is 'cet aigle qui voulait le monde pour pâture' but who 'se trouvait entre quatre murailles étroites et sales' (LL, 614). Entrapment within the physical bounds of the school does not, however, prevent his imagination from taking flight, as exemplified by the effect which reading has on him:

> souvent […], j'ai accompli de délicieux voyages, embarqué sur un mot dans les abîmes du passé, comme l'insecte qui posé sur quelque brin d'herbe flotte au gré d'un fleuve. Parti de la Grèce, j'arrivais à Rome et traversais l'étendue des âges modernes. (LL, 591)

This ability to re-create within his mind entire geographical and historical scenes is astonishing:

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[473] This point regarding the sado-masochistic overtones to Louis's process of disembodiment is investigated by Robert Smadja in his *Corps et roman*, p. 39.

en lisant le récit de la bataille d'Austerlitz, […] j'en ai vu tous les incidents. Les volées de canon, les cris des combattants retentissaient à mes oreilles et m'agitaient les entrailles; je sentais la poudre, j'entendais le bruit des chevaux et la voix des hommes; j'admirais la plaine où se heurtaient des nations armées, comme si j'eusse été sur la hauteur du Santon. (LL, 593-4)

Louis's imaginative powers are so impressive that the narrator is in a position to inform us:

quand il employait ainsi toutes ses forces dans une lecture, *il perdait en quelque sorte la conscience de sa vie physique* [my italics], et n'existait plus que par le jeu tout-puissant de ses organes intérieurs dont la portée s'était démesurément étendue: il laissait, suivant son expression, *l'espace derrière lui.* (LL, 594)

Both Louis and the narrator are capable of achieving this separation from the physical body: 'notre vie était donc toute végétative en apparence' (LL, 616). The two are regularly chastised by their teachers on this very point: 'vous ne faites rien, Lambert!' (LL, 608) is an allegation hurled regularly at Louis by 'les Pères'. Yet 'ce: *Vous ne faites rien*, était un coup d'épingle qui blessait au cœur' (LL, 608) given that Louis is instead absorbed in a much deeper level of contemplation. The narrator informs us that in the very widest sense he and Louis 'existions par le cœur et par le cerveau. Les sentiments, les pensées étaient les seuls événements de notre vie scolaire' (LL, 616).

The intensity of Louis's investment in a disembodied spirituality is exemplified in one highly significant scenario in which Louis and the narrator undertake an afternoon walk through the Vendôme countryside around the Collège.

Quand nous fûmes arrivés sur la colline d'où nous pouvions contempler et le château assis à mi-côte, et la vallée tortueuse où brille la rivière […], Louis Lambert me dit: « Mais j'ai vu cela cette nuit en rêve! » Il reconnut et le bouquet d'arbres sous lequel nous étions, et la disposition des feuillages, la couleur des eaux, les tourelles du château, les accidents, les lointains, enfin tous les détails du site qu'il apercevait pour la première fois. […] Je lui demandai s'il n'était pas venu à Rochambeau pendant son enfance, ma question le frappa; mais, après avoir consulté ses souvenirs, il me répondit négativement. (LL, 620-1)

In trying to work out how he could possibly have seen this landscape without ever having visited it before, Louis posits the theory that he must be a '*homo duplex*' (LL, 622).

> Si le paysage n'est pas venu vers moi, ce qui serait absurde à penser, j'y suis donc venu. Si j'étais ici pendant que je dormais dans mon alcôve, *ce fait ne constitue-t-il pas une séparation complète entre mon corps et mon être intérieur?* [...] Ces faits se sont accomplis par la puissance d'une faculté qui met en œuvre *un second être à qui mon corps sert d'enveloppe*, puisque j'étais dans mon alcôve et voyais le paysage. (LL, 621, my italics)

Louis's body thus performs the function of an envelope to his disembodied 'être intérieur' paralleling the way in which, in Laing's view, the schizophrenic's disembodied true self is enveloped and shielded by the embodied false self.

We have seen so far the co-existence within Louis of a strong interior, separatist domain alongside the outer physical, embodied world. What of the productive aspects of this co-existence which Laing argues for? To what extent does his denial of the external body expedite the realisation of the ideals which are associated with his 'vie intérieure'? Is there a causal link between his process of disembodiment and his ability to realise his separatist goals of discovering 'les lois constitutives de l'humanité future, de la Jérusalem nouvelle',[474] paralleling Laing's description of a causal link between the schizophrenic's movement towards disembodiment and his ability to realise 'authentic versions of freedom, power and creativity' (TDS, 89)? It would appear, initially at least, that there is indeed a link, as is evidenced by Louis's travails at the Collège. He may well feel 'plein de mépris pour les études presque inutiles auxquelles nous étions condamnés', but as a direct result he comes to follow 'sa route aérienne, complètement détaché des choses qui nous entouraient' (LL, 615). Similarly, we read that: 'dompté par les malheurs du collège, [...] [Louis] se contempla intérieurement' (LL, 644). The most significant example of this causal link, however, can be found in one particular description of Louis's every-day school life.

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[474] Lichtlé, 'Introduction', p. 577.

> Attaché sur un banc à la glèbe de son pupitre, frappé par la férule, frappé par la maladie, affecté dans tous ses sens, pressé par une ceinture de maux, tout le contraignit d'abandonner son enveloppe aux mille tyrannies du collège. *Semblable aux martyrs qui souriaient au milieu des supplices, il se réfugia dans les cieux que lui entr'ouvrait sa pensée.* (LL, 612-3, my italics)

The more engulfing the torturous outside world becomes, the more detached from his physical body his separatist goals become, and the more deeply he burrows into his core of inner aliveness as a means of furthering his separatist goals. The state of disembodiment does, then, seem to contribute to Louis moving towards a realisation of his ideals of messianic pre-eminence which would otherwise have been unfulfilled were he to have remained in a fully embodied state, thus providing a further parallel between Laing's theories and the novels in question. Are there any further examples in the other three novels of this type of disembodiment which we have witnessed in relation to Louis Lambert and the resultant attempt to move towards the fulfilment of separatist goals?

Turning to *Le Rouge et le Noir*, first of all, one salient example emerges in the pre-shooting chapter of the novel entitled 'Une loge aux bouffes'. In a conversation between Julien and Mathilde, we read: 'ah! se disait-il en écoutant le son des vaines paroles que prononçait sa bouche, comme il eût fait un bruit étranger' (RN, 616-7). In this example, a form of disembodiment is clearly observable as Julien's physical being is seemingly capable of producing sounds independently of the rest of him. This instance aside, however, there seems to be little evidence of the type of physical disembodiment which we saw was an important leitmotif of *Louis Lambert*. This is not merely the case in *Le Rouge et le Noir* but also in *L'Œuvre* and *Renée Mauperin*. Does this dearth of examples relating to disembodiment therefore mean that Laingian theory diverges too widely from the trajectory of these three novels for our anti-psychiatric analysis to remain tenable? I would argue not for in the same way that there were divergences and convergences between Laingian theory and *Louis Lambert* there are also certain elements of Laing's descriptions of disembodiment which correspond more closely than others to the existential positions of Julien, Renée and Claude. While there may be little evidence of a programme of

disembodiment undergone by these three protagonists on a literal level, or at least a desire for it as in Louis's case, the processes which Laing outlines are nonetheless replicated on a figurative level. What have so far been termed Julien, Renée and Claude's 'separatist desires' may be identified with Laing's concept of the 'true self'. Similarly, the integrationist forces to which all three are subjected arguably correspond with what Laing terms the schizophrenic's 'false self systems'. While we therefore cannot posit a literal equivalence between, on the one hand, the false self systems and the integrationist forces and, on the other, the separatist desires and the true self, the descriptions which Laing gives of the interaction between the true and false self systems find considerable resonance in the interaction between the three protagonists' integrationist and separatist desires.

As a first example, the characteristics and outcomes of the schizophrenic's process of disembodiment, as described by Laing, are clearly visible in the chapters of *Renée Mauperin* which precede her untimely demise. We saw earlier that Renée is largely compliant with the integrationist forces which aim to nullify her separatist alterity and, furthermore, that her behaviour remains largely within the bounds of 'vraisemblance' even if this fact does not form the novel's principal focus. It can therefore be argued that Renée projects to others a false self which acts as her front-(wo)man, managing her contact with her family and contemporaries in a parallel manner to the ontologically insecure individual's manipulation of the false self. Whereas this projection of a false self takes place in a more literal sense in relation to the schizophrenic, it is replicated on a figurative level with regard to Renée, relating more to the values and ideals which she holds than to her wider existence than to her body specifically. Her self-normalising behaviour has the effect of digging a protective moat around the sanctuary of her separatist ideals, cutting them off and guarding them from maurauding integrationist forces antithetical to their existence and realisation. This procedure therefore parallels the way in which the schizophrenic projects a false, embodied self in order to ring-fence his disembodied core of inner aliveness off from an engulfing environment.

Julien Sorel, like Renée, also normalises his behaviour ('il se dé-singularise', we saw earlier in this chapter) as a means of complying with many of the integrationist forces at work on him, a procedure which is particularly evident with regard to his manipulation of speech. The false self Julien projects in, for example, the Hôtel de La Mole is indeed all that is seen by others: certainly, many assume it represents the entirety of his being. Laing's specific point that the schizophrenic who is caught in this position is 'maintaining his outward semblance of normality by progressively more and more abnormal and desperate means' (TDS, 138) echoes resonantly with Julien's position in light of the increasing degrees of depersonalisation to which Julien subjects others as he rises through the social strata of nineteenth-century France, as we have seen in this chapter. No fingerprints of the twin elements of Julien's separatist ideals – his capacity for authenticity and his Napoleonic ambitions – can be found on the false self which others see at the Hôtel de La Mole, so carefully has he hidden them from public view. As Laing argues, this splitting into true and false selves is an entirely necessary reflex as it allows Julien's separatist goals to occupy an inviolable position and provides them with protection from an environment which deems intolerable any manifestations of 'singularité' and the 'imprévu'.

We have seen so far, then, that the way in which the schizophrenic's process of disembodiment and false self projection protects the authentic core of inner aliveness from its fears of engulfment and implosion finds a close counter-part in Renée and Julien's self-normalising behaviour. Do, however, these protagonists also achieve the same goals of 'inner honesty, freedom, omnipotence and creativity' (TDS, 89) which the schizophrenic apparently realises as a result of his/her process of disembodiment? To answer this question fully, it is necessary to return briefly to Laing's description of the outcomes of disembodiment in order to discover why the realisation of these goals is enormously problematic and ultimately unsustainable. Laing writes: 'without reference to the objective element, it [the true self] can be all things to itself – it has unconditioned freedom, power, creativity' (TDS, 89). Crucially, however, the true self can only be 'omnipotent and free *only in phantasy*' (TDS, 84, my italics). There

is no sense in which disembodiment leads to the *actual* achievement of an omnipotence and control which can be observed and verified by others. While this statement may seem self-evident, its consequences are worth bearing in mind. Laing writes:

> its freedom and its omnipotence [i.e. that of the 'true self'] are exercised in a vacuum and its creativity is only the capacity to produce phantoms. The inner honesty, freedom, omnipotence, and creativity which the 'inner' self cherishes as its ideals, are cancelled, therefore, by a coexisting tortured sense of the lack of any real freedom, of utter impotence and sterility. (TDS, 89)

Laing's words in this last extract can surely be read as a remarkably apt summary of the 'impotence and sterility' which characterise Claude's artistic efforts throughout the novel. While Claude is like Louis in not being subject to the same *self-normalising* forces which figure highly in the lives of Renée and Julien, he nonetheless shares their fate in the sense that throughout his life his 'creativity is only the capacity to produce phantoms' (TDS, 89). In other words, his creativity is only the capacity to produce incomplete and often publicly derided works of art. So total is Claude's lack of real freedom and his sterility and inability to translate into pictorial reality his separatist ideals that in fact he ends up being reduced to the humiliation of producing the most commerical and most 'integrationist' art forms of all: 'il en arriva au dernier degré de la misère, il travailla « au numéro »: des petits marchands infimes, qui vendent sur les ponts et qui expédient chez les sauvages, lui achetèrent tant par toile, deux francs, trois francs, selon la dimension réglementaire' (LO, 249). What is perhaps most significant about this form of artistic prostitution to which he is reduced is the devastating effect it understandably has on his still jealously guarded artistic ideals: he is rendered 'incapable d'une séance sérieuse, regardant son grand tableau en détresse, avec des yeux de damné, sans y toucher d'une semaine parfois, comme s'il s'était senti les mains encrassées et déchues'. (LO, 249). From this extract, it is clear, then, that the more Claude is forced to produce such art, the more unlikely he is to ever realise his separatist goals. In a further direct parallel to the situation of the Laingian schizophrenic, then, the more Claude indulges the phantasy of his omnipotent ability to 'tout voir, tout faire, tout

conquérir' (LO, 201), the more he damages that same dream and prevents it from ever becoming actualised on canvas.

This point also assumes considerable significance in relation to *Louis Lambert*. We have just seen that Louis desires to move towards a literal form of disembodiment in order to help him achieve his separatist goals in much the same way that the schizophrenic undertakes his/her process of disembodiment in order to achieve the goals of 'inner honesty, freedom, omnipotence and creativity' (TDS, 89). Yet, Laing argues that the schizophrenic's creativity is 'only the capacity to produce phantoms' (TDS, 89). So it is too with Louis as he cannot *actually* achieve his Promethean goals of discovering 'les lois constitutives de l'humanité future, de la Jérusalem nouvelle'[475] via a process of disembodiment. This is because he also requires relatedness to others if he wants to see them being realised, as we saw earlier in this chapter, yet this relatedness necessarily implies embodiment which in turn acts as an impediment to his ideals. Louis's move towards disembodiment therefore leads, much like Claude's, only to 'a lack of real freedom, [and] utter impotence and sterility' (TDS, 89). The more he attempts to disembody himself and the more he avoids relatedness, then, the more he ends up blocking the realisation of his separatist desires.

This double bind which we have explored here in relation to Claude and Louis's pursuit of their separatist ideals has some resonance in the lives of Julien and Renée even if it is not replicated in precisely the same manner. This is due to the fact that they, unlike Claude and Louis, subject themselves to a lengthy process of self-normalisation. Nonetheless, the outcomes of their 'dé-singularisation' are remarkably similar to the difficult position which Claude and Louis find themselves in, even if the route by which they arrived there is somewhat different. To see how this is case, it is useful to touch on one further aspect of Laing's description of the process of disembodiment. Laing argues that if, as we have seen, the creativity which disembodiment facilitates 'is only the capacity to produce phantoms' (TDS, 89), then

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[475] Lichtlé, 'Introduction', p. 577.

it is evident that the true and false selves operate largely independently of one another. In other words, for the schizophrenic: *'his false self does not serve as a vehicle for the fulfilment or gratification of the [true] self'* (TDS, 96) – and, again, it should be noted that the emphasis in this extract is Laing's. If the false self does not provide gratification for the true self, what then is its function? Laing responds that the false self is felt as largely autonomous and finally becomes fully compliant with the demands and ambitions placed on the individual by others, or at least with the demands and ambitions the individual believes others are placing on him/her. For the schizoid, the false self's goal 'consists in becoming what the other person wants or expects one to become while only being one's 'self' in imagination or in games in front of a mirror' (TDS, 98-9). These points seem particularly pertinent to the early life of Renée Mauperin as her self-normalising behaviour, which we have so far identified with the false self system, also does not act as a source of fulfilment or gratification for her separatist ideals. On the contrary, her self-normalising behaviour runs directly counter to these ideals, and, indeed, stands in the way of their realisation. Renée spends most of her time being compliant with the demands and ambitions placed on her by her family despite finding it all 'une scie' (RM, 52): be it when she goes through the charade of being introduced to potential future husbands or in behaving with the decorum and restraint which her mother expects of her. In a similar fashion to how schizophrenics can only be their ''self' in imagination or in games in front of a mirror' (TDS, 98-9), Renée can only allow her separatist ideals to come to the fore on a few limited and fleeting occasions when seated at the piano, for instance, or when she retreats into silence. Julien, too, is only standing in the way of the achievement of his separatist ideals of authenticity by continuing with the projection of his false self system at the Hôtel de La Mole. Similarly, his separatist ambition to become a figure of Napoleonic stature are hardly furthered by his integrationist strategies of becoming an officer in an army loyal to the king, of marrying into a wealth, aristocratic family, and of taking on the 'particule' de La Vernaye.

From the preceding analysis in this chapter, it emerges that Julien, Claude, Louis and Renée are caught in a double bind: one in which their separatist ideals are prevented from being achieved by the very same actions and defence mechanisms which were designed to protect them in the first place. Laing's statement: 'what was designed in the first instance as a guard or barrier to prevent disruptive impingement on the self can become the walls of a prison from which the self cannot escape' (TDS, 138) could act as a perceptive analysis of the double bind situation in which all four protagonists are caught up: their separatist ideals are also trapped inside the very walls which were designed to protect them. Of similar interest is the consequence of this double bind, as described by Laing. The vicious circle in which the schizoid individual is trapped is one in which the true self cuts itself off from all contact with the outside world as a means of indulging in its fantasies of omnipotence and freedom. However, the omnipotence and control which the true self believes it is exercising prove to be no more than fantasy as they cannot extend into any sphere beyond the interiorised, disembodied self shut off from the outside world. This much we have seen already in this chapter. Laing goes on to say, however, that 'the more this fantastic omnipotence and freedom is indulged, the more weak, helpless, and fettered it becomes in actuality' (TDS, 84). In effect, because the fantasies indulged in by the schizoid individual receive no sustenance from reality, or are never ''embodied in reality' or 'enriched by injections of 'reality', the true self becomes even more empty and volatilised' (TDS, 85). The dangerous consequence of the double bind in which the schizophrenic is entangled means that eventually even the true self may start to lose its own solidity. 'Its omnipotence is based on impotence. Its freedom operates in a vacuum. Its activity is without life. The self becomes desiccated and dead' (TDS, 141). It is the very same risk which all four protagonists run in the period which precedes their irrational actions: the very defence mechanisms they rely upon to protect their separatist ideals not only prevent these ideals from being realised at that moment, but also constantly defer the day when their ideals will ever be realised. Consequently, a Laingian interpretation of the four protagonists' lives would suggest that their separatist ideals also risk becoming 'desiccated and dead' (TDS, 141) in the period which precedes their 'madness'.

Because it is increasingly unlikely that their separatist ideals will ever reach a point of realisation, it is possible that they will in fact eventually wither and die.

In conclusion, then, we have seen in this chapter that all four protagonists employ a series of defence mechanisms – isolation, depersonalisation and disembodiment – as a means of dealing with the mutually exclusive sets of separatist and integrationist forces at work in their lives. These mechanisms are similar to those which the Laingian schizophrenic relies upon to protect his/her core sense of being. Yet the mechanisms which the protagonists employ do not in fact lead to a more stable modus vivendi because they do not bring the realisation of their separatist ideals any closer nor do they lessen to any significant degree the burden of the integrationist forces weighing on them. Indeed, the mechanisms they reply upon contribute to deferring the day when their ideals could eventually be realised. The existential positions which the four protagonists occupy as they near the point of committing their allegedly 'mad' action are thus neatly summed up by Laing's description of the double bind which he argues lies at the root of psychosis. In order to forestall the fear that 'any impingement [of reality] will be total, implosive, penetrative, fragmenting, and engulfing' (TDS, 83), the schizoid individual 'is prepared to write off everything he is, except his 'self'. But the tragic paradox is that the more the self is defended in this way, the more it is destroyed' (TDS, 77). Psychosis therefore arises out of the fact that

> it is not possible to go on living indefinitely in a sane way if one
> tries to be a man disconnected from all others and uncoupled even
> from a large part of one's own being. [...] Without the 'self' ever
> being qualified by the other, committed to the 'objective' element,
> and without being lived in a dialectical relationship with others, the
> 'self' is not able to preserve what precarious identity or aliveness it
> may already possess. (TDS, 139)

The protagonists' predicament is similarly alarming: in the period leading up to the turning-point of each novel, they find themselves in a paradoxical situation in which their separatist ideals have no hope of realisation and are not 'qualified by the other', or at least not for a sufficiently substantial period of time. They are ensnared in a double bind which sees the achievement of their separatist ideals being blocked and

in fact undermined by the very mechanisms of isolation, depersonalisation and disembodiment which had been brought into play as a means of protecting these ideals. In the final chapter of part III, I therefore wish to examine how the four protagonists disrupt and break out of this punishing double bind and this unliveable situation by committing their 'mad' actions.

PART III Chapter Three:
Privileged Territories

Mais ceci est-il une prison? Est-ce là ce que j'ai tant redouté? Au
lieu d'apercevoir à chaque pas des désagréments et des
motifs d'aigreur, notre héros se laissait charmer
par les douceurs de la prison.[476]

L'idée, chez l'homme, se renforce et grandit de tout
ce qu'il ne donne pas à la femme.[477]

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[476] Stendhal, *La Chartreuse de Parme*, in *Romans et nouvelles de Stendhal II*, p. 311.
[477] Goncourt, *Journal*, I, p. 1135 (29 January 1865).

Death of the 'true self'

Although we saw at the end of the last chapter that the four protagonists are caught up in a difficult double bind, it could alternatively be argued that in the period which immediately precedes their allegedly mad actions all is seemingly going well for three of the four protagonists. In *Le Rouge et le Noir*, for example, just before he reads Mme de Rênal's damning letter, Julien finds himself in a position of limbo awaiting the marquis de La Mole's decision over his marriage to Mathilde who several weeks earlier had impatiently broken the news of their affair to her astonished father. The marquis has already gifted Julien and his daughter extensive and profitable lands in Languedoc as well as the title de La Vernaye so that Mathilde may be 'sauvée de ce nom de Sorel' (RN, 639). If all goes to plan, Julien could soon find himself a member of one of the richest and most glittering aristocratic families in Paris. He seems to have succeeded in his wish to triumph over his aristocratic 'betters': 'j'ai su me faire aimer de ce monstre d'orgueil, ajoutait-il en regardant Mathilde; son père ne peut vivre sans elle, et elle sans moi' (RN, 639). Of greatest significance of all to Julien is the fact that the marquis has had him parachuted into the position of lieutenant in the fifteenth hussars regiment which, importantly for his self-esteem, is 'l'un des plus brillants de l'armée' (RN, 641). Julien's wish to become a figure of Napoleonic stature is well on its way to being fulfilled – indeed, 'sa joie fut sans bornes' (RN, 639) upon learning of his sudden elevation. Tellingly, the first detail which is provided in relation to Julien's nascent army career relates to that archetypal Napoleonic image – a horse: 'M. le chevalier de La Vernaye montait le plus beau cheval de l'Alsace qui lui avait coûté six mille francs' (RN, 641). Julien's fascination with the glittering badges of his success is reiterated in the following passage:

> Julien était ivre d'ambition et non pas de vanité; toutefois il donnait une grand part de son attention à l'apparence extérieure. Ses chevaux, ses uniformes, les livrées de ses gens étaient tenus avec une correction qui aurait fait honneur à la ponctualité d'un grand seigneur anglais. (RN, 642)

It would seem that at the time of reading Mme de Rênal's letter Julien has joined the ranks of those whom Mathilde had berated at the ball in the Hôtel de Retz for failing to display the type of decoration 'qui ne s'achète pas' (RN, 489). (The fact that Julien

had had to buy the equestrian symbol of his Napoleonic status seems particularly ironic in this light). On that occasion Mathilde had justifiably remarked: 'un titre de baron, de vicomte, cela s'achète; une croix, cela se donne; mon frère vient de l'avoir, qu'a-t-il fait? Un grade, cela s'obtient. Dix ans de garnison, ou un parent ministre de la guerre, et l'on est chef d'escadron comme Norbert' (RN, 490). As Sandy Petrey explains in his Austinian reading of the novel: 'the titles, honors and decorations she sees strike her as so many shams; none signifies anything except itself, none actually represents reality, each is glaringly performative'.[478] It is to just such a world which Julien now belongs.

Turning to Zola's *L'Œuvre*, the prospects for Claude's future also look rather good, for once, as he has seemingly abjured his artistic obsessions. Having previously devoted his entire life to his canvas 'maîtresses' (LO, 347), he is shaken from his stupor by Christine's imprecations to see the unpleasant reality of his indecipherable final painting: 'réveille-toi, ouvre les yeux, rentre dans l'existence' (LO, 347), she begs him. In response, Claude takes a step back and is able to look at his work afresh.

> Il s'éveillait enfin de son rêve, et la Femme, vue ainsi d'en bas, avec quelques pas de recul, l'emplissait de stupeur. Qui donc venait de peindre cette idole d'une religion inconnue? Qui l'avait faite de métaux, de marbres et de gemmes, épanouissait la rose mystique de son sexe, entre les colonnes précieuses des cuisses, sous la voûte sacrée du ventre? Etait-ce lui qui, sans le savoir, était l'ouvrier de ce symbole du désir insatiable, de cette image extra-humaine de la chair, devenue de l'or et du diamant entre ses doigts, dans son vain effort d'en faire de la vie? (LO, 347)

Horrified, Claude slowly realises that his Promethean artistic ambitions to 'faire de la vie' had ultimately been unachievable:

> [il] compren[ait] bien que la réalité elle-même ne lui était plus possible, au bout de sa longue lutte pour la vaincre et la repétrir plus réelle, de ses mains d'homme. [...] Est-ce donc impossible de créer? Nos mains n'ont-elles donc pas la puissance de créer des êtres? (LO, 347-8)

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[478] Petrey, *Realism and Revolution*, p. 130.

Not only does he see that his ambitions could never have been fulfilled, but he also realises that they contained the potential to lead him into a dangerous abyss: 'béant, il avait peur de son œuvre, tremblant de ce brusque saut dans l'au-delà' (LO, 347). Claude steps back from the brink and walks into the arms of Christine. 'Il brûla avec elle, se réfugia en elle […]. « Eh bien! Sauve-moi!' (LO, 350), he implores her. This she seems to manage as she cries out: 'enfin! tu es à moi! il n'y a plus que moi, l'autre est bien morte!' (LO, 350). With Christine's painted rival now humbled, Claude can experience happiness and be taken 'loin de sa misère, oubliant, renaissant à une vie de félicité' (LO, 350). Forsaking his separatist ideals in this way promises him not just a life of 'bonheur', but of 'félicité'. The religious overtones to this term seem crucial as they signify that Claude will experience, in the words of Senancour, 'un bonheur qui paraît complet, et qui s'annonce permanent'.[479] A new life is thus opening up for Claude: he is being re-born in an almost evangelical sense, converted by the Christ-like figure of *Christ*ine. The result of this re-birth is that he decides: 'je brûlerai mes tableaux, je ne travaillerai plus' (LO, 350), and also that Christine and he can end up experiencing a night of passion like no other they have known during in their relationship.

> Christine et Claude, à tâtons avaient roulé en travers du lit. Ce fut une rage, jamais ils n'avaient connu un emportement pareil, même aux premiers jours de leur liaison. Tout ce passé leur remontait au cœur, mais dans un renouveau aigu qui les grisait d'une ivresse délirante. L'obscurité flambait autour d'eux, ils s'en allaient sur des ailes de flamme, très haut, hors du monde, à grands coups réguliers, continus, toujours plus haut. […] Ils repartirent, dans le vertige de leur chevauchée à travers les étoiles. Leurs ravissements recommençaient, trois fois il leur sembla qu'ils volaient de la terre au bout du ciel. Quel grand bonheur! comment n'avait-il pas songé à se guérir dans ce bonheur certain? Et elle se donnait encore, *et il vivrait heureux, sauvé, n'est-ce pas? maintenant qu'il avait cette ivresse.* (LO, 350-1, my italics)

The role played by love and by a female partner is similarly crucial in Balzac's *Louis Lambert*. From the letters which Lambert sends Pauline de Villenoix in the period leading up to their marriage and his attempted self-castration, it seems fair to say that

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[479] Quoted in *Le Petit Robert*, p. 903.

his 'amour sans bornes' (LL, 659) for Pauline has transformed his life. 'J'avais trop souffert', is how he describes his life before meeting Pauline. His soul had been 'brisée par des travaux inutiles, consumée par des craintes qui me font douter de moi, rongée par des désespoirs qui m'ont souvent persuadé de mourir' (LL, 663). Now, instead, 'le bonheur' reigns in his life.

> Pauline, le regard par lequel vous m'avez annoncé le bonheur a tout à coup réchauffé ma vie et changé mes misères en félicités. […] Mon amour s'est trouvé grand tout à coup. Mon âme était un vaste pays auquel manquaient les bienfaits du soleil, et votre regard y a jeté soudain la lumière. (LL, 664)

Much like in the final stages of Christine's relationship with Claude, Pauline exerts a quasi-messianic power over Louis, acting as the light onto his world and enabling him to access, like Claude has apparently done, a life of 'félicité'. Most important of all perhaps is the decisive shift which Pauline has brought about in relation to Louis's pursuit of his separatist ideals. Previously he had experienced the world around him 'comme une prison' (LL, 664).

> Mes idées ne pouvaient donc passer que sous la protection d'un homme assez hardi pour monter sur les tréteaux de la Presse, et parler d'une voix haute aux niais qu'il méprise. Cette intrépidité me manquait. J'allais, brisé par les arrêts de cette foule, désespérant d'être jamais écouté par elle. (LL, 664)

Whereas, as we saw in the previous chapter, Louis used to view relatedness with others as both an obstacle on his path towards the realisation of his separatist goals as well as their catalyst, he sees it now – in its form of a reciprocated love for Pauline – as only likely to expedite those goals.

> Ma volonté de fer peut tout. Je suis aimé! Armé de cette pensée, un homme ne doit-il pas faire tout lier devant lui? […] Vous avez réveillé mille vertus endormies dans mon être: la patience, la résignation, toutes les forces du cœur, toutes les puissances de l'âme. […] Maintenant tout a un sens, pour moi, dans cette vie. (LL, 665)

A further sign of the ecstatic happiness which love has confered on Louis centres on the extent to which he is looking forward to having sexual relations with Pauline

once they are married: 'quoi! nos sentiments si purs, si profonds, prendront les formes délicieuses des mille caresses que j'ai rêvées. Ton petit pied se déchaussera pour moi, tu seras toute à moi! Ce bonheur me tue, il m'accable' (LL, 673). He awaits expectantly the pleasure allied to 'la possession d'une femme aimée' (LL, 674) and to 'ce baiser sans durée, dénouement de tous [s]es désirs' (LL, 674). He continues:

> sache-le, ma Pauline, je suis resté pendant des heures entières dans une stupeur causée par la violence de mes souhaits passionnés, restant perdu dans le sentiment d'une caresse comme dans un gouffre sans fond. En ces moments, ma vie entière, mes pensées, mes forces, se fondent, s'unissent dans ce que je nomme un désir, faute de mots pour exprimer un délire sans nom! (LL, 674-5)

Among the last words he writes to Pauline before his attempted self-castration are 'demain, notre amour se saura donc!' (LL, 675)

If future prospects arguably look bright for Julien, Claude and Louis in the portions of the novels which immediately precede their first 'mad' actions, the situation seems rather different for Renée. It could, admittedly, be argued that Renée *ought* to be at her happiest at this stage of her life as her brother Henri is on the verge of marrying the daughter of a wealthy businessman. This venture will bring him considerable financial advantage: 'elle aura un million de dot', Mme Bourjot, the mother of his future bride tells him, 'et vous aurez, quand nous n'y serons plus, de quatre à cinq millions…' (RM, 153). By association, the Mauperin family stands to harvest extensive social kudos in the eyes of their friends and counterparts as a result of Henri's savvy matrimonial manoeuvring. One would then expect Renée to be elated in the period which precedes her first 'mad' action of informing the last remaining holder of the de Villacourt title of her brother's intention to usurp his 'particule'. Yet this is not the case as she has set herself firmly against the marriage: 'vous ne pouvez pourtant pas épouser sa fille! s'écria-t-elle' (RM, 167), when she and her brother first discuss the issue. 'Ne fais pas ce mariage, je t'en supplie… si tu m'aimes, si tu nous aimes tous… Oh! Je t'en supplie!' (RM, 167). Why does she so object to her brother's plans? If we return briefly to our analysis of Renée's separatist ideals, we find that honour and probity were the two values which she placed above all others.

This marriage, she believes, can only bring dishonour on the Mauperin family both because of the liaison which Henri has been pursuing with his future bride's mother and because he will have to take on a 'particule' in order to be deemed sufficiently worthy by his future father-in-law to marry Mlle Bourjot. 'Je suis à tes genoux, tu vois bien', Renée tells her brother, 'et puis, ça porte malheur de quitter le nom de son père… C'est notre sang, ce nom-là, Henri… Notre brave père' (RM, 167). Her ideals are becoming tarnished through being associated with her brother, and the integrationist pressures to which she has been subject are now encroaching more uncomfortably closely on her personal territory than ever before. Tellingly, in a discussion of a man who has, in Renée's words, 'fait une lâcheté' (RM, 174), she declares:

> tu sais bien, je suis une passionnée, moi, comme tu dis… […] Mais je suis bien bonne, c'est vrai! Ce n'est pas nous, ce monsieur, n'est-ce pas? Ah! *Si c'était quelqu'un des miens qui fît quelque chose comme ça, une chose contre l'honneur, une chose…»*
> *Elle s'arrêta brusquement* […]. (RM, 176, my italics)

Renée stops so suddenly here because she realises that, of course, 'un des siens' – her brother Henri – is indeed committing what in her eyes is a similarly dishonourable 'lâcheté'. She thus finds herself gradually losing her place on the moral high ground from which she used to be able to speak without reserve. Even her father, who up until this point in the novel had been something of a kindred spirit for Renée as the piano incident had confirmed,[480] 'avait fini par céder à l'éblouissement que fait l'argent' (RM, 187). The narrator goes on:

> ce grand honnête homme, pur, sévère, rigide, incorruptible, avait laissé peu à peu cette grande fortune des Bourjot entrer dans sa pensée, revenir dans ses rêves, parler et toucher à ses instincts d'homme pratique, de vieillard, de père de famille, d'industriel. Il était séduit et désarmé. (RM, 187)

This slippage in her father's views leaves Renée feeling 'ennuyée, rêveuse, triste' (RM, 187). She is now more isolated than ever in holding her separatist ideals as all those around her, including her normally incorruptible and trustworthy father, are either already infected by or are in the process of succumbing to the plague of

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[480] See p. 138.

dishonour and materialism to which she objects and has thus far remained largely immune. It is in this respect that the links between Renée's position and that of the other three protagonists become clearer. While Renée may not share Julien, Claude and Louis's elation in the days and hours before their allegedly irrational actions, she nonetheless finds herself in a very similar position to theirs. What we have been terming her separatist ideals are on the verge on being engulfed by the hostile, money-obsessed, bourgeois environment in which she has to live. Engulfment of what Laing would term her 'true self' is now an increasingly likely possibility. The other three protagonists also find themselves in a position where their separatist tendencies are coming under increasingly heavy attack and where the values associated with their 'true selves' are quite possibly on the verge of extinction due to the encroachment of increasingly powerful or irresistible integrationist forces. We have just seen this to be the case in relation to Renée, but how can this represent the position of the other three protagonists?

Claude Lantier in *L'Œuvre* provides perhaps the most straightforward example in this regard. Christine may well have saved her husband from the most disastrous excesses of his art (indeed, at this point of the novel, he seems to believe so too), but viewed from another perspective, she has also succeeded in almost snuffing out the aspirational embers of his separatist artistic fires. This fact comes across clearly in some of the phrases which appear in the lengthy argument in which Claude finally recognises the monstrous nature of Christine's painted rival: 'déjà, elle l'avait reprise, […] elle semblait vouloir le faire sien' (LO, 349); 'elle l'amollissait et le conquérait' (LO, 349); 'elle le serrait à l'étouffer, c'était elle qui le possédait' (LO, 351); and 'elle le liait d'une cuisse, […] comme pour s'assurer qu'il ne lui échapperait plus' (LO, 351). Symbolically, these phrases point to the dominance which Christine exerts over her husband at this point of the novel and, in Laingian terms, to the way in which his separatist ideals have now apparently become fully engulfed. Whereas previously Christine had provided the sole means by which Claude could hope to see his separatist values and artistic ideals realised through her acting as his depersonalised model, she has now 'switched sides' and allied herself to

the already impressive array of integrationist forces which throughout the novel had aimed to divert Claude off his separatist path. Degas's words – 'la femme a été créée pour empêcher l'homme de faire de trop belles choses'[481] – could hardly be more apt with respect to Claude and Christine as Claude now finds himself defeated and possessed by a woman who is opposed to his Promethean ideals because of the damage they had been inflicting on their relationship. As such, the ideals which were identified with the true self and which had striven towards a canvas re-modelling of reality are left with no possible means of realisation, and, indeed, have been crushed. The integrationist pressures which have constantly weighed down on his artistic goals have now become so strong but crucially also so irresistible that Claude no longer even attempts to defend himself against their onslaught: 'cette fois, il fut vaincu' (LO, 350).

This defeat of the true self and its ideals is reflected in the collapse of the defence mechanisms which Claude had previously relied upon to provide his true self and separatist, artistic ideals with a safe haven and a possible means of realisation. During this time – that is, in the period immediately prior to his reconciliation with his wife -, Claude had withdrawn into a position of almost complete physical isolation, his painted mistress providing him with his only comfort and company, while his depersonalised wife Christine was left feeling 'jalouse, […] dédaignée et trahie' (LO, 346). He had been pursuing his separatist ideals with such vigour that he can now see in retrospect that his true self had become largely disembodied from his physical outer shell: he does, after all, ask 'qui donc venait de peindre cette idole d'une religion inconnue?' (LO, 347) when he sees the monstrous reality of his 'Femme nue', as if refering to another artist. Furthermore, he had been having no sexual relations with Christine for several months because of the detrimental, engulfing effect this form of relatedness was having on his ideals.

> Cette virilité qu'il lui refusait, il la réservait et la donnait à la rivale préférée. Elle [Christine] savait bien pourquoi il la délaissait ainsi. Souvent d'abord, quand il avait le lendemain un gros travail, et qu'elle se serrait contre lui en se couchant, il lui disait que non, que

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[481] Quoted in Michel Crouzet, 'Introduction', in Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *Manette Salomon* (Paris: Gallimard, 'Folio', 1996), p. 19.

> ça le fatiguerait trop; ensuite, il avait prétendu qu'au sortir de ses bras, il en avait pour trois jours à se remettre, le cerveau ébranlé, incapable de rien faire de bon; et la rupture s'était ainsi peu à peu produite, une semaine en attendant l'achèvement d'un tableau, puis un mois pour ne pas déranger la mise en train d'un autre, puis des dates reculées encore, des occasions négligées, la déshabitude lente, l'oubli final. Au fond, elle retrouvait la théorie répétée cent fois devant elle: *le génie devait être chaste, il fallait ne coucher qu'avec son œuvre.* (LO, 346-7, my italics)

Yet the sexual intercourse which follows their reconciliation has the effect of breaking down all the defence mechanisms with which he had hoped to both protect and further the values of the true self. Claude switches off the depersonalising gaze he had for so long directed at Christine, and appears to become fully 're-embodied': 'il s'abandonna, dans l'attendrissement de cette passion infinie. C'était une immense tristesse, un évanouissement du monde entier *où se fondait son être*' (LO, 349, my italics).

The process of 're-embodiment' as a result of sexual intercourse which we witness here in relation to Claude Lantier can also be attributed to Louis Lambert who realises that in marrying Pauline de Villenoix his 'contemplations vont devenir des réalités' (LL, 675). Our Laingian analysis has already demonstrated that Louis both desires and fears relatedness with others because it simultaneously facilitates and prevents the realisation of his separatist ideals. This interpretation would also maintain that, by extension, sexual intercourse with Pauline will lead to the engulfment of his separatist desires and to the triumph of the integrationist pressures associated with the false self system in much the same way as happens with Claude Lantier. Two scenes from earlier in the novel help to back up this Laingian hypothesis. The first is an incident in which Louis catches sight of a beautiful young woman one evening in the 'Théâtre-Français' in Paris. Given that Louis's life had apparently been largely devoid of any erotic drive up until that point:

> la vue de cette femme, jeune et belle, bien mise, décolletée peut-être, et accompagnée d'un amant pour lequel sa figure s'animait de toutes les grâces de l'amour, produisit sur l'âme et sur les sens de Lambert un effet si cruel qu'il fut obligé de sortir de la salle. (LL, 645)

This unexpected confrontation with sexual desire provokes Louis into a fit of intense jealousy:

> S'il n'eût profité des dernières lueurs de sa raison, qui, dans le premier moment de cette brûlante passion, ne s'éteignit pas complètement, peut-être aurait-il succombé au désir presque invincible qu'il ressentit alors de tuer le jeune homme auquel s'adressaient les regards de cette femme. (LL, 645)

The entire experience shakes Louis to the core, and he realises that the dangers allied to erotic desire could undermine his Promethean ambitions: 'je ne me craindrais pas dans une grotte au désert, et je me crains ici', he tells his uncle in a letter from Paris, 'au désert, je serais avec moi-même sans distraction; ici, l'homme éprouve une foule de besoins qui le rapetissent' (LL, 648). The second scene which teaches Louis of the detrimental effect which sexual relations could have on his Promethean ambitions can be found in his reading of Swedenborgian philosophy which brings home to him the importance of subjugating 'l'action corporelle' in favour of his 'vie intellectuelle'. He has learnt that 'il y aurait en nous deux créatures distinctes' (LL, 616) and also that 'l'ange serait l'individu chez lequel l'être intérieur réussit à triompher de l'être extérieur' (LL, 617). It is the individual's duty, then, to 'nourrir l'exquise nature de l'ange qui est en lui' (LL, 617), according to Swedenborg. However, a salutory warning is sounded:

> si, faute d'avoir une vue translucide de sa destinée, il [un homme] fait prédominer l'action corporelle au lieu de corroborer sa vie intellectuelle, toutes ses forces passent dans le jeu de ses sens extérieurs, et l'ange périt lentement par cette matérialisation des deux natures. (LL, 617)

Sexual relations with Pauline thus run the risk of killing off Louis's 'angelic' potential, but it is a risk which, at this point of the novel at least, Louis seems prepared to take.[482] Indeed, he seems to be convinced that all his separatist desires will in fact be fulfilled: 'ma volonté de fer peut tout. Je suis aimé!' (LL, 645), he declares.

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[482] For full studies of Balzac's reading of Swedenborg, see J. van der Elst, 'Autour du « Livre mystique »: Balzac et Swedenborg', *Revue de littérature comparée,* 10 (1930), 88-123; K. - E. Sjöden, 'Balzac et Swedenborg', *Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes françaises,* 15 (1963), 295-307.

In relation to *Le Rouge et le Noir*, the triumph of Julien's false self system over his separatist urge towards authenticity reaches its climax in his statement: 'mon roman est fini, et à moi seul tout le mérite' (RN, 639). A career path which he believes will lead him to Napoleonic glory has now been cemented into place, and his life has taken on entirely fictional proportions with the encumbering (if correct) details of his past life as the derided and penniless son of a provincial carpenter having now been replaced by a purchased 'particule'. Julien is a changed man from the callow, youthful no-body we saw in Verrières and Vergy: he is now 'froid et hautain' (RN, 641) even towards the abbé Pirard. To his army colleagues he shows only 'son air impassible, ses yeux sévères et presque méchants, sa pâleur [et] son inaltérable sang-froid' (RN, 641), and none of the insouciant sincerity which had characterised his days at Vergy in the company of Mme de Rênal. All he can think of is how best to embellish the 'integrationist' fictions of his life which will bring closer the day when, he believes, his Napoleonic ambitions will be fully realised.

> A peine lieutenant, par faveur et depuis deux jours, il calculait déjà que, pour commander en chef à trente ans, au plus tard, comme tous les grands généraux, il fallait à vingt-trois être plus que lieutenant. Il ne pensait qu'à la gloire et à son fils. (RN, 642)

The days of what Laing would have termed 'authentic disclosure' at Vergy could hardly be further from his mind, it would seem, and his separatist urge towards authenticity is now seemingly dead and buried. Julien's situation is slightly more complex than that of the other three protagonists given that his separatist ideals consist of two separate elements, and even if his drive towards authentic mutual relatedness has stalled, his Napoleon-inspired separatist desires are in fact being sated at this stage of the novel. Nonetheless, it remains an indisputable fact that the integrationist forces allied to the false self system are without doubt in the ascendency, as is the case in relation to the other protagonists, given that Julien has relied on thoroughly integrationist strategies to worm his way into the homes (and hearts and beds) of his alleged superiors, and, as a result, further his Napoleonic ambitions.

We have seen so far that in the period which immediately precedes their 'mad' acts the four protagonists have either already experienced the total engulfment of their separatist ideals or else face the imminent prospect of such engulfment. It is this point which remains crucial to the 'comprehensible transition' which I wish to argue exists between their existential positions before and after their allegedly 'mad' acts. The schizophrenic, in Laing's view, 'dreads relatedness as such, with anyone or anything or, indeed, even with himself, because his uncertainty about the stability of his autonomy lays him open to the dread lest in any relationship he will lose his autonomy and identity' (TDS, 44). In a parallel sense, the four protagonists find that the dangers allied to relatedness have indeed become reality, that their defence mechanisms have been violated, and that the 'autonomy and identity' of their separatist ideals has been either sacrificed, lost or severely damaged as a consequence of relatedness with others. In the following section of this chapter, I want to examine how the four protagonists react to this engulfment of their true selves, turning firstly to *Le Rouge et le Noir*.

Death of the 'false self'

At the very moment of his life when Julien is 'au milieu des transports de l'ambition la plus effrénée' (RN, 642) and when his ambitions for Napoleonic pre-eminence are beginning to be achieved, news reaches him of the catastrophe which Mme de Rênal's denunciation has unleashed. Mme de Rênal has confirmed to the marquis his suspicions about Julien's past – 'je ne sais pas encore ce que c'est que Julien' (RN, 639), he had worried just before the arrival of the infamous letter – and has alerted him to the truth about Julien's life being constructed upon whatever integrationist strategies he feels are most likely to help him 'faire fortune' (RN, 259) and 'faire les choses extraordinaires' (RN, 287). Madame de Rênal exposes the persona or the false self which he had so successfully projected to other people as one which is founded on 'l'hypocrisie la plus consommée' (RN, 643) and 'aucun principe de

religion' (RN, 644), and as one which aims solely to help him 'se faire un état et [...] devenir quelque chose' (RN, 643). 'Tout est perdu!' (RN, 642), Mathilde had shrieked in the letter she sends Julien warning of her father's wrath. Yet, as we saw in part II, all is not in fact lost for Julien.[483] He would, after all, have had relatively little difficulty in rebutting Mme de Rênal's allegations, and so the set-back which his career has suffered as a result of her letter is far from an irreversible one. What has in fact been 'perdu', however, is not so much other people's image of Julien and his future career prospects but, rather, his own image of himself. It is Julien's self-image which has been irreparably damaged by Mme de Rênal's allegations: 'quel père voudrait donner sa fille chérie à un tel homme!' (RN, 644), he exclaims in disgust. Julien recognises that the individual described in Mme de Rênal's letter is indeed a vile and despicable specimen and refers to him as if describing a man other than himself. The paradox is, of course, that given Julien's co-existing true and false selves, it is as if he really is referring to someone other than himself. In Laingian terms, Julien's 'true self' – that is, his twin drives for authenticity and Napoleonic pre-eminence - has become almost fully disembodied and detached from the false self system which has been acting as its front-man in the period immediately preceding the shooting. By this stage of the novel, the process of disembodiment has assumed such considerable proportions that Julien is able to look upon the individual described in Mme de Rênal's letter as a foreign being, or, more precisely, as a being foreign to and separate from the true self. The false self which he has projected to others in, for example, the Hôtel de La Mole bears 'no footprints or fingerprints' (TDS, 89) of the true self which yearns both to experience afresh the 'unité de soi, hors de l'existence sociale'[484] characteristic of Julien and Madame de Rênal's time in Vergy and to see his Napoleonic ambitions realised. It is this very point which Julien finally recognises as a result of Mme de Rênal's letter; he sees that he is trapped within the double bind discussed at the end of the last chapter: namely, that his false self is not in fact serving as a vehicle for the fulfillment or gratification of his true self, and that the integrationist strategies by which he has been attempting to further his separatist goals will not bring about their realisation and are instead only standing

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[483] See pp. 77-8.
[484] Crouzet, *Nature et société chez Stendhal*, p. 52.

in the way of them ever being achieved. Julien has had his eyes opened to the reality of the double bind in which his separatist ideals are caught. The explosive contents of Mme de Rênal's letter thus have the effect of tearing apart the image he had of himself as likely to bring about the realisation of his separatist goals via integrationist means. His false self is thus killed off in this collapse of his self-image, a collapse which has been precipitated by Mme de Rênal's letter. It is at this point that Julien's desires for authenticity and Napoleonic pre-eminence - his 'true self' in Laingian terms - face the prospect of total engulfment and annihilation by an environment which has constantly been opposed to their realisation, now that they have been robbed of their integrationist shield. At the same time, his separatist desires are left in the invidious position of also having no possibility of seeing their full potential realised as they have now been robbed of what they had mistakenly believed would be their catalyst and means of realisation.

That Julien's physical husk has seemingly ceased to function now that the false self has effectively been killed off can be seen in the difficulties he experiences in carrying out physical actions in the moments leading up to the shooting scene. For example, his ability to communicate (which as we saw in part III chapter one represented Julien's most successful integrationist ruse) has been severely impaired: 'il ne put écrire à Mathilde comme il en avait le projet, sa main ne formait sur le papier que les traits illisibles' (RN, 644). Similarly, when he enters the gunsmith's shop to buy the necessary weapons, 'Julien eut beaucoup de peine à lui [l'armurier du pays] faire comprendre qu'il voulait une paire de pistolets' (RN, 644). Most telling of all is the sentence which comes immediately before the point when Julien fires on Mme de Rênal: 'je ne le puis, se disait-il à lui-même [Julien], *physiquement*, je ne le puis' (RN, 644, my italics). While his spirit is certainly willing to pull the trigger, his flesh is all too weak as all that Julien has previously identified with his outer physical skin – his false self system or his integrationist strategies - has been fatally undermined by Mme de Rênal's denunciation and the subsequent collapse of his self-image.

What, then, is the response of the 'true self' to its potentially fatal unmasking as a result of the death of the false self? Logically, it is to attack the entity which precipitated the removal of its protective shield and its one hope of eventual realisation: that is, to attack Mme de Rênal. It is therefore entirely consequent that Julien should try to kill Louise de Rênal, and, moreover, that he should do so immediately after his true self has been robbed of its protective shield and its only, if flawed, possible means of realisation. A Laing-inspired interpretation thus runs counter to George Orwell's argument that the shooting is 'a particularly meaningless outrage and has only been put in because Julien has to die to in the limelight'[485] as well as to Michel Crouzet's argument that:

> les plus grands moments [de la vie de Julien], ses plus graves décisions sont dus à des transes (qui peuvent être rationnelles), à des instants d'éblouissement, de « folie », d'« énergie », ou de lucidité aveuglée, qui se détachent, sans cause et sans fin, de la trame de sa vie.[486]

A Laingian analysis of the shooting scene would propose instead that Julien's actions are in fact fully concomitant with and, more importantly, *provoked* by the events within 'la trame de sa vie'. Julien is surely not 'au-delà des catégories, des catégories morales et des catégories psychologiques',[487] as Crouzet would have it. Instead, the shooting represents the final desperate act of his true self which has been laid bare and exposed to a hostile world. In part one, we saw that anti-psychiatrists regard a schizophrenic patient's behaviour as symptomatic of an existential crisis: the individual's unusual behaviour, they argue, represents 'a special sort of strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unliveable situation' (PE, 95). In a parallel sense, Julien's 'madness' in shooting Mme de Rênal is symptomatic of the major existential crisis in his own life, one which is based on the ultimately impossible co-existence of two sets of mutually exclusive desires, and one which has been triggered off by Mme de Rênal's allegations. The shooting represents Julien's 'special sort of

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[485] George Orwell, 'Review of F. C. Green's *Stendhal*', in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, three volumes, edited by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), I: *An Age Like This 1920-1940*, pp. 438-41 (p. 440).
[486] Crouzet, 'Julien Sorel et le sublime', p. 105.
[487] Michel Crouzet, '*Le Rouge et le Noir*': *Essai sur le romanesque stendhalien* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995), p. 108.

strategy', albeit a desperate one, for living in a world which has suddenly been made unliveable for him through having had his true self forcibly 'outed' into an engulfing and implosive environment where it has no hope of seeing its values and ideals realised. In summary, then, Julien's shooting can be seen as his 'special sort of strategy' to help him cope with suddenly finding himself 'in a position of checkmate' (PE, 95).

This Laingian interpretation also proposes a response to the question as to why Julien should attack Mme de Rênal and not, for instance, the marquis de La Mole (who has after all banned any future contact between Julien and his daughter and wants to see him exiled to America) or Valenod (who is an obvious target if one believes Julien's shooting to be motivated by considerations of class warfare). Mme de Rênal is the only other protagonist of the novel to have shared Julien's yearning for authenticity. Throughout the novel, she has been portrayed as a flawless, incomparable vehicle for the key Stendhalian attribute 'le naturel': 'elle avait un air de simplicité, et de la jeunesse dans la démarche', the narrator eulogises, 'ni la coquetterie, ni l'affectation n'avaient jamais approché de ce cœur' (RN, 229). A little later, the narrator continues: 'aucune hypocrisie ne venait altérer la pureté de cette âme naïve, égarée par une passion qu'elle n'avait jamais éprouvée' (RN, 279). Moreover, as we have seen, Mme de Rênal is the one person with whom Julien has experienced fleeting moments of authentic mutual relatedness or what Buber and Laing would term an 'I-You form of relatedness'. Upon reading Mme de Rênal's letter, Julien believes that the only available route towards the fulfillment of his desire for authenticity has now been blocked off because Louise, he mistakenly thinks, has 'switched sides' under the malign influence of the Church and joined the ranks of the true self's enemy which sacrifices one's metaphysical capacity for authenticity and 'le pouvoir de la beauté' (RN, 279) on the integrationist altar of conformity, assimilation and corruption.

A further reason why Mme de Rênal should be the target of his bullets relates to how this shooting can be interpreted as an attempted suicide. Thomas Freeman proposes a

pithy summary of the central strategy adopted by the Laingian schizophrenic: 'the schizophrenic feels he has killed his self in order to avoid being killed'.[488] It would seem that Julien is engaged in a very similar venture, because at the moment of shooting Mme de Rênal, his true self has been robbed of its protective shield and of what it perceived to be its medium for eventual realisation. With these essentials removed, the true self is thus left exposed and vulnerable, unable to survive in this hostile environment and unlikely to achieve its goals. Engulfment is almost certain with the result that Julien anticipates and thwarts the imminent engulfment and snuffing out of the aspirational embers of his true self by putting an end to its existence himself. He sees that his separatist ambitions are not going to be realised and that he must kill them off before they are killed off for him. However, given the actual target for the bullets, it appears that the true self attempts to kill not itself but instead displaces the suicide attempt onto the person most similar to itself – that is Mme de Rênal, the one individual who, as we have seen, has never strayed from her adherence to authenticity and 'le naturel', unlike Julien. The murder attempt thus represents the apogee of the process of total disembodiment and total self-depersonalisation which had characterised Julien's existence before the shooting. Laing argues that for the schizophrenic, 'to turn oneself into a stone becomes a way of not being turned into a stone by someone else' (TDS, 51). This would seem to be the case here too in relation to the twin elements of Julien's true self: he turns them into a stone, or de-animates them, before they can be turned into a stone by someone else. This 'suicide' hypothesis is reinforced by Julien's later refusals to put up a credible defence against his attempted murder charges or to take up one of the many opportunities open to him to escape from his Besançon prison cell (RN, 650, 653, 693). It is also further bolstered by his actions during his trial in which he effectively signs his own death warrant by giving an impassioned speech in which he rails against the social injustices he believes to have been perpetrated by the bourgeoisie. To have been acquitted of the charges laid against him, Julien would have had to accept that he owed his life to the bourgeoisie which he so disdains and which stands directly opposed to both his sets of separatist values. As Richard B. Grant has

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[488] Thomas Freeman, 'Review of *The Divided Self* by R. D. Laing', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 34 (1961), 79-80 (p. 79).

argued: 'in accepting acquittal from this society, he would show tacit approval of its values and conventions',[489] values and conventions which he can no longer relate to since the demolition of his false self.

If Julien's 'mad' act of shooting Mme de Rênal represents the final desperate act of the true self laid bare to a hostile environment, the factors which motivate Louis, Claude and Renée are arguably of a similar nature. With regard to *L'Œuvre*, Claude's suicide represents his strategy to cope with a world now made unliveable by the collapse of the mechanisms with which he had hoped to both protect and further his artistic ideals. Near the beginning of his final argument with Christine, Claude had asked the question 'mais puis-je vivre encore, si le travail ne veut plus de moi?' (LO, 349). The initial answer to this question would seem to have been that he can: 'il vivrait heureux, sauvé, n'est-ce pas? maintenant qu'il avait cette ivresse?' (LO, 351). A life of felicity and prosperity was supposed to flow from this defeat of his separatist desires. Indeed, the processes of depersonalisation and disembodiment to which he had given himself over with such vigour had seemingly been reversed in a reflex which saw Christine substitute her body for his: 'je te réchaufferai contre ma gorge, je lierai mes jambes aux tiennes, je nouerai mes bras à tes reins, *je serai ton souffle, ton sang, ta chair...*' (LO, 350, my italics). He had, almost by default, become re-embodied. Moreover, he desperately implores Christine to 're-personalise' him as this, he believes, will save him from his own artistic excesses:

> endors-moi, anéantis-moi, que je devienne ta chose, assez esclave,
> assez petit, pour me loger sous tes pieds, dans tes pantoufles... Ah!
> descendre là, ne vivre que de ton odeur, t'obéir comme un chien,
> manger, t'avoir et dormir, si je pouvais, si je pouvais! (LO, 350)

This scenario in which Claude has been 're-embodied' and 'un-depersonalised' proves to be unsustainable, however, as shortly afterwards, once Christine has fallen asleep, 'ses [Claude] pensées étaient revenues, toutes, débordantes, torturantes, creusant son visage' (LO, 351). Claude is haunted by the ghost of his ideals which now lie dead, and it is at this point that a process of what could be termed 're-

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[489] Richard B. Grant, 'The Death of Julien Sorel', *Esprit Créateur*, 2 (1962), 26-30 (p. 27).

disembodiment' and 're-depersonalisation' begins. This time, however, he carries the process through to the point of *total* disembodiment and *total* self-depersonalisation: that is, to the point of suicide. In a pithy example of how he has re-depersonalised Christine, he complains of 'cette cuisse *de femme*, allongée sur lui' (LO, 351, my italics) which he feels 'prenait une lourdeur de plomb, il en souffrait comme d'un supplice' (LO, 351). This word 'supplice' emphasises the physical aspects of the process of 're-disembodiment', one which involves enormous pain and which sees his body being symbolically broken up: 'il en souffrait comme […] d'une meule dont on lui broyait les genoux' (LO, 351). He must 're-depersonalise' and sacrifice Christine; he must withdraw from all physical or sexual contact: as Zola wrote in the novel's 'ébauche', he must 'immoler [Christine] à sa passion d'art'.[490] Why he must do so is neatly explained by Laing when he writes that one of the schizophrenic's greatest fears is that of being depersonalised by others. As we saw earlier, the schizophrenic thus attempts to defend him/herself by turning that de-personalising gaze around and re-directing it back on to the other person: 'the very act of experiencing the other as a person is felt as virtually suicidal' (TDS, 47), Laing writes. Claude had successfully depersonalised Christine for a lengthy period of the novel prior to their reconciliation. Now, however, that Christine has become 'un-de-personalised' and now that Claude's earlier movement towards disembodiment has been reversed, his separatist ideals face total engulfment. His experiencing Christine as a person (or as an 'un-depersonalised' being) is felt as virtually suicidal, and his only option is to take to its extreme point a process of total 're-disembodiment' and total 're-depersonalisation' which results from the knowledge that he has no hope of seeing his artistic ideals become reality. Like Julien, only this time in a literal sense, suicide is the only strategy open to Claude in a world which he now finds entirely unliveable. He too, much like the Laingian schizophrenic, finds himself 'in a position of checkmate' (PE, 95) once his separatist ideals have been crushed by Christine and by the almost irresistible integrationist pressures she has come to represent at this stage of the novel.

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[490] Quoted in Brady, *L'Œuvre*, p. 430.

As was discussed in part II, the 'mad' and 'invraisemblable' status of Claude's suicide is in part dependent on its timing. It was asked: why should Claude commit suicide immediately after experiencing a re-birth, around the time he feels furthest away from 'sa misère, oubliant, renaissant à une vie de félicité' (LO, 350)?[491] A Laingian response to this question would propose that the opportunity to 'se guérir' (LO, 350) equates to a re-birth as a person shorn of artistic ideals or of his 'true self' and left finally at the mercy of society's normalising techniques. It is logical therefore that Claude should commit suicide at this point, at the very time when he realises his separatist ideals are now dead. A Laingian analysis would therefore assert the 'context-sensible' nature of Claude's suicide. It is neither 'mad' nor 'invraisemblable' as it arises out of a deep existential crisis which revolves around an inescapable paradox: namely, that his inner truth or his 'true self' may only be externalised through relatedness, physicality and sexuality, states which in themselves are directly antithetical to the true self. Yet when Claude reaches a situation in which the states of physicality and sexuality engulf and overpower the true self, only disembodiment (or in this case 're-disembodiment') can 'save' the truth, only 're-disembodiment' can accord the values of the true self some status or existence. It may well be an unpotentiated or virtual existence, but it is a form of existence nonetheless. To save the truth, Claude must die.

If Claude finds that death through suicide is his only possible option when faced with the prospect of a life mediated by physicality and sexuality and one shorn of his artistic ideals, Louis Lambert must make a similar choice. He, too, realises he must die in order to save the truth. In the previous chapter, we saw the fundamental paradox which is inherent to Louis's interaction with other people – that is, relatedness acts as a barrier to the realisation of his ideals as well as their catalyst. Given the imminence of his wedding day, Louis is fast approaching the point where the delicate balancing act he has been performing of trying to reconcile two irreconcilable opposing forces is going to be fundamentally disturbed. Louis had previously lived in the hope that his true self and all that is identified with it could

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[491] See p. 91.

somehow be projected through his body and that he would be able to reach the sexual 'dénouement de tous [s]es désirs' (LL, 674) without having to compromise his Promethean ambitions. Yet a Laingian analysis would suggest that the closer this 'dénouement' comes, the closer the day also comes when his true self will be engulfed by relatedness. It is for this very reason that the timing of Louis's 'mad' actions is so crucial, as it is in relation to Julien's and Claude's actions, even though it is seemingly a point ignored by most Balzacian critics, as we saw in part II.[492] Louis's uncle tells the narrator after all that '*la veille de son mariage*, il [Louis] est devenu fou' (LL, 676, my italics). Certain elements of this 'folie' are particularly instructive as regards the 'death' of the false self which is identified with Louis's physical body and which he had hoped would one day act as a medium for the realisation of the true self's goals: 'il était resté pendant cinquante-neuf heures *immobile, les yeux fixes, sans manger ni parler*' (LL, 677, my italics). From this example, it appears that Louis's body has seemingly ceased to function. Furthermore, once this initial two-and-a-half day 'accès' has passed, Louis 'se crut impuissant' (LL, 679). The word 'impuissant' points not only to his sexual incapacitation but also to a wider collapse of his entire physical being, one which causes him to slide into 'une mélancolie que rien ne put dissiper' (LL, 679). In this melancholic state, Louis sees that the balancing act he has been performing of both desiring and fleeing relatedness – symbolised here by the sexual act – is no longer sustainable. He realises that he must choose definitively between, on the one hand, the pursuit of his separatist ideals and, on the other, the pursuit of Pauline and his sexual desires: there is simply a structural incompatibility between the two spheres which means he can have only one and not the other. A Laingian interpretation thus confirms the narrator's hypothesis: 'peut-être a-t-il vu dans les plaisirs de son mariage un obstacle à la perfection de ses sens intérieurs et à son vol à travers les Mondes Spirituels' (LL, 680). The result is that Louis chooses to attempt 'l'opération à laquelle Origène crut devoir son talent' (LL, 679) not merely to deny himself the 'baiser sans durée' which represents the 'dénouement de tous [s]es désirs' (LL, 674) but also, and more significantly, to symbolically kill off his entire physical being as a means of

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[492] See pp. 69 and 94.

preventing his true self or his separatist ideals from being subsumed by the relatedness which the sexual act would bring with it. Louis, like Julien and Claude therefore, enacts a form of suicide of the true self in order to prevent it from being engulfed by relatedness with others in a remarkably similar way to that which Laing attributes to the schizophrenic who, in Freeman's words quoted earlier, 'has killed his self in order to avoid being killed'. The symbolic death of Louis's physical body, or his false self, finds further evidence in the descriptions which the narrator gives of Louis's physical state some time after his first 'accès'. His body can barely function as he is unable to tolerate light, for example; he shares a resemblance 'avec les bustes qui représentent les grands hommes du siècle de Louis XIV' (LL, 682), so drained is his physical being of all potency and vitality; and his senses have collapsed as his eyes can no longer see or blink and his ears no longer hear. As Pauline rightly says: 'il a réussi à se dégager de son corps, et nous aperçoit sous une autre forme' (LL, 683). Louis has brought to its climax the process of disembodiment, which he had previously pursued only to a limited degree, now that he has renounced the possibility of achieving the twin but ultimately contradictory aims of being a fully sexualised individual and pursuing his separatist ideals.

Do such considerations have any relevance to *Renée Mauperin*? It would appear that they do. We have already seen that Renée finds her separatist ideals are becoming increasingly isolated and undermined as various family members 'switch sides' and fall under the alluring spell of the integrationist temptations around them. Her environment is gradually being made more and more unliveable, and she finds herself moving towards 'a position of checkmate' (PE, 95) as she now has no-one with whom to share her separatist ideals and has even less of a opportunity than ever of seeing them achieved. Informing the rightful holder of the de Villacourt title of her brother's intentions is thus fully concomitant with the principles of honour and probity which, as we saw earlier in part III, are the hallmarks of these ideals. Her initial mad act of incriminating her brother can thus be seen as an action which is motivated not just by her adherence to the true self's ideals but also by the mounting difficulties they experience in surviving in an increasingly intolerable environment,

thus providing a parallel to the way in which the schizophrenic's unusual behaviour represents 'l'issue que le libre organisme [...] invente pour vivre une situation invivable'.[493]

The second element to Renée's 'mad' behaviour – the way in which she apparently wills herself to death, making no effort to fight off the advancing death throes – can be explained in a similar manner. We saw in the previous chapter that there were seemingly no examples in the early chapters of *Renée Mauperin* of the type of literal form of disembodiment which Laing attributes to the schizophrenic. However, in scenes subsequent to her first 'mad' action of incriminating her brother, instances of disembodiment do, however, emerge. Renée kills off her outer physical being in order to protect the sanctity of her inner true self from the rapidly encroaching integrationist forces in a similar fashion to that which we have seen in relation to the other protagonists and to the Laingian schizophrenic. As the narrator reveals: 'peu à peu elle se laissait s'échapper et s'écouler d'elle la conscience de son être physique, le sentiment et la fatigue de vivre' (RM, 243). She thus takes to its extreme point a process of 'disembodiment':

> une gêne, un malaise vague, se répandant de là par tout son être et la remplissant d'énervement, lui ôtait toute énergie vitale, brisait en elle toute volonté de mouvement et la tenait écrasée, inclinée, sans forces pour sortir et se relever d'elle-même. (RM, 234)

Similarly, the process of self-depersonalisation reaches its apogee as Renée nears her death:

> chaque jour, M. Mauperin cherchait dans sa fille quelque chose qu'il ne trouvait plus et qui n'était plus en elle: ses yeux, son sourire, ses gestes, son pas, sa robe pleine et fière de ses vingt ans, toute cette jeunesse de jeune fille qui volait autour d'elle, et qui vous effleurait en passant, tout cela se voilait, s'évanouissait, disparaissait comme si la physionomie de la vie se retirait d'elle. [...] *Il semblait à M. Mauperin que ce n'était déjà plus sa fille.* (RM, 236-7, my italics)

She, too, again like the Laingian schizophrenic, turns herself into a stone as a way of not being turned into a stone by other people. She commits a form of suicide of the

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[493] Sartre, 'Foreword', in Cooper and Laing, *Reason and Violence*, p. 7.

true self much like that which we have seen in relation to Claude, Julien and Louis as she aims to prevent her true self from being killed off by relatedness with corrupted and corruptible others. It is hardly surprising, then, that critics such as Robert Ricatte have been unable to find many similarities between the manner of Renée's death and the symptoms attributed to a 'maladie de cœur' by nineteenth-century medical experts,[494] as we saw in part II. A Laingian analysis would therefore contend that her death has in fact very little to do with any feelings of grief or shame she may have experienced over the role she played in her brother's untimely death. Instead, it would propose that her death has rather more to do with the drastic measures of absolute (self-)depersonalisation and disembodiment which she takes as a means of sealing off her true self from the ever more threatening possibility of engulfment by the marauding and corrupting integrationist forces which have assailed her all her life.

So far in this chapter, we have seen two stages in the four protagonists' 'comprehensible transition' (TDS, 17) between their behaviour before and after each novel's de-motivated or ambiguously motivated turning-point. This 'comprehensible transition' mirrors that which Laing believed was characteristic of the schizophrenic's shift from 'the sane schizoid way of being-in-the-world to a psychotic way of being-in-the-world' (TDS, 17). These first two stages in the protagonists' transition represent 'the special sort[s] of strateg[ies] which [they] invent in order to live in an unliveable situation' (PE, 95). Their lives have been made unliveable through their having been propelled into an environment in which the values and aspirations associated with their true selves have either been unmasked and killed off or else face imminent engulfment. In the next section, however, we will see that these strategies which are formed to deal with 'this position of checkmate' in fact allow the four protagonists to move towards a temporary realisation of the separatist goals which they initially believed to have been blocked off for good by the defeat of their true selves. Moreover, this brief achievement of their Promethean ambitions imbues them with strong messianic

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[494] See p. 110.

characteristics which in turn suggest close similarities with the objectives which anti-psychiatrists set for their therapeutic practice, but goals which, as we saw in part I, they found themselves unable to achieve in clinical practice. In order to examine one such move towards a 'privileged territory' and a messianic status, I will turn first to *Le Rouge et le Noir*.

'Hierophants of the sacred'

When Julien is in the prison cell, his state of mind is vastly different from that which we saw in the pre-shooting chapters of the novel. He enjoys a previously unexperienced personal tranquillity – 'son âme était calme' (RN, 650) – which leads him to view his up-coming trial as little more than 'de légers embarras, des cérémonies ennuyeuses auxquelles il serait temps de songer le jour même' (RN, 650). Death has lost its sting in his eyes (RN, 650) and his previously all-consuming Napoleonic goals now seem irrelevant: 'il considérait toutes choses sous un nouvel aspect. Il n'avait plus d'ambition. Il pensait rarement à mademoiselle de La Mole' (RN, 650). Mathilde, on the other hand, devotes her life to securing his acquittal and release. Yet in so doing, she manages to increase her distance from Julien as her constant grand-standing and back-room dealing only reminds Julien of the inherent superiority of Mme de Rênal.

> Julien se trouvait peu digne de tant de dévouement, à vrai dire il était fatigué d'héroïsme. C'eût été à une tendresse simple, naïve et presque timide, qu'il se fût trouvé sensible, tandis qu'au contraire, il fallait toujours l'idée d'un public et *des autres* à l'âme hautaine de Mathilde. (RN, 663)

Any such thoughts of 'des autres' are anathema to Julien. He begs Mathilde:

> laissez-moi ma vie idéale. Vos petites tracasseries, vos détails de la vie réelle, plus ou moins froissants pour moi, me tireraient du ciel. On meurt comme on peut: moi je ne veux penser à la mort qu'à ma manière. Que m'importent *les autres*? Mes relations avec *les autres* vont être tranchées brusquement. (RN, 667)

He would even rather be alone than be in the company of Mathilde: 'dans le fait, je suis plus heureux seul que quand cette fille si belle partage ma solitude' (RN, 667); indeed, his one complaint in his prison cell is that he cannot lock the door from the inside. Julien therefore takes to its extreme the third mechanism of defence which Laing attributes to the ontologically insecure individual – isolation – having already taken the techniques of self-depersonalisation and disembodiment to their limits, as we saw earlier in this chapter. The only person who can break through this desire for solitude is Mme de Rênal with whom he is 'éperdument amoureux' (RN, 664): 'ses remords l'occupaient beaucoup et lui présentaient souvent l'image de madame de Rênal, surtout pendant le silence des nuits' (RN, 650). The little time they snatch together is devoted to 'une rêverie profonde': both are lost in 'le pays des idées' (RN, 668), locked together in communion at their time at Vergy. Indeed if one phrase can sum up Julien's existence in his prison cell, it is that 'sa pensée était à Vergy' (RN, 668). His desires to become a Napoleonic super-hero have faded: 'l'ambition était morte en son cœur' (RN, 664), the narrator tells us before going on to say that 'il vivait d'amour' (RN, 695) for Mme de Rênal but not for Mathilde, much to the latter's chagrin. Julien comes to live for the moment: 'il vivait presque sans songer à l'avenir' (RN, 695). Elsewhere the narrator goes on:

> il trouvait un bonheur singulier quand, laissé absolument seul et sans crainte d'être interrompu, il pouvait se livrer tout entier au souvenir des journées heureuses qu'il avait passées jadis à Verrières ou à Vergy. Les moindres incidents de ces temps trop rapidement envolés avaient pour lui une fraîcheur et un charme irrésistibles. Jamais il ne pensait à ses succès de Paris; il en était ennuyé. (RN, 664)

Julien himself gives a testimony to Mme de Rênal of his regrets at having passed up the opportunity for happiness which he recognises now he had within his grasp. He realises: 'j'aurais pu être si heureux pendant nos promenades dans les bois de Vergy' (RN, 695). Yet at that time, 'une ambition fougueuse entraînait mon âme dans les pays imaginaires. Au lieu de serrer contre mon cœur ce bras charmant qui était si près de mes lèvres, l'avenir m'enlevait à toi' (RN, 695). Instead, he tells her that he became embroiled in 'innombrables combats que j'aurais à soutenir pour bâtir une fortune colossale....' (RN, 695), and with the ever indispensable benefit of hindsight,

he can tell Mme de Rênal of his relief at having forsaken his Napoleonic ambitions and the flawed integrationist ruses he had relied upon to bring them to life: 'je serais mort sans connaître le bonheur, si vous n'étiez venue me voir dans cette prison' (RN, 695).

Now that Julien has experienced 'le bonheur', as he admits here, he has rejected definitively the integrationist forces which have been at work on him all his life and with which he has always been so complicit. That these forces have been largely overcome is exemplified by Julien's partial avoidance of speech and his inability to communicate the strength of his emotions within the necessarily restrictive confines of speech, an inability which Mme de Rênal seems, quite contentedly, to share. 'Ses sanglots l'étouffaient; *elle ne pouvait parler*' (RN, 682, my italics); and elsewhere, 'elle s'appuya sur Julien, qui était à ses genoux, et longtemps ils pleurèrent *en silence*' (RN, 682, my italics). We saw earlier Michel Crouzet's statement that language is 'un ordre lointain et négateur du moi, […] [il] humilie le moi et le trahit'.[495] It is this betrayal and denial of his true self that Julien must put right. 'Le langage est en moi un étranger, un non-moi […] qui me confisque à moi-même et me donne à autre chose'.[496] A rejection of this 'étranger' and of this integrationist strategy par excellence which was Julien's manipulation of speech thus acts as a prerequisite for access to this 'privileged territory'. He consequently tells Mathilde: '*from this time forth, I never will speak word*. On ne me verra ni parler ni écrire' (RN, 647). Similarly, that the values of the 'true self' seem to have triumphed can be seen in the fact that the process of 'disculturation'[497] to which Julien is subject in his prison cell has little real effect on him. He receives a series of visitors from his father to Mathilde to the grand-standing priest who wants him to repent of his sins, each of whom attempts to subject him to the integrationist pressures which he had largely complied with and internalised previously. Each of these visitors, however, fails to divert him from his separatist path now that he has become largely impervious to such normalising techniques. Throughout his period in the cell, the values of the 'true

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[495] Crouzet, *Stendhal et le langage*, p. 18.
[496] *ibid.*, p. 19.
[497] Goffman, *Asylums*, p. 23.

self' hold firm, and it is his memories of Vergy and the presence of Mme de Rênal which sustain and console him as death approaches. Indeed the last thoughts to reportedly go through his mind before being guillotined are his recollections of the moments of authentic 'bonheur' which he had managed to experience with Madame de Rênal.

> Jamais cette tête n'avait été aussi poétique qu'au moment où elle allait tomber. Les plus doux moments qu'il avait trouvés jadis dans les bois de Vergy revenaient en foule à sa pensée et avec une extrême énergie. Tout se passa simplement, convenablement, et de sa part sans aucune affectation. (RN, 697)

Julien can finally die 'sans affectation' as his integrationist strategies and his ambitions for Napoleonic glory are now long since dead. It is only then that Julien can finally feel 'fort et résolu comme l'homme qui voit clair dans son âme' (RN, 693).

That the prison cell provides Julien with access to a 'privileged territory' and that incarceration becomes synonymous with liberation stands as a common-place of Stendhal criticism: Victor Brombert, for example, writes that 'the feared prison becomes the happy prison, symbolising self-containment and spiritual self-sufficiency. [Julien] experiences, much like Fabrice in *La Chartreuse de Parme*, an unexpected at-homeness in jail'.[498] Shoshana Felman also stresses that 'la prison délimite dès lors cet espace marginal, espace autre – qui, du fait même de son exclusion, s'établit hors des frontières de l'ordre bourgeois et *transcende* la réalité, et où l'âme, exilée du réel, peut enfin respirer, s'épanouir librement'.[499] What has not been commented on, however, is the proximity of the characteristics of this territory to the goals of anti-psychiatric practice. As we saw in part I, Laing's therapeutic goal was to help restore the schizophrenic individual to a position of 'aletheia'. This he described as the state of being 'true to oneself', and of being 'without secrecy, that which discloses itself without a veil'.[500] In his prison cell, Julien achieves this very

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[498] Brombert, *Stendhal: Fiction and the Themes of Freedom*, p. 92. For a study of this point in relation to *La Chartreuse de Parme*, see Brombert, *The Romantic Prison*, pp. 62-87.
[499] Felman, *La « folie » dans l'œuvre romanesque de Stendhal*, p. 143.
[500] See p. 26.

goal and sheds the veil represented by his Napoleonic ambitions and the integrationist pressures he had colluded with for so long in order to fulfill these ambitions. As a result of shedding this veil, Julien and Louise reach in the prison cell a position of what Laing would term 'genuine mutual relatedness', a state which they had first experienced briefly at Vergy. This relationship is one predicated on 'the original bond of I and You' (TDS, 19). This much is clear when one compares the details of their relationship, as we have just seen them, with the characteristics of an I-You bond as outlined originally by Buber. Tamar Kron's summary of these characteristics was cited earlier, but it bears repetition here because of its brevity.

> I-You relationships are spontaneous, direct and authentic. They occur in the reality of the here-and-now. They are the 'between', the meeting between an authentic open I and a unique separate Other. There is no ulterior motive for the meeting, no objective other than the meeting itself.[501]

This 'I-You' bond contrasts with the second form of relatedness which Buber outlines – an I-It bond – and which characterises Julien and Mathilde's interaction at this point of the novel. Kron describes such an I-It relationship as one in which the 'relations are partial as the other is only an object for the I to use and categorise. The other is not perceived as a separate, independent being, but as a passive something either to possess or analyse'.[502] Such a description echoes the facts that, firstly, 'il fallait toujours l'idée d'un public et *des autres* à l'âme hautaine de Mathilde' (RN, 663), and, secondly, Julien views her constant manoeuvring as a bothersome if ultimately inconsequential distraction. By contrast, Julien and Louise appear to have effected a shift from an I-It to an I-You form of relatedness; they have established inside the prison walls the type of authentic encounter which Laing and his colleagues held up as the aim of their psychotherapeutic practice but which they were ultimately unable to put into clinical practice at, for example, the Kingsley Hall therapeutic community. How do Julien and Louise manage this? It is because Julien has finally 'un-learned the false selves'[503] which he had projected at the Besançon seminary or the Hôtel de La Mole, for example, in order to further his separatist

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[501] Kron, 'The 'We' in Martin Buber's Dialogical Philosophy', p. 14.
[502] *ibid.*, p. 14.
[503] See p. 36.

goals (even if, as we saw earlier in this chapter, these false selves were in fact only standing in the way of the fulfilment of his separatist desires). Julien's achievement in 'un-learning his false selves' seems remarkably similar to the way in which anti-psychiatrists aimed to help their patients divest themselves of their false selves and un-do the knots and double binds in which they had become entangled thanks to disconfirmatory forms of interaction in family and society. Now that Julien's false selves have been demolished and stripped away, he has, in effect, gone through a process of 'positive disintegration'[504] of his self. This, as we saw in part I, was considered by those in the anti-psychiatric vanguard to be a prerequisite to the 'dissolution of the normal ego, that false self competently adjusted to our alienated social reality' (PE, 119), a process which would be facilitated by non-institutionalised, non-invasive therapeutic techniques. In essence, Julien has undergone an 'existential rebirth' and experienced a voyage of a 'metanoic'[505] character similar to the one which Laing hoped Kingsley Hall residents would experience, one which would lead to 'a new quality of thought that is beyond everyday thought'.[506] This we can see clearly in the narrator's statement made very early on during Julien's stay in the Besançon prison cell: 'il [Julien] considérait toutes choses sous un nouvel aspect' (RN, 650).

This new quality of thought is vitally important to both anti-psychiatric therapy and to *Le Rouge et le Noir*. In relation to the latter, it has two important and inter-linked aspects. The first is that it allows Julien to look afresh at the world and recognise that it is founded on sleaze and insincerity. 'J'aime la vérité… Où est-elle?… Partout hypocrisie, ou du moins charlatanisme, même chez les plus vertueux, même chez les plus grands; et ses lèvres prirent l'expression du dégoût… Non, l'homme ne peut pas se fier à l'homme' (RN, 690). The established church and organised religion, too, are the objects of his allegations of sanctimony: 'où est la vérité? Dans la religion… Oui, ajouta-t-il *avec le sourire amer du plus extrême mépris*, dans la bouche des Maslon, des Frilair, des Castanède…' (RN, 691, my italics). It is not only Julien's religious

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[504] See p. 38.
[505] See p. 41.
[506] See pp. 41.

contemporaries who are castigated by Julien as even the Church's founding fathers do not escape censure: 'où est la vérité? […] Peut-être dans le vrai christianisme, dont les prêtres ne seraient pas plus payés que les apôtres ne l'ont été? … Mais saint Paul fut payé par le plaisir de commander, de parler, de faire parler de soi…' (RN, 691). Napoleon, once Julien's idol, also now appears in a different light, demonstrating just how much Julien's priorities have been re-ordered as a result of his miraculous 'metanoic' conversion. 'Madame de *** faisant une quête pour ses pauvres orphelins, me disait que tel prince venait de donner dix louis; mensonge. Mais que dis-je? Napoléon à Sainte-Hélène!… Pur charlatanisme, proclamation en faveur du roi de Rome' (RN, 691).

The second aspect to the new quality of thought which Julien's 'metanoic' voyage or 'existential re-birth' brings about as a direct, if unplanned, result of his 'mad' behaviour is that he becomes endowed with a Christ-like omniscience. This messianic status is remarkably similar to the state of prophetic or divine wisdom which Laing and his anti-psychiatrist colleagues believed their disturbed patients could be able to access as a result of their existential crises. Both in *Le Rouge et le Noir* and in the anti-psychiatric theories of R. D. Laing, we find reference to individuals who successfully divest themselves of their collective identities. In Laing's words 'the "normal", "adjusted" state is too often the abdication of ecstasy' (TDS, 12). Both Julien Sorel and the Laingian schizophrenic patient are able to move beyond the 'pseudo-sanity' which represents 'the betrayal of [their] true potentialities' (TDS, 12) and access a messianic sphere in which they become 'the servant of the divine and no longer its betrayer' (PE, 119). Admittedly, Laing's techniques for aiding his patients to reach this 'gateway to Promethean discoveries'[507] were fiercely disputed by his colleagues in the psychiatric establishment, and, more importantly, seemed to work out better on paper than in clincial reality, as we saw in part I. The fact remains, however, that Julien Sorel appears to realise – albeit briefly - in a fictional context the goals of anti-psychiatric therapy which Laing arguably largely failed to achieve in practice. As such, Laing's

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[507] See p. 38.

most famous and most cited declaration – 'madness need not all be breakdown, […] it may also be breakthrough' (PE, 110) – would seem to have considerable resonance within the final stages of the life of Julien Sorel, as is demonstrated by the many messianic characteristics which Julien assumes in the final chapters of the novel and which many Stendhal critics have pointed to. Roger Pearson, for example, describes Julien's 'voyage d'apprentissage' as his own personal 'via dolorosa';[508] Hans Boll-Johansen sees the incident in which Julien shares a drink with two fellow prison inmates as an 'allusion évidente aux deux larrons de la Bible';[509] while Richard B. Grant points to the fact that '[Julien's] head is spirited away by Mathilde, a fact unknown to his escort'.[510] Grant is also at pains to make the judicious point, however, that in spite of all the surface similarites between the lives of Julien and Jesus, 'even more obvious is that there are innumberable differences […], both formal and substantive. To take but one example, there is only one woman who goes to the cave, not two as in the Bible, and Mathilde de La Mole can in no way be assumed to resemble them'.[511] What remains unarguable, however, is that Julien certainly takes on god-like characteristics in the eyes of Mme de Rênal who sees him as a messianic figure worthy of her adoration: 'dès que je te vois, tous les devoirs disparaissent, je ne suis plus qu'amour pour toi, ou plutôt, le mot amour est trop faible. Je sens pour toi ce que je devrais sentir uniquement pour Dieu: un mélange de respect, d'amour, d'obéissance' (RN, 683). The cult of Julien is such that he inspires his followers to fanaticism as is evidenced both by the crowds who attend his trial in such numbers and are so moved by his words and also by this statement from Mme de Rênal: 'en vérité, je ne sais pas ce que tu m'inspires. Tu me dirais de donner un coup de couteau au geôlier, que le crime serait commis avant que j'y eusse songé' (RN, 683).

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[508] Pearson, *Stendhal's Violin*, p. 153.
[509] Hans Boll-Johansen, *Stendhal et le roman: Essai sur la structure du roman stendhalien* (Aran: Editions du Grand Chêne, 1979), p. 115.
[510] Grant, 'The Death of Julien Sorel', p. 28. F. W. J. Hemmings adds a further dimension to this messianic theme by drawing a parallel between Julien and Saint Julien the Apostate. See his article 'Julien Sorel and Julian the Apostate', *French Studies*, 16 (1962), 229-44.
[511] *ibid.*, p. 28.

Do the conclusions which we have reached here regarding Julien's messianic status and his anticipation of anti-psychiatric objectives have any relevance to the other three novels? It would appear that they do when we turn, first, to *Renée Mauperin*. We saw in part II that the 'invraisemblance' which surrounds Renée's death relates not merely to why she should incriminate her brother or to why she should die at any early age but also, most significantly of all, to the overtly beatified manner of her death and to the apparent transfiguration she undergoes on her death-bed. She is characterised, for example, by 'une beauté d'extase et de suprême délivrance', (RM, 259) and 'la paix d'un ravissement' (RM, 259): she dies, in Cabanès's words 'une mort édifiante'.[512] What, then, is significant about the manner of her death is the fact that she has reached a privileged territory in which she is able to see her separatist ideals finally realised, or, in Laingian terms, in which her true self's ideals of 'inner honesty, freedom, omnipotence and creativity' (TDS, 89) can be ultimately fulfilled. How has she done this? It would appear that this privileged territory has been accessed thanks to the processes of full disembodiment, depersonalisation and isolation which she undertakes in parallel to killing off her physical, outer false self. We have already seen examples of Renée's reliance on the mechanisms of disembodiment and (self-)depersonalisation. For these procedures to be effective, however, and for there to have been no counter-acting, centripetal integrationist pressures acting on her, Renée has had to foresake relatedness almost entirely and withdraw into as extreme a form of isolation as she can manage. Accordingly, she insists towards the end of the novel on moving to the family's isolated estate at Morimond, a place whose buildings include a deserted, tumble-down monastery and whose name is derived from the phrase 'mort-au-monde' (RM, 59). She, too, quite simply wishes to be 'morte-au-monde'. As Peter J. Edwards describes in his study of urban / provincial topography in the Goncourts' novels, 'la ville est avant tout un centre de pouvoir: un pouvoir qui s'exerce inéluctablement sur la vie des personnages avec ou sans leurs concours'.[513] It is in 'la ville' (in Renée's case, Paris) that the integrationist forces at work on Renée are not only at their most intense but

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[512] Cabanès, 'L'art de mourir', p. 99.

[513] Peter J. Edwards, 'Lieux de pouvoir, pouvoir des lieux: Images de la ville chez les frères Goncourt', *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 30 (1993), 214-21 (p. 214).

are also at their most 'inéluctable'. Morimond, by contrast, acts as a 'non-lieu' which defies referentiality, 'un lieu de pure idéalité' where 'le personnage [peut] se réaliser sans opposition'[514] – that is, where Renée can realise her separatist goals without opposition from the array of normalising forces to which she has been constantly subjected. It was at Morimond as a child that Renée had known her happiest days, and it was there that she had initially been associated with imagery of the divine: she was a 'petit ange' (RM, 62) in the adoring eyes of her father as the two of them indulged in 'des bêtises divines' (RM, 62), joined in a Rousseau-esque communion with nature: 'il [M Mauperin] ressentait d'ineffables douceurs à entendre son enfant, pénétrée de tout ce bruit dans lequel il marchait, chercher des sons, murmurer, bégayer, comme pour répondre aux oiseaux et parler au ciel qui chantait' (RM, 62). Morimond, and the isolation she experiences there, when taken together with her depersonalisation and disembodiment, allow Renée to be 'morte-au-monde'. As such, Morimond provides Renée with an invaluable opportunity to move towards the realisation of her separatist ideals.

That Renée is 'mort-au-monde' can also be seen in the significant development undergone at this stage of the novel by the aesthetic of silence which has characterised her entire life. As we saw in relation to Julien Sorel, a rejection of speech goes hand in hand with a rejection of the self-normalising techniques which so charactersed Renée's earlier life. As such, it is a prerequisite to her accessing a privileged territory in which she may move towards a realisation of her ideals. What is perhaps most interesting about the textual inscription of silence at this stage of *Renée Mauperin* is not so much the way in which Renée's silence is 'told' (after all, how can Renée 'say' she is being silent?), but the way in which it is 'shown', as her withdrawal from speech is conveyed most substantially on the narratological level. For example, the narrative towards the end of the novel becomes considerably more elliptical and impressionistic with the final thirty chapters of the novel (out of a total

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[514] *ibid.*, p. 215. On this point, see also the excellent study of the Goncourts' *Germinie Lacerteux*, *Soeur Philomène* and *La Fille Elisa* by Danielle Thaler, 'A la recherche du paradis perdu: enfance et prolétariat dans trois romans des Goncourt', *Les Cahiers Naturalistes*, 58 (1984), 97-110.

of 65) taking up a little under 25% of the novel as compared with the first thirty chapters which account for over 60%. An extreme example of this textual compression is to be found in the novel's fifty-seventh chapter which comes only a few pages before Renée's death and which reads in its entirety:

> Comme elle regardait par sa fenêtre, elle [Renée] vit une fois une femme s'asseoir dans la poussière au milieu de la rue du village, entre une pierre et une ornière, et démailloter son petit enfant. L'enfant sur le ventre, le haut du corps dans l'ombre, remuait ses petites jambes, croisait ses pieds, gigottait dans le soleil: le soleil le fouettait amoureusement comme il fouette les nudités d'enfant. Des rayons qui le caressaient et le chatouillaient, semblaient lui jeter aux talons les roses d'une corbeille de Fête-Dieu... La mère et l'enfant partis, Renée regardait encore. (RM, 246)

Reading this chapter, one is left with the impression that the entire novel is withering away and silencing itself, paralleling Renée's own physical withering and self-silencing, given that the narrator refrains from providing the kind of all-explaining, all-knowing interventions which so characterise the early part of the novel.[515] Such silencing of the omniscient narrator in the guise of an increasingly pointillist writing style also serves to create a strong sense of solidarity between the narrator and Renée's fate.

We have seen so far that Renée is now largely 'morte-au-monde' thanks to her having taken to their extreme the processes of isolation, disembodiment and depersonalisation. A Laingian interpretation of the manner of her death would thus suggest that she takes on divine attributes on her death-bed because she, like Julien, has successfully divested herself of the collective identites and false self systems she had projected earlier in the novel as a means of coping with the integrationist pressures being applied to her. She, too, has undergone a form of existential rebirth and a 'metanoic voyage' which endows her with 'une beauté d'extase et de délivrance' (RM, 259). Such messianic qualities inspire cowering and worshipful admiration from those present: 'son père, sa mère, son ami étaient tombés à genoux' (RM, 259). In effect, she becomes a conduit for the divine or, in anti-psychiatric terms, 'a hierophant of the sacred': 'ses yeux grands ouverts, tournés en haut,

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[515] See, for example, chapters 2, 5 (especially pp. 84-6), 6 (pp. 91-4), 8, 12 (pp. 121-3) or 20.

paraissaient s'emplir d'infini, son regard, peu à peu, prenait la fixité des choses éternelles. De tous ses traits se levait comme une aspiration bienheureuse' (RM, 259). Elsewhere, we read: 'elle était à demi détachée de son être, et toute prête à se dissiper dans la divine douceur des choses' (RM, 243), and that 'ce qui l'enveloppait d'ombre l'enveloppait aussi de paix' (RM, 239). Interestingly, in response to the narrator's statement: 'elle se mit à [...] parler de tous les bons côtés de la souffrance' (RM, 231), Jean-Louis Cabanès writes: 'filtrée par l'instance narrative qui s'interpose entre le lecteur et le personnage, *la parole de Renée semble ainsi venir d'outretombe tout en énonçant des vérités intemporelles*'.[516] It is, then, only as a result of her 'madness' and of her allegedly 'mad' actions that she has been able to embark on this 'healing voyage' and leave behind her 'pseudo-sanity' of paying lip-service to the integrationist pressures at work on her. As a consequence of her 'madness', she can access a quasi-messianic status and have revealed to her new insights which are blocked off to the rest of humanity

Louis Lambert also undertakes a 'healing voyage' as a result of his 'madness' similar to that which he have just witnessed in relation to Julien and Renée. He, too, is endowed with overt messianic characteristics as a result of having taken as far as possible the processes of disembodiment, depersonalisation and isolation. The narrator goes on a 'pélerinage' (LL, 680) to visit him and then describes the effect which Louis's few words have on him: his words 'semblaient accuser un bonheur divin' (LL, 683). Louis can bear witness to others of an 'incomplète révélation d'un monde inconnu' (LL, 683) given that 'sans cesse, il voltige à travers les espaces de la pensée' (LL, 684). When Louis speaks, he has an almost evangelical effect on his listeners: 'sa phrase retentit dans nos âmes comme quelque magnifique sonnerie d'église au milieu d'une nuit profonde' (LL, 683). Louis's 'madness' has led to what Laing would describe as 'the dissolution of the normal ego' and also, crucially, to 'the emergence of the 'inner' archetypal mediator of divine power' (PE, 119). His existential rebirth has facilitated 'the eventual re-establishment of a new kind of ego-functioning, the ego now being the servant of the divine, no longer its betrayer' (PE,

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[516] Cabanès, 'L'art de mourir', p. 103, my italics.

119). As Pauline explains: 'quand il parle, il exprime les choses merveilleuses' (LL, 683), or in the words of one critic: 'Louis Lambert, the hero, transcends the bitter limitations of the human comedy'.[517] He has indeed become a 'hierophant of the sacred' and has progressed onto the higher plane of sanity which anti-psychiatrists believed their patients would be able to access given a supportive therapeutic environment, a higher plane beyond the 'pseudo-sanity' of everyday life and one which he feels no real need to return from. As Pauline tells the narrator: 'peut-être un jour Louis reviendra-t-il à cette vie dans laquelle nous végétons; mais s'il respire l'air des cieux avant les temps où il nous sera permis d'y exister, pourquoi souhaiterons-nous de le revoir parmi nous?' (LL, 684)

Does Claude Lantier fall into this same category, one in which he undergoes a process of 'positive disintegration'? One might initially think not given that the novel ends on a note of such wretched despair at Claude's graveside. As Bongrand and Sandoz put the problem:

> - […] Si nous ne tenions pas si fort à nos peaux, nous ferions tous comme lui [Claude]… N'est-ce pas?
> - Ma foi, oui. Puisque nous ne pouvons rien créer, puisque nous ne sommes que des reproducteurs débiles, autant vaudrait-il nous casser la tête tout de suite (LO, 363).

Yet even if the perspective of the narrator appears to support their nihilistic view, it is not necessarily one which is shared by Claude as he appears to obey quite willingly 'la voix haute' (LO, 352) which calls him back towards his art and towards his death now that he knows he will never be able to realise his artistic ideals. In so doing, Claude too accesses 'a new quality of thought', which, much like in the case of Julien Sorel and the other protagonists, allows him to see the reality of the world around him for what it really is: 'il se décida, c'était fini, il souffrait trop, il ne pouvait plus vivre, *puisque tout mentait et qu'il n'y avait rien de bon*' (LO, 351, my italics). He, like Renée, can finally throw off the integrationist shackles which just a few moments before had become all-powerful in the guise of Christine. 'Il avait rompu la chaîne enfin, il était libre. Un troisième appel le fit se hâter, il passa dans la

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[517] Buck, 'The Uses of Madness', p. 65.

pièce voisine, en disant: « Oui, oui, j'y vais! » (LO, 352). He obeys his calling and becomes a martyr to the divinity which his Promethean ideals represent.

Conclusion to Part III

In part III, we have undertaken a Laingian analysis of the four protagonists' behaviour and of their arguably 'invraisemblables' and irrational actions. This analysis has suggested, firstly, that there is in fact, in Laing's words, 'a comprehensible transition' (TDS, 17) between the protagonists' behaviour in the early stages of each novel and that towards the end of the novel, and, secondly, that their allegedly 'mad' actions should not in reality be seen as out-of-place and can instead be viewed as 'context-sensible'. This 'comprehensible transition' centres on an uneasy co-existence between two mutually exclusive sets of separatist desires and integrationist pressures within each of the protagonists, a co-existence which, as we in chapters two and three of part III, eventually becomes unsustainable. All four protagonists reach a point where they realise that their separatist ideals are about to be engulfed by the hostile, normalising environment around them, and, consequently, that these goals will never be realised. At this point, all four protagonists commit a form of suicide of their true selves or of their separatist ideals in order to prevent their true selves from being entirely subsumed or destroyed. All four abide by the key principle Laing attributes to the schizophrenic – that is, they turn themselves into stone to prevent themselves from being turned into stone by others. As a result of their 'suicide', however, they gain access to a higher sphere of existence which endows them with quasi-messianic characteristics and which would seem to suggest that they have in fact managed to realise, albeit briefly and in a limited space, both the goals of their true selves as well as the aims of anti-psychiatric therapy which Laing and his colleagues failed to achieve in clinical practice.

This Laingian analysis of the four novels would furthermore suggest that some critics' interpretations of the protagonists' lives, examined in part II chapter two, are somewhat wide of the mark. For example, a Laing-inspired examination of *Louis Lambert* would argue that Louis should not be seen at the end of his life as a tragic figure or an incapacitated failure, as many psychiatrists and critics have suggested.[518] Instead, it concords with Balzac's own view that with *Louis Lambert* he aimed to

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[518] See pp. 71 and 95.

portray 'les grandes conceptions de l'extase humaine échauffée par le souffle divin';[519] and also with the small number of critics who propose a positive assessment of Louis's final state such as Arthur Holmberg who believes that the novel represents 'the triumph of man's spirit to transcend the confines of physical reality'.[520] Moreover, it bolsters, firstly, those critics who celebrate rather than denigrate or ignore the role of Pauline de Villenoix in Louis's destiny,[521] and, secondly, those like Barbéris[522] who situate Louis's denial of the body within his 'profond besoin de vérité, d'authenticité',[523] a need which remains unsated in the world around him. Yet a Laingian approach surely enables us to go beyond the work of these critics as it provides an insight into the specific psychological processes which underlie and precipitate this need to escape and transcend the limitations of the human condition.

Regarding *Le Rouge et le Noir*, we saw that a Laingian interpretation rejects the view that Julien's attempt on the life of Mme de Rênal is by its essence inexplicable or the result of an involuntary state of hypnosis or extreme paranoia.[524] It also suggests that interpretations of the shooting which focus on notions of social class and revenge[525] or on Julien's relations with father or mother figures[526] have certain limitations. It proposes instead that Julien's behaviour is motivated more by the complex interplay between his ambitions and the methods he has been using to bring about these ambitions. It situates his murder attempt within the dramatic collapse of his self-image as a figure of Napoleonic stature and potential and within the realisation that he has become the type of vile despicable hypocrite which he had always so despised. Of all the critical approaches reviewed in part II, it would seem to be that put forward by Leo Bersani which our anti-psychiatric interpretation lies most closely to. Bersani wrote:

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[519] Balzac, *Correspondance*, II, p. 693.
[520] Holmberg, 'Louis Lambert and Maximilian Rubin', p. 130.
[521] See pp. 96-8.
[522] See p. 97.
[523] Barbéris, *Balzac et le mal du siècle*, p. 1728.
[524] See pp. 99-103.
[525] See p. 103-4.
[526] See p. 105.

> Julien is fit to be neither a revolutionary nor a parvenu because his social ambitions include very little interest in society; instead, he wants to be powerful enough to do without society. Julien sees Napoleon not as the man who changed society, but rather as a historical metaphor for his own dream of a secure solitude in which people will no longer be able to hurt him.[527]

It is just this dream 'of a secure solitude' which Julien is eventually able to realise, not because of his status as a quasi-Napoleonic revolutionary, but precisely because he comes to sacrifice his ambitions to 'faire fortune' and 'faire les choses extraordinaires'.

Our Laingian examination of *Renée Mauperin* contributes much to the field of Goncourt criticism because relatively little critical attention has been focused on the novel to date. It also gives some backing to the second of the two critical schools of thought relating Renée's behaviour: namely, that which focuses on the 'productive' aspects of her death and the messianic status she assumes on her death-bed.[528] It thus rejects the views put forward by, firstly, François Fosca, for example, that the guilt and shame she feels over the role she played in her brother's death are to blame for her untimely demise through precipitating a fatal 'maladie de cœur',[529] and, secondly, Robert Ricatte who believes that the novel is fatally flawed because it fails to remain faithful to the medical theories of the day. In relation to the final scenes of the novel, for example, he writes: 'le passage est d'un grand effet, mais il est irritant quand on a lu les agonies réelles de Bouillaud'.[530] Medical realism, a Laingian critic would argue, is only of secondary importance to the end of the novel when compared with the transcendent state of divine beauty that Renée is able to access as a result of having forsaken the impossible task of trying to remain true to herself and to her absolute values in a world characterised by corruption and mediocrity. In essence, Renée has become a martyr to the divinity of authenticity in a 'mad' and dishonourable world.

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[527] Bersani, *Balzac to Beckett*, pp. 95-6.
[528] See pp. 109-11.
[529] See p. 108.
[530] Ricatte, *La Création romanesque chez les Goncourt*, p. 242.

Finally, turning to Zola's *L'Œuvre*, the Laingian critic would reject as largely irrelevant the swathes of criticism devoted to the questions of the reliability of the novel as a document of sociological or artistic history.[531] Instead, it gives backing to the much smaller school of criticism which focuses on Claude Lantier's quest for authenticity in art, a search which eventually proves to be impossible. Significantly, however, Laing's work provides an important development of the ideas put forward by critics such as David Walker and Thomas Zamparelli[532] as it permits an examination of the day-to-day psychological process which Claude must undergo in the attempt to produce 'true' or 'authentic' art.

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[531] See pp. 111-5.
[532] See pp. 116-8.

Thesis Conclusion

In the introduction to this thesis, I proposed that my aims would be twofold. First, I aimed to put forward anti-psychiatry-inspired responses to a series of questions regarding seemingly irrational and out-of-place events in four novels. This objective has been met in part III of this thesis where I situated the four protagonists' behaviour within the unsustainable co-existence between two mutually exclusive sets of separatist desires and integrationist pressures. The second aim was to examine, more widely, the extent to which the writings of R. D. Laing, discredited though they may be in clinical psychiatric circles, may be used as a framework within which to analyse literary texts. Throughout this thesis, many convergences have emerged between the four novels and Laing's writings - notably his 1960 work *The Divided Self*. These convergences, I believe, suggest that Laing's work does indeed offer the literary critic a wide range of simple but still extremely fruitful concepts and tools with which to analyse the actions and motivations of fictional characters. It has also emerged, however, that the elements of Laing's work which gained him most renown within 1960's counter-cultural circles and most notoriety among his one-time colleagues in the psychiatric establishment – that is, his belief in madness as a healing voyage which could potentially facilitate a metanoic conversion – are the same elements which provide surely the closest parallel of all between his work and the four novels. This fact would therefore appear to give some credence to Elaine Showalter's view which was quoted in the thesis introduction: 'if Laing's work lasts, it will not be in the realm of psychiatric practice or social style, but in art or literature, where it may provide instructive images and tropes for other imaginations'.[533] The field of literary analysis thus could arguably offer Laing's work, particularly his most discredited work, a warmer and more welcoming home than the sphere of clinical psychiatry does today.

In part I, I demonstrated that some moves have been made recently towards re-establishing Laing as a key figure of twentieth-century psychiatry and psychotherapy. Much critical work remains to be done, however, on the writings of R. D. Laing and their fruitful conjunction with literary texts. I hope therefore that this thesis can represent one small contribution to the rapidly growing field of Laingian

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[533] Showalter, 'Laing and the Sixties', p. 127.

analyses of literary texts and can contribute towards establishing Laing's work as a significant tool for literary analysis.

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