

379
N81
NO. 4835

THE TREATMENT OF THE HEROINES IN REPRESENTATIVE
NOVELS OF FRANCOIS MAURIAC

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Linda Ruth Hendry, B. A.

Denton, Texas

May, 1974

RGH

Hendry, Linda R., The Treatment of the Heroines in Representative Novels of François Mauriac. Master of Arts (French), May, 1974, 182 pp., bibliography, 27 titles.

This study analyzes specific scenes in the novels dealt with in order to determine the type of women characters Mauriac has created.

This study covers Mauriac's early, middle, and late periods as a novelist. The heroines are nearly all examined in relation to each other chronologically. The study shows that Mauriac first portrays a religious and simple heroine. The heroines become agnostic, if not atheistic in several of the subsequent novels. Through Thérèse, they become progressively more psychologically complex. They then become less complicated and, except for the last heroine, are religious. The last heroine is psychologically portrayed but is the least original of the heroines. The examination of Mauriac's women characters seems to show that the author is deeply sympathetic with the majority of them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. NOEMI D'ARTIAILH, MATHILDE AND FELICITE CAZENAVE, AND MARIA CROSS	7
III. THERESE DESQUEYROUX, ISA FONDAUDEGE, AND BLANCHE FRONTENAC	54
IV. BRIGITTE PIAN AND PAULE DE CERNES	126
V. CONCLUSION	158
BIBLIOGRAPHY	181

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

François Mauriac was born in 1885 in Bordeaux, France, and died in 1970 in Paris. During those eighty-four years, he wrote over one hundred works, which include four volumes of poetry, a very short autobiography called Commencements d'une vie, several biographies, much literary criticism, four plays, including the successful Asmodée, and twenty-four novels. Mauriac is often classified as a regionalist because nearly all of his novels are situated in the Bordeaux area.

The death of Mauriac's atheistic father in early June of 1887 is particularly important in the writer's life since the boy was then left to be raised by a household of devout Catholic women. In Commencements d'une vie Mauriac poetically recalls the various women in his life--two sisters, a grandmother, aunts, and above all, the mother, about whom he writes: "Tout ce qui touchait à elle prenait à mes yeux un caractère sacré . . ." (1, p. 25). He commemorates his mother, Claire, in his novel called Le Mystère Frontenac.

In view of the number of women surrounding Mauriac when he was a small boy, it is little wonder that such striking women characters are found in his novels. Because women played such an important role in his life, one should

be interested particularly in studying the heroines in his works.

The novels examined in this study were selected because they seem to be the most representative of Mauriac's fictional output, both in terms of the value attributed to them and in terms of the dates of publication. Le Baiser au lépreux brought the author instant fame as a novelist. Three years later he received Le Grand Prix du Roman for Le Désert de l'amour. During the time that he was writing Thérèse Desqueyroux, the novel for which he is probably best known, Mauriac was suffering a severe religious crisis, which he finally resolved, choosing to remain firm in his Catholic faith. The then widely acclaimed novelist was elected to the French Academy in 1933, the year Le Mystère Frontenac was published. Mauriac was selected for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1952, a year after he completed Le Sagouin, the last novel included in this study.

The heroines to be considered come from works covering Mauriac's early, middle, and late periods as a novelist. The main chapters of the thesis coincide with the three divisions so that Chapter II covers the early years from 1922 to 1925 and includes the most important heroines from Le Baiser au lépreux, 1922; Genitrix, 1923; and Le Désert de l'amour, 1925. Chapter III includes heroines from the middle years, 1928 to 1935. The novels in this period are Thérèse Desqueyroux, 1928; La Fin de la nuit, 1935; Le Noeud

de vipères, 1932; and Le Mystère Frontenac, 1933. For the purpose of continuity, La Fin has been placed after Thérèse Desqueyroux because Thérèse is the main heroine in both novels. Therefore, it seemed better to place La Fin out of chronological order and focus attention once on Thérèse, rather than place the novel in correct chronological sequence and be forced to reexamine the heroine after studying two other women. The late period, which spans a decade, is included in Chapter IV and includes only two novels, La Pharisienne, 1941, and Le Saqouin, 1951.

Not all of the women in the novels have been included simply because of the scope of such a study. Consequently, only the most important ones, the heroines, from each novel will be considered. Both of the principal female characters from Genitrix will be examined because each plays a very significant role in the book. Thérèse will be considered as one heroine even though she appears in two novels. Thus, the study will include a total of nine heroines.

As has already been stated, except for Thérèse of La Fin, all of the heroines will appear in chronological order, since part of the purpose of the study is to see whether or not there are any significant changes in Mauriac's treatment of his heroines from his early through his late period as a novelist. None of the critics included in this examination appears to have undertaken a similar study in the same manner as has been done here, nor does there seem

to be such a study anywhere. Most of the criticism appears to concentrate on Thérèse. There seems to be little criticism available on some of the lesser known heroines, such as Blanche Frontenac, Isa Fondaudège of Le Noeud, the later Thérèse, and particularly of Paule de Cernès of Le Sagouin. The limited amount of criticism on many of Mauriac's heroines is rather surprising considering the fact that he creates such interesting women characters.

In view of the importance of the women's liberation movement today, it will be a point of interest to notice whether Mauriac expresses his attitude towards a woman's role in society. Are the women in his novels able to express themselves freely? Are they able to choose the role they wish to play in life? In other words, do his heroines seem to be liberated or trapped women? Do the women seem satisfied with their lot in life? Does Mauriac appear to feel that they should be more or perhaps less liberated than they are?

The purpose, then, of this investigation is to examine Mauriac's treatment of specific heroines, who are thought to be representative, by focusing on important scenes of the novels in which these women appear. It is believed that by analyzing those scenes a fairly accurate image of each heroine can be developed and that valid comparisons can then be made. Also it is hoped that by concentrating on specific scenes, a flavor of the author's style will be handed to

the reader. Mauriac's style is, after all, one of his strongest assets in his powerful portrayal of women.

In short, the aim of this investigation is two-fold. It is hoped that by examining the heroines in specific scenes a fair evaluation can be made of each one and that this evaluation will make it possible to compare the heroines with one another in order to see what Mauriac has created in the way of women characters. Once it has been seen how the author treats his women, it is hoped that that information will lead to a better understanding of Mauriac, both as a person and as a writer.

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Mauriac, François, Commencements d'une vie, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1932.

CHAPTER II

NOÉMI D'ARTIAILH, MATHILDE AND FÉLICITÉ

CAZENAVE, AND MARIA CROSS

Noémi d'Artiailh is the young heroine of Le Baiser au lépreux, the novel which in 1922 established Mauriac's reputation as a novelist (7, p. 105), as was stated earlier.

Jean Péloueyre, the young hero of Le Baiser, is used to watching the pretty Noémi d'Artiailh every Thursday morning when she stops at the haberdasher's below his window. The contrast of her pretty face nestled in brown curls with her rather stocky body appeals to Jean. His thoughts are mixed as he stares greedily at her from behind the closed shutters of his bedroom. Her face makes him think of her angelic attributes and her purity, but her stocky body arouses baser thoughts in him. In the description of Noémi which follows, many of the words which Mauriac uses depict her innocence: "chasteté," "enfance," and "virginité." The author's use of the word "soudain" makes the contrast of her face and body seem all the more startling:

Déjà son cou, sa douce gorge luisaient de moiteur. Des cils indéfinis ajoutaient à la chasteté des longues paupières sombres: visage encore baigné de vague enfance, virginité des lèvres puériles--et soudain ces fortes mains de garçon, ces mollets qu'au ras du talon, comprimés de lacets, il fallait bien appeler chevilles (10, p. 157)!

The d'Artiailh arrange for Noémi to marry Jean Péloueyre, even though he is horribly ugly and sensitive, because the Péloueyre name is prestigious and represents a large fortune. The families arrange for the couple to meet at the church to be introduced to each other.

Mauriac compares the dark room of the church to a scientific laboratory in which the scientist is seen peering through his microscope at the specimen. Jean Péloueyre, insecure in his own ugliness, searches for flaws in Noémi's appearance and notices her blackheads, her stained throat, and her faded tooth (10, pp. 163-164). While she is being scrutinized, Noémi looks at Jean Péloueyre and compares him in her mind to a cricket and a larva. She concludes that he is really a little crazy (10, pp. 164-165). The imagery clearly shows that the young couple is doomed to misery.

The flower motif, used by Mauriac several times in Le Baiser to depict what Noémi feels in her spirit (4, p. 69), is employed at the beginning and end of the church scene. When Jean first sees Noémi, her dress overflows her chair like a magnolia in full bloom, but as she leaves the church, her dress looks crumpled and her head is bent down in a dejected fashion. Mauriac now compares her to a flower, cut and wilting (10, p. 166). In only a few minutes' time, Jean Péloueyre has destroyed the youthful and eager look of the girl he peers at from his room on market days.

Actually, Noémi is in utter horror and misery at the thought of marrying the Péloueyre son. At night, she stares out into the lovely sky, saying her prayers, tears running down her cheeks. The sound of the crickets reminds her of her own cricket, Jean. The thought of sleeping with Jean Péloueyre especially worries her. But more terrible still is her image of the ugly child that will be born to them. Noémi's feeling of helplessness is expressed in the idea that Jean Péloueyre will have all the rights over her body and it will be for a lifetime: "Elle savait qu'il aurait droit à toute caresse, et à celle-là, mystérieuse et terrible, après quoi un enfant naîtrait, un petit Péloueyre tout noir et chétif. . . . Le grillon, elle l'aurait toute sa vie et jusque dans ses draps" (10, p. 168).

Noémi does not refuse to marry Jean Péloueyre because she has been taught that her role in life is to be the servant in the family, to obey, and to keep house. She has been sheltered from reading novels, a habit which Mauriac says in his essay, "L'éducation des filles," was especially thought dangerous in the provinces, even as late as 1933 (9, p. 169). The family has kept Noémi's mind narrow so that she believes the oft-repeated phrases like, "On ne refuse pas le fils Péloueyre" (10, p. 168)! The Péloueyre name is one of the best in the area and means the wealth of farms, sheep, silver, and all the fine things of life (10, p. 169).

The fine things of life do not come cheaply for Noémi d'Artiailh. The scene depicting the morning following the wedding night shows how expensive the Péloueyre name, and all that goes with it, is. Even the words Mauriac uses-- "se battre," "longtemps," "morte," "lutte," "six heures," and "sueur"--add up to the fact that the sexual battle is a tragic disaster. The battle has been fought by Jean Péloueyre only. Noémi has responded like a dead woman. She is pictured as the innocent child, dying a martyr's death:

Jean Péloueyre dut se battre longtemps, d'abord contre sa propre glace, puis contre une morte. À l'aube un gémissement faible marqua la fin d'une lutte qui avait duré six heures. Trempé de sueur, Jean Péloueyre n'osait bouger,--plus hideux qu'un ver auprès de ce cadavre enfin abandonné.

Elle était pareille à une martyre endormie. Les cheveux collés au front, comme dans l'agonie, rendaient plus mince son visage d'enfant battu (20, p. 171).

The extremes to which Mauriac goes to make the reader share Noémi's horror of Jean's ugliness and her determination to fulfill her role faithfully as his wife can scarcely be exaggerated. At times, Noémi, moved by pity for Jean Péloueyre, is able, by clenching her teeth and closing her eyes, to throw herself towards him, similar to the way in which a Christian virgin might have thrown herself to the beast in the amphitheater (10, p. 174). Noémi has never really given herself to Jean; in her attitude towards him, she is still a virgin. There is no unity in the marriage. John Flower points out that Noémi goes by her maiden name

throughout Le Baiser, another indication that the marriage is a failure (4, pp. 58-59).

Nevertheless, Noémi is an efficient housekeeper. Almost immediately following the honeymoon, she is busy taking care of M. Jérôme, Jean Péloueyre's invalid father, and is adeptly seeing to the needs of the tenants. She seems to have a level head when it comes to the business matters, for she has charge of all those also (10, p. 173). But sometimes she keeps busy so that she can postpone going to bed where she will have to be near her husband (10, p. 176).

Noémi expresses her disgust for Jean Péloueyre through her silence. He, too, is unable to talk to her. Both of them are in a continual state of suffering; both try not to offend the other one. "Jamais entre eux de ces disputes qui séparent les amants" (10, p. 177). In trying to overcome her disgust for Jean, Noémi loses her appetite and starts looking thin. Jean Péloueyre notices also how white her ears are (10, p. 175).

Noémi is only too relieved when Jean lets her know that he is going to Paris for awhile. She tries to pretend, for Jean's sake, that she does not want him to leave. However, Jean notices that in her protests of his leaving, there is a marked feeling of forced sadness, of insincerity. He puts her sincerity to the test: "Et si je ne partais pas, Noémi" (10, p. 181)? Her only reply is a short, stifled cry in which Jean denotes her terror. He also notices that Noémi's

appetite improves immediately and her health along with it. He is hurt to see her packing his trunk days before he has to leave. Noémi d'Artiailh has destroyed Jean's last hope that she will ever love him.

Even though she does not love Jean, Noémi remains a faithful wife the whole time he is away. She is flattered, however, when a young doctor in town begins waving at her each day when he passes by her window. Noémi feels a glow inside she has never felt when with her husband. Lying on her bed, she recalls the handsome features of the young man. She longs to wave back to him and decides she will, but her conscience intervenes. Noémi is simple. She does not analyze her feelings; she merely responds to her conscience: "Noémi, tout instinct, mais dressée à l'examen de conscience, fut vite mise en alerte: sa première alarme vint, pendant sa prière, de ce qu'il fallut recommencer chaque oraison: entre Dieu et elle, souriait une figure brune" (10, pp. 190-191). The following day Noémi is pictured sitting behind closed shutters when the doctor comes by the house. Her quiet willingness to sacrifice her own happiness in obedience to an inner urging is admirable, if not at times almost a little unbelievable. It would almost be a relief if Noémi would do or say something a bit hateful, but meanness does not seem to be one of her failings. She is determined to remain pure, so she goes a step beyond ignoring the doctor;

she writes Jean that she misses him and wants him to return home.

One of Noémi's desires now is to love and be loved, but only by her husband. In Jean's absence, Noémi begins imagining that he is not half as puny and repulsive as she had previously thought. Eagerly, she waits for him at the station. The flower motif is employed again in the way her dress spreads out in the sun. She is quite seductive looking in the way she is dressed--the bare neck, and the cameo with the two lovers: ". . . sa robe d'organdi s'épanouissait au soleil. Elle portait des mitaines de fil et, à son cou nu, un médaillon où étaient peints deux amours luttant avec un bouc" (10, p. 192).

Jean returns home ill and looking uglier than before. Noémi again feels disgust in his presence; nevertheless, she takes care of him. The young doctor is called in to give Jean medication. His main attention, however, is on Noémi. When Jean asks her if the doctor should come back, she answers, "C'est tout à fait inutile" (10, p. 196). The words have a double meaning. Jean does not really need him as he is only fatigued; but Noémi is particularly directing her words to the doctor, telling him that his advances are futile. She is completely dedicated to her hideous husband. The full significance of her decision to remain faithful is artistically made known to the reader by Mauriac. Her future now seems particularly dismal. As she holds up the

lamp outside the house while waiting for the doctor's departure, the wind extinguishes the flame. She is left in darkness, before a dead house, hearing the sound of the carriage wheels growing fainter in the distance (10, p. 197).

But what is amazing about Noémi is her abundant supply of courage and patience. Mauriac always portrays her as a compassionate and gentle wife. One night she goes to Jean's cot, still fighting against her disgust for him, and kisses him, "ces baisers qu'autrefois des lèvres de saints imposaient aux lépreux" (10, pp. 197-198). André Maurois notes the deadly implication of the kiss as far as Noémi is concerned when he says that Noémi "accorde au Lépreux le baiser dont elle va mourir" (12, p. 24). This reinforces the image Mauriac has already painted of his heroine playing the role of a martyr.

Jean, realizing his presence is a burden to Noémi, deliberately contracts tuberculosis. Noémi, once again facing the possibility of his absence, but this time in death, is able to imagine that she could love Jean. She thought the same while he was in Paris. As she stands beside Jean's deathbed, she now sees noble and grand qualities in him. She tells herself that if he would get well, she would love him. Mauriac now intrudes in the novel to contradict the heroine's naïve thoughts:

Comment Noémi aurait-elle su que d'un Jean Péloueyre à peine convalescent, elle eût déjà commencé de se déprendre, et qu'il fallait qu'il touchât à son heure dernière pour qu'enfin elle le pût aimer? C'était une

très jeune femme ignorante et charnelle et qui ne connaissait pas son coeur (10, pp. 205-206).

Mauriac excuses Noémi for her naïveté because she is young, inexperienced and sensual. It will be interesting to notice if older, more experienced women know themselves any better than Noémi, and to see if Mauriac's attitude is as kind towards them.

Noémi is reduced to a life of nothingness after Jean Péloueyre's death. She realizes one day while walking among the pines that she must suffer the rest of her life, like the pines, which appear to be in anguish because of having been cut for resin. Noémi also realizes that the pines, the sand, and the landes will imprison her forever: "Elle éprouvait que les pins innombrables, aux entrailles rouges et gluantes, que les sables et les landes incendiées la garderaient à jamais prisonnière" (10, pp. 211-212).

In her decision to remain a widow, Noémi is submitting to her parents' wishes because she will lose her part in the Péloueyre fortune if she remarries. But Mauriac also suggests at the end of the novel that Noémi is remaining in the Péloueyre family because she believes that faithfulness is her noble mission in life. Mauriac portrays Noémi's faithfulness once again through the use of imagery. Noémi sees the young doctor while walking through the pine woods. She turns from him and runs, throwing her arms around a stunted black oak which looks like Jean Péloueyre (10, p. 213). Noémi was left standing in the black night. Again here the

color black is used to symbolize the bleakness of Noémi's future. She, nevertheless, makes her choice, to some extent at least, of her own free will.

Cecil Jenkins ignores the fact that it is Noémi herself who makes the decision. In his effort to point out the cruel aspects of the novel, he states that Noémi "will be condemned to remain a widow for life" (6, p. 55). Germaine Brée is much less severe, though perhaps too filled with praise in her comments on the book as a whole: "After Jean's death the beautiful, sensuous young woman will refuse the fulfillment offered by another man. In that act of renunciation she appears, as do few other Mauriac characters, greater than her fate. The story is well told, free of all analysis, convincing" (1, p. 117).

Perhaps it will be worth while to keep Germaine Brée's comment about the extent of Noémi's greatness in mind while looking at Mauriac's other heroines and while comparing her with the two in Genitrix, published only one year after Le Baiser, a rather significant fact to remember in noting Mauriac's treatment of Mathilde and Félicité Cazenave as compared to his treatment of Noémi d'Artiailh.

It becomes immediately obvious in Genitrix that neither of the heroines is the patient, self-sacrificing type. Mathilde seems to be portrayed as a pathetic character, a victim of an unfortunate background. All her life she has been neglected by those around her, who seem to treat her as

though she were non-existent. Mathilde's mother deserts her father and Mathilde grows up scarcely noticed by the professor, her father. When her cousins take her into their home as an orphan, they say that she knows how to disappear. In their home at mealtime, Mathilde even looks non-existent with her bleached hair, her eyes that seem to see nothing, but which see everything, and her clothes the color of wainscot (10, pp. 333, 335). After marrying Fernand Cazenave, an ageing man completely possessed by his mother's jealous love, she finds that she counts little more in the Cazenave house than the old servant until she becomes pregnant (10, pp. 328-329). Her husband then begins to take some interest in her, but she has a miscarriage and again becomes insignificant to Fernand. Thus, Mauriac prepares the reader for the role Mathilde plays as one of the heroines in the story. She is the invisible protagonist of the other heroine, Félicité Cazenave.

Mauriac pictures Mathilde as the helpless victim of her enemies: her husband, Fernand, and her mother-in-law, Félicité Cazenave. He is completely controlled by his mother. They leave Mathilde to die all alone in her upstairs bedroom. There, she is portrayed as a captive living in a nightmare world. The following quotation eloquently shows some of the nightmarish aspects which are the platform near the window that Mathilde imagines to be a huge crouching beast and the mother-in-law, who is portrayed as the absolute

protectress of her son's celibacy:

Quelle était cette masse noire, près de la fenêtre, cette bête couchée et comme repue--ou tapie peut-être? Mathilde reconnut l'estrade que sa belle-mère avait autre fois, fait dresser dans chaque chambre, afin de pouvoir commodément suivre les allées et venues de son fils, soit qu'il fit au Nord le "tour du rond" ou qu'il arpentât l'allée du Midi, ou qu'elle guettât son retour par le portail de l'Est. C'était sur une de ces estrades, celle du petit salon, qu'un jour de ses fiançailles Mathilde avait vu se dresser l'énorme femme furieuse, piétinante et criant:

---Vous n'aurez pas mon fils! Vous ne me le prendrez jamais (10, p. 325)!

The double image of beast makes the scene more grotesque and makes Mathilde's position in the Cazenave family seem hopeless.

Mauriac seems to continue to be somewhat sympathetic towards Mathilde when he pictures her fighting the battle for life all alone in her bedroom, a suffering victim of fevers and chills. She is the helpless victim of illness and loneliness. The mother-in-law and husband ignore her entirely. Mauriac's imagery shows that Mathilde is involved in a battle for life. She looks up from her bed to see a wooden arrow supporting the white calico curtains around the bed. In order to picture Mathilde's suffering and loneliness, Mauriac compares her in the following to a young tree being savagely destroyed in a cyclone. The silence of the night makes Mathilde more aware of her complete solitude:

Mathilde ne doute plus maintenant: la tempête mortelle la tord de nouveau, la secoue, la pénètre, s'acharne à cet arrachement d'un jeune arbre vivace. . . . Comme le lit tremble! Il ne tremblait pas si fort, la première fois. Du fond de ce cyclone, elle avait

étrangement conscience de la paix nocturne autour de son corps possédé. . . . Seule! seule (10, pp. 339-340)!

The only moment of consolation Mathilde has as she lies dying is in thinking about the child that might have been hers except for her miscarriage. She longs for a close relationship to another, a relationship which she thinks could have been hers in the child that she imagines would have looked like her; she would have protected it and it would have consoled her. Mauriac continues his portrayal of the grotesque in the novel even in the description of the child, which Mathilde imagines would bear a birthmark like hers:

. . . une figure sans grande beauté et même un peu chétive avec, au coin gauche de la lèvre, ce signé que Mathilde avait aussi. "Je serais restée assise dans le noir près de son lit jusqu'à ce que fût passé le rapide qui souvent lui aurait fait peur." Ce royaume où elle se fût enfermée avec la petite enfant n'aurait pas été du monde. Ceux qui la haïssaient n'auraient pu l'y poursuivre (10, p. 330).

But thoughts of the child cannot long console Mathilde, for her life has been hard and she recalls that she has become vindictive in order to protect herself from the cruel people about her. She recalls how self-centered and cynical she has been in life. By allowing the heroine to judge herself, Mauriac again seems to be somewhat sympathetic with her. She accuses herself of always having used others to her advantage: "Chaque être, chaque événement, tu les interrogeais, tu les retournais comme des cartes, espérant l'atout" (10, p. 339). Even her concept of love has always been cynical. Mathilde recalls that she began, while still

quite young, to equate love with debauchery and prostitution, the animalistic type of cravings she used to observe in her younger brother. She remembers that she married the fifty-year-old emotionally retarded Fernand only to escape her life of dependency on her cousins. When she recalls the extent of her mother-in-law's control over Fernand, she again shows that she is a vindictive person. Her only reason for living is to have another child, one that she can possess and use as a weapon to break up the love relationship between her enemies, Fernand and Félicité Cazenave (10, p. 331).

However, in spite of Mathilde's vindictiveness, Mauriac basically retains a sympathetic attitude towards her by continually showing her to be the helpless victim of a hideous mother-in-law. For example, in one scene Mauriac compares Félicité to Medusa. He thereby makes her seem grotesque and removes her somewhat from the human sphere. Just how evil a foe Félicité is to Mathilde is obvious when the reader recalls that Medusa was one of the Gorgons, a "fearsome" monster who would turn to stone anyone who would look at her: "And they are three, the Gorgons, each with wings and snaky hair, most horrible to mortals. Whom no man shall behold and draw again the breath of life. . ." (5, pp. 143-144). Notice now Mathilde's terror at seeing "cette tête de Méduse" as Félicité enters the enemy's room shortly before she dies. The reader might also note the nightmarish atmosphere depicted in the "pureté glacée" and "cauchemar":

---Qui est là?

---C'est moi, ma fille.

La veilleuse n'éclaire plus la chambre mais, à travers les persiennes, une pureté glacée. Mathilde regarde son cauchemar qui avance. Alors, les dents claquantes, elle crie:

---Laissez-moi (10, p. 341).

How evil the words, "ma fille" sound in this context. The sleepwalker is the real Medusa herself as far as Mathilde is concerned. It is in absolute terror that she cries out, "Laissez-moi."

Mauriac's sympathy for Mathilde seems to continue until she dies. The image of her dying all alone, having never loved nor been loved, makes her seem pathetic (10, p. 340). However, Mauriac shows by the look of peace on Mathilde's face in death that she is now free from her utter loneliness, from the horrors of her life--the nightmares and storms--and from her prison, the Cazenave house. In death, she is loved for the first time and thus is able to avenge herself, for awhile, of her mother-in-law, Félicité. Fernand, obsessed by the look of peace she has in death that she never had in life, now turns his attention from his mother to Mathilde, who possesses him in death as she never was able to in life. She thus breaks up the love-hate relationship between Félicité and Fernand and becomes the invisible but powerful foe of the Medusa, Félicité, left behind.

Mauriac insists on Félicité's evil character by comparing her to Juno as well as Medusa. The best physical description of her appears in a scene in Le Baiser, since

Félicité and Fernand Cazenave play a very minor role in that novel as Jean Péloueyre's greedy aunt and cousin. In the following scene Jean Péloueyre spies on the Cazenaves who are in the Péloueyre garden. In the massiveness of Félicité's body and the urgency with which she pursues her son, Mauriac is portraying the image of a dominant mother. He strips Félicité of any real human qualities by comparing her head to that of the Roman goddess, Juno, and by comparing her to a broken-down machine:

Dissimulé derrière le tilleul, Jean Péloueyre vit passer Fernand au pas de course, ainsi qu'il faisait toujours cinq minutes avant ses repas. Sa mère le suivait, soufflante. Son grand corps tout en jambes, son buste sphérique, sa tête de vieille Junon attachée à ses seins--toute cette forte machine détraquée, usée, obéissait aux injonctions du fils bien-aimé, comme s'il eût, en pressant un bouton, mis en branle un mécanisme (10, p. 158).

The comparison of Félicité with Juno is interesting. In Roman mythology, Juno was the protectress of marriage and childbirth. She was excessively jealous of her husband, Jupiter, and often was very cruel to any woman she even suspected of rivalry (5, p. 28). Mauriac makes Félicité appear particularly cruel for she, in her jealousy, does not protect marriage and childbirth, but rather destroys both in order to possess Fernand completely.

She never loved her husband, who died when Fernand was very young, but rather felt relieved by his death, for she was then free to let her passions take possession of Fernand (10, p. 379). Félicité's love for Fernand is so overpowering,

so consuming, that it verges on incest. She kisses Fernand and tucks him in bed at night, even when he is fifty (10, pp. 125-126). She and Fernand sit in the study reading the newspaper together, her head on his shoulder (10, p. 148). She loves to hear her son's heavy breathing in the bedroom next to hers. Mauriac impresses upon the mind of the reader that Félicité has thoughts for only one thing in life, her son. No sounds in the night can keep her from hearing his breathing: "Ni des pas furtifs, ni le pont de fer grondant sur le fleuve, ni les gémissements de l'équinoxe, ni les rossignols dans les lilas, n'avaient prévalu contre cette respiration endormie" (10, p. 360).

Everything that Félicité says or does finds its roots in the fact that she is a jealous mother. Her love, founded on jealousy, manifests itself in various ways, but the result is always destructive.

Madame Cazenave makes Fernand fully dependent on her. She reduces her son to a state of mental retardation. He sits by the hour cutting out aphorisms to be pasted in a scrapbook, which he thinks reveal the truth of life. She tries to convince him that he is sickly and needs her to watch out for his health. She keeps him from becoming involved in any activities in Bordeaux. She tries to convince him that she alone loves and understands him, that other women will only take advantage of him. Fernand marries Mathilde to spite his mother, but writes her on his

honeymoon, "Tu avais raison: une mère seule peut comprendre l'homme que je suis. Toutes les autres femmes sont des étrangères" (10, p. 362).

Félicité is motivated by jealousy to commit murder; she lets Mathilde die, making good her threat, "Si Fernand se marie, ma bru mourra" (10, p. 158). As Nelly Cormeau points out, the crime is particularly horrible because she abandons Mathilde, leaving her to suffer and die, all alone (2, p. 126). At one point in the novel, Félicité even takes on the appearance of a murderess. She has just noticed that her favorite picture has been cut up, the one in which Fernand is holding her arm, rather than Mathilde's. Félicité sees her picture lying in the wastebasket; Mathilde's is missing: "Elle avait cette figure stupide, tendue de la femme qui cache sous son manteau un revolver armé, un bol de vitriol" (10, p. 357). Félicité has no intention of killing her son, but her jealousy, at times, turns her love into a hate so overwhelming that she is driven to destruction.

Because of her jealousy, Félicité is motivated to spy on her son. In order to do so, she has had platforms built near all the windows inside the house so that she can see Fernand from any direction (10, pp. 325-326). It was one of these platforms that Mathilde saw as a ferocious beast when she lay ill.

Jealous of the hold Mathilde has on Fernand after her death, Félicité is often seized by fits of violent anger, an

anger which is destructive in nature. Félicité's hatred is aroused when she discovers her favorite picture is missing. The following shows how angry she is when she finds that Fernand has made an idol of Mathilde's photo. Once again Félicité is in constant motion: "Elle s'arrêta, puis fit un pas vers le guéridon, ébaucha, les mains en avant, le geste d'un Polyeucte briseur d'idoles. Cracher sur cette image, la déchirer, la piétiner . . ." (10, p. 358).

Her jealousy causes her to become a victim of fear. She is afraid that she has permanently lost Fernand to Mathilde when he begins sleeping in her bed. Towards the middle of the novel she almost appears panicky when she fully realizes she is helpless for once in her life because her enemy is invisible and cannot be dealt the accustomed blows given to the living. The insecurity of fighting an invisible foe makes Félicité fear she is going crazy in her struggle to repossess Fernand, for at one point she says to herself, "Je suis folle . . ." (10, p. 361). She fears the silence and the darkness in her bedroom at night. Her son's breathing had always protected her from the night sounds. When Fernand moves to Mathilde's bedroom, Félicité is, for the first time, aware of the house shaking from the passing trains (10, p. 360). Again Mauriac is showing how totally dependent Félicité is on Fernand. Without him, she has no security.

Her fears are heightened by the fact that she is a non-believer, "elle ne croyait qu'à ce qu'elle touchait" (10, p. 361). Yet her battle is against Mathilde, who cannot be touched. Her disbelief wavers somewhat as the novel progresses and as Félicité continues to try to reposses Fernand. Mauriac says of her, "Elle commençait de savoir que les absents ont toujours raison . . . ce sont les présents qui ont tort" (10, p. 377).

Mauriac seems to be presenting Félicité as an unbeliever who is being confronted with the reality of the supernatural. As a result, her skepticism is somewhat shaken. Fernand's obvious dependence on the memory of Mathilde only serves to reinforce Félicité's feelings of frustration and helplessness in fighting the dead. Just when Félicité begins to feel that she is getting her little boy back because Fernand shows some response to her, he says to her, "C'est 'elle' qui veut que je sois bon pour toi. . ." (10, p. 381).

Only for a brief moment does Mauriac present Félicité in a manner that makes her even a little sympathetic. After she realizes the hopelessness of her struggle against Mathilde, Félicité, in one very brief scene, is said to have genuine love for Fernand. Mauriac says of her, "Alors son amour commença de ressembler à celui des autres mères, qui n'exige rien en échange de ce qu'il donne" (10, p. 369). Félicité begins playing the role of a martyr by eating rich foods in order to encourage Fernand to eat also. Maxwell A.

Smith points to Félicité's suffering and martyrdom to support the idea that she "is not quite a monster of wickedness" (15, p. 88). However, it is the all-possessive Madame Cazenave who reappears at the end of the novel in the form of the powerful "Genitrix." In spite of her sacrifice, Félicité is still the same jealous mother who has broken her son's spirit in order to dominate him, and it is she who dominates him again at death. Nelly Cormeau sees much better than Mr. Smith the true personality of Félicité, whom she appropriately calls, "la vieille reine despotique," and, "la mère omnipotente, omniprésente." Nelly Cormeau's account of Félicité's victory is powerful and needs to be included for the reader to grasp the full impact of Félicité's control of Fernand.

À peine disparue, la Genitrix auguste, la vieille reine despotique rétablit son règne avec une autorité éclatante et terrible. L'épouse qui, un instant, l'a suppléée, meurt une seconde fois pour faire place, dans l'âme du fils désespéré, au culte éperdu exclusif de la mère omnipotente, omniprésente . . . (2, p. 128).

No satisfactory explanation has been found for the name "Genitrix." The Romans believed in a spirit called "Genius" "which was supposed to attend every person from birth to death" (5, p. 327). Possibly Mauriac derived the name Genitrix from this source. Certainly, the concept is applicable to Félicité.

The imagery and atmosphere of Genitrix are used very effectively by Mauriac to make the reader empathize with the heroines and, therefore, some outstanding examples should be

included here for emphasis. Jenkins says that Mauriac establishes an overall atmospheric affect in the following manner:

By commencing with the feverish imaginings of the dying Mathilde--before giving us the background in a flashback and then proceeding to resolve the situation--he at once obtains a nightmarish present in which both past and future are felt inevitably to be inscribed. Again, his intuition has led him unerringly to the simple, powerful images by which the nightmare may be maintained and made concrete: the house which trembles to the sound of trains thundering past. . . (6, p. 59).

The trains are an important part of the imagery of Genitrix for they often complement the feelings of the heroines. For example, Mathilde, trembling when seized by one of her chills, is aware of the passing trains which shake the house so that it, like herself, seems to be dying. Also, just as Félicité has her stroke near the time of her death, Fernand hears "le dernier express qui ne s'arrêta^t pas, vertige lumineux de vitesse et de risque dans l'ombre" (10, p. 384). The train, like Félicité, seems to be suffering from a stroke, rushing towards death.

Mauriac appears to believe in pathetic fallacy in Genitrix when he says, "Dans les pays du feu, les passions des hommes s'accordent à la violence du ciel. . ." (10, p. 374). The following scene is one of the finest in the novel depicting Mauriac's use of pathetic fallacy. The words "soleil," "pesait," "aride," "poussiéreuses," and "cendre" all build up to an eventual crisis in the weather which corresponds to the "halè^tement" of the train and of

Félicité's breathlessness. Never is Félicité pictured as being more desperate than she is beginning with the word, "Furibonde." In spite of the toll on her health (breathlessness, purplish-blue cheeks, legs giving out), Félicité rushes through the rooms of the house, knowing that she must find Fernand. Notice how impulsive she is:

Étouffant, la mère poussa les volets. Le soleil de midi pesait sur le jardin aride. Entre les pelouses poussiéreuses, le sable des allées avait la couleur de la cendre. Le halètement d'un train en partance rappelait une poitrine oppressée. . . . Furibonde, la vieille femme roulant sur ses hanches gagna l'escalier. De marche en marche, elle perdait le souffle, mais tout de même se hissa jusqu'à la chambre de l'ingrat. . . . Félicité eut peur dans la glace de ses joues violacées. . . . Elle descendit (ses genoux malades fléchissaient), suivit le corridor, traversa le vestibule nocturne, un corridor encore. . . (10, p. 357).

This scene is reminiscent of the one in which Félicité listens so contentedly to Fernand's breathing at night, for in both scenes Mauriac impresses upon the reader the idea that nothing can long separate the jealous mother from her son. Even Félicité's obvious weaknesses, signs of her old age, cannot keep her from rushing frantically ahead to try to repossess Fernand. There is nothing gentle or truly loving in Félicité as she appears in this scene or most others in the novel.

In spite of her vindictive nature, Mathilde seems far less cruel than Félicité. In portraying Mathilde as the victim of Félicité, Mauriac makes Mathilde seem even rather sympathetic. Mauriac, by using Mathilde as a sort of

catalyst to trigger the jealousy of Félicité, emphasizes Félicité's cruelty throughout the book. The two heroines represent the eternal conflict between the wife and mother for a man's love.

Both Mathilde and Félicité seem fairly simple in character when compared to Maria Cross, the heroine of Le Désert de l'Amour, published, as was stated earlier, in 1925. Maria seems complex and mysterious for several reasons. First, she plays a dual role in the novel as "femme entretenue" and saint. In the town of Bordeaux, Maria has a terrible reputation. She is the first Mauriac heroine thus far not to have a family, and lives as Victor Larousselle's mistress in a small house behind the church of Talence provided by him. However, Dr. Courrèges, a friend of hers, thinks she has saintly qualities, and at times she does appear to strive after noble ideals. Secondly, the attitude Maria has towards herself and what she really wants in life, as revealed in the interior monologues she engages in, also make her seem complicated and ambiguous. Thirdly, her name, which Mauriac uses as a symbol of shame, purity and suffering, adds to her complexity and mysteriousness. Martin Turnell states rather appropriately that, "her role cannot be fully elucidated," and "she herself cannot be reduced to clear-cut outlines. . ." (16, p. 329).

The structure of the novel is somewhat complex. Raymond Courrèges sees Maria Cross walk into a Paris bar where he is

sitting one evening. He has last seen Maria seventeen years previously in Bordeaux. His mind wanders back to the year he met her. Thus, Maria Cross is seen in a flashback throughout most of the book.

As Raymond sees Maria step into the bar, she is wearing a large bell-shaped hat which hides all of her face but her chin. Her furs give her the appearance of being comfortably wealthy. She removes her hat and Raymond sees her short dark hair and large, calm eyes. Her forehead looks young, but she shows signs of aging on her neck, mouth, and cheeks and has a slight middle-aged spread. Raymond recalls that Maria Cross is now forty-four. Later he glances her way again and thinks what an odd combination of youth and middle-age she is; her forehead still retains its former radiance, but the lines on the lower part of her face make her look her age. Her clothes appear to be rather stylish to Raymond, yet they look more like the fashions of a few years ago. The last time Raymond looks at her, still in the far, but at the end of the novel, he notices in particular her lips, which remind him of Maria's sexual appeal: "fruit par miracle intact encore," that which "fixait toute la sensualité de ce corps" (11, pp. 7-8, 20, 142).

Maria Cross lives in a small house provided her by Larousselle, described in the book as being somewhat of a playboy. Mauriac mentions several times that her house is behind the church of Talence; however, not once does Maria

enter the church or see a priest. The dark drawing-room in her home is particularly important since that's the only room she ever seems to be in, and its appearance is symbolic of her apathy and of her empty existence. It is often described as being deserted. An ash tray filled with cigarette butts shows that Maria is a heavy smoker. There are a lot of books in the room, but none have had all their pages cut, an indication that Maria isn't particularly interested in reading. The curtains are torn and shabby (11, pp. 35, 44). The utter barrenness of the room is oppressive. It lacks any touch of femininity and beauty. It looks like the room of a woman who has ceased to live.

Maria's activities, too, indicate that she is bored and apathetic. She spends hours lying on her couch reading or smoking. Now and then she plays the piano or takes a walk in the garden. The only time she leaves the house is to make her daily trip to the cemetery to visit her son's grave. She has given up getting out in public because she feels that people are talking about her when she does (11, pp. 101-102).

The reader should keep in mind that Raymond Courrèges thinks back to the Maria Cross he knew seventeen years previously as he sits looking at her in the Paris bar. He recalls the Bordeaux gossip which makes her appear to be an opportunistic, openly wicked prostitute. Thus, her name is symbolic of evil in town. He also recalls that she becomes

dependent on Victor Larousselle when Larousselle's wife is dying of cancer, and for that reason, Maria Cross is particularly despised throughout Bordeaux. She is referred to as a "femme entretenue" or merely as "cette femme" (11, pp. 19, 78, 102).

Dr. Courrèges, Raymond's father, sees the opposite in Maria Cross. At one time while defending Maria Cross to Raymond, Dr. Courrèges claims Maria has the potential of becoming a saint (11, p. 87). He bases his opinion of her partially on what Maria herself has told him about herself. He believes her to be a victim of her incompetence, laziness, apathy and misfortune. He believes she became Larousselle's mistress only in a desperate attempt to provide for herself and her son, François, and was unaware at the time that M Larousselle's wife was dying of cancer (11, p. 86). Dr. Courrèges is further persuaded that Maria Cross is innocent because of information given him by Larousselle, who is very insistent on Maria's purity: "Personne qui connaisse moins les choses de l'amour que Maria et qui y prenne moins de plaisir. . . . Une innocente, docteur! Plus innocente que la plupart des belles et honnêtes dames qui la méprisent" (11, p. 94). Other ideas Dr. Courrèges has of Maria come from his personal contact with her.

In order to understand Maria Cross's strange relationship with Dr. Courrèges, the reader should realize that the doctor has been labeled a saint in Bordeaux and feels obligated

to live up to that reputation (11, p. 60). Although he is secretly in love with Maria, the doctor creates a barrier between the two of them by at first playing the role of her spiritual director. Maria responds by trying to play the role of his disciple; she reads Maeterlinck and Pascal and insists that Dr. Courrèges continue his saintly role, although she finds the role as boring as her daily existence (11, p. 36). Mauriac seems to state rather coldly that Maria Cross continues her relationship with Dr. Courrèges only because she feels she can benefit by claiming the friendship of so eminent a man. Mauriac says of her: "Elle était fière d'intéresser le docteur et, dans sa vie déchuée, prisait très haut ses relations avec cet homme éminent; mais qu'il l'ennuyait" (11, p. 36)! Regardless of what Dr. Courrèges thinks of Maria, she seems hypocritical rather than saintly in the way she uses him. Dr. Courrèges, too, realizes that Maria seems hypocritical, but he loves her and wants to believe that she cares for him. He thus is more concerned about her disinterested attitude towards him that makes her seem elusive to him.

Another example of Maria's insincerity towards Dr. Courrèges and one that makes her again elusive to him, is her exaggerated praise for him. The exaggeration makes her sound very hypocritical, as for example in the following passage, where she addresses Dr. Courrèges on one of his visits to her deserted drawing-room. Maria appears to have

escaped reality and seems to be playing a theatrical role when, with tears in her eyes and, apparently trying to get the doctor's sympathy, she somewhat imploringly looks at him and says: "Vous qui êtes si grand . . . vous, l'être le plus noble que j'aie jamais connu . . . dont la seule existence suffit à me faire croire au bien. . ." (II, pp. 35-36). Her speech, when read in context, makes Maria appear to be only trying to get the doctor to praise her. Her conduct, too, seems intended to draw Dr. Courrèges's attention to herself. She appears seductive as the doctor enters her deserted drawing-room. As usual, Maria Cross is lying on the sofa rather carelessly. She invites him to sit beside her there and offers him her hand. She then lets him hold her hand while she proceeds to praise him, playing the role of his disciple, and thus barring him from making love to her. Maria seems to be so caught up in the games she plays with Dr. Courrèges, an apparent distraction for her boredom, that she is completely indifferent to the suffering she is causing him.

Maria Cross' indifference to Dr. Courrèges' anguish because of his love for her, a love she is apparently completely unaware of, takes on a particularly cruel aspect in the scene in which she dismisses him from her life. In that scene her apathetic attitude has suddenly changed. Dr. Courrèges meets her rushing out of the door of her house instead of seeing her in the accustomed position on the sofa

(11, p. 64). She is no longer in mourning, no longer cares to read and no longer feels the need for medication. She tells him, "Vous pouvez, sans inconvénient, interrompre vos piqûres. . ." (11, p. 66). She no longer acts neurasthenic and no longer plays the role of his disciple. She brushes him aside by insinuating that Dr. Courrèges' friendship towards her has been insincere: ". . . ne s'était-il pas abaissé jusqu'à elle? N'avait-il pas daigné parfois l'élever jusqu'à lui" (11, p. 67)? Dr. Courrèges feels the sting of Maria's insulting words and leaves. She remains in the deserted drawing-room, apparently indifferent to his suffering. It is especially her indifference to the torment she causes that makes Maria seem cruel. For as André Maurois points out, "Every human being who, consciously or unconsciously, incites a passion which he doesn't feel becomes, willingly or not, an instrument of torture" (13, p. 156).

Maria Cross' abrupt change in attitude from one of complete boredom and apathy to one of excitement and anticipation is a result of her having seen Raymond Courrèges on the workmen's tram which she rides home every evening from the cemetery where she visits her son's grave.

Maria's relationship with Raymond is very strange from the beginning. She and he sit facing each other for weeks without speaking. She seems to see in Raymond someone to console her (11, p. 42), perhaps a substitute for her son, François, for she particularly notices his child-like face.

In the scene in which Maria Cross sees Raymond for the second time, Mauriac states, "ses yeux calmes reprenaient possession du visage de l'enfant. . ." (11, p. 47). The word "possession" seems to be especially important. Maria Cross, who has lost her child, already appears to be claiming Raymond as her own. That idea is strengthened in the scene where Maria Cross talks to Raymond for the first time as they walk together from the tram. She sees Raymond's child-like qualities but now feels confused because he seems so young. Her bewildered emotions would appear to be the result of a dual attraction for Raymond, an attraction of a mother for a child and also that of a lover for her loved one. The following seems to indicate that Maria is drawn to Raymond both as a mother and a lover. Mauriac portrays her as a woman whose conscience is already beginning to warn her that her intentions are not pure, for she feels shame. At the same time, however, there is something alluring about Raymond, something exciting, for she also feels joy. Maria has just noted Raymond's boyish appearance: ". . . l'idée s'ancra en elle que c'était presque un enfant; elle en éprouva une émotion confuse, faite de scrupule, de honte et de délice" (11, p. 75). The scene marks the beginning of a violent emotional conflict within the heroine. Throughout her relationship with Raymond, Maria Cross is portrayed as a woman bringing about the destruction of a sensitive, adolescent boy. She does not seem to be the wicked woman the

town believes her to be, for she tries not to harm Raymond. But neither is she the saint Dr. Courrèges believes her to be, for she enjoys the idea of playing the role of Psyche in search of true love and willingly gives in to her attraction to Raymond (11, p. 76). As she becomes more emotionally involved with him, Maria clings desperately to her theory that he is an innocent child, apparently an excuse she uses to continue her relationship with him even though she senses it may end in harm to him. Mauriac is somewhat sarcastic towards Maria Cross when he points out that she ignores the evidence that Raymond might not be as innocent as she believes him to be, and clings to her theory that he is an innocent child: ". . . sa gaucherie ombrageuse acheva d'aider Maria à se persuader qu'il était un enfant, bien que parfois, un rire, une allusion, un regard en dessous eussent pu la mettre en garde; mais elle tenait à son ange" (11, pp. 90-91). Mauriac then proceeds to portray Maria as a subtle but persistent seducer: "elle s'en approchait sur la pointe des pieds, en retenant son souffle" (11, p. 91). Thus, Maria Cross is seen to be quite intent on spoiling that which she believes to be innocent.

Raymond is depicted as lacking innocence in his intentions towards Maria from the moment she hesitantly reveals her name to him. The scene which best depicts what the name Maria Cross means to Raymond, and, in fact, which also best depicts the symbolic meaning of the name in the novel, is

the one showing Raymond at supper the evening he has discovered who is the mysterious woman on the tram. That Raymond feels Maria is an easy conquest is seen in the way he eats his soup and in his thoughts. The name Maria Cross symbolizes one who draws Dr. Courrèges and Raymond together in their mutual interest of woman. Raymond and his father have been total strangers with nothing in common until now. When he states that the name chokes Raymond like a clot of blood, Mauriac indicates that Raymond, like his father, will know suffering because of Maria Cross:

Il lampait sa soupe à grand bruit, comme un chien. . . .
Seul son père lui semblait proche. Il connaissait
Maria Cross, lui, lui! Il avait été chez elle, l'avait
soignée, l'avait vue au lit, avait appuyé sa tête contre
sa poitrine et son dos . . . Maria Cross! Maria Cross!
ce nom l'étouffait comme un caillot de sang. . . (11,
p. 81).

Harry T. Moore notes that Raymond is especially attracted to Maria because he thinks she is an evil type: "He saw her as a figure of evil and became obsessed with her. . ." (14, p. 98). But Maria seems to remain totally unaware of Raymond's intentions until the fatal moment when he tries to take her by force. Her naïveté and her utter boredom help make Maria Cross seem sympathetic even though she is a destructive force. Desperately lonely and imagining Raymond capable of giving her the love that will fill the vacuum within her, Maria is blind to the true Raymond. She seems to always feel that it is she who is corrupting him. In a series of interior monologues, Maria argues with herself

about her motives in wanting Raymond to visit her in her drawing-room. She seems to want to protect him and play the role of the good woman as she was able to do with Dr. Courrèges, but now her emotional involvement will not allow her to remain indifferent. Gustave Lanson describes what takes place in the interior monologue. He says that the person "investigates his personal peculiarity and anxiously questions his own destiny" (8, p. 799). He notes that afterwards, "Lives develop and become entangled without ever penetrating each other; the essential remains incommunicable, even in love. . ." (8, p. 799). Both of these aspects are seen to be true of Maria Cross as she struggles with her conscience, then fails to communicate with Raymond.

Maria appears to be aware of her decline, for she thinks to herself after having invited Raymond to visit her in her drawing-room: "Mais si je renonce à l'amendement de ma vie extérieure, il reste de ne plus rien me permettre que ma conscience réproûve, ou dont elle s'inquiète" (11, p. 99). At this point Maria fully intends to remain morally pure. She is merely giving up the outward appearance of being an upright woman. Mauriac continues to show that Maria Cross is completely incapable, however, of not becoming a prey to her emotional needs, though she is able to for a short time. She finds, however, that she can no longer endure her boredom, which seems much worse, once she has experienced a passion for Raymond, than it was during her acquaintance

with Dr. Courrèges. Pulled between the desire to protect Raymond and the desire to relieve her boredom by filling it with the passion she believes she will continue to feel for Raymond, Maria writes him a letter telling him not to come to see her. But in spite of herself, she words the letter in such a way as to entice Raymond to her house rather than discourage his visit (11, p. 100). Thus, Maria lets her emotions dominate rather than her logic. She is portrayed as the temptress rather than the protectress.

Once Raymond is in her presence, Maria feels safe because her impression of him as a child calms her pentup passion and she again feels more like a mother to him than a lover (11, p. 104). She remains blind to the fact that he continues to see her only as a seducer and not capable of innocent intentions. Maria's careless conduct towards him as she shows him a photo album containing pictures of François confirms Raymond's opinion of her. In the following passage, she is indifferent to the emotional turmoil she is causing in Raymond: "Penchée sur Raymond pour tourner les pages, elle ne voyait pas la figure furieuse du garçon. . . . Il haletait, il tremblait de violence au repos" (11, p. 106). Raymond leaves Marie's drawing-room very much confused by her conduct towards him, which appears to be somewhat forward but at the same time aloof. Raymond, as well as Dr. Courrèges, finds Maria Cross a mysterious woman.

Mauriac continues to portray Maria Cross as a woman completely overcome by boredom when left alone. The final result is that she decides to give up the struggle to remain morally pure. She experiences a painful relief in giving in to her passion; also, she is fully aware of the decision she is making and the dangers involved in it: "Elle ne tenta plus rien contre l'incendie, ne souffrit plus de ce désœuvrement, de ce délaissement; sa fournaise l'occupait: un démon obscur lui soufflait: 'Tu meurs, mais tu ne t'ennuies plus'" (11, p. 109). But again in Raymond's presence, Maria feels only a motherly interest in him. She, however, is guilty of wanting to have him near her, of giving him the impression, by inviting him to the seclusion of her somewhat dark drawing room, that she is the prostitute the town says she is. She is also guilty of being so involved in her own emotions and in the lie that Raymond is innocent, that she fails to see his motives before it is too late. Mauriac once again notes that Maria Cross is unaware of Raymond's intentions towards her when he says: "Mais elle ne reconnaissait pas une certaine expression des yeux et du front, cette rage du peureux qui a décidé de vaincre. . ." (11, p. 111). Mauriac proceeds to blame Maria explicitly for the humiliation Raymond feels when she resists his efforts to take her by force, for even though Maria seems to regret sincerely the destruction she has caused, Raymond leaves the drawing-room

believing that Maria meant to make a fool of him and determined to make her pay for having humiliated him.

Mauriac does not excuse Raymond but does blame Maria for bringing out the worst in him: "Et sans doute *était-il né avec cet instinct de chasseur, mais, sans Maria, il l'eût adouci de quelque faiblesse*" (11, p. 118). Amélie Fillon is rather gentle when she says of Maria, "son drame, c'est *d'éveiller le désir des hommes et de n'aspirer elle-même qu'aux maternelles tendresses*" (3, p. 138). Turnell explains Mauriac's rather harsh attitude toward Maria when he says,

She has the fallen creature's pervasive sense of her own corruption, but she is haunted by the image of the lost paradise of childhood. She tries to convince herself that it is his "innocence," or rather the appearance of innocence, which draws her to Raymond, but in her heart she knows that it is an illusion (16, pp. 326-327).

Once Maria sees that her image of Raymond as an innocent child is false and that her search for true love has failed, she seems to look at her life somewhat more realistically. She admits that she continued going to François' grave so that she could see Raymond, the living child, on the way home (11, p. 118). She also realizes that the boring Dr. Courrèges cannot fill the void she feels. Stripped of all illusions, she has to admit that she is left with an inner solitude that nothing on earth seems to be able to fill. In total despair, Maria Cross tries to commit suicide.

Mauriac takes advantage of Maria's recovery from suicide to use her as a philosophical spokesman for his theories on

the fruitless search for a meaningful human relationship. Maria states that now she realizes that the physical relationship is purely for continuing the species and is not intended to fill the void in mankind, a void which must be filled by a higher love than the human one. Maria says that pleasure is just a substitute for the real love man desires: "Je ne suis pas à la mesure du plaisir . . . Lui seul pourtant nous fait oublier l'objet que nous cherchons, et il devient cet objet même" (11, p. 133). Maria Cross indicates that she no longer has any hope of finding pleasure in a physical relationship, which she describes as a "pays fétide," a "marécage," and as "boue" (11, p. 134). She claims that now she understands that what she really desires is a sort of metaphysical relationship in which she can possess and be possessed: "Un être que nous pourrions atteindre, posséder--mais non dans la chair . . . par qui nous serions possédés" (11, p. 135).

That Maria fails to experience such a relationship and, therefore, continues to play games of insincerity rather than face bleak reality, is seen in the conversation Raymond has with her in the Paris bar. It has been seventeen years since Maria's attempted suicide and Raymond's present encounter with Maria in the bar. As Raymond talks to her, hoping to humiliate her as she did him seventeen years ago, she appears to be elusive and indifferent to him. She pretends to have forgotten the past, as seen when she asks,

"Alors vous avez cru que ces bêtises pouvaient compter dans ma vie" (11, p. 144)? And later she asks him when he mentions the tram, "Quel tramway" (11, p. 149)? Everything she says makes her seem more inaccessible to Raymond, but Mauriac clearly indicates that she is covering up her real feelings. She is able to appear indifferent because she now feels some security in being able to refer to herself as "Mme Victor Larousselle" (11, p. 143). She is able to make Raymond feel inferior by speaking highly of her stepson, Bertrand (11, p. 148). Maria played the role of a torturer when she dismissed Dr. Courrèges from her life; she again appeared to play the same role when she humiliated Raymond before her attempted suicide. Now in the bar she continues to torment Raymond by pretending to be completely indifferent to him.

Though Maria's marriage is far from ideal, as seen in the fact that Larousselle leaves her to flirt with the barmaids, it nevertheless gives her enough security that she is able to appear indifferent to Raymond. Her indifference is insincere, for Mauriac indicates that she is relieved to realize that Raymond does not know she tried to commit suicide after she rejected him (11, p. 144). She thus causes Raymond to suffer more because she leaves him believing that she never truly loved him. For seventeen years Raymond has been tormented because of Maria Cross. Mauriac shows how completely Raymond has been obsessed with her in

the following: "Mais il n'a guère vécu de jours, durant ces dix-sept années, sans éveiller en lui, sans insulter, sans caresser cette figure dont il voit de tout près, ce soir, le profil" (11, p. 147).

Raymond's father also appears to have suffered through the years because of Maria Cross. In order to clarify Dr. Courrèges' involvement once again with her, Raymond telephones his father, who is at a medical convention in Paris, to care for Larousselle, who becomes suddenly ill from overdrinking. Maria Cross is as indifferent to him as she is to Raymond. When he tries to renew his ties with her, she dismisses him lightly and makes a joke of his affection for her (11, p. 156). Thus, Mauriac continues to portray Maria Cross as a cause of suffering to both Raymond and Dr. Courrèges. She makes Raymond suffer by her feigned indifference; she causes the doctor to suffer by her real indifference. She is totally aloof and inaccessible to both.

Mauriac seems to show that Maria has alleviated her own suffering concerning Raymond by marrying Larousselle, a substitute for the metaphysical relationship she once seemed to desire. Her family appears to have absorbed enough of her attention that she is less disoriented than she once was while living in the deserted drawing-room. She now appears in public. She tells Dr. Courrèges that she is no longer the lazy woman she used to be (11, p. 154). Mauriac seems to show through Maria that marriage serves as a distraction

from oneself and thus is a type of drug to help deaden the suffering or the emptiness within the human heart. That is why Dr. Courrèges suggests marriage to Raymond: "Tu ne saurais croire comme il fait bon vivre au plus épais d'une famille . . . mais oui! On porte sur soi les mille soucis des autres. . ." (11, p. 159).

At the end of the novel, Mauriac shows Maria, Raymond and Dr. Courrèges still longing for a truly meaningful relationship. Maria would like to believe that she could have found, years ago with Raymond, the love she is seeking if she had only told him what she expected from a lover (11, pp. 148-149). Dr. Courrèges, after trying to renew his contact with Maria, returns home to Bordeaux early in order to find comfort in his home, or so it seems, because of the marriage advice he gives Raymond. As seen in the following passage, Raymond is more aware than ever before, after seeing Maria again, of the futility of his existence because of her apparent indifference and elusiveness: "Intolérable certitude qu'il ne posséderait jamais Maria Cross et mourrait sans l'avoir possédée. Ce qu'il avait eu ne comptait pas; rien n'avait de prix que ce qu'il n'aurait jamais" (11, p. 163).

Finally, Mauriac uses the name Maria Cross in a very general sense to imply that she is representative of all women. He thereby gives Maria Cross a sort of eternal quality. The Maria Crosses Raymond will find in the future

will only bring him more misery: "Raymond porte en lui une passion forcenée, héritée de son père--passion toute-puissante, capable d'enfanter jusqu'à la mort d'autres mondes vivants, d'autres Maria Cross dont il deviendra tour à tour le satellite misérable. . ." (11, p. 164).

Thus, Maria Cross is not only frustrated and miserable herself, but she causes frustration and misery to the men who desire to love her. She is Mauriac's apex of the desert of love. Empty and always somewhat disorientated, she is totally incapable of forming a meaningful relationship with others, who, like herself, are without purpose in their lives. Maria Cross' role in Le Désert is quite aptly described by Turnell when he says: "She is not a mere symbol or a mere abstraction; she is the pivot of the book and the apex of one of the strangest of Mauriac's triangles" (16, p. 327).

Mauriac's heroines treated thus far seem to differ notably from each other. Each one looks quite different from the other; their ages differ except for Mathilde and the young Maria Cross, in the flashback, who would be approximately the same age.

All the heroines thus far seem to suffer from an inner loneliness, a loneliness they sense must be filled through a love relationship. How they cope with their isolation determines their character. Noémi is portrayed as a noble heroine because she chooses faithfulness and suffering

rather than unfaithfulness and pleasure. She keeps busy and her life has purpose until, perhaps, after Jean's death. Mathilde's suffering and loneliness is much greater than Noémi's because she has never loved nor been loved. Her inner suffering is emphasized by her physical torment, and her inner loneliness by the fact that she is left alone to die. As she lies dying, suffering and alone, Mathilde can only imagine in a distorted fashion what love and friendship would mean. Her idea of love is centered about a child, not a man. Unlike Noémi, Mathilde is bitter and vindictive towards others. Félicité is the most impulsive-acting of the heroines thus far. She rarely, if ever, is aware of her conscience or of her shortcomings, as are Noémi and Mathilde. She, however, like them, suffers from loneliness. But much more so than either of them, Félicité is filled with an all-consuming passion, that of a jealous mother's love for her son. Nothing else concerns her; she has nothing else to fill her thoughts. She does nothing useful in the novel, but spends nearly every moment doting on Fernand. Félicité, who is so cruel, is quite a contrast to Noémi, who is so considerate. Maria Cross is more overcome by boredom than the other heroines, and therefore, she is more aware of a meaninglessness in her life. Maria has nothing to distract her from herself; she has no family and no occupation. Nothing and no one seems to satisfy her

permanently. She suffers from boredom and she suffers from passion. Much more so than Noémi, Maria seems to live in a world of fantasy, for Noémi keeps busy, whereas Maria is incapable of putting any of her ideas into action. Maria Cross seems somewhat less disorientated when she is seen as Victor Larousselle's wife. Maria is much more introspective than the other heroines, and the first to think seriously about the answer to her loneliness. She, like them, is unable to experience the love that she believes would make her life meaningful.

Mauriac's attitude seems to vary from one heroine to another. He seems to sympathize with Noémi and admire her, for he portrays her as the young, naïve, innocent girl dedicated to fulfilling her mission in life. He appears also to sympathize with Mathilde, whom he pictures as the helpless victim of a horrible background, of illness, and of her enemies, Fernand and Félicité Cazenave. Mauriac seems to have almost no sympathy, however, for Félicité, whom he portrays as an old broken-down machine, a Juno, a Medusa, and an old woman who goes to any length to possess her son. He portrays her as a monstrous, jealous mother. His attitude towards Maria Cross is more difficult to ascertain for he portrays her rather ambiguously. He definitely shows her to possess an almost magic ability to ensnare men, as seen in the fact that Larousselle, Dr. Courrèges, and Raymond are

all fascinated by her. Mauriac shows her to be seductive but cruel to those who love her, though not necessarily intentionally so; Maria does seem to want to protect Raymond, and she is sorry for the destruction she causes him.

Mauriac often seems rather harsh towards Maria because she plays games with men and causes them suffering, especially when he shows that Maria deliberately insists on Raymond's innocence. Unlike Noémi, Mathilde, or Félicité, Maria Cross is confusing to the men who love her; they do not understand her; she is a mystery to them.

In a period of only three years, Mauriac appears to have progressed from creating rather simple heroines-- Noémi, Mathilde, and Félicité--to creating a very complex one, Maria Cross. It will now be interesting to see how he treats the heroines in some later novels that span a ten-year period following Le Désert.

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Brée, Germaine and Margaret Guiton, The French Novel from Gide to Camus, New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962.
2. Cormeau, Nelly, L'Art de François Mauriac, Paris, Bernard Grasset, Editeur, 1951.
3. Fillon, Amélie, François Mauriac, Paris, Société française d'éditions littéraires et techniques, 1936.
4. Flower, John Ernest, Intention and Achievement, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969.
5. Hamilton, Edith, Mythology, New York, The New American Library, Inc., 1942.
6. Jenkins, Cecil, Mauriac, New York, Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1965.
7. Keeler, Sister Mary Jerome, Catholic Literary France from Verlaine to the Present Time, Freeport, New York, Librairies Press, 1969.
8. Lanson, Gustave, Manuel illustré d'histoire de la littérature française, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1953.
9. Mauriac, François, Le Romancier et ses personnages, Paris, Buchet/Chastel, 1933.
10. _____, Oeuvres complètes, Volume I, Paris, Bibliothèque Bernard Grasset chez Arthème Fayard, 1950.
11. _____, Oeuvres complètes, Volume II, Paris, Bibliothèque Bernard Grasset chez Arthème Fayard, 1950.
12. Maurois, André, Études littéraires II, New York, Éditions de la maison française, Inc., 1944.
13. _____, From Proust to Camus; Profiles of Modern French Writers, translated by Carl Morse and Renaud Bruce, Garden City, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966.

14. Moore, Harry Thornton, Twentieth-century French Literature to World War II, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1966.
15. Smith, Maxwell A., François Mauriac, New York, Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970.
16. Turnell, Martin, The Art of French Fiction, Norfolk, Connecticut, James Laughlin, 1959.

CHAPTER III

THERESE DESQUEYROUX, ISA FONDAUDEGE, AND BLANCHE FRONTENAC

Even the casual reader of Thérèse Desqueyroux, published in 1928, feels drawn into the drama of the heroine for whom the novel is named. Like Maria Cross, she is extremely complex. But the torment Maria Cross causes men seems like innocent child's play compared with the crimes of Thérèse. Yet, Mauriac shows in his treatment of Thérèse that he sympathizes more positively with her than with Maria. In the Preface he admits that Thérèse is his most wicked heroine to date, then proceeds with a statement which is full of compassion and understanding for all humans who are corrupt in nature. The comment clearly indicates that Mauriac is presenting the portrait of a criminelle in the book, but it is particularly significant because it illustrates why he feels pity and sympathy for her. He seems to imply that she is the victim of a corrupt nature when he puts her among those whose hearts are buried and mixed with a corps de boue:

Beaucoup s'étonneront que j'aie pu imaginer une créature plus odieuse encore que tous mes autres héros. Saurai-je jamais rien dire des êtres ruisselants de vertu et qui ont le coeur sur la main? Les 'coeurs sur la main' n'ont pas d'histoire; mais je connais celle des coeurs enfouis et tout mêlés à un corps de boue (5, pp. 169-170).

Thérèse, perhaps the best known of all Mauriac's heroines, is a criminal. She has tried to poison her husband, Bernard Desqueyroux. Nevertheless, Mauriac is on her side and he makes his position clear in the first scene of the book. The atmosphere of gloom and silence in the scene is important for it is typical of the mood in the entire book. Rarely does Mauriac remove Thérèse from darkness and isolation. In the first scene Mauriac shows the heroine walking through the misty dusk from the Palais de Justice. He portrays her as a lonely woman. Both her father and the lawyer try to ignore her presence. The barrier of silence is noted by Mauriac when he says that Thérèse "s'efforçait de ne pas entendre les propos du petit homme aux courtes jambes arquées qui, pas une fois ne se retourna vers sa fille; elle aurait pu choir au bord de ce chemin: ni lui, ni Duros ne s'en fussent aperçus" (5, pp. 172-173).

Mauriac's portrayal of Thérèse as the daughter of so cold and calculating a politician as M. Larroque is intended to make the reader feel sorry for her. The reader's sympathy is further invoked by the fact that Thérèse's mother died in childbirth, leaving her daughter for M. Larroque to raise. The following quote shows that as far as he is concerned, Thérèse does not exist. His only worry is that she might destroy his chances to win a seat in the senate in an upcoming election. His chauvinistic attitude towards women is evident in Mauriac's statement: "Il ne l'écoute pas; ne

la voit plus. Que lui importe ce que Thérèse éprouve? Cela seul compte: son ascension vers le Sénat interrompue, compromise à cause de cette fille (toutes des hystériques quand elles ne sont pas des idiots)" (5, p. 175).

The imagery Mauriac uses in the novel to depict his heroine is certainly one of the intriguing aspects of his treatment of her. Probably one of the most repeated motifs is that of darkness. As has already been stated, Thérèse almost always stands in the shadows, both physically and spiritually. She begins her trip back home to Argelouse on the night train. The trip takes her nearly three-fourths of the novel. As she rides the train through the night, Thérèse, in an effort to piece together the drama of her life, hoping to receive her husband's forgiveness, recalls the events which led her to the attempted poisoning of Bernard. In many of the scenes she remembers, Thérèse is in both physical and spiritual darkness.

Although the heroine's trial has been declared Non-lieu, Mauriac treats her as a prisoner throughout the book. In one of the first scenes of the novel, he describes her as a woman condemned to eternal solitude. At the same time, Mauriac also presents her looking much like a person who has already been imprisoned. Though her magnificent forehead suggests that she was once attractive, she is now too weary and haggard looking to be pretty. The following passage describes Thérèse as she is riding in the carriage towards

the train that will, in turn, carry her to Argelouse:

Elle enlève son chapeau, appuie contre le cuir odorant sa petite tête blême et ballottée. . . . Juges creuses, pommettes, lèvres aspirées, et ce large front, magnifique, composent une figure de condamnée--oui, bien que les hommes ne l'aient pas reconnue coupable--condamnée à la solitude éternelle (5, pp. 178-179).

Mauriac continues his treatment of Thérèse as a prisoner by portraying Bernard as her waiting judge at Argelouse. Argelouse is itself a kind of exile as seen in the author's description of it as "une extrémité de la terre; un de ces lieux au delà desquels il est impossible d'avancer" (5, p. 185).

The reader must feel some pity for Thérèse, as evil as she is, because of Mauriac's portrayal of her as the victim of a cruel and fatal destiny. While attempting to understand why she once tried to poison Bernard, Thérèse feels certain that hers was not a premeditated crime, but that she was led into it by a mysterious evil force within her. Admitting that she does not understand herself or the destructive force within her, Thérèse thinks: "Moi, je ne connais pas mes crimes. . . . Je n'ai jamais su vers quoi tendait cette puissance forcenée en moi et hors de moi: ce qu'elle détruisait sur sa route, j'en étais moi-même terrifiée. . . ." (5, p. 181). Mauriac takes her side in attesting to the fact that her crime was not premeditated when he says, "Thérèse n'a pas réfléchi, n'a rien prémédité à aucun moment de sa vie. . . ." (5, p. 184).

Jenkins feels that Thérèse is portrayed as the victim of a Satanic being, or at least of a powerful malevolent force, when he says that an evil destiny seems to accompany the heroine's every act (4, p. 36). Looking back to her preceding thoughts, one sees that she believes the evil force comes from within her as well as from without when she names it as "cette puissance forcenée en moi et hors de moi. . ." (5, p. 181). Mauriac himself never really defines what is the evil force which lures the heroine into committing eventual murder. There seems to be no escape for her from the evil to which she is a prey, and that is partly the reason, no doubt, that Mauriac seems to be very much in sympathy with her.

One of the intriguing aspects of Thérèse's personality is her sadistic nature, which is so vividly depicted by Mauriac throughout the novel. For example, in one memorable scene he describes her sadism while she attended secular school as a child. Trying to pinpoint a motive for her crime, Thérèse recalls:

. . . je souffrais, je faisais souffrir. Je jouissais du mal que je causais et de celui qui me venait de mes amies; pure souffrance qu'aucun remords n'altérerait: douleurs et joies naissaient des plus innocents plaisirs (5, p. 184).

The few scenes in the novel in which Thérèse remembers her summers at Argelouse as a child impress upon the reader the dual aspect of her personality. She is fascinated by innocence and purity on the one hand, and lured by evil on

the other. Mauriac shows his heroine's obsession for purity and innocence through the person of her only childhood friend, Anne de la Trave, Bernard's half-sister.

The author often seems to portray Anne as Thérèse's alter-ego. Anne is in many ways the person Thérèse would like to be. She is full of lighthearted chatter, imagination and enthusiasm. Thérèse is quiet and likes to read. Anne is the product of a Catholic education, and seems to represent for Thérèse an ideal of purity and innocence. She tells Anne that she is ignorantly innocent because of her religious training, but Thérèse's actions show that she is envious of her pious friend. For example, she makes it her goal "à la saison brûlante, de ne pas se juger indigne d'Anne. . ." (5, p. 184). Thérèse recalls how she followed her friend everywhere, "insatiable de sa présence" (5, p. 190). They apparently have a perfectly harmonious relationship, but Mauriac subtly warns throughout the childhood scenes that the happiness, purity and innocence they know is temporary. For example, at one point he notes: ". . . Thérèse regarde ces jours purs de sa vie--purs mais éclairés d'un frêle bonheur imprécis. . ." (5, p. 188). Again when he is describing their silent hours in the hunter's hut he says, "Ainsi leur semblait-il qu'un seul geste aurait fait fuir leur uniforme et chaste bonheur" (5, p. 190). He shows that Thérèse is completely dependent on Anne for her satisfaction and contentment because when Anne leaves her, Thérèse

suffers from the silence and isolation of Argelouse. Like Noémi d'Artiailh after Jean Péloueyre's death, Félicité Cazenave after Fernand prefers Mathilde to her, and Maria Cross when not with Raymond, Thérèse finds that her life, too, is boring, purposeless, and futile when not with the loved one. Mauriac depicts Thérèse's emptiness when he writes: "Elle n'avait pas envie de lire; elle n'avait envie de rien; elle errait de nouveau. . ." (5, p. 191).

In the childhood scenes, it is interesting to note how Mauriac keeps Thérèse somewhat hidden in darkness. In one scene, because of the intense heat of the surrounding pine area, the girls retreat into the salon ténébreux of the Larroque house (5, p. 188). The girls also spend many hours lying in the hunter's hut sheltered from the Argelouse heat (5, p. 188). Thus, even in her childhood days, Thérèse is enveloped in darkness and silence.

It has been seen thus far that Mauriac's heroine has gone through her life, up to the poisoning of her husband, giving no particular thought to why she acts the way she does. In a sense, she has lived her young life much as though she were sleepwalking. Mauriac uses that very imagery to describe Thérèse on her wedding day. Thérèse cannot decide why she married Bernard. There were the typical reasons: one side of her wanted to become part of the establishment; she rather liked the idea of being Anne's sister-in-law; the thought of adding Bernard's two-thousand

hectares of pines to her own vast property was appealing, for as Mauriac mentions several times, "Elle avait toujours eu la propriété dans le sang" (5, p. 192). She was also one of the best prepared women in the region to manage a household. She had received special training in household management. Then too, Bernard was one of the best educated men in the area. But the true reason for her marriage eludes Thérèse. As always in her conclusions, she is left with maybe's:

". . . peut-être cherchait-elle moins dans le mariage une domination, une possession, qu'un refuge. Ce qui l'y avait précipitée, n'était-ce pas une panique" (5, p. 192)?

After recalling all the events leading up to her wedding, Thérèse once again is overcome by a feeling that some mysterious, sinister force, the dark destiny that Jenkins refers to, or the hidden evil of the soul that Elsie Pell speaks of (9, p. 8), has taken possession of her. Mauriac shows Thérèse suddenly awakening from her sleepwalking on her wedding day to discover that she has walked unknowingly into the cage of the bourgeois Desqueyroux family, whose only concerns are to maintain the status quo at any cost. He pictures Thérèse waking up to find the door of the cage locked: "Elle était entrée somnambule dans la cage et, au fracas de la lourde porte refermée, soudain la misérable enfant se réveillait" (5, p. 194). By equating her with a "misérable enfant" Mauriac again shows his sympathy for her. Also, his imagery reminds the reader that Thérèse has been a prisoner since

her marriage. Mauriac elaborates on the meaning of Thérèse's condemnation in the wedding scene. As she looks at Anne's happy face, she resents Anne's cheerful attitude. She reasons that Anne is insensitive to their approaching separation. Thérèse is particularly upset about her loss of innocence in marriage, which will further separate her from Anne, who is still a virgin. The following passage shows the bride's feeling of utter loneliness and despair at her wedding:

Aucun visage sur qui reposer ses yeux, dans cette foule, hors celui d'Anne; mais la joie enfantine de la jeune fille l'isolait de Thérèse: sa joie! Comme si elle eût ignoré qu'elles allaient être séparées le soir même, et non seulement dans l'espace; à cause aussi de ce que Thérèse était au moment de souffrir, --de ce que son corps innocent allait subir d'irréremédiable (5, p. 194).

The sudden change in Thérèse's mood at her wedding seems to be the result of what she believes is a crisis in her life. Her dark mood is noticed by the wedding guests, who are amazed at her ugly appearance. They later comment, "Elle ne se ressemblait pas, c'était une autre personne. . ." (5, p. 195). The comment strongly supports the idea that the heroine is probably schizophrenic. From her wedding day and on through the novel, Mauriac portrays primarily the dark side of his heroine. He shows the young bride on her honeymoon in Paris believing that happiness is now a mirage; she no longer knows what the word means. In the night train, the heroine remembers trying to imagine that there must be happiness for her somewhere in her relationship with Bernard

(5, p. 195), but her experience denies that possibility. In her sexual relationship with Bernard, the young bride feels alienated by her husband, who seems intent upon using her solely for his own enjoyment. Nelly Cormeau suggests that Mauriac depicts Noémi d'Artiailh, the alienated bride, and Thérèse, also the alienated bride, in much the same fashion (2, p. 113). However, the crisis of the wedding scene seems to be much worse for the latter. The following illustrates the type of relationship she once had with Bernard. She is particularly resentful of his using her and isolating her: "Il était enfermé dans son plaisir comme ses jeunes porcs charmants qu'il est drôle de regarder à travers la grille, lorsqu'ils reniflent de bonheur, dans une auge ('c'était moi l'auge; songe Thérèse!)" (5, p. 196).

The idea that her marriage soiled and degraded her is supported by the author's imagery, as in the above quote, and is confirmed by Thérèse's own thoughts. In one scene, the heroine, still riding the night train back to Argelouse, says to herself: "Tout ce qui précède mon mariage prend dans mon souvenir cet aspect de pureté; contraste, sans doute, avec cette ineffaçable salissure des noces" (5, p. 183).

From now on Mauriac shows that Thérèse's personality is deteriorating. Her moods are increasingly blacker; she is portrayed as suffocating in the stifling atmosphere of the Desqueyroux family. The heroine again seems to be schizophrenic.

Thérèse launches on a mission to destroy Anne's happiness when she receives word on her honeymoon from her former friend that she, Thérèse, has been betrayed. Anne's passions are now aflame for a young neighbor, Jean Azévédo. The heroine, feeling cheated of happiness in marriage, mutters to herself: "Elle connaît cette joie . . . et moi, alors? et moi? pourquoi pas moi" (5, p. 200)? Then suddenly, as at her wedding, Therese's mood becomes very dark, she feels a "désespoir mystérieux" and the author notes that again her appearance changes so drastically that she looks like someone else (5, p. 199). In the following scene, she imagines herself to be the prisoner of the Desqueyroux family, whose members make up the living bars to her cage. She seems to have given up her struggle against those about her and has become withdrawn from reality. Again she appears to be suffering from a severe psychosis:

La famille! Thérèse laissa éteindre sa cigarette; l'oeil fixe, elle regardait cette cage aux barreaux innombrables et vivants, cette cage tapissée d'oreilles et d'yeux, où, immobile, accroupie, le menton aux genoux, les bras entourant ses jambes, elle attendrait de mourir (5, p. 204).

Somewhat interestingly, the heroine has imagined her very condition when she returns to Argelouse after her trial and is locked in her bedroom by her vindictive husband. The following scene, which occurs immediately following the heroine's imagined imprisonment, is also futuristic in nature, for it seems to be a forewarning of her poisoning of Bernard. Thérèse, in bed the night following the arrival of Anne's

letter, wants to rid herself of her young husband; the following lines show how desperate she is: "D'une main brutale et qui pourtant ne l'éveilla pas, de nouveau elle l'écarta . . . Ah! l'écarter une fois pour toutes et à jamais! le précipiter hors du lit, dans les ténèbres" (5, p. 204).

The sadistic thoughts that the heroine has in the previous scene are enacted in the scenes of the novel that follow it. At first Thérèse directs her attack against Anne. One of her sadistic acts, interestingly enough, involves the photo of Jean Azévédo that Anne has included in a letter. Thérèse, coolly and calmly, as though acting in a perfectly normal manner, picks up a pin, stabs the picture in the area of the heart, and flushes it down the toilet (5, pp. 200-201). The act of taking revenge by destroying a photo is a repeated scene, for in a critical moment in Genitrix, Félicité considers ruining Mathilde's picture, which Fernand has made into a shrine. The heroines seem to feel that they can get partial revenge by eliminating the visible evidence of the invisible foe.

One of the crucial scenes in Thérèse is the one in which the heroine commits herself to the mission of destroying Anne's happiness. As the passage below shows, Thérèse is dedicating herself to despair. Her mind seems unusually evil and cruel as she determines to remove all of her former friend's illusions. Again, as at her wedding, the heroine cannot endure the thought that Anne can be happy without her:

. . . un travail urgent l'appelait, non de vengeance, ni de haine: mais cette petite idiote, là-bas, à Saint-Clair, qui croyait le bonheur possible, il fallait qu'elle sût, comme Thérèse, que le bonheur n'existe pas. Si elles ne possèdent rien d'autre en commun, qu'elles aient au moins cela: l'ennui, l'absence de toute tâche haute, de tout devoir supérieur, l'impossibilité de rien attendre que les basses habitudes quotidiennes, --un isolement sans consolations (5, p. 205).

The philosophy expressed by Thérèse in the above quote is completely negative. In it the heroine subscribes to absolute despair, to an atheistic doctrine. It seems that she intends to make sure that Anne has no illusions about the meaning of life, which for Thérèse is utter loneliness and loss of hope.

Mauriac, however, does not minimize Thérèse's cruelty. In his portrayal of her when she attempts to destroy Anne's love for Jean, he compares her to a wasp which finds its shelter in the dark recesses of the family room. After she is assured of success in her mission, Thérèse remains coldly aloof from Anne, who is now suffering: "Thérèse n'avait plus besoin de lui demander si elle souffrait: elle l'entendait souffrir dans l'ombre; mais sans aucune pitié" (5, p. 212). Mauriac has again, in a few words, vividly depicted Thérèse as a sadist.

Anne, who does not suspect Thérèse of having sided against her, agrees to a temporary banishment from the Argelouse area, and entrusts Thérèse with relaying her messages to Jean. Thérèse's encounters with young Azévédo are important, for it is he who makes her consciously aware of

the suffocating bourgeois mediocrity of Argelouse. He makes her feel that she definitely does not belong there, that she is superior and deserves a better lot in life: "Mais vous! Je sens dans toutes vos paroles une faim et une soif de sincérité. . ." (5, p. 227). Jean's honesty and facile manner of expression make her more aware of the dull relationship she has with Bernard (5, p. 223).

In the following scene Jean has returned to Paris and the heroine now suffers more from the silence and oppressiveness of Argelouse. Again Mauriac depicts her as being in a darkness which now seems eternal, for it is "sans cesse." She is afraid of being forever enveloped in darkness. She also fears suffocation: ". . . dès que je l'eus quitté, je crus pénétrer dans un tunnel indéfini, m'enfoncer dans une ombre sans cesse accrue; et parfois je me demandais si j'atteindraisi enfin l'air libre avant l'asphyxie" (5, p. 228).

At this point, Thérèse would appear to be an unsympathetic heroine if Mauriac did not portray the Desqueyroux family in a worse light. The entire Desqueyroux family plots to destroy Anne's love for Jean; they even lock her in the garden, making a prisoner of her. In one scene, Bernard drags Anne roughly into her bedroom and locks her in it, foreshadowing his later imprisonment of Thérèse. Jenkins also shows that he is sympathetic with the heroine when he says, "She is the noblest member of the family." He points out that only Thérèse has any real awareness of the word noble (4, p. 77).

Mauriac continues to show sympathy and pity for Thérèse by keeping before the reader the fact that the Desqueyroux are responsible for her mental withdrawal and feeling of suffocation by their indifference to her. She remembers thinking that while she was pregnant the family thought of her only as a vase sacré. The important fact to remember is that in pregnancy, Thérèse feels she is losing her individuality, a thought she apparently cannot bear as the following lines imply:

Les le Trave vénéraient en moi un vase sacré: le réceptacle de leur progéniture; aucun doute que, le cas échéant, ils m'eussent sacrifiée à cet embryon. Je perdais le sentiment de mon existence individuelle. Je n'étais que le sarment; aux yeux de la famille, le fruit attaché à mes entrailles comptait seul (5, p. 233).

Nelly Cormeau's assertion that one of the reasons that Thérèse poisons Bernard is that her spirit refuses to succumb to the mediocrity of the Desqueyroux family seems to be supported by the above passage and by other passages in the book. Thérèse sounds somewhat like a feminist in Cormeau's statement, "Elle aspire à une existence individuelle, à l'affirmation de sa personnalité, par opposition aux femmes de la famille qui s'anéantissent tout de suite dans l'enfant et qui très tôt acceptent comme leur mission naturelle de n'être plus que l'esclave dépersonnalisée du clan" (2, p. 114). By refusing to succumb to her role as a mother, the heroine is asserting the rebel side of her personality. By ignoring her daughter when she is born,

Thérèse appears to be different from the previous Mauriac heroines. She seems to prefer her books and intellectual conversations with Jean Azévédo to the role she ought to play if she were to take her part in the establishment. However, as the reader has already seen, Thérèse apparently feels that such a role destroys her individuality. Thérèse's tragedy is that there appears to be no permissible means of escape for her. Nauseated by Bernard's attitude of satisfaction, she considers escaping but has no way to do so. "Sortir du monde . . . mais comment? Et où aller" (5, p. 237)? The plan of escape emerges slowly to the foreground of her mind on the day of the Mano fire.

By the time Mauriac gets to the scene of the fire in the novel, he has established Thérèse's withdrawn personality so well that there is nothing at all shocking or even surprising about the actual commitment of the crime. Having seen how much she has suffered from the indifference or outright cruel remarks of the Desqueyroux family, the reader may not find it tremendously difficult to sympathize with her action, cruel though it is. However, if the reader feels as Mauriac does, he will not condone the act. He will, nevertheless not condemn her for it. Thérèse becomes progressively detached from reality from the time of Jean Azévédo's departure. Thus on the day of the fire, Thérèse, like someone in a dream, watches Bernard take a double dose of arsenic. Later, when she uses him as a laboratory specimen, giving him extra

doses of arsenic in order to see what the effects will be, she shows her rejection of being a complacent, self-satisfied individual. Thinking back to the crime, while approaching the last station before she must meet Bernard in the night, the heroine recalls: "Oui, je n'avais pas du tout le sentiment d'être la proie d'une tentation horrible; il s'agissait d'une curiosité un peu dangereuse à satisfaire" (5, p. 239). Mauriac, like Nelly Cormeau, looks upon Thérèse's crime partly as a refusal to be buried in boredom and to accept a routine role in a bourgeois society that is just as evil as Thérèse. The family members break all moral laws but seem to escape condemnation because they obey the codes of that society. Cormeau says that Mauriac prefers Thérèse to her victim, Bernard, because he is complacent. Mauriac praises her in the novel saying: "Peut-être, mourrait-elle de honte, d'angoisse, de remords, de fatigue, mais elle ne mourrait pas d'ennui. . ." (5, pp. 250-251).

Once Thérèse arrives at Argelouse, Bernard, her awaiting judge, sentences her to solitary confinement in her room. He is more generous than Mme de la Trave, Thérèse's mother-in-law, who would like for her to be amputated, like a poisonous limb, from the family (5, pp. 250-251).

Mauriac's attitude towards Thérèse after she reaches Argelouse is even more compassionate than it is previously in the novel. In one particularly tender scene, Thérèse is portrayed as really having a mother's genuine love for her

daughter. She decides to commit suicide rather than submit to imprisonment in her room. When she steps beside her daughter's bedside for a last look, Thérèse is moved to unprecedented tenderness at the sight of the one who is her very image: "Thérèse reconnaît cette oreille trop grande; son oreille." She shows her humaneness with a flow of tears and by admitting she is "un monstre" (5, p. 255). She then leaves to throw herself upon the only possible mercy she can any longer hope for, the mercy of a God whose existence she questions. Never before has Thérèse shown such tender emotion as in this scene, nor has she previously seemed quite so desperate for forgiveness and understanding. Never before has she manifested so strong a hope in the existence of a Supreme Being. For these reasons the monstre does not seem as genuinely monstrous as she did even shortly before her attempted suicide. The suicide scene is important as it shows the author's treatment of his heroine from a religious viewpoint. The heroine has prayed to God, whose very existence she doubts, to either have mercy on her and spare her life or pardon her after death. Somewhat miraculously, her ageing aunt, the only person in the story who loves Thérèse, dies just as the heroine is about to take poison. The entrance of the servant bearing the news of the aunt's death prevents Thérèse from committing suicide. She, however, fails to see that perhaps God has spared her life, an idea Mauriac seems to express in the scene (5, p. 257).

Mauriac's imagery now makes the reader share the heroine's utter loneliness, her sense of exile and of condemnation. Bernard has confined her to her bedroom and he has left Argelouse. Thérèse, normally so fond of the pines, at times imagines that they are closing in on her like prison guards. Again the author portrays Thérèse in darkness and silence. As winter approaches, the rains come and the number of hours of darkness increases (5, p. 259). The heroine remains in her bedroom, leaving her bed less and less because the fire dies out and the room becomes cold. Isolated, Thérèse's only other consolation comes from the murmuring pines on windy nights. Thérèse seems to imagine then that they are expressing the same sorrow she feels: "Elle préférait les nuits de vent,--cette plainte indéfinie des crimes recèle une douceur humaine" (5, p. 258).

One of the last scenes in the novel shows Thérèse and Bernard sitting at a cafe in Paris, for he has decided that she must be exiled. The heroine seems to want to make a reconciliation with her husband, but he remains coldly indifferent. In the following passage, she tries to explain her complicated personality to him, a personality she herself does not thoroughly understand. Thérèse feels that she has a dual personality, one that wants to join the establishment and one that rebels against becoming a part of it. Mauriac presents quite a softened image of the revolutionary who now seems to apologize for her rebel side.

Mais maintenant, Bernard, je sens bien que la Thérèse qui d'instinct, écrase sa cigarette parce qu'un rien suffit à mettre le feu aux brandes, --la Thérèse qui aimait à compter ses pins elle-même, régler ses gemmes; --la Thérèse qui était fière d'épouser un Desqueyroux . . . cette Thérèse-là est aussi réelle que l'autre, aussi vivante; non, non: il n'y avait aucune raison de la sacrifier à l'autre (5, p. 281).

Fillon feels that Thérèse is a far more compassionate person than Bernard. She appears to be right when she expresses the idea that the barriers separating the heroine and her husband are too broad to be crossed because of his complacency and rigidity: "Aucune entente n'est possible entre cette femme intelligente, paradoxale, compliquée et cet homme positive, satisfait, personnel" (3, p. 151).

In the final scene of the novel Mauriac leaves Thérèse on a Paris street, seemingly condemned to eternal silence. She has no friends there. In a nearby window she sees the reflection of herself, a young woman who still shows the affect of her recent imprisonment in her room at Argelouse: "Mais de son temps d'Argelouse, elle gardait une figure comme rongée: ces pommettes trop saillants, ce nez court" (5, p. 284). She tries to hide the marks of condemnation by putting on makeup. She appears to be trying to forget her loneliness by heavy drinking and smoking. She has no place to go. "Thérèse avait un peu bu et beaucoup fumé. Elle riait seule comme une bienheureuse. Elle farda ses joues et ses lèvres, avec minutie; puis, ayant gagné la rue, marcha au hasard" (5, p. 284).

Thérèse is a rather intellectually inclined woman who has ideals and who feels stifled in the conventionalism of the people about her at Argelouse. She apparently suffers from a mental disorder, perhaps schizophrenia, evidenced by her dual personality, her withdrawal from reality, her suicidal attitude, and her sudden dark moods brought on by the crisis of her wedding day. Basically, it is the dark side of the heroine that dominates in the novel. Mauriac appears to emphasize the evil of her black moods by placing her in the dark throughout the book. The heroine apparently withdraws from reality partly because she cannot bear the mediocrity of Bernard and his family. The author portrays her as a sleepwalker. Almost as though fated to do so, Thérèse allows her husband to take an overdose of poison and then begins to poison him herself. At the time she is in mental despair and is withdrawn from reality. She seems to be acting out of instinct, in order to rescue herself from the one she feels is destroying her. Thérèse's high degree of intelligence accompanied by her somnambulistic state of mind is partly what makes her a mysterious person. Conflicting analysis of the heroine shows that she probably cannot be comprehended. Fillon believes that "tous ses actes sont dictés par son cerveau, car elle est exclusivement cérébrale. . ." (3, p. 153). Brée, however, flatly contradicts Fillon's idea when she says: "She is governed not by the mind but by some dark, mysterious force within her" (1,

p. 119). It seems wise to avoid making absolute statements concerning the heroine's motivation since even she herself does not know why she committed the crime of poisoning Bernard (5, p. 239).

Mauriac portrays Thérèse as a rebel in various ways. She refuses to conform to the standards established for women in her society. She likes to read, something most girls of the provinces were not encouraged to do. She is a chain smoker; she is sadistic towards others whom she feels are intellectually stagnant; she refuses to assume responsibility for her child when she is born and she tries to poison her husband. In one scene the author compares her to a wasp. She is, indeed, wicked and cruel.

However, Mauriac presents a very sympathetic portrait of Thérèse. He is consistent in his treatment of her as a victim of an apparently innate evil nature and as a prisoner of her family and environment. She even looks like one who has spent time in prison. In the first scene of the novel, the author presents Thérèse as being utterly exhausted. He makes special mention of her pale face and ears which detract somewhat from her magnificent forehead. The heroine is seen to be intensely lonely. The scorching heat and silence of the remote Argelouse accented her feeling of isolation. She knows no one, either human or Divine, on whom she can lean. She seems blind to the Divine assistance that might be available to her. Finally, Thérèse demands sympathy at the

end of the novel when she is seen trying to reconcile herself to her husband. He, however, leaves her all alone to wander like an exiled criminal through the crowded, impersonal Paris streets. She is still living in Paris in the following novel Mauriac writes about her.

Mauriac explains in the Preface, which appears in the "Appendice" of La Fin de la nuit, that he is writing another major novel about Thérèse because she has still been haunting him and she longs for the author to bring her to the point of death. He states his purpose in the following words: "Depuis dix ans que fatiguée de vivre en moi, elle demandait à mourir. . ." (5, p. 537).

In the Preface the author seems very concerned about the fate of his heroine and about the attitude of his Catholic audience towards his treatment of her. He regrets that his heroine is not converted at the end of the novel because he cannot find a suitable priest to whom she can confess (5, pp. 537-538). Mauriac's concern about the opinion of his Catholic readers is interesting; he seems almost apologetic for having written another novel about a condemned heroine, and appears to ask his readers' forgiveness when he offers them the following reason for his attitude towards her: ". . . il importe de rappeler que mon héroïne appartient à une époque de ma vie déjà ancienne et qu'elle est le témoin d'une inquiétude dépassée" (5, p. 537). It seems, then, from the Preface, that Mauriac is now admittedly sensitive

to the feelings of his Catholic readers, an attitude which sometimes noticeably affects his treatment of Thérèse in La Fin.

Mauriac did not intend for La Fin to be a sequel to Thérèse, but he wanted it to be "le portrait d'une femme à son déclin, que j'avais peinte déjà du temps de sa jeunesse criminelle" (5, p. 537). Nevertheless, the reader who is acquainted with the young heroine of Thérèse Desqueyroux will find it quite impossible not to consider the older Thérèse a sequel to the younger woman.

When Bernard leaves Thérèse in Paris at the end of Thérèse Desqueyroux, she seems to be particularly concerned about her age and appearance. Thérèse, still living in Paris, is fifteen years older in La Fin. In the first scene, Mauriac shows her to be concerned about the same things as in Thérèse. She now notices signs of ageing and seems to fear growing old. For example, in the following passage, Thérèse, looking in the mirror, something she does repeatedly in the novel, notices that her receding hairline is what makes her look older. The heroine notes that by wearing a hat she can reduce her age by approximately twenty years:

Elle perd ses cheveux comme un homme; oui, elle a un front dévasté de vieil homme, 'un front de penseur . . .' prononce-t-elle à mi-voix. Mais c'est le seul signe apparent de vieillissement: 'Quand j'ai un chapeau, je suis pareille à ce que je fus. On me disait déjà, il y a vingt ans, que je n'avais pas d'âge. . . (5, p. 336).

Although Thérèse would like to believe that she is still young, Mauriac notes several signs that show she is in her decline. Her thinning hair has been mentioned. Throughout the book, Thérèse is portrayed as one suffering from a weak heart. She is failing financially because the business involving her pines is poor. She now has several debts (5, p. 337). She also seems paranoid. She likes to read only detective novels (5, p. 336) and hates to leave her apartment for she feels that people are spying on her, much as Maria Cross felt before she became established as Larousselle's wife. Mauriac's description of her clothes reminds one of Raymond's evaluation of Maria's as he looked at her in the Paris bar at the beginning of Le Désert. Mauriac suggests in the following passage that people stare at Thérèse because they find her rather ill-fitting clothes amusing. Thérèse, wanting to believe that she is still young, seems unaware that her clothes look strange:

Dans sa mise, qu'elle croyait être correcte et même sobre, régnait ce vague désordre, ce rien d'extravagance où se trahissent les femmes vieillissantes qui n'ont plus personne pour leur donner des conseils . . . tout prenait sur elle, à son insu, un caractère bizarre (5, pp. 337-338).

The lack of care that is apparent in Thérèse's dress is, according to Mauriac, an outward sign of her lack of companionship. She lives alone and has no friends except the maid, Anna. In the first scene of the novel, which takes place at night, as do many of the scenes, Mauriac stresses the idea that Thérèse is a lonely woman, for she,

like Maria Cross, is an outcast of society. The bookcase in her livingroom, which once concealed the arsenic she gave to her husband, Bernard, is a silent witness to the fact that she is a poisoner of lives. Alone at night in her third-floor apartment in Paris, Thérèse feels too restless to read (5, p. 336). In the following passage, Mauriac emphasizes the utter emptiness of her life by the repetition of the word rien. He is still portraying Thérèse as a woman condemned to eternal solitude: "Or, ce soir, elle se sentait impuissante à demeurer seule. . . . Il n'y avait rien de plus dans sa vie, à cette minute précise, que ce qui toujours y avait été: rien de nouveau . . . Rien" (5, p. 338).

In the first scene, Mauriac also establishes the image of Thérèse as a lonely prisoner in her own apartment. Her only companion is the servant, Anna, whom Mauriac compares to a piece of brown bread that the heroine is clutching on to dans sa prison. Lonely, Thérèse is also intensely bored, as the following lines illustrate so well. The author pictures the heroine turning around in a closed world: "Thérèse tournait autour de ce monde clos: une paysanne, une domestique qu'elle gardait comme un morceau de pain bis dans sa prison, n'ayant pas le choix entre cette fille et une autre créature humaine (5, p. 334). Thérèse is tempted to want to possess Anna; however, in one scene Mauriac shows that the heroine refuses to let herself dominate Anna's life (5, p. 335).

At the beginning of the novel, Mauriac shows that his heroine is terrified by the thought of death. For the past fifteen years that she has been in Paris, Thérèse has tried to take care of her health. She has even given up her cigarettes in order to preserve her life: "Ce goût de se détruire . . . elle n'y avait jamais cédé, non pour des raisons nobles, mais par terreur de la mort" (5, p. 339). The sacrificing of her cigarettes is interesting in view of the image Mauriac depicts of her in La Fin as opposed to the one of her in Thérèse Desqueyroux. Thérèse's smoking once made her appear to be a rebel to the Desqueyroux family. At times it also reminded the reader of the novel that she was a poisoner of lives. In La Fin Thérèse is concerned with preserving life, partly perhaps because she carries with her a strong burden of guilt.

The scene depicting the arrival of Marie, Thérèse's daughter, is significant for it shows the heroine's attitude of guilt. Like Maria Cross, Thérèse is ashamed of her name, a symbol of evil. Marie hopes to stay with Thérèse in order to keep a watch on her boyfriend, Georges Filhot, who would like to evade her. Thérèse shows her shame of having Marie associate with her when she whispers to her, unable even to say her own name, ". . . tu te réclames de moi, tu te mets sous ma protection, toi et ton amour. Sous la protection de . . ." (5, p. 354). Later, Thérèse imagines that she is again on trial when Marie questions her about her separation

from Bernard. The Thérèse in La Fin is thus seen to be treated by the author as a woman suffering from a guilt complex: she regards herself as a criminal.

Thérèse often seems to feel that no one truly cares for her. She imagines that once they know her background, they will reject her. In one scene she worries about having lost Marie's respect and then believes Anna no longer cares for her either. Mauriac again shows the reader how very lonely Thérèse is. In the following lines he calls her a recluse, and depicts her as a prisoner, believing she no longer even has the necessities of life: ". . . le respect, l'affection d'Anna, c'était l'eau et le pain de cette recluse . . . Ils lui étaient enlevés maintenant . . . Plus rien ne lui restait . . . Elle avait beau répéter: plus rien! . . ." (5, p. 372).

It seems that Mauriac would very much like to convert his heroine, as is evidenced in his treatment of her in one notable situation. The author portrays Thérèse walking through the fog when suddenly she seems to have a revelation. She feels conscious of a goal, of walking vers quelque chose as though a mysterious force has taken hold of her and turned her around. The first lines sound as though she is being divinely healed: ". . . elle ne se sentait pas souffrir, délivrée, 'opérée' d'elle ne savait quoi, --comme si elle n'eût plus tourné en rond, comme si elle avançait tout à coup, comme si elle marchait vers quelque chose" (5,

p. 372). Mauriac's handling of Thérèse is somewhat ineffective; it is not convincing. Mauriac himself seems to question the validity of his treatment of the heroine in his personal intrusion. He pretends to wonder what could have caused the change in her and in failing to provide an explanation, he concludes rather lamely, "En tout cas, elle voyait plus clair; elle marchait dans une certaine direction" (5, p. 372). It is Mauriac's treatment of Thérèse as a "predestined character" that brought forth some very harsh criticism from Sartre. He felt that Mauriac was depriving his heroine the freedom of choice necessary to make her seem realistic in the twentieth century. Sartre could not accept Mauriac's wish "to show Thérèse as a predestined character" as "subject of a valid novel" (12, p. 29).

However weak Mauriac's treatment of the heroine may be in the above scene, he now shows her to have a goal. In a rather long monologue Thérèse spells out for herself the goal she now envisions for her life. Again the author seems to use her as a mouthpiece to voice his own theories. Thérèse concludes that all people are guilty of crimes and that she, therefore, is not unique in that aspect. Thérèse's goal is a total renouncement of self, "Un mépris total et sagace de soi. . ." (5, p. 373). In many scenes throughout the rest of the novel Mauriac mainly shows Thérèse struggling, like Sisyphus, to reach the top of the mountain. Her mountain is self-renunciation. She fails often in her goal because an

evil force within her makes her want to satisfy herself rather than renounce those things that might bring her pleasure. As was true of Thérèse fifteen years earlier, so now the evil force is a mystery to her. In one scene she asks herself: ". . . quel est ce fond de mon être sur quoi toujours je retombe" (5, p. 393)?

Mauriac focuses on Thérèse's vanity when he wants to show her losing the battle of self-renouncement. When she puts on makeup and conceals her bald forehead, she is thinking only of flaunting herself, an act which is destructive in the novel. For example, the care that she takes in putting on makeup, even the first time she goes to see Georges Filhot, is Mauriac's way of showing that the heroine desires the attention of the young twenty-two-year-old boy, attention that is more rightfully Marie's since Thérèse has promised her daughter to help her win Georges' love.

The problem Thérèse faces in the novel becomes apparent when she realizes that Georges does not love Marie. From then on Mauriac shows her engaged in an emotional conflict, trying to be faithful to Marie, yet tempted to accept the love Georges is eager to offer her.

Thérèse is also faced with a philosophical problem. Will she allow Marie to believe she is loved and thus let her live rather contentedly deluded, or will she shatter Marie's illusions by making her know the truth? In the following lines Thérèse still seems to believe, as she did

fifteen years previously, that knowledge of the truth leads to despair. She herself still seems to hate all illusions:

J'exige des autres qu'ils soient clairvoyants. Ce qui m'irrite chez Marie, c'est sa puissance d'illusion. J'ai toujours eu cette manie de détacher les bandeaux. . . . Il faut qu'on me rejoigne dans le désespoir. Je ne comprends pas qu'on ne soit pas désespéré (5, p. 394).

In Thérèse Desqueyroux, Thérèse destroyed Anne's happiness and made her join her in the belief of despair. Thérèse now shows a change of attitude by deciding to allow Marie to be deluded and, therefore, happy, though falsely so, in Thérèse's opinion.

However, Mauriac continues to portray her wavering in her decision from time to time. For example, in the scene when Georges comes for supper, the heroine takes special care in preparing herself for the meal (5, p. 395). The scene shows very well the conflict that Thérèse is engaged in. She tries to make herself appealing to Georges by carefully applying her makeup, wearing a scarf around her neck, and styling her hair to cover her bald forehead. She realizes that she wants to play the coquette, that her words as well as her appearance will be a lie. Her conscience rebukes her somewhat, and she decides, even while she is putting on her makeup, that she will try to be unnoticed. But she knows that she cannot efface herself when she is with Georges, for even in their brief time together in a previous scene, Thérèse finds him intellectually interesting and a true companion.

The scene of Georges' second visit is the one which Mauriac states in the Preface as being the purpose of the entire novel. Georges has taken Marie to the train on which she has returned to Argelouse. He has arranged in a previous night scene to see Thérèse again. She is well aware of his infatuation for her and realizes that she could very easily discourage Georges' advances by allowing him to see her true self, an ageing and dying woman, the poisoner of lives. She feels that all she would have to do would be to pull back the hair hiding her bald forehead. However, Thérèse, flattered by Georges' attentions and finding consolation from her loneliness in their understanding of each other, is not ready to sacrifice the love Georges apparently feels for her, even though she has promised Marie that she will encourage Georges to marry her (5, p. 405).

The scene of Georges' second visit depicts the climax of Thérèse's struggle to renounce self and protect Marie's happiness. In order for Thérèse to protect Marie's happiness, she must make Georges see the truth about herself. The entire scene shows her step-by-step renouncement of self. Each step fails to put her and Georges' relationship on a safe basis. Finally, Thérèse realizes that she must make a total sacrifice of self in order to try to keep from destroying Marie's happiness. In a series of episodes, Thérèse struggles with her conscience, wanting to do what is best for Marie but also wanting to keep Georges for herself. Like Maria Cross,

Thérèse seems to think that if she treats her lover like a child, their relationship will be safe: "Elle tenta un geste de dénégation et, soulevant un peu la main droite, la posa sur les cheveux rebelles, les rejeta comme elle eût fait pour découvrir le front de son fils avant le baiser du soir" (5, p. 419). The mirror tells Thérèse that she is not being honest. In it she sees the reflection of a radiant face, one whose youthful appearance is not a result of makeup but of the joy she feels in the knowledge she has of being loved (5, p. 420). Thus, Mauriac shows that Thérèse is forgetting her goal and is wanting to make only herself happy for she thinks, "Stupide jeunesse qui se croit seule aimée" (5, p. 421)! Nevertheless, Thérèse no sooner slides down the hill than she again begins to climb back up. Recalling that she once tried to poison Bernard with real poison, she feels that now her means of destruction is much more subtle and just as deadly. As she sees herself trying to destroy Marie's happiness, Thérèse is stunned by the thought that now she can kill at a distance: "Ah! elle n'a plus besoin d'être présente pour assassiner les êtres! Elle les tue à distance maintenant" (5, p. 421).

Still in the scene of Georges' second visit, the author shows his heroine struggling to renounce self in order to bring Georges and Marie together. Thérèse has just been reminded of her daughter's trust in her. She has picked up Marie's letter from the mantle which expresses confidence in

Thérèse's faithfulness to her. With tremendous effort, the heroine decides to deny herself the joy of Georges' presence. The emotional strain of the moment can be seen in her mains tremblantes, in the way she puts her hands to her eyelids, in her sudden turning towards Georges and in her clenched teeth:

Elle prit un à un les feuillets dans ses mains tremblantes, les mit en ordre et les glissa dans l'enveloppe. Elle leva les bras, appuya ses paumes contre ses paupières, se tourna brusquement vers le garçon accroupi sur cette chaise basse où elle-même avait tant souffert, et lui dit à mi-voix, les dents serrées:

_____ Allez-vous-en (5, pp. 421-422).

In the following scene Georges has returned to Thérèse's apartment, not having gone further than the landing, still wanting to reveal his love for her. It is now that Thérèse makes the supreme sacrifice in the novel. The following passage shows Mauriac's treatment of the heroine as she performs the small act that has such tremendous consequences. By her act, Thérèse is admitting that she is unattractive and ageing. Mauriac even includes the idea that she is still l'empoisonneuse. Finally, the act causes Thérèse to lose Georges; he draws back from her figure terrible in horror. The following lines give an excellent portrait of the heroine as a martyr:

Elle s'était rassise sur la chaise basse et, d'un geste machinal, écartait ses cheveux de son front trop vaste, découvrait ses grandes oreilles pâles . . . une figure terrible, et ces vieilles mains qui, quinze années plus tôt, avaient essayé de donner la mort et dont, ce soir encore, il venait de subir l'étreinte (5, pp. 434-435).

Again it appears that the author would very much like to have his heroine converted. After the above scene, Mauriac praises Thérèse for having made such a valiant effort at self-renunciation when he says, ". . . maintenant voici qu'elle est sortie de cette nuit" (5, p. 435). But in the following scenes Mauriac continues to treat her as the one who poisons lives. She has never been able to make a confession that would absolve her of her guilt.

It is interesting that even her supreme act of self-denial is destructive in part. Mauriac stresses the idea that Thérèse's act is somewhat harmful by his repeated use of the word nuit in the scenes immediately following the heroine's rejection of Georges. Mauriac shows that by alienating Georges from her life, Thérèse has pushed him into despair. For example, she awakens several times following her act of renunciation worried about having pushed Georges into the night. She wonders, "Ah! pourquoi cette hâte à le rejeter dans la nuit" (5, p. 440)? When Georges last visited Thérèse, she made him realize that he too is guilty of crimes. She also made him promise to try to love Marie. The following scene shows that the heroine has indeed forced Georges to the brink of despair. She goes to his hotel room and discovers that he has not been in all night. When he finally does return, Mauriac depicts him as one who no longer has any hope: "Il parut enfin, l'oeil trouble, la figure noircie de barbe, les souliers pleins de boue" (5, p. 451).

In the final scenes of the novel, Mauriac portrays Thérèse as one whose physical and mental being is rapidly declining. Following her visit to Georges' hotel room, the heroine returns to her apartment physically exhausted. She barely has the strength to enter her livingroom and remove her hat; her heart is beating wildly (5, p. 457). She desperately wants to confess her guilt to someone, but not finding anyone who can forgive her, she becomes completely paranoid. She feels that everyone, including her trusted servant Anna, is conspiring to catch her in her crime and have her imprisoned (5, p. 458).

Mauriac shows Thérèse finally regaining her lucidity in a scene back at Argelouse. She has returned to Argelouse which she now believes is a refuge from her enemies. She is bedridden and on the verge of death. In a last spell of delirium, Thérèse imagines that Marie, who is bent over her bed attempting to feed her, is another Thérèse trying to give her a dose of poison. The heroine thinks to herself: "C'est Thérèse elle-même qui s'approche de Thérèse" (5, p. 492). The thought is that of a woman driven insane by the guilt she feels. She sees everyone as an enemy, and realizes that she is her own worst enemy. The thought also symbolizes her inner conflict throughout the book. Just as one Thérèse has lain watching another approach her with what she thinks is poison, so throughout the novel has the Thérèse who wants to be self-sacrificing seen the destructive Thérèse

always present. Mauriac once again treats Thérèse as a Catholic artist would when he shows that the heroine is able to see Marie as her innocent daughter only after she puts herself in the position of being crucified. Thérèse glances up at the crucifix above her bed when she sees Marie approaching her. After stretching forth her hands and feet as though she were being crucified, Thérèse realizes that Marie is not another Thérèse but is, in fact, her daughter (5, p. 493).

Thérèse is finally able to reconcile Georges and Marie and assure herself that they will spend their future together. In bringing them together, Thérèse has, in part, acted nobly. She has sacrificed herself. She has given Marie what her heart desires. But, she has forced Georges into a marriage that will suffocate him. Shortly after Thérèse joins Georges and Marie's hands together in hers, Georges hears Marie's voice and he "sentit qu'il haïssait la voix de cette femme auprès de laquelle il lui faudrait vivre et mourir" (5, p. 504).

Mauriac shows that Thérèse is still struggling like Sisyphus in the last scene. When Marie tells her mother that Georges loves Thérèse rather than herself, Thérèse feels a surge of happiness. But again she denies herself the joy and tells Marie that Georges does not love her but merely sees in her a mother image, someone who understands him and in whom he can confide (5, p. 491).

At no time in the novel is Thérèse portrayed as being able to succeed in one kind act, for everything she does turns into harm for either Georges or Marie. She is incapable of permanently renouncing self, and even her costly effort at self-denial fails, for Georges still prefers her to Marie, and she continues to feel moments of triumph at the thought. She can find no one who can forgive her of her crimes, so she becomes more and more paranoid until she returns to Argelouse, which, ironically enough, becomes a refuge to her in her dying days. Again, she is not the rebel she used to be in her younger days. There is no ultimate victory for the heroine in the novel. She struggles against death and against poisoning the lives of others. In the final scene, Thérèse is awaiting death after having made the sacrifice that will no doubt cause Georges and Marie unhappiness and despair. However, despite the apparent futility of Thérèse's effort to renounce self and bring happiness to Marie, Fillon seems to feel, and probably rightly so, that Mauriac's Thérèse in La Fin is a noble creature because she refuses to resign herself to her power to destroy (3, p. 215). The heroine seems to be fully aware of the futility of her life in the closing lines. When Georges comes to see her, she tells him, "Je ne fais rien. J'écoute sonner les heures. J'attends la fin de la vie. . ." (5, p. 506). Georges, understanding her fully, expresses what both have found to

be true when he replies, "Voulez-vous dire: la fin de la nuit" (5, p. 506)?

Mauriac continues to show the conflict in Thérèse that is a result of her dual personality. Remember that the younger heroine struggled between wanting to conform to society and wanting to free herself of its traditionalism and false standards. In La Fin Mauriac treats Thérèse as a person whose innate evil nature conflicts with the good that she wills to do.

In other ways Thérèse is quite different in La Fin than she was in Thérèse Desqueyroux. Older, she is no longer such a rebel; she is, rather, somewhat of a conformist. She insists that Marie return to the family at Argelouse. She makes the sacrifice that brings harm to the intellectual person in the novel, Georges, and which, temporarily, at least, brings happiness to the mediocre person, Marie. Certainly, at times, Thérèse appears to be acting out of a guilt complex, acting the role of a martyr in an effort to make amends for the destruction she caused in her younger days.

In La Fin Mauriac treats Thérèse much more from a religious viewpoint than he did in Thérèse Desqueyroux. Her attitude of self-renouncement is basically a Christian attitude. As a younger woman, Thérèse cared only for herself. She was committed to leading Anne to despair. The older Thérèse is willing to sacrifice some of her ideals in order

to try to make her daughter happy. In La Fin Mauriac emphasizes Thérèse's exertion of her free will. In Thérèse Desqueyroux the heroine recalls that she had never given any thought to the events in her life. Mauriac still portrays Thérèse in darkness in La Fin, but she is seen to be struggling against being engulfed in it. Mauriac equates Thérèse's life with the imagery of night and he leaves her in the night through the end of the book.

Thérèse seems to be quite a noble heroine in La Fin. The fact that she never gives up her struggle at self-renunciation proves that she is genuine in her desire to quit poisoning the lives of others. Mauriac seems to treat her sympathetically, though realistically. She is often misunderstood; no one is able to free her spirit of its burden of guilt. Thérèse is even unable to rid herself of her guilt by making her supreme sacrifice, a sacrifice which Mauriac depicts in the simple but difficult act of pulling back her hair and revealing her balding forehead and pale ears.

Mauriac treats Thérèse as an ageing woman, a woman in her decline. Although she seems less mentally despondent in La Fin than she did in Thérèse, the older heroine continues to be neurotic. The latter Thérèse lives in fear of other people whom she occasionally imagines to be her enemies. She suffers from numerous heart seizures. Mauriac's physical description of the middle-aged Thérèse also shows her decline. She still looks rather young when she covers her balding

forehead and wears makeup, but the appearance is false. Her clothes, somewhat outdated and ill-fitting, testify to the heroine's decline.

Mauriac continues to portray Thérèse as a lonely woman who is still condemned to eternal solitude. She lives alone and has few friends. Her friends are unable to relieve her of her sense of guilt. She often imagines that they are her enemies. She must choose to reject the only one who understands her, Georges, in order to be loyal to her daughter. She cannot fill her life with passion and be true to her commitment of self-renunciation. Her choice to renounce self seems to show that she is a noble person, for she, like Noémi d'Artiailh, makes the choice fully aware that she is thereby condemning herself to eternal solitude. Smith's praise of the latter Thérèse is somewhat overdone and rather surprising in view of Mauriac's rather irritating manipulation of the heroine in a couple of the scenes that have been specifically mentioned. Smith says: "If the earlier Thérèse possessed the aura of mystery, this latter Thérèse in her passionate struggle to overcome her fatal heredity is among the most subtly delineated and lifelike of Mauriac's protagonists" (11, p. 107).

The reader may now wish to consider the author's treatment of a heroine of far less reknown than Thérèse, Isa Fondaudège of Le Noeud de Vipères. The novel is acclaimed by critics as one of Mauriac's best, but the main character

is Louis, Isa's husband; therefore, it is he who most often receives the attention of those who read the book. Mauriac published Le Noeud in 1933. Isa Fondaudège, then, appears five years after the young Thérèse and two years before the same heroine in her decline.

Le Noeud de Vipères is, to a great extent, a letter written by the ageing, avaricious and overly sensitive Louis, the hero of the novel. In Part I, Louis, knowing that he will soon die, addresses his letter to his wife, Isa, with whom he has lived for almost forty years in silence. He regards her as his enemy, the one to blame for his miserable and lonely existence. Claiming to be fully lucid, Louis traces his wife's failures throughout the years, and accuses her on numerous occasions of having destroyed him. Louis hopes that after he dies and his wife reads the letter, that she will understand him and regret her indifference to him, that she will be sorry for having caused the rift in their relationship.

The reader would be left with a very unfavorable impression of the heroine were it not for Louis' change of attitude in Part II. He ceases to write the letter to Isa at this point. Instead, he keeps a journal of daily events. He and Isa are now both elderly and Louis begins to be less critical of her and at the same time less sure of the lucidity of his own judgement. His bitter attitude towards his wife has softened noticeably.

In his letter in Part I Louis regards Isa as the woman who once made him feel important and happy, but who later made him feel insignificant and aware of his solitude by her indifference to him.

Isa comes from a powerful and wealthy bourgeois family. Louis, on the other hand, comes from a peasant family who have become rich through hard work and thriftiness. He always seems sensitive to the fact that he is of the peasant class and, interestingly enough, never mentions a last name. He often refers to Isa, however, by her maiden name, a fact which helps to remind the reader of the barrier between the married couple.

Louis' first impression of Isa when he sees her at Luçon as a young man is that she is a snob. In his letter he accuses her of being haughty when he writes: "Tu avais d'ailleurs cette insolence de ne jamais regarder les autres, qui était une façon de les supprimer" (6, p. 366). However, he soon succumbs to her flattery. She is coquettish and makes Louis feel important. He is very sensitive and has never before enjoyed the affections of a woman who seems to adore him. Isa flirts with him, pointing out the features she likes in him. For example, she tells him, "C'est extraordinaire, pour un garçon, d'avoir de si grands cils" (6, p. 368)! Isa's flirtations make Louis forget his oddities and make him feel significant. He recalls in his letter, "Tout d'un coup, j'avais la sensation de ne plus déplaire,

je ne déplaisais plus, je n'étais pas odieux" (6, p. 368). He credits Isa with giving him a belief in love: "Ce qui comptait, c'était ma foi en l'amour que tu avais pour moi" (6, p. 368). The following quote vividly describes the effect of Isa's love on him. A mere look from her releases a surge of passion within him. Because of her, his whole world has come alive.

Je me rappelle ce dégel de tout mon être sous ton regard, ces émotions jaillissantes, ces sources délivrées. Les gestes les plus ordinaires de tendresse, une main serrée, une fleur gardée dans un livre, tout m'était nouveau, tout m'enchantait (6, p. 369).

In a complaint typical of a married man, Louis accuses Isa of trapping him into marriage. He cannot quite explain how she does it: "Tu interprétras, je crois, une parole que j'avais dite dans un tout autre sens que celui que j'y avais voulu mettre: je me trouvais lié à toi et n'en revenais pas moi-même" (6, p. 372).

Isa begins to show her snobbish airs again shortly after they are engaged, according to Louis. He believes that she does not want to live with his mother because she thinks she is of a superior class. He accuses her of having given the excuse that they might keep peace better if they lived elsewhere: "Tu m'avais tout de suite averti d'une de tes exigences. 'Dans l'intérêt de la bonne entente', tu te refusais à faire ménage commun avec ma mère et même à habiter la même maison" (6, p. 372).

The scene that Louis builds up to as the crucial event in his life is the one he refers to as cette nuit. Louis still seems very sensitive to the injury he experienced on that night for he begins to tell about it several times, then goes to other subjects, as though he cannot bear to discuss it. He and Isa agree to discuss everything frankly when they first marry. Louis recalls that at first they confide in one another completely (6, p. 353). He then accuses her of having cruelly disregarded his feelings when she insists on telling him about a former fiancé, Rodolphe (6, p. 354). He blames her insensitivity on the fact that she has grown up in a large, highly organized bourgeois family; therefore, she cannot know the meaning of individual relationships: ". . . toi, cellule d'une puissante et nombreuse famille bourgeoise, hiérarchisée, organisée" (6, p. 355). Louis dwells quite often on his peasant background in contrast to the powerful bourgeois Fondaudège family. He quite obviously feels inferior to her. Not only is Isa from a powerful family, but she is talented in painting, singing and playing the piano (6, pp. 379-380), so Louis is proud of her when he marries her.

However, his pride soon turns to regret when what he describes as the spirit of Rodolphe comes between himself and Isa. Louis feels that Isa has betrayed him, that when he makes love to her she is thinking of Rodolphe, not him as is seen when he writes: "Il surgissait, ce Rodolphe inconnu,

que j'éveillais dans ton coeur, dès que mes bras se refermaient sur toi" (6, p. 380).

The following passage shows Louis' bitter attitude towards Isa because she awakened a sleeping passion within herself and destroyed his happiness by putting into words ce secret putride. He places all the blame on her: "Ce qui dormait sous les eaux endormies, ce principe de corruption, ce secret putride, je ne fis rien pour l'arracher à la vase. Mais toi, misérable, tu avais besoin de libérer par des paroles cette passion déçue et qui était restée sur sa faim" (6, p. 381).

The relationship between Louis and Isa deteriorates quickly. The tone in Isa's voice and the withdrawal of her head from his shoulder are the signs Louis recalls of her guilt, of her willingness to leave him in silence and solitude: "Tu parlais d'une voix basse et précipitée. Ta tête ne reposait plus au creux de mon épaule. Déjà l'espace infime qui séparait nos corps étendus, était devenu infranchissable" (6, p. 381).

Although Isa assures Louis several times of her love for him at first sight, "Je t'ai aimé tout de suite, dès que je t'ai vu" (6, p. 383), his sensitive nature retains only the parts of her story that convince him that she took him only because she had no other choice (6, p. 383).

In the scene Louis refers to as cette nuit, perhaps Isa is delighting somewhat in the idea of making Louis

jealous. Whatever her motive, she is not at all prudent in what she tells her highly sensitive husband. For example, she insinuates that she feels comfortable with him because he is rather unattractive when she says that she could not have been happy with Rodolphe because he was so handsome she would have feared that someone else might have taken him from her (6, p. 383).

Isa appears to be totally unaware of the suffering she has caused Louis by her confession. When she feels him shaking beside her she asks him, "Tu as froid, Louis" (6, p. 384)? She then is the one who tries to break his silence. Apparently worried that she may have offended him she tries to coax him into communicating with her. She begs him: "Ne reste pas sans rien dire: tu me fais peur" (6, p. 385). He then feels that he is suffocating when she leans across him, a feeling that accompanies his disgust for her. He recalls, "J'étouffais sous ton corps odieux" (6, p. 385). Louis' own words imply that his wife never rejected him; rather it was he that rejected her.

Louis thinks of cette nuit as the turning point in his life. He refers to the following day as "ce jour de ma nouvelle vie" (6, p. 385). Isa had given him confidence in himself and made the whole world seem alive. Feeling himself to be unloved, Louis looks in a mirror to see the image of a man who has lost the aura of being loved, a man who is now aware of his large peasant's hand:

Je me levai sans bruit, j'allai pieds nus jusqu'à la glace de l'armoire et me contemplai, comme si j'eusse été un autre, ou plutôt comme si j'étais redevenu moi-même: l'homme qu'on n'avait pas aimé, celui pour qui personne au monde n'avait souffert. Je m'apitoyais sur ma jeunesse; ma grande main de paysan glissa le long de ma joue non rasée, déjà assombrie d'une barbe dure, aux reflets roux (6, p. 386).

The nouvelle vie is very well depicted in the following scene. Louis is outside and is watching Isa the morning after cette nuit. Isa seems totally wrapped up in herself. Her hair is perhaps a sign of the femininity which Louis feels has deceived him. His only feeling for her as he looks at her is hate. Once again he accuses her of having brought on him a lifetime of bitterness:

Tu étais à ta fenêtre, la tête penchée, tenant tes cheveux d'une main et de l'autre, tu les brossais. Tu ne me voyais pas. Je demeurai, un instant, la tête levée vers toi, en proie à une haine dont je crois sentir le goût d'amertume dans la bouche, après tant d'années (6, p. 387).

Throughout the rest of Part I Louis accuses Isa of being a mother only, not a wife. Very bitterly Louis accuses her of neglecting him entirely in favor of the children. He feels that he has been used by her:

Dès la naissance d'Hubert, tu trahis ta vraie nature: tu étais mère, tu n'étais que mère. Ton attention se détourna de moi. Tu ne me voyais plus; il était vrai, à la lettre, que tu n'avais d'yeux que pour les petits. J'avais accompli, en te fécondant, ce que tu attendais de moi (6, p. 389).

Louis feels that Isa's indifference to him has hindered him in his career. Though he has what he believes to be exceptional talent as a lawyer, as he has demonstrated in one particular case, he feels her lack of concern has greatly

retarded his success. In his letter he wonders what success would have been his had he had a loving rather than an indifferent wife: "Et moi, je possédais une espèce de génie. Si j'avais eu, à ce moment, une femme qui m'eût aimé, jusqu'où ne serais-je pas monté" (6, p. 398)? Louis tells Isa in another passage that she was greedy and rigid. He feels that she is far from the ideal wife who would have sacrificed all her desires for his (6, p. 399).

On the contrary, far from sacrificing for him, Isa, in his opinion, lives off of him like a parasite. He sees Isa as an opportunist, one who married him for what she could get out of him, not caring about getting to know him. Louis compares himself and Isa to two trees growing beside each other, but totally separate. In the following lines she is growing from the nourishment in his soil and provides him nothing in return: "De moi, tu n'as vraiment accepté que mon pays. Tu as pris racine dans ma terre sans que nos racines se puissent rejoindre" (6, p. 404).

Louis often thinks of Isa as his enemy. He accuses her of acting as the head of a troop, for she has turned the children against him so that he is hated by the entire family. He often spies upon his enemies, who in turn spy upon him. The following passage occurs in one of the best scenes in the novel as Isa is shown to be the ringleader of Louis' opposition, the children. He thinks of them as a troupeau which advances strongly united against him. Isa

is the chief spy, the one who alerts her unit to the fact that the enemy is awake. Louis writes while the enemy moves in on him:

J'entends votre troupeau chuchotant qui monte l'escalier. Vous vous arrêtez; vous parlez sans crainte que je m'éveille (il est entendu que je suis sourd); je vois sous la porte la lueur de vos bougies . . . Tu t'approches de ma porte; tu écoutes; tu regardes par la serrure: ma lampe me dénonce. Tu reviens vers la meute; tu dois leur souffler: "Il veille encore, il vous écoute. . ." (6, p. 400).

Louis wages a counterattack against Isa on numerous occasions. He searches for her most vulnerable areas. He often attacks the inconsistencies in her religious beliefs and practices. He accuses her of taking advantage of the poor. For example, he notes that she takes care of her servants when they are sick so she can demand the most amount of work out of them for the least amount of pay. He accuses her of being a Pharisee, of failing to understand the most basic Christian virtue, love. Louis tells Isa that she substitutes duties done in the name of charity for real love: "Que charité soit synonyme d'amour, tu l'avais oublié si tu l'avais jamais su. Sous ce nom, tu englobais un certain nombre de devoirs envers les pauvres dont tu t'acquittais avec scrupule, en vue de ton éternité" (6, p. 410). When Luc, Isa's sister's son, goes to boot camp, Louis accuses her of going through the actions of being charitable by sending him packages but testifies to her lack of genuine love because she comments, rather coldly: "Ce pauvre petit,

ce serait bien triste, évidemment . . . mais lui, du moins, ne laisserait personne derrière lui . . ." (6, p. 439).

Isa, whose two brothers have died of consumption, always wore white when she first met Louis, refusing to follow the traditional black in order that she might attract a man to marry her. Louis shows her hypocrisy in the following insertion in his letter when he recalls Isa's critical attitude towards Marienette who refused to wear a veil and dress in black after the death of her husband. Isa apparently wants her sister to remain a widow so that the money she inherited will remain in the family and go to the children:

C'était déjà trop que d'avoir consenti à ce qu'elle portât des robes blanches dans la semaine; mais tu jugeais inconvenant qu'elle assistât à la messe sans son voile et que son manteau ne fût pas bordé de crêpe. La chaleur ne te semblait pas être une excuse (6, p. 418).

Louis' main criticism of Isa throughout the second half of Part I is that she is a mother only. He tells her that her obsession for her children is the reason for her failing to demonstrate Christian love to the people about her: "A cette époque, ton amour pour tes enfants t'accaparait tout entière; ils dévoreraient tes réserves de bonté, de sacrifice" (6, p. 412).

Isa's sister Marienette stays with her and Louis after her husband dies. When Louis compares them, he finds that the older sister, Marienette, who has a fine figure, seems much younger than Isa. He tells Isa that her children are at fault for destroying her figure and making her seem older.

Louis, naturally, shows preference for Marienette, older, but more attractive and cheerful than Isa: ". . . je fus d'abord sensible à sa grâce; plus âgée que toi d'une année, elle paraissait de beaucoup ta cadette. Tu étais demeurée lourde des petits que tu avais portés" (6, p. 418).

Near the end of Part I, Louis, in his elderly years, begins to look within himself, and he has to admit that he is far from being blameless. Seeing that he has allowed himself to become poisoned by the hatred he has carried within his heart for his family, he compares his heart to a "noeud de vipères" (6, p. 443).

His perceptiveness seems to soften his attitude towards Isa, for in Part II Louis regards her in a more favorable light. He and Isa are now both elderly. He is no longer writing a letter to her. Louis often feels sorry for Isa, whom he decides is now being used by the children to get the money they want from him. Louis notes that Isa often opposes her children in order to take a stand in his favor. For example, in one memorable scene Louis is spying on his family who is sitting in a circle below his window late one night talking about his meanness, plotting to get his money. When Phili, Isa's son-in-law, calls Louis a monster, Isa reprimands him: "Je vous prie, Phili, de ne pas traiter ainsi mon mari devant moi et devant ses enfants. Vous lui devez le respect" (6, p. 453).

Throughout the novel Louis often sees the children and Isa in a circle. The circle is a picture of their united stand against him, the outsider. In one scene Louis recalls the family gathering around his bed: ". . . le cercle de famille se reserre autour de mon lit" (6, p. 433). In Part II, Louis begins to see that Isa, too, has become an outsider, that the children no longer include her in the circle. For example, in the same scene referred to in the above paragraph, Louis watches the children and Isa who are gathered in a circle below his window on the patio. He notes that the children are indifferent to Isa, now old and suffering from rheumatism. In the following passage she has to make the move to kiss them goodnight:

Ils discutaient maintenant comme si la vieille femme n'eût pas été présente. Elle se leva de son fauteuil en gémissant. Elle avait tort, disait-elle, avec ses rhumatismes, de rester assise dehors, la nuit. Les enfants ne lui répondirent même pas. . . . C'était elle qui devait les embrasser à la ronde. Ils ne se dérangèrent pas (6, p. 456).

In a scene immediately following the one just discussed, Isa almost breaks through the silent barrier between her and Louis. But Louis notes that it is now too late. Isa is too weak to speak. They are both winded from walking. Louis again notes that Isa has given herself to the children but he no longer accuses her. He notes, with pity, that she is left with nothing, as a result, in her old age. She no longer has the strength or desire to live:

Elle devait penser que c'était le moment de parler, une occasion unique. Mais elle n'en avait plus la force.

Je remarquai comme elle était, elle aussi, essoufflée. Tout malade que je fusse, moi, j'avais fait front. Elle s'était livrée, donnée; il ne lui restait plus rien en propre (6, p. 463).

Mauriac expresses through Louis the idea that Louis and Isa's lives have formed a complete circle from the time they first met up to their present old age. Louis notes that he and Isa are pushed together by their family, much as he believes they were pushed into marriage by her family according to Isa's confession on cette nuit. In the following passage, Louis notes that the vieille femme cannot escape the imprint of her youth. The vieille femme and the filie odorante are the same person. Time has not changed her: "Geneviève et Hubert, poussés eux-mêmes par leurs propres enfants, jetaient contre moi cette vieille femme, Isa Fondaudège, la jeune fille odorante des nuits de Bagnères" (6, p. 464).

Mauriac shows that Louis has not been as lucid as he once prided himself in being. For example, in one scene in Part II, Isa bitterly rebukes Louis for accusing her of never having loved anyone but her children. She claims he has completely misjudged her, that she has deprived herself of her children for years, hoping that he would show his love rather than his indifference to her:

Mes enfants! quand je pense qu'à partir du moment où nous avons fait chambre à part, je me suis privée, pendant des années, d'en avoir aucun avec moi, la nuit, même quand ils étaient malades, parce que j'attendais, j'espérais toujours ta venue (6, p. 467).

Thus, Mauriac shows that Louis has misjudged Isa and it is he who has been the unfaithful one. Louis has had affairs with other women and in one scene even tries to will his fortune to an illegitimate son.

Louis is also the one who seems to insist on the barrier of silence. Isa tries to make Louis talk to her after the Rodolphe story but he refuses to answer. Again, after she tells him that she has waited all these years for him to come to her, he allows his sensitive nature to destroy another chance for breaking the barrier of silence. While on a walk with Isa, Louis almost believes she has loved him. However, he then sees the circle of chairs that remind him of his enemies, his family. He again feels that all of them have rejected him and he rushes into the house, deaf to Isa's, "Louis" (6, p. 468)!

In a final scene of the novel, Isa dies, leaving Louis feeling that his whole life has been meaningless. He believes that all his efforts to break the silence between them by writing a letter explaining himself to his wife, have been futile. He believes that he will never be understood or loved and that he will die a lonely man. He expresses his despair in his diary in the following words:

Nous ne pourrions pas recommencer, repartir, sur nouveaux frais; elle était morte sans me connaître, sans savoir que je n'étais pas seulement ce monstre, ce bourreau, et qu'il existait un autre homme en moi. Même si j'étais arrivé à la dernière minute, même si nous n'avions échangé aucune parole, elle aurait vu ces larmes qui maintenant sillonnaient mes joues,

elle serait partie, emportant la vision de mon désespoir (6, p. 494).

Louis' thoughts are self-centered. He does not give one thought to the idea that Isa may have died a lonely woman.

In a final scene of the novel, Louis discovers the real Isa in a few lines of a letter in the ashes of the fireplace in her room. The ashes tell Louis something of the agony his wife has suffered because of his indifference to her. He finds in the fragment of an unburned letter that Isa was jealous of the attention he had paid Marienette's son, Luc. Louis is overwhelmed by the idea that Isa was so miserable she tried to efface herself by destroying in the fireplace all traces of her existence. As he looks at the ashes, he realizes that Isa died having suffered for him. She, however, died the lonely death of a woman unloved. Her despair is seen in the fact that she wanted to destroy all traces of herself. Louis, staring into the ashes, thinks, "Elle avait voulu disparaître toute entière; elle avait effacé ses moindres traces" (6, p. 510).

But Mauriac treats her as a being with an eternity to live after death, for she has not and cannot disappear completely. The truth of her existence, like the truth of her love for Louis, remains on an unburned fragment of a letter.

Peyre seems to judge Isa too severely, if the entire novel is taken into consideration. He refers rather bluntly to Isa's crime, which he says was her decision to marry Louis for his money (10, p. 113). His criticism, however,

seems much milder than that of Cormeau. In the following lines Miss Cormeau blames Isa alone for the bitterness and greed in the family:

Cette Isa Fondaudège est si étroitement bigote, si stupidement harcelante, si bornée et si sèche qu'il faut, à la vérité, voir en elle la seule responsable de l'enfer familial. Une froideur naturelle, une cécité mentale, bien involontaire sans doute, lui font infailliblement écarter toute parole profonde, toute expression de la vie intérieure, celle-ci étant inexistante en elle d'ailleurs (2, pp. 133-134).

Such severe criticism scarcely seems justifiable when one considers Louis' reaction to her because of his overly sensitive nature. Both Peyre and Cormeau seem to overlook the rather sympathetic image Mauriac gives of his heroine in Part II of the novel.

Mauriac depicts Isa primarily through the letter her vindictive husband is writing to her. Through Louis, Mauriac portrays Isa in three different periods of her life.

At first Isa is pictured as a young, bourgeois snob. She flirts with Louis and makes him feel confident once he thinks he is worthy of such a woman's love. Somewhat immature and probably wanting to make Louis jealous once she is married, Isa tells him about a former fiancé and shakes her husband's confidence in her love for him and in his own self-importance. For awhile Mauriac's attitude towards his heroine remains somewhat ambiguous. As Louis describes her in the years following the rupture in their relationship, Isa is seen to be a mother only, greedy for Louis' money so she can give it to her children. She appears, perhaps, to

be an impediment to his career, a religious hypocrite and completely indifferent to him.

As Mauriac portrays Isa in her later years, she becomes increasingly sympathetic. She is suffering from poor health; her children reject her. Sometimes the author shows Isa trying to break the barrier of silence that endures for forty years of her marriage to Louis. In the scene in which Louis finds the traces of an unburnt letter to Isa that prove she has always loved him, Mauriac shows that she is really a more tender wife than Louis has thought. The author, therefore, seems to redeem his heroine from the dotting mother she at times appears to be, placing much of the blame on Louis for her indifference to him through the years.

When Isa is young she is apparently quite attractive. She is obsessed by the color white, a sign that she desperately wants a husband. She seems to be the essence of femininity: she likes light chatter, enjoys her role as a homemaker and loves art and music. Her long hair and flirtatious ways also add to the image of Isa as a very feminine heroine.

Mauriac's treatment of the heroine in Le Mystère Frontenac is unusually tender, especially considering the fact that the novel was published only one year after Le Noeud. He explains why in the Preface when he says:

J'ai conçu Le Mystère Frontenac comme un hymne à ma famille au lendemain d'une grave opération et de la maladie durant laquelle les miens m'avaient entouré d'une sollicitude si tendre. Si j'avais dû mourir, je

n'aurais pas voulu que Le Noeud de vipères fût le dernier de mes livres. Avec Le Mystère Frontenac, je faisais amende honorable à la race (7, p. ii).

The love and care Mauriac received from his family while he was lying ill made such a tremendous impression on him that he was inspired to write a novel depicting a family knit together by genuine love for each other. He writes that the theme of the novel is "cette union éternellement indissoluble de la mère et de ses cinq enfants" (7, p. ii).

Mauriac admits that some of the characters in Le Mystère are patterned after members of his own family. For example, he says that the heroine, Blanche Frontenac, is almost exactly like his mother, and adds that he is much like the youngest son in the novel, Yves (7, p. ii).

Le Mystère Frontenac, like Le Noeud, is written in two parts. In Part I, Mauriac presents Blanche Frontenac as the mother of a household of five young children. Her husband has died, leaving her with the cares and responsibilities of raising three boys and two girls. In Part II, the heroine lives with her married daughters. She is no longer surrounded by her family, and two of her sons have left Bordeaux. Mauriac continues, however, to treat Blanche as the central figure of the now disintegrating family, still united, however, in a mysterious bond of love.

Mauriac establishes the idea that Blanche has made a happy and stable home for her children in the first scene. She is busy knitting while the two oldest boys lie on the floor

reading. The two girls are in the corner laughing and saying their catechism. Yves, the youngest son, seems to feel especially close to Blanche, for he is sitting against her knees. When the clock strikes 9:30, Blanche tells the children to get in bed and they obey. Her relationship with Yves shows that she is not a doting mother. Yves is rather frail and sensitive. When he calls for his mother to tuck him in bed, she checks on the other children first. Like Yves, Blanche feels an inner solitude. But instead of clinging to Yves and allowing him to cling to her for companionship, she makes him remain somewhat independent of her.

As a deeply religious mother, Blanche tells Yves to learn to trust in God to fill his loneliness. For example, she tells him, "Combien de fois t'ai-je dit que tu n'es pas seul? Jésus habite les coeurs d'enfants. Quand tu as peur, il faut l'appeler, il te consolera" (7, p. 7).

Blanche's insistence on depriving herself of being overly protective of her children is particularly commendable because she is portrayed as a lonely woman who shows signs of suffering. She, however, is not bitter about her solitude. Mauriac says that she is a passionate woman who has decided not to remarry but to remain as the sole head of the household. He portrays her as a mère tragique, one who is being eaten alive by her children. Her appearance shows the strain she has undergone as a widow. Her face shows signs of worry;

she is thin and her hair is greying. Mauriac notes that her appearance gives her an air of despair. He says that she looks like "une femme qui n'attend plus rien." She longs for someone to understand her (7, p. 6).

Blanche's primary concern throughout the novel is for the welfare of her family. Many tender scenes show her concern for each child. Early in the novel Mauriac says that she rises at six in the morning to help José do his homework (7, p. 13), and that is only the beginning of a very busy day. She usually goes to communion, takes care of business affairs, visits the poor, tends to the children in the evening, and visits her mother after they are in bed (7, p. 14).

Though she bears up courageously under the load she carries, Blanche is not portrayed as being a perfect woman. For example, she finds her brother-in-law, Xavier, irritating and loses her temper at him (7, p. 5). She sometimes resents the fact that she has no husband to love her and provide for her children. In the following lines, Mauriac shows her thinking that she is condemned to a meaningless existence, in spite of all she does each day: "Condamnée à perpétuité à ses enfants. Elle en souffrait. 'Une femme finie . . je suis une femme finie. . .'" (7, p. 14). She then runs her hands across her face as though thinking that she is growing old and that she has no one who really understands her. But typical of Blanche, she immediately withdraws her attention from herself and thinks of the duties that still need to be

done, for she begins thinking of the trip she needs to make to the dentist (7, p. 14).

Though her burdens are many, Blanche never fails to show a tender and loving attitude towards her children. The following passage is an example of her motherly compassion. Yves has just called for her in his sleep and she goes to his room to see how he is. She tiptoes to his room, looks at his frail body, gently covers him and tenderly puts her hand on his forehead to see if he has a fever:

Elle alla à pas de loup jusqu'à sa chambre. Il dormait d'un sommeil agité, il avait rejeté ses couvertures. Une jambe squelettique et brune pendait hors du lit. Elle le recouvrit, le borda. . . . Elle lui toucha le front et le cou pour voir s'il était chaud (7, p. 14).

Though Blanche demonstrates tenderness towards all her children, her relationship with Yves is especially warm and best shows the real spirit of the Frontenac Mystery. One early scene is particularly picturesque in its portrayal of the mysterious unity that exists between the mother and her child. It is nearly supper time and Blanche is walking through the hall of the house saying her prayers, followed by Yves: ". . . Blanche se promenait en récitant son chapelet, et Yves la suivait, soutenant des deux doigts sa robe, tout livré à un rêve de magnificence dont il n'ouvrait à personne l'accès" (7, p. 15).

In a later scene, Mauriac shows Blanche again weighed down with the burdens of life. She is growing fatter as she approaches middle age and she fears she has a tumor that may

be malignant. She worries about what will happen to the children when she dies. She has several kinds of medicine to take before and after meals, but she does not let that interrupt her care of the girls, Danièle and Marie (7, p. 21).

The children often note that their mother, though closely knit to them, lives in a world apart from their childish games. Her oldest son, Jean-Louis, in one scene, explains to Yves the adult world that their mother lives in, a world of cares where things are done only if it benefits the family as a whole. He tells Yves that happiness is not even considered in the decisions his mother and uncle make:

Non, il ne s'agit pas de bonheur . . . As-tu remarqué? C'est un mot qui ne sort jamais de leur bouche . . . Le bonheur . . . J'ai toujours vu à maman cette figure pleine de tourment et d'angoisse . . . Si papa avait vécu, je pense que c'eût été pareil . . . Non, pas le bonheur; mais le devoir . . . une certaine forme du devoir, devant laquelle ils n'hésitent jamais. . . (7, p. 51).

In a later scene, Mauriac depicts Blanche as the mother hen worried about the brood she fears death will rob her of. She has just convinced Jean-Louis that he must take over the family business rather than become a professor of philosophy. She feels that it is his duty as the oldest son to put the welfare of the family before his happiness, as she has done for many years. Fillon elaborates on the meaning of the mystery, stating that it means much more than familial love. She calls it a mystery of union et de tradition. She expands even further on its meaning implying that the mystery involves a personal commitment to that union by faithfully carrying out

those traditions that keep the family united (3, p. 190). Perhaps Fillon's idea explains the reason that Blanche seems to take so seriously the devoir that she feels is hers in caring for the family.

In the following lines, Mauriac portrays Blanche as she leaves Jean-Louis on the evening walk during which she tries to persuade him to put the family first. She is suffering from an illness she believes to be terminal. Yves, unnoticed by her, sees her glide her hand in her blouse, an act which she does quite often and which denotes her concern for the tumor in her chest. Incidentally, it is always Yves that notices her concern for her health, her suffering. The lines read:

La lune éclairait la figure tourmentée de sa mère. Elle se croyait seule et avait glissé une main dans son corsage, elle s'inquiétait de cette glande . . . On avait beau lui répéter que ce n'était rien . . . Elle tâta cette glande. Il fallait qu'avant sa mort, Jean-Louis devînt le chef de maison, le maître de la fortune, le protecteur de ses cadets" (7, p. 52).

Many of the scenes in which Yves and Blanche are portrayed together take place outside on a moonlit evening, along the Hure River or under the pines. The quiet atmosphere of the outdoors lends a mysterious air to the tender relationship between Blanche and Yves. In one scene Yves has been lying amongst the pine needles along the Hure. When he gets up, he has pine resin on his jacket and pine needles in his hair. As he walks along a path made mysteriously dim by the fog, Yves runs into his mother saying her

prayers. She has entertained guests that evening and is dressed in her party gown and a violet shawl. The brooch she is wearing around her neck has a large decorated B and F interlaced on it. The letters on the brooch seem to symbolize the mysterious unity between Blanche and her children. Blanche tries to impress on Yves the fact that she does not have long to live. Yves, refusing to accept her death as a possibility, takes her worried face in his hands and tells her, as though it were a fact that cannot be negated, "Tu es là . . . tu es toujours là" (7, p. 60). She takes her shawl and puts it around him also so that they are wrapped in it together. The image again portrays the close relationship between Blanche and Yves. Though Mauriac notes that Blanche may die soon, he shows the everlasting relationship of love, that cannot be broken by death, by noting the eternal flowing of the Hure and by giving Yves' words assuring Blanche of the endless quality of love. Blanche has just told Yves that she may not live long. Mauriac paints the unending quality of their relationship when he writes:

Une dernière fois, peut-être, comme un petit garçon, Yves se blottit contre sa mère vivante qui pouvait disparaître d'une seconde à l'autre. La Hure continuerait de couler dans les siècles des siècles? Jusqu'à la fin du monde, le nuage de cette prairie monterait vers cette première étoile (7, pp. 60-61).

He then shows that Blanche, though dedicated to her religion, needs to be reassured by her son that love relationships are eternal. Yves writes poetry and seems to understand mysteries.

With the quiet concern of a mother who will soon be separated from her children by death, Blanche asks Yves: "Je voudrais savoir, mon petit Yves, toi qui connais tant de choses . . . au ciel, pense-t-on encore à ceux qu'on a laissés sur la terre" (7, p. 61)? Then, unable to bear the idea of an eternity apart from her beloved children, she questions:

". . . comment imaginer un monde où vous ne seriez plus tout pour moi, mes chéris" (7, p. 61)? Yves' words of reassurance console his mother and explain the meaning of the Frontenac Mystery. He tells her that "tout amour s'accomplirait dans l'unique Amour, que toute tendresse serait allégée et purifiée de ce qui l'alourdit et ce de qui la souille. . ." (7, p. 61).

In Part II Blanche is no longer the mother of a brood of five small children. Yves has gone to Paris and in one scene Blanche has had to agree to let José be sent away for squandering money from the family business. Blanche no longer has to bear the family burdens herself because Jean-Louis has taken over the Frontenac portion of the business.

In a scene in Part II, Mauriac shows Blanche as she sees Yves for the last time. He has dropped in unexpectedly to see her for a brief fifteen minutes. He is in a hurry to leave and return to Paris with his friends. She obviously hates to see him leave for she follows him onto the stair landing. Like the loving mother that she is, she lets him leave, but not without a few words of concern for his safe return. She says to him, "Sont-ils prudents au moins? Vous

n'allez pas comme des fous? Je n'aime pas à te savoir sur les routes. Télégraphie dès ce soir. . ." (7, p. 83).

Mauriac's portrayal of her leaning on the banister, a look of suffering on her face, shows that she will not live long (7, p. 83).

In the scene of the funeral procession for Blanche Frontenac, Mauriac depicts her two business associates making snide remarks about her love for money and her tough business tactics. Yves is mystified by their opinion of his mother, for he can only recall the tenderness and love she always demonstrated towards the children. Both Dussol and Caussade recall that she made her debtors pay every cent they owed, even when she had to take them to court (7, p. 90). They discuss her love of money. Dussol states that she loved her land only because it represented sure money. He tells Caussade, "Elle m'a affirmé que, bon an mal an, tous frais défalqués, si on calculait sur une période de dix années, ses propriétés lui rapportaient du quatre et demi et jusqu'à du cinq" (7, p. 91).

Yves, sentimentally remembering the tender moments he has spent with his mother, cannot picture her as the shrewd business woman he hears Dussol and Caussade describing. The following lines show that he remembers her surrounded by the mysterious outdoors, saying her prayers. He can only remember that she loved the beauty of the land:

Yves ressuscitait sa mère, le soir, sur le perron, au milieu des pins de Bourideys; il la voyait venir

vers lui, dans l'allée au tour du parc, son chapelet à la main; ou, à Respide, il l'imaginait lui parlant de Dieu, devant les collines endormies. Il cherchait dans sa mémoire des paroles d'elle qui eussent témoigné de son amour pour la terre; et elles s'éveillaient en foule. D'ailleurs, avant même de mourir, Jean-Louis avait raconté qu'elle avait montré le ciel de juin, par la fenêtre ouverte, les arbres pleins d'oiseaux et qu'elle avait dit: "C'est cela que je regrette. . ." (7, p. 91).

In the last few scenes of the novel, Yves experiences the despair of unrequited love. The memory of his mother's unselfish and unfailing love sustains him in his most discouraging moments. In the last scene, Yves thinks of his mother and his ancestors who have all died. He recalls the words of consolation that he once gave his mother concerning the eternal quality of their love. In the midst of his despair, realizing that the people about him, like the pines at home, are decaying, Yves finds hope in the thought that the love that binds his family together, the Frontenac Mystery, is indestructable. His mother, Blanche, is still a part of the mystery though she has died. The following lines are the final thoughts of Yves and beautifully express the image of Blanche and her children bathed in the Frontenac Mystery that Mauriac has painted throughout the novel:

Le Mystère Frontenac échappait à la destruction, car il était un rayon de l'éternel amour réfracté à travers une race. L'impossible union des époux, des frères et des fils, serait consommée avant qu'il fût longtemps, et les derniers pins de Bourideys verraient passer, non plus à leurs pieds, dans l'allée qui va au gros chêne, mais très haut et très loin au-dessus de leurs cimes, le groupe éternellement serré de la mère et de ses cinq enfants (7, p. 122).

The last of Mauriac's middle heroines to be considered is portrayed as a tender and loving mother to her children, but is a calculating and demanding business woman, if Dussol's testimony is to be believed.

Blanche Frontenac is Mauriac's portrayal of his own mother. His attitude towards her is warm and tender, yet she is not idealized. She seems very human.

Blanche is a widow with five young children to raise. In all the scenes mentioned, she demonstrates real love for her young ones, but she is particularly close to the youngest son, Yves, who the reader will recall is Mauriac's portrayal of himself. Blanche shows her love by always putting first in her life the things that will most benefit the family as a whole. Thus, she chooses to bear the burden of raising the family alone, suffering from a feeling of loneliness, rather than remarrying and having the family business taken over by an outsider. She frets at Xavier because he will not take the responsibility for the business she feels he should. She encourages the oldest son Louis to give up the career he has chosen in order to take his rightful position in the family business. She is noble in that she sacrifices her own interests for those which are for the good of her children. Maurois too thinks Blanche is presented as a noble person. He says that Le Mystère Frontenac pictures "a mother who defends her young with self-denial and nobility" (8, p. 163).

Blanche is not a doting mother, even though she very easily could be since she has only her children to love. In various scenes, she is depicted as being tender and compassionate, but she refuses to act possessively of her family. For example, she makes Yves rely on his religious faith at night when he is afraid, rather than on her. She allows José to be banished. She lets Yves leave for Paris when he wishes to go, even though she thinks his choice of a writing career is foolish and she fears that he will be corrupted in the city.

Several times Blanche Frontenac is the one around whom and through whom Mauriac generates the mystery of love in the book. The children are often pictured gathered around her. Mauriac compares her to a mother hen with her brood. When the children grow up and leave their mother, it is the thought of her that ultimately comforts them. Yves is particularly consoled by her memory after her death. The scene in which Blanche gathers Yves into her purple shawl one evening to keep him warm also reveals the close relationship between the mother and her son. Blanche is often portrayed walking through the piny woods, bathed in mysterious moonlight. The necklace she wears with the B and F seems to symbolize her as the central figure of the Frontenac Mystery. Mauriac also shows Blanche radiating the spirit of the Frontenac Mystery in the scenes in which she is saying her prayers. She seems sincere in her love for the One she worships.

Mauriac is careful to make Blanche seem genuinely human. The scenes which show Blanche losing control of her temper, showing more concern for the material aspects of life than the spiritual and the funeral scene particularly testify to Blanche's human weaknesses.

Mauriac also maintains his fairness in portraying Blanche in his physical depiction of her. He makes her appear to be a mère tragique. Her face shows signs of worry and despair. The decision to raise her family alone has taken its toll.

The examination of Mauriac's treatment of seven heroines is now completed. In retrospect, it is interesting to see that all of the heroines have certain redeemable features. All seem to be described quite vividly in a physical sense. All seem to suffer from loneliness and a lack of love. Yet all of them seem to be distinct individuals.

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Brée, Germaine and Margaret Guiton, The French Novel from Gide to Camus, New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962.
2. Cormeau, Nelly, L'Art de François Mauriac, Paris, Bernard Grasset Editeur, 1951.
3. Fillon, Amélie, François Mauriac, Paris, Société française d'éditions littéraires et techniques, 1936.
4. Jenkins, Cecil, Mauriac, New York, Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1965.
5. Mauriac, François, Oeuvres complètes, Volume II, Paris, Bibliothèque Bernard Grasset chez Arthème Fayard, 1950.
6. _____, Oeuvres complètes, Volume III, Paris, Bibliothèque Bernard Grasset chez Arthème Fayard, 1951.
7. _____, Oeuvres complètes, Volume IV, Paris, Bibliothèque Bernard Grasset chez Arthème Fayard, 1951.
8. Maurois, André, From Proust to Camus; Profiles of Modern French Writers, translated by Carl Morse and Renaud Bruce, Garden City, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966.
9. Pell, Elsie, François Mauriac: In Search of the Infinite, New York, Philosophical Library, 1947.
10. Peyre, Henri, French Novelists of Today, New York, Oxford University Press, 1967.
11. Smith, Maxwell A., François Mauriac, New York, Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970.
12. Suhl, Benjamin, Jean-Paul Sartre: The Philosopher as a Literary Critic, New York, Columbia University Press, 1970.

CHAPTER IV

BRIGITTE PIAN AND PAULE DE CERNES

The original edition of La Pharisienne appeared in 1941, five years after the first publication of La Fin de la nuit. It is the third novel that has been treated thus far to bear a title directly related to the heroine, the other two being Genitrix and Thérèse Desqueyroux.

The title, La Pharisienne, indicates that the heroine is the key figure in the novel. It also characterizes her as a hypocritical literary type, ". . . par l'intention et par la pratique extérieure plus que par la charité. . ." (3, p. 79). It will be particularly interesting to see how Mauriac depicts the pharisaical traits of the heroine, Brigitte Pian.

Throughout the novel, the heroine is viewed through the eyes of Louis, her stepson, who is writing about her from things he remembers in his youth and from the ideas contained in the journals of two priests, Messieurs Calou and Puybaraud, close associates of his stepmother.

Louis' stepmother, whom he normally refers to as Madame Brigitte or Brigitte Pian, plays an active role as a leader in church politics and religious activities during most of the novel. At one time it had been her ambition to buy and renovate an old convent in order to establish her own religious

order, but the project failed to develop further than the purchase of the land. Brigitte's purchase of the land in order to establish her private convent is important for it is an early indication of a couple of aspects of her personality. First, it is a sign of her desire to reign over people, to dominate them. Secondly, it perhaps partially accounts for her joy in seeing others fail, because, no doubt, the failure of her project caused her much frustration, a feeling she seems to have in the book.

Louis' first description of Madame Brigitte is worth quoting because it so graphically portrays the physical features of the middle-aged stepmother and impresses upon the reader the domineering aspects of her personality, which is, after all, one of the outstanding facets of her character. Maxwell A. Smith goes so far as to say that Brigitte is "as overweening and dominating a personality in her own way as that earlier matriarch Mme Cazenave. . ." (10, p. 115). She is dressed quite prudishly--the "guimpe" and the extraordinarily high collar. Mauriac paints Madame Brigitte as a woman with a strong personality when he uses such words as "grande figure," "joues larges," "dominée par les cheveux gonflés" to describe her. Her eyes and mouth make her seem stern and unmerciful. She is, as Mauriac states, a truly majestic and commanding woman. His portrayal of her leads Nelly Cormeau to compare "sa volonté tenace et implacable" to that of Félicité Cazenave (1, p. 129). The following is

Louis' description of his stepmother as she sits at the supper table one evening in Bordeaux, in the second story of a temporary lodging, cours de l'Intendance:

Pour elle, malgré la chaleur, elle portait une guimpe et un col de guipure qui lui enserrait le cou jusqu'aux oreilles. Sa grande figure, aux joues larges et mates, était dominée par les cheveux gonflés de 'frisons' et que maintenant une presque invisible résille. L'oeil était noir, fixe et dur, mais la bouche toujours souriante, bien qu'elle ne découvrit presque jamais de longues dents jaunes déchaussées et solidement aurifiées. Le double menton donnait à l'ensemble un caractère majestueux, que soulignaient le port de tête, la démarche, et une voix timbrée et faite pour le commandement (5, pp. 232-233).

The attitudes of the various characters towards Brigitte Pian are interesting and important to anyone trying to get an impression of her character. Michèle, Louis' older sister, resents the stepmother, particularly because Brigitte believes that she has the God-given ability to understand other people more clearly than they understand themselves, and, therefore, has the obligation of dictating to them that which is best for them. Madame Brigitte's self-pride is at the basis of her pharisaical attitude. It is her self-righteous attitude accompanied by her desire to dominate that makes her a destructive force in the novel. Louis recalls that his stepmother, so full of pride, sincerely and firmly believes it is her destiny to be in charge of the souls of the people she has contact with (5, p. 236). Because she is responsible for their eternity, so to speak, Brigitte Pian feels it is her obligation to know everything about them. She makes it a matter of her daily business to

spy on people and, as in the case of Michèle, to censor their mail. Mauriac portrays Brigitte Pian as believing it is her divine right to spy on others and thus protect their souls. Of course any action on her part is justifiable.

Louis often finds her seated at her desk, busy with the church correspondence. His comments on her appearance at her desk are worth mentioning because they show how she looks in a typical scene, and they also show what a rigid, inflexible woman Madame Brigitte Pian is. Louis notes that she always sits very straight, not the least relaxed. Then, in the following words, he describes her as he remembers her: ". . . elle demeurait donc immobile, le buste droit, une habitude conventuelle lui interdisant de s'appuyer au dossier de la chaise. (Je ne me souviens pas non plus de lui avoir jamais vu croiser les jambes)" (5, pp. 237-238).

Her hypocrisy and rigidity are also reflected in her disapproval of any demonstration of love or passion. She is somewhat embittered by her husband's indifference to her, by his attachment to the memory of his former wife, whom he could not get along with while she was alive. Brigitte Pian takes advantage of her religious influence to destroy the passions of those about her. For example, she forbids Michèle to see her boyfriend, Jean de Mirbel. She sends her to a boarding school and orders the Mother Superior to censor all of the girl's mail, making sure that no letter from Jean gets to her. When the abbé Calou intervenes, she causes him to lose

his parish. She never has any mercy for those who oppose her plans and decisions. In another situation, Madame Brigitte tries to prevent M. Puybaraud, a schoolmaster under her supervision, from marrying a young school teacher, Octavie. Her tactic, as always, is religious in nature. She claims to be intervening on God's behalf to save a soul, as seen when she warns M. Puybaraud: "Dieu n'a pas accoutumé d'appeler une âme sur les hauteurs pour la rejeter dans les bas-fonds" (5, p. 243). Her bigoted attitude is further demonstrated when she tries to belittle Octavie for accepting M. Puybaraud's proposal. She tries to make her feel that she is undeserving of M. Puybaraud's love and is, in fact, causing his spiritual destruction by marrying him. As Octavie's judge, Madame Brigitte points her accusing finger at her and asks: ". . . avez-vous ou non le droit d'accepter qu'un homme tel que M. Puybaraud, qui vous dépasse infiniment par tous les dons de l'esprit et par les grâces reçues, vous sacrifie les fruits de son apostolat, sa gloire devant Dieu, son honneur devant les hommes" (5, p. 244)? By dictating to others the decisions they must make, Madame Brigitte feels that she is fulfilling her destiny to "révéler aux autres les vues que Dieu avait sur eux du fond de son éternité" (5, p. 274).

Several of the other characters make statements concerning Brigitte Pian which are interesting and which seem significant enough to bear repeating since they broaden the

reader's perspective of her personality. Octavie, who has worked for Madame Brigitte, and has, therefore, had some degree of contact with her, does not hesitate to give her frank opinion of her mistress to M. Puybaraud. In the following lines Octavie tells him that the talent that Brigitte prides herself in, which is being able to see others more clearly than they can see themselves, is entirely false, that she actually has no such talent: ". . . Madame Brigitte voit faux: elle n'est pas pénétrée . . . de cette vérité que toute chair quoique blessée est sainte. . ." (5, p. 277).

Each word of advice, every deed of charity, the sum total, in fact, of all she does is effectuated in the spirit of the Pharisee. She feels that she is showing her greatness by helping others, all of whom, she believes, are inferior to her. In one scene, she tells Louis, "C'est l'épreuve des grandes âmes que de s'épuiser dans les ténèbres au service d'esprits inférieurs, subalternes. . ." (5, p. 282).

Mauriac treats Brigitte as though she is knitting together each of her good deeds to form a large piece of art which she, no doubt, can show to God and man as proof of her righteousness. Again and again Madame Brigitte is described as adding a stitch to the fabric of perfection. In the true spirit of the Pharisee, Brigitte Pian even takes advantage of her sins to add still another maille to the fabric.

For example, in one scene, she loses control of her temper before M. Puybaraud. She is depicted as having a nature de feu and loses her temper often. Afterwards, Brigitte excuses herself somewhat by saying that she is overly concerned for his soul: ". . . quand je crois qu'une âme se trompe et va à sa perte, je ne me contiens plus. . ." (5, p. 284). Mauriac adds that she makes her confession, as would any Pharisee, "avec une visible satisfaction" (5, p. 284). Thus, even an outburst of temper becomes an opportunity for Madame Brigitte to add a stitch to her fabric of perfection. She is capable, as André Maurois notes in Etudes littéraires, of always being able to find an excuse for even the worst of her passions (6, p. 39). Her self-righteous attitude irritates a number of people, but Michèle expresses her annoyance the most graphically when she tells Louis, in the following memorable words, ". . . mieux vaut être un sale type que d'être vertueux comme Brigitte Pian. . . . Oui, plutôt en enfer sans elle qu'au ciel avec elle" (5, pp. 290-291)!

The kind priest, M. Calou, also seems to share Michèle's sentiments, but perhaps to a lesser degree, when he says of her, "Que ce sont de ces personnes qui choisissent Dieu, mais que Dieu, lui, ne choisit peut-être pas. . ." (5, p. 291).

Madame Brigitte Pian's husband has a similar lack of love for her. Louis describes the couple's marital relationship

as that of a sourd dissentiment. Brigitte Pian has forced her husband to fire the old couple that once lived on his property. Louis recalls that the incident left a permanent rift between Octave and his wife, Brigitte (5, p. 293).

When Madame Brigitte sins, Mauriac is once in a while rather humorous in his comments about her failure to have attained the perfection that she professes. For example, in one scene she makes a sarcastic remark about the Comtesse de Mirbel, Jean's mother, to the abbé Calou and Louis, Mauriac rather amusingly remarks, "une mailles, deux maille venaient de sauter dans le tissu de perfection. . ." (5, p. 299).

In several different scenes, Louis describes his stepmother in her housecoat, dressed for bed. She always wears an amethyst-colored housecoat and her hair in a long braid. He seems to dislike the braid, which he imagines to be a long, fat serpent. The red ribbon tied to the braid clashes with the amethyst housecoat. Louis certainly recalls nothing in her appearance which makes her seem the least bit pleasant. In his opinion, Madame Brigitte keeps her formidable appearance at night as well as in the day. As he tries to sneak out of the house one evening, he looks up the stairway to see his stepmother spying on him: "Elle est là, au tournant de l'escalier, dressée dans le petit jour qui tombe du toit, vêtue d'une robe de chambre améthyste. Une puissante tresse comme un gros serpent gras et dont un ruban rouge lie le museau, descend jusqu'à ses reins" (5, pp. 341-342).

Madame Brigitte appears more malicious in the scene in which she visits the Puybaraud when Octavie is sick in pregnancy than in almost any other scene in the novel. Her little gestures reveal the inner hardness of her attitude, her total lack of sympathy for the plight of Octavie and M. Puybaraud, a plight which the reader will recall she had predicted for them before they married. In this scene, and in others, Mauriac portrays Brigitte's haughty spirit in the look on her face. Madame Brigitte Pian is angered by the sight of a piano in the Puybaraud's house, a rental she believes extremely extravagant, especially when they are living on money which she gives them. Strangely enough, she feels no qualms about having forced him out of his job. Once they are obligated to her, Brigitte treats the Puybarauds as inferiors. Mauriac shows her disapproval of the Puybarauds and her feeling of superiority when he says, ". . . le front de la bienfaitrice demeura sourcilleux" (5, p. 361). Brigitte completely loses control of her temper before she leaves the Puybarauds, and in departing, screams furious words at the couple between clenched teeth (5, p. 362).

The scene with the Puybarauds is significant because it shows how Brigitte Pian takes advantage of other people's misfortunes to obligate them to her. As has been pointed out, it also shows how Mauriac reveals her pride through her facial expressions. But the scene is important in a third

way; it marks a turning point in Brigitte's attitude. For the first time in the story, the Pharisee begins to look at herself somewhat realistically. When she leaves the Puybaraud's home, she feels temporarily shocked at her own violent outburst of temper simply because she has noticed a piano in the Puybaraud's home. Although she again tries to excuse her anger and adds another stitch to her fabric of perfection, she is at least temporarily shaken by her self-righteous attitude. But she quickly focuses her attention on the poor impression she has made with the Puybarauds. Typical of the Pharisee, who is unduly concerned about the outward impression, Brigitte Pian worries that the Puybarauds will now think her spiritually immature, a mere publican: "Elle enrageait à l'idée que les Puybaraud ne se faisaient aucune idée de son ascension depuis quelques mois et que, sur l'apparence d'un mouvement d'humeur, ils la classeraient parmi les dévotes de l'espèce la plus commune" (5, p. 367). It is the thought of being classified a publican that Brigitte particularly finds upsetting to her pride, for she is accustomed to thinking of her actions in terms of merit only. Like the Pharisee in the Gospels, Brigitte Pian always prays in a spirit of pride. Mauriac says that she never comes before God "que pour le prendre à témoin de son avancement rapide et de ses mérites singuliers" (5, pp. 367-368).

After her visit to the Puybarauds, Brigitte Pian begins to see God occasionally as He really is, and then she finds

herself stripped of her false pride, "misérable et nue, sur une plage aride et sous un ciel d'airain" (5, p. 368).

Characteristically, however, Brigitte takes pride in her humility and finds herself again praying as the Pharisee: "Notez bien, Seigneur, que je l'accepte et n'omettez pas de porter cette acceptation à la colonne de mes profits" (5, pp. 368-369).

But in spite of constant relapses into a pharisaical attitude, she is portrayed by Mauriac in a somewhat humble aspect towards the end of the novel. One of the first changes in her that the children note is that she controls her temper and at times demonstrates an almost tender attitude towards them (5, p. 383). Brigitte Pian makes no sudden or radical change in her behavior. For even after the children notice her showing an occasional tender attitude towards them, she still has a rather high opinion of herself, as the following testimony appropriately shows: "Dieu m'est témoin que j'ai toujours cherché sa plus grande gloire et le bien des âmes. . ." (5, p. 384).

Up to the present point in the novel, Brigitte Pian has never once demonstrated a genuine feeling of love for anyone. She equates love with passion, which she feels turns people into irrational beasts. In the following scene Brigitte warns Louis about the dangers of passion. Michèle has left the house during the night to search for Jean. Madame Brigitte thus uses her as an object lesson in an attempt to

edify Louis:

Regarde ta soeur, une bonne petite, bien sûr . . .
 pourtant rien ne pourrait la retenir de courir les
 bois, par cette nuit d'hiver. Voilà ce que la passion
 fait des êtres, voilà jusqu'ou elle nous ravale.
 Promets-moi que toi . . . tu ne te laisseras pas
 changer en bête (5, p. 386).

Louis first becomes aware that his stepmother suffers from an inner torment after Brigitte Pian's husband dies. During countless nights, he hears her pacing the floor late. He does not realize, however, until he is older, that the pacing was that of a woman who was feeling the frustration of trying to serve a God she did not love, whose love she did not know. Louis says that he did not then realize "l'horreur de cette torture que s'infligent à eux-mêmes les serviteurs de Dieu qui ne savent pas qu'il est Amour" (5, p. 387). The pacing is a sign that Brigitte is beginning to feel less confident about her own righteousness. She has indirectly caused the death of her husband. She is beginning to see the destructiveness of her character upon her family, M. Calou, Jean and the Puybarauds. As a result, she feels inner frustration and torment expressed in her pacing of the floor. Her frustration and torment are accompanied by physical decline. Louis first notices her weakened condition in the scene in which he is riding to Bordeaux on the train with his stepmother. Looking at her, he realizes that she has grown somewhat unstable, that she is quite wrinkled. She seems reduced in size to him, less awesome (5, p. 409). Later, Louis notes that Madame Brigitte has lost weight. Her

worries over the anguish she has caused Michèle and Jean, the Puybarauds, her husband and M. Calou are beginning to take their toll on her. The fact that she is so deeply concerned about the negative influence she has been to the people about her is significant in that it supports the idea that Mauriac is now showing a somewhat repentent Pharisee.

Louis encourages his stepmother to go to M. Calou for a confession. The act seems to bring some degree of peace to her mind, for Louis notices that she no longer tries to edify Michèle and him. At the same time, he notices that Madame Brigitte's interests are no longer entirely centered on the church. She loses interest in knitting her fabric of perfection. Her time is now taken up with spying on others; she becomes especially interested in their love affairs (5, p. 431). She discovers the classics in literature and reads avidly (5, p. 431). But in spite of certain changes in Brigitte, Mauriac is careful to maintain that the Pharisee in her has not died. For example, in the following passage, Mauriac points out through Louis that Brigitte Pian has to contend with the feeling of pride she feels in her newly developed humility:

Non que la pharisienne fût morte en elle: la lucidité qui lui avait permis de se juger et de se condamner, la rendait fière. Elle ne croyait point qu'il y eût beaucoup d'exemples d'une chrétienne capable de reconnaître, à cinquante ans, qu'elle avait fait fausse route. Elle ne s'avouait pas qu'il lui était agréable maintenant de ne plus diriger personne. Parfois une profonde nostalgie la prenait quand elle songeait à ses années révolues (5, p. 433).

One of Brigitte Pian's greatest problems when she loses interest in knitting her fabric of perfection is in maintaining an interest in life itself. At first she seems to have lost her desire to live. Louis recalls that at Larjuzon, her country home, Brigitte spends long hours in the vestibule, lying down, looking pale and flushed. He believes she has become a neurasthenic (5, p. 436). How different she is, though, after she has fallen in love with her protestant doctor, Gellis. In one scene, following the death of the doctor, Louis returns home to find his step-mother sitting at her desk, her hair neatly piled on her head, revealing her large ears and fine forehead. Around her shoulders is a purple shawl. She seems perfectly at ease to him (5, p. 442). In a tone of serenity, Madame Brigitte Pian shares her inner thoughts with Louis; thoughts that reveal a woman touched by the love a man has shown her; thoughts that express a feeling nearly every Mauriac heroine has experienced--that the withdrawal or death of the man in her life intensifies her love for him because the physical barriers are then removed. The following words of Brigitte Pian are the sincere expression of a somewhat humbled woman: "Cher M. Gellis n'a jamais été si proche, même durant sa vie mortelle. Vivant, il avait déjà commencé sa mission auprès de moi, mais nous sommes de pauvres corps . . . Oui, nos corps nous séparaient. Rien ne nous sépare plus maintenant. . . ." (5, p. 442).

In his final treatment of the Pharisee, Mauriac shows that through the tragedy she has caused others and through human love, she gains an understanding of God's love, and to some extent begins to understand the meaning of compassion and humility. The following quotation will give the reader an impression of Mauriac's rather compassionate attitude towards Brigitte at the end of the novel. He still portrays her as a Pharisee, but one who has come to know God's love through human love:

. . . l'amour humain ne s'était pas levé trop tard sur l'aride destin de la Pharisienne, et . . . le "sépulcre blanchi" avait été descellé enfin et ouvert. Peut-être y subsistait-il quelques ossements, un peu de pourriture. Il arrivait encore que les sourcils redoutables se rapprochassent comme autrefois sur deux yeux de braise. Quelque offense longtemps remâchée faisait jaillir une parole amère. Mais "cher M. Gellis" n'était jamais loin et il ramenait Madame Brigitte dans le calme de Dieu (5, p. 442).

Jacques Robichon seems rather awed by Mauriac's excellent handling of Brigitte's conversion, a task which he believes Mauriac accomplished without spoiling his portrayal of her as the Pharisee. Not the least stingy with his praise, Robichon asserts:

. . . quel écrivain, quel romancier aurait dressé ce tableau impitoyable d'une lèpre de l'âme se exactement restituée, cette cruauté et cet aveuglement de certains êtres parmi les plus engagés sur la voie de la perfection sur la terre, cette face atroce de Gorgone devenue celle d'un certain christianisme militant (10, p. 135).

The rather humble image Mauriac paints of Madame Brigitte in the concluding pages of the novel contrasts greatly with the stern, bigoted and domineering Brigitte that he portrays

to begin with. In the novel, Mauriac presents to the reader a powerful image of a "deeply religious woman who might be called an unconscious hypocrite. She forces others to practice virtue and thus drives them to revolt or hatred" (7, pp. 114-115). In his treatment of her, Mauriac is faithful to keep the pharisaical image alive, yet he subdues it at the end of the book by putting the heroine through a series of experiences that teach her humility, compassion, and love. Thus, the pride and hypocrisy that at first dominate Brigitte's character no longer dominate it in the last pages of the story. For that reason Robichon labels her a "monstre de déformation." He believes that Mauriac presents her in a convincing manner, that she is very "humaine" (8, p. 131). Mauriac's final attitude towards her seems compassionate and understanding. He does not condemn her; neither does he make excuses for her, as the above final quotation substantiates. He tries to leave the reader feeling that Madame Brigitte will continue to show anger and self-pride from time to time. But he seems to want to overshadow that idea with the thought that those feelings will give way to a spirit of peace made possible by the love the heroine has come to know. André Maurois seems to feel that Mauriac, in his treatment of the *fausse dévote*, Brigitte, wishes to show that "les monstres, s'ils se connaissent comme tels et se font horreur, peuvent devenir des saints" (6, p. 49).

Mauriac's final treatment of Madame Brigitte contrasts tremendously with his apparent attitude towards the following heroine, Paule de Cernès. Perhaps it is worthwhile to mention in passing that Mauriac turned his attention to playwriting after completing La Pharisienne. It was not until a decade after La Pharisienne that he published the novel which he originally planned to center around the heroine but which he finally centered around "le Sagouin," her son (10, p. 73). It is interesting that the word sagouin means a squirrel-monkey. It is also used figuratively to mean a slovenly fellow or woman (9, p. 665).

The ten-year span between the publication of La Pharisienne in 1941 and Le Sagouin, first published in 1951, is significant for two reasons. First of all, the period of ten years is the longest one between any two of the nine novels dealt with in this study. Thus, in view of the lapse in time, it will be particularly interesting to notice how Mauriac treats the two heroines in the chapter. Secondly, the years themselves are important, for they cover the time of the Second World War. Some of the disturbances brought about by the war are, perhaps, reflected in the novel and in the treatment of the heroine, Paule de Cernès. For example, the gruesome atmosphere of the book and Paule's unrivaled sloppy appearance may be Mauriac's portrayal of a world which was torn and bleeding because of a global war.

The heroine in Le Sagouin is important in part because she is the last one to be dealt with. Remember that it has been almost thirty years since Mauriac featured Noémi d'Artiailh in Le Baiser. Thus, the reader may wish particularly to bear in mind any differences or similarities he sees in Mauriac's treatment of his final heroine compared with earlier ones. Reference will often be made to Mauriac's second novel, Genitrix, for, as has already been mentioned, the atmosphere and characters in it and Le Sagouin are strikingly similar.

As has previously been stated, the heroine, Paule de Cernès, is not the central figure of Le Sagouin. Mauriac's attention is focused primarily on Paule's son, who was christened Guillaume but is more often called Guillou since the beginning of the War. The War referred to in the novel is World War I. Remember that he is le sagouin of the story.

Paule de Cernès resembles Mathilde Cazenave, one of the heroines from Genitrix, in a number of ways. They are about the same age. Paule is close to thirty-eight. Like Mathilde, Paule uses people for her own benefit. Remember that she marries Galéas de Cernès to raise her class status from that of a peasant to that of an aristocrat with the title of baroness. Like Mathilde, Paule has to compete with a domineering mother-in-law who controls the lives of her son and grandson and economizes to the point that the château in which the Cernèses live is in partial ruin. The château is

located in Cernès, a very small village in the Bordeaux region which seems little more than a mudhole in the novel.

As in Genitrix, the atmosphere in Le Sagouin is that of a nightmare; all of the characters are somewhat grotesque and are at war with each other. The heroine is one of the central warriors. For example, in the first scene of the novel, Paule is portrayed viciously slapping her son, Guillou. She is exasperated at his apparent lack of intelligence. Especially irksome to her is the boy's drooping lower lip, a characteristic which reminds Paule of the somewhat retarded man she married and now despises, Galéas (4, p. 3). The image of Paule slapping Guillou seems to indicate that Mauriac is again portraying a cruel and dominant mother.

In every description of her in the novel, Paule is dressed extremely slovenly. Her lack of concern for her appearance seems to be a sign that she has given up on life. The following passage is a description of the heroine at the first of the book. The ill-fitting and dirty clothes are a sign of her indifference. The mud stains on Paule's skirt are interesting for Mauriac often mentions mud on her. Paule's soiled clothes help to establish her as a vital part of the nightmarish atmosphere: "Cette blouse de laine verdâtre, elle la reprenait à chaque automne, l'encolure était trop large. Ces taches avaient reparu malgré le nettoyage. La jupe marron, mouchetée de boue, était légèrement relevée par devant comme si Paule eût été enceinte" (4, p. 4).

Like Mathilde Cazenave, who marries Fernand to avenge herself of her childhood miseries, only to find herself in a worse predicament, so Paule also realizes late that she, in marriage, is in a bad predicament. Mauriac suggests that Paule may have expected adventure and a whole new life in marriage when he writes: "Et puis ce mariage, c'était une porte . . . ouverte sur l'inconnu, un point de départ vers elle ne savait quelle vie" (4, p. 6). But like nearly all previous Mauriac heroines, Paule de Cernès finds, after marrying, that she has entered a closed milieu. She has not even gained the title she desired so much: "Il n'existait qu'une Mme la baronne: sa belle-mère, la vieille" (4, p. 7). Her marriage has rather labeled her as the wife of the man she loathes, for she is known as Mme Galéas. Like other Mauriac heroines, Paule has nothing to which to look forward in the future but a bleak and lonely existence because her marriage has, so to speak, ended any hope she might have in finding a meaningful life. Mauriac expresses the idea that the future holds no hope for Paule in the usage of the words "à jamais" in the following statement: "Ainsi participait-elle plus étroitement à cette déchéance qu'elle avait épousée, qu'elle avait faite sienne à jamais" (4, p. 7).

Perhaps Paule tries to escape from the despair, the frustration, the torment and the solitude that she feels every day by beating Guillou. Maxwell Smith maintains that viewpoint when he says, ". . . Paule, disappointed in her

dream of achieving entrance into the aristocracy, seeks an outlet for her frustration in dominating and torturing her retarded son. . ." (10, p. 74). Certainly she attempts to escape through the fantasies of the mind that she so frequently conjures up. But she finds that escape is not possible, for her world is filled with violence, suspicion and hate. At night, during her fitful moments of sleep, Paule is plagued by nightmares in which she finds herself in a huge ditch which she has fallen into of her own free will, but which she cannot escape from (4, pp. 7-8). At dawn she awakens to the living nightmare of life as the wife of an idiot and the mother of le Sagouin. The worst part of her torment seems to lie in the knowledge that she has chosen her destiny of her own free will.

In the following scene, Mauriac depicts Paule as emerging from the nightmare of her sleepless night into the nightmare of day. The imagery is sustained in Mauriac's usage of the words "fantôme," "membres noirs" and "brouillard":

"Paule émergeant des ténèbres, voyait à travers la vitre quelques fantômes d'arbres, sous des haillons de feuilles, agiter dans le brouillard leurs membres noirs" (4, p. 8).

A vivid aspect of the nightmare is the vieille baronne, who is always portrayed by Mauriac as Paule's chief adversary. Paule, like Mathilde Cazenave, is always very much aware of the tormenting presence of the mother-in-law. In one scene Paule hears the baronne tell her grandson to go to his

mother and kiss her. The image of the terrified Guillou slipping into his mother's bedroom is important because it shows Guillou's fear and disgust for his mother, who is described then in some detail. Once again Mauriac emphasizes the hideous aspects of Paule's appearance. There seem to be no redeeming factors in her looks as Mauriac describes her, lying in bed, awaiting the slobbery kiss of her idiot son: ". . . cette tête redoutable, ces cheveux tirés sur les tempes et qui découvraient un front étroit, mal délimité, cette joue jaune (et le point de beauté parmi un duvet noir) sur laquelle il appuyait vite ses lèvres. . ." (4, p. 9).

Throughout the novel the baronne, as Paule's chief enemy, is the one who rallies around her the members of the family. The following scene serves as a good example of the baronne's dominance. Paule has left the house after having been insulted by her mother-in-law. Mauriac then shows the enemies getting together. The baronne calls them: "Galéas! Guillou! chéris!" They shout back an affectionate, "Mamie! Maminette" (4, p. 17): The scene is again much like several in Genitrix which portray the attraction of Fernand and Félicité for each other, to the exclusion of Mathilde. So too, Galéas, Guillou, and the baronne gather together in the room of the bien aimée, in a united front against the enemy, Paule (4, p. 18).

Paule's husband is also a part of her nightmarish existence. Perhaps the following description of him is worthy of

being included because he is grotesque and he is evidence of the extent to which Paule was willing to go in her choice of a husband in order to enter the aristocratic class, gain a title, and perhaps have some adventure. Although his entire person is repulsive, his drooping mouth is particularly disgusting, and it is that feature that Paule finds unbearable:

Il avait des épaules étroites et tombantes sous un vieux chandail marron, une grosse tête disproportionnée, très chevelue, des yeux enfantins assez beaux, mais une bouche terrible aux lèvres mouillées, toujours ouverte sur une langue épaisse. Le fond de son pantalon pendait. L'étoffe faisait de gros plis sur des cuisses de squelette (4, pp. 17-18).

Paule is very much a loner throughout the novel. As a young girl, Paule was shunned by her peers. She grows up an orphan. After her marriage, she is accused of seducing a priest and is gossiped about in the village. Because of the incident with the priest, an incident which Paule feels has been entirely misjudged, the church authorities have forbidden the performance of a mass in the de Cernès chapel. Paule is regarded as an adultress and the enemy of the church. She, in return, hates the church leaders. She fears being seen by anyone and often hides in the woods to escape the eyes of a passer-by when she goes on walks. She returns from the woods looking like the despised figure that she feels she is, "décoiffée, avec de la boue au bas de sa robe. Elle sentirait la transpiration" (4, p. 21). Again Mauriac refers to the mud on her skirt. The mud is, of course, a direct result of her idle wanderings over deserted

paths. It is thus symbolic of her meaningless existence, of her loneliness, of her desire to avoid people by taking the back roads, the muddy ones. It is, perhaps, symbolic too of her utter degradation.

As has been stressed already, Paule is a despised woman throughout the novel. Even the de Cernès' Austrian maid, Fraulein, thinks her despicable. In the following scene, Mauriac shows the Fraulein's reaction to Paule's intrusion upon her and the rest of the family, who are gathered in the baronne's bedroom. Mauriac portrays the Fraulein reacting much like a cat surprised suddenly by the appearance of a dog. The imagery is that of open warfare, imagery Mauriac maintains in the story, with the heroine always at odds with everyone else: "Fraulein tourna vers l'ennemie sa figure écrasée de chatte qui, en présence d'un chien, aplatit ses oreilles, devient bossu et se prépare à cracher" (4, p. 35).

Guillou also regards her as his enemy. Mauriac often portrays her as the hunted animal that she forces from its hole in a spiteful manner. The imagery is significant because it reveals the meanness in Paule's nature. She is always portrayed as a cruel mother, an image which is established in the first scene of the novel. In the following quote, Mauriac depicts Paule's cruelty by portraying her as the huntress, the one who forces the frightened prey, Guillou, from his hole: "Le voilà tiré par les oreilles

hors de son terrier, exposé au jour aveuglant des grandes personnes" (4, p. 40).

The baronne scorns Paule mainly because of her peasant background. In heated arguments, Paule often takes advantage of her knowledge of the peasant dialect, using it to wound the aristocratic pride of the old woman. Reference to one scene will suffice to illustrate the flavor of such exchanges between the two women. Paule, using peasant idiom, says, "Ça voux en bouch au coin" (4, p. 47), which the old woman does not understand. Not knowing what to reply, the baronne retorts, "Comme le langage est révélateur" (4, p. 47): The baronne's remark is intended to place Paule in the illiterate, uncultured class from which she came. The baronne recalls that her children in Paris sometimes use a slang word in front of her, "mais jamais ils ne se fussent servis d'une expression aussi vulgaire" (4, p. 47).

The battles between Paule and her mother-in-law upset Guillou, whose childish imagination causes him to think of the fights as the quarrels of angry gods. At one point, he is awakened by shouting and thinks, "Oui, les dieux se battaient toujours au-dessus de sa tête" (4, p. 55). Thus, in the eyes of her son, Paule is a monster, a raging goddess, a fearsome superbeing. She is at the center of the nightmare the little boy lives in.

Paule herself seems to rather enjoy her role as a battling goddess. Her attitude about the fights is interesting

as it is expressed in her own words: "Comme on dit 'faire l'amour,' il faudrait pouvoir dire 'faire la haine.' C'est bon de faire la haine, ça repose, ça détend" (4, p. 57). Upon saying that, Paule stretches out on the floor of her bedroom, dressed in a quilted housecoat, gazing at the burning logs in the fireplace, drinking, smoking, daydreaming of the relationship she hopes to develop with the schoolmaster in town. He seems interesting to her because he is a probable communist, someone who would, she feels, sympathize with the sufferings she knows by being a peasant in an aristocratic household. In her mind, Paule does not let the schoolmaster's wife interfere with her friendship with him. Only in passing does she recall, "Il était marié" (4, p. 57). Much of the scene needs to be included because it is unique. Only at this time does Mauriac show Paule so relaxed. Although the Fraulein tells the baronne previously that Paule drinks heavily, nowhere else does Mauriac show her drinking excessively. It is also in this scene that he shows Paule smoking. Her daydreams about the schoolmaster are more explicitly described here. The scene is important because even though it is unique in the sense that there is no similar episode in the novel, the reader feels that Paule may spend many evenings like this one, in her room. At one point, Mauriac carefully depicts her movements. She seems withdrawn and detached from reality:

Elle ouvrit l'armoire et sa main hésita. Elle choisit le curaçao, jeta les coussins du divan sur le tapis, le

plus près possible du feu, s'étendit avec le verre et la bouteille à portée de sa main. Elle commença de fumer et de boire et se mit à penser à l'homme, à l'instituteur, à l'ennemi des nobles et des riches, un rouge, peut-être un communiste. Méprisé comme elle, par la même espèce de gens . . . Elle s'humilierait devant lui . . . Elle finirait bien par entrer dans sa vie . . . Il était marié (4, p. 57).

In the last few lines of the scene, Mauriac beautifully sums up his portrayal of the somewhat intoxicated Paule, with her "visage renversé de criminelle ou de martyre" (4, p. 58)-- "criminelle" and "martyre" no doubt, because of her seducing the schoolmaster and her attitude of self-pity expressed in the above passage by the word "méprisé." Paule is thus depicted as she continues her lonely orgy late in the night: "Elle ne se redressait que pour remplir son verre, jeter un fagot dans le feu, puis s'étendait de nouveau et parfois la flamme réveillée éclairait brusquement ce visage renversé de criminelle ou de martyre" (4, p. 58).

Mauriac's description of Paule on the following day as she visits the schoolmaster for the first time is particularly pertinent here. Paule has just spent the previous evening imagining herself seducing him. She still has the same interest in him now, but her appearance is scarcely that of a woman expecting to lure a man. As always, she looks slovenly. She trudges through the rain in her raincoat, large shoes, and beret pulled down over her eyes. Mauriac says she feels that the rain has washed away traces of the previous night's orgy (4, p. 59). Her unkempt appearance makes Paule seem like a rejected woman, used to a solitary life,

not used to a man's love and attention. She looks and acts very much like an alcoholic. She has grown so indifferent about her appearance that she never once gives it a thought, an idea that Mauriac supports in the following lines:

La pensée ne vint même pas à Mme Galéas de poudrer sa figure, ni de rien tenter pour rendre moins apparent le duvet brun qui recouvrait ses lèvres et ses joues. Ses cheveux lavés eussent paru moins gras. Elle aurait pu supposer que l'instituteur inconnu était, comme la plupart des hommes, sensible aux parfums . . . Mais non: sans plus d'apprêt que de coutume, aussi négligée que jamais, elle allait tenter sa chance dernière (4, pp. 59-60).

Since one of Paule's chief physical traits is her hairy face, it seems somewhat appropriate to mention a remark by Robert Bordas, the schoolmaster. Although it seems utterly preposterous, Robert's wife is jealous of Paule. In an attempt to reassure his wife, Robert tells her, "Je n'ai pas de goût pour les femmes à barbe" (4, p. 80).

Paule arranges to have Guillou take private lessons from Bordas. Again her cruel nature dominates as she tries to persuade her son to follow her to the schoolmaster's house. She threatens to put him in a house of correction if he does not go. When he finally submits, Paule loses interest in him and becomes lost in her daydreams of M. Bordas, the "idole au centre de sa vie" (4, p. 98). On the way to the schoolmaster's house, Paule ignores Guillou. Mauriac describes her as being enclosed "dans un univers inconnu de passions et de pensées" (4, p. 102). Basically, Paule wants

nothing to do with Guillou, for she is ashamed of the replica of her husband.

Guillou shows a surprising ability to read and ascertain what he reads when at M. Bordas' house, a capability which leads the reader to feel that Paule considers him to be more of an idiot than he really is. She seems to have made him feel inferior by her constant beatings. She tells him nearly every day, "Tu es vilain, sale et bête" (4, p. 142). Paule, then, seems to be depicted as somewhat at fault for having created her idiot son, the Sagouin.

Mauriac's treatment of the heroine seems to be rather unsympathetic from the beginning to the end of the book. When the father and son commit suicide, Mauriac lays the blame for their death directly on Paule when he states that the two lonely figures are seeking deliverance from the wife and mother in the cold waters by the mill: "Voici qu'ils sont près d'atteindre les humides bords du royaume où la mère, où l'épouse ne les harcèlera plus. Ils vont être délivrés de la Gargone, ils vont dormir" (4, p. 147).

Mauriac's reference to Paule as a Gargone indicates that he feels she is a monster. He is here equating her with Félicité Cazenave, whom he also called a Gargone when he referred to her tête de Méduse.

There seems to be no redeeming feature in Paule de Cernès, even in the final pages of the novel when she lies dying on a hospital bed. Not once does she feel remorse for having

caused the deaths of Galéas and Guillou. The only crime she feels guilty of is that of having married Galéas and of having given birth to a son like him. She believes that she acted towards them in the only way she could. Mauriac summarizes her attitude towards her family in the grotesque imagery typical of the novel when he says, "Elle avait vomis les Cernès, parce qu'on n'est pas maître de sa nausée" (4, pp. 151-152). The statement sums up fairly well Mauriac's treatment of Paule in the course of the entire book. She is sick of the sight of the members of her family and tries to rid herself of them. She ignores Galéas, is brutal towards Guillou, and wages war with the baronne. She is never at peace with herself or with any of those about her.

John Flower points to much evidence in the novel which supports the idea that Mauriac lacks sympathy for the heroine. He feels that Mauriac even "tries to do his best to ensure that Paule does not enjoy the sympathy that was so readily given to Thérèse" (2, p. 96). Only in Genitrix has Mauriac presented the heroines in so unfavorable a light.

It has been seen that the two last heroines studied here, Brigitte Pian and Paule de Cernès, resemble one another in their domineering attitudes. Both are mean, but Paule shows her cruelty in more brutal ways. She often slaps her son and screams at him. Both women are at war with themselves, dissatisfied and empty within. Both are frustrated

in their marriages. Both bring about the suicides of their husbands.

Nevertheless, the women are distinct individuals. Paule, at thirty-eight, is much younger than Brigitte, who is fifty. Brigitte is outwardly the epitome of a religious woman; Paule does not try to hide her feeling of disdain and hatred for the church and its leaders. Brigitte is the type of woman Paule would definitely loathe. Brigitte has redeemable traits, but Paule has none. Brigitte is neat in appearance, though stern. Paule is dirty and unkempt and wasted-looking because of excessive drinking and smoking. Paule seems to fall into the category of the mentally ill. Like Maria Cross and Thérèse, she often appears withdrawn.

Mauriac's final treatment of the two women leaves them worlds apart. Brigitte Pian finds love and with it a new sense of direction in her life. Paule has never known the meaning of love. As far as she is concerned, life is a nightmare with no hope for improvement, especially since she now has a malignant tumor. Death holds no terror for her because, unlike Brigitte, she does not even consider the possibility that there is an eternity. At the end of the novel, Paule knows only the darkness of despair.

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Cormeau, Nelly, L'Art de François Mauriac, Paris, Bernard Grasset Editeur, 1951.
2. Flower, John Ernest, Intention and Achievement, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969.
3. Jeanneau, Augustin and Louis Chaigne, Petit guide de la littérature d'aujourd'hui, Paris, Fernand Lanore, 1966.
4. Mauriac, François, Le Sagouin, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1954.
5. _____, Oeuvres complètes, Volume V, Paris, Bibliothèque Bernard Grasset chez Arthème Fayard, 1951.
6. Maurois, André, Etudes littéraires II, New York, Editions de la maison française, Inc., 1944.
7. Peyre, Henri, French Novelists of Today, New York, Oxford University Press, 1967.
8. Robichon, Jacques, François Mauriac, Paris, Editions Universitaires, 1953.
9. "Sagouin," The New Cassell's French Dictionary, 2nd ed., New York, Funk and Wagnalls Company, Inc., 1965.
10. Smith, Maxwell A., François Mauriac, New York, Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In his treatment of heroines in this study, which includes representative works between the years 1922 and 1951, Mauriac appears to have created distinctly individual women who share in common a feeling of despair and a sense of futility. Very few, if any, appear to have discovered the fulfillment in life they seem to desire. Mauriac appears to feel pity for most of the heroines, for he often gives them a sympathetic role in his novels. If most are wicked in many respects, they, nevertheless, are usually sympathetically portrayed. Though the heroines may resemble each other in some respects, particularly, perhaps, because Mauriac primarily deals with the middle-class from the Bordeaux area, and because he depicts them from a psychological viewpoint, still each one remains distinct from the others.

Six of the heroines seem to have names chosen for a particular effect. For example, Noémi d'Artiailh of Le Baiser, 1922, and Isa Fondaudège, Le Noeud, 1932, go by their maiden names, apparently a technique used by the author to emphasize the barrier of silence and the lack of communication and love between husband and wife. The silence between Isa and Louis lasts much longer than that

between Noémi and Jean Péloueyre. Interestingly enough, Isa's married name is never once mentioned. The name Félicité in Genitrix, 1923, is ironically chosen. Félicité is unhappy and brings only misery to Mathilde and Fernand. Mauriac appears to have chosen the name Maria Cross, Le Désert, 1925, primarily for its symbolic significance, for she is the one who draws men to her and makes them suffer. Blanche Frontenac, Le Mystère, 1933, is portrayed as being genuinely pure and noble, as her name indicates. Paule, Le Sagouin, 1951, has not earned the title of la Baronne, by marrying Galéas, but to her chagrin, she goes by de Cernès, the name that links her to her idiot husband.

All of the heroines studied were married women. Two of them, Félicité and Blanche, were widows throughout the entire story. Three became widows during the course of the novel--Noémi, Brigitte, and Paule. Maria Cross was unique. She was a widow, then Larousselle's mistress, then married to Larousselle. None of the heroines found in marriage the love or inner satisfaction they seemed to desire.

It is rather interesting to note that four of the heroines--Mathilde, Félicité, Isa and Blanche--die by the end of the books. Two of them are from the same novel, Genitrix. Since both regained their power over Fernand in death, it seems possible that Mauriac is trying to make a positive assertion of the truth of life after death, an idea that even Félicité, the atheist in the novel, almost becomes convinced

of, in time. The idea of eternal life is also contained in the deaths of Isa and Blanche, for when they die, the two men, Louis and Yves, are comforted with a sense of love that they never felt while the heroines lived. Both Thérèse and Paule lie dying at the end of La Fin and Le Sagouin. They seem to believe that their deaths will end their miseries; neither apparently has any belief in life after death. Of the three heroines that continue to live, Brigitte is the one whose future seems the least futile for she apparently has found the meaning of love, though not through her husband, however. Noémi, by choosing to remain within the Peloueyre family, has selected a meaningless existence, symbolized by her purposeless wanderings in the woods and her clinging to the burnt pine tree, which resembles Jean. Maria Cross appears to have given up finding the ideal love she once sought; she seems to have found some consolation in becoming Larousselle's wife, an arrangement which gives her social acceptance but which apparently does not obligate her to him as a sexual companion, as is evidenced in his flirtations with the barmaids. It appears that Mauriac's heroines are forever searching for a love that will fill the void in their lives. Marriage is usually especially disastrous because, not finding the love they had hoped to find from their husbands, the women then often become despairing. At best, marriage acts as a drug to make the heroine forget

herself somewhat by taking on the burden of a family, as Maria does in Le Désert.

All of the heroines appear to suffer from an inner loneliness that they are unable to satisfy with a meaningful relationship, for they are incapable of forming relationships that endure. They all find that there are insurmountable barriers between themselves and the ones they should love. Thus, Noémi is repulsed by Jean's ugliness and can only love him when he is absent from her. Mathilde cannot have the love that should be hers until she dies because her husband suffers from an Oedipus complex. Félicité is temporarily kept from possessing her son's love until after her death because he is attracted to his dead wife. Maria cannot obtain the love she is searching for because she does not know where to look for it, and she seems incapable of giving herself to another. Thérèse cannot love Bernard because his self-satisfaction nauseates her. Neither can she love Georges because she has promised Marie that she will try to persuade him to marry her, and she is too noble to take that which is not rightfully hers. Isa loses her husband's love by apparently trying to make him jealous of a former lover. Blanche denies herself the love of a husband in order to do what she feels is best for her children. Brigitte seems to be one of the few heroines who finds some comfort in love. She, however, does not experience the meaning of love until she loses her self-pride and her false conceptions of what

love is. Then she discovers that she can love and be loved. She discovers that love even crosses religious barriers, for Dr. Gellis is a protestant. However, the love she discovers is not perfect for she lapses back to the Pharisee from time to time. Paule cannot form any meaningful relationship because she chooses to marry a man who does not have the intelligence to communicate with her. She also thinks him physically repulsive. The only love she can imagine is an affair between herself and the schoolmaster, but that never materializes. Mauriac seems to be saying that each heroine has an inner feeling of futility; he then shows how each heroine copes with her feeling of hopelessness. All seem to feel that the void might be filled by love. Mauriac then seems to show, however, that the heroines are basically self-centered and destructive and that they cannot form a truly meaningful love relationship with another human being. If Mauriac left the problem unsolved, then he would truly be a philosopher of despair. He does, however, appear to offer a solution, though usually the heroine remains blind to it. The solution which the author seems to offer is that of Eternal Love, which is the Frontenac Mystery. Blanche finds some comfort in the knowledge that she will spend eternity with her children. Brigitte learns the meaning of Love after she meets Dr. Gellis. The despair in the Mauriac novels herein examined seems to come as a result of the heroine's

having failed to see the invisible, yet real, Loving God behind the scenes.

Mauriac shows the utter loneliness and despair of each heroine. Often they feel like prisoners of their environment. They commonly wander about, accomplishing nothing. They are usually isolated, lost in a world of darkness and silence. For example, Noémi d'Artiailh in one memorable scene is left standing in darkness and silence as the young doctor leaves her and her lantern goes out. After Jean's death, she wanders idly through the pines, no longer aware of a worthwhile goal in life. Mathilde's physical suffering is depicted more vividly than is that of the other heroines. She seems like the prisoner of her mother-in-law, who leaves her to die all alone. Mathilde's loneliness and anguish are emphasized by her lying alone in the dark, by the nightmarish atmosphere of the old house, and by her illness and terror in dying alone. Félicité's loneliness is best described by her frantic efforts at recaptivating Fernand's affection, especially well portrayed in her rushing through the dark rooms of the old house, desperately hoping to subdue Mathilde. Félicité seems to be a prisoner of her passion for Fernand and of the old house. Maria Cross' emptiness is best depicted in the description of the dark room where she spends most of her time, in her lying idly on the couch, and in her aimless wanderings in the garden. She seems to be the least energetic of the heroines examined. She also seems to be the most aware

that all love relationships are, at best, poor imitations of the ideal Love she once envisioned. Thérèse's loneliness seems to be depicted as being the most despairing. The fact that she is nearly always merged in darkness makes her seem terribly gloomy. She lives in a more remote area than do the other heroines. She seems to be the most conscious of the silence surrounding her. She is more graphically portrayed as a prisoner than are the other women. In Paris, she wanders idly about her livingroom, aware of her inner silence, though now she is surrounded by the noise of the city. Her struggle to deny self and stop poisoning lives is comparable to the struggle Noémi makes to be self-sacrificing in Le Baiser. Maria Cross, also, is portrayed as fighting against the desire to be self-indulging, though she appears to be less successful in her struggle. In her later years, Brigitte Pian, too, endeavors to overcome her desire to be self-centered. Mauriac does not seem to make her struggle as much a dominating part of the novel as he does with the struggles of Noémi, Maria and Thérèse; however, that aspect of Brigitte does become increasingly important as the heroine begins to change. All four of the heroines show that they are incapable of a permanent victory over self. However, Noémi, probably the most naïve heroine, seems to feel she could love Jean if he were to live. Maria discovers that she cannot maintain a safe relationship with Raymond and gives up the effort. Thérèse and Brigitte seem conscious

that the struggle will continue until the end of life. Thérèse appears to grow weary of the fight, whereas Brigitte is not necessarily portrayed in a like manner. Isa's loneliness is not really emphasized until Louis discovers the truth of her love for him near the end of the novel. She tries to fill her emptiness by doting on her children. She seems to be the type of mother Blanche could have been if she had been placed in a similar situation. Though she is a protective mother, Blanche is portrayed as being much more normal than the psychologically disoriented Félicité. She endures more silent years of marriage than does any other heroine. Blanche seems to be the least despairingly lonely of the heroines. Though she is lonely and suffers, she has hope of one day being reunited with her family once she has died. Her isolation and suffering seem to be best depicted in her quiet walks in the moonlight and in her putting her hand on her breast in order to feel the tumor that is killing her. Brigitte does not really seem to realize that she is empty until she begins to admit that she is not perfect. She avoids being conscious of a void in her life by keeping busy with church work and by prying into the lives of other people. Once she discovers her own emptiness, Brigitte begins to pace the floor. For awhile, like Maria Cross, Brigitte reads and lies about idly on a couch. She does so no longer when she falls in love with Dr. Gellis. Paule's loneliness is depicted in her living, like Félicité, in a

large dark, decaying house whose members are her enemies. Like Noémi, she wanders for long hours through the woods. Like Maria and Thérèse, Paule smokes, though the author does not make an issue of her smoking like he does for the other two heroines. She seems more dissipated than any of the other heroines that have been considered, for she has no concern about her slovenly appearance and she drinks heavily. She appears to be what Mathilde would have been had she lived longer.

Some of the most memorable scenes in the novels take place at night or relate to the color black. Noémi holds the lantern at night, bidding farewell to her possible opportunity to escape from misery. Her lantern goes out, and she is left in the dark. In a later scene, she embraces the black tree stump that looks like Jean Péloueyre. Mathilde is portrayed dying at night. Félicité roams through the dark rooms of her old house and listens for her son's breathing at night. Maria Cross returns from the cemetery at dusk and spends most of her time in her dark drawing-room. Thérèse rarely, if ever, appears in the light. Her moods are darker than any other heroine's. Mauriac equates her life with night in La Fin de la nuit. Isa loses Louis' love on one memorable night which Louis refers to as cette nuit. In another important scene, Louis watches his family on the patio around one o'clock in the morning. It is then that he begins to realize that Isa, too, is rejected by the children.

Blanche is portrayed in less darkness than the other heroines. She is often seen walking through the moonlit woods. Interestingly, her name also removes her somewhat from the realm of darkness that so many of the heroines seem to dwell in. Brigitte is described rather hideously in several night scenes. She is then wearing her hair in a long braid which her son feels resembles a large, fat snake, perhaps symbolic of her hypocritical spirit throughout much of the book. One of the outstanding scenes in Le Sagouin shows Paule in an all-night orgy. She seems completely out of touch with reality as she drinks, smokes and contemplates having an affair with Bordas. When she goes to the schoolmaster's house on the following day, the weather is dark and rainy. It seems quite possible that Mauriac uses night scenes and the color black to depict the emptiness and the despair in the souls of the heroines. Thus, Thérèse, the most wretched of the heroines, lives in more darkness than do the others.

Most of the heroines come from the middle class; their families are in business or own land with pines or vineyards. Notable exceptions are Mathilde, Maria Cross, and Paule. Mathilde's father was a poor school teacher. Maria Cross' mother was also a school teacher; her husband died, leaving her no inheritance. Paule was an orphan and had no inheritance. She seems to feel the class barrier more than the other heroines.

All of the heroines are destructive forces in the novels, but not necessarily more so, or as much so, as the other characters. Noémi causes Jean such personal anguish that he commits suicide. Mathilde is described as having always used others as weapons; she destroys herself by choosing to marry Fernand. Félicité destroys Mathilde and Fernand. She murders Mathilde by her lack of care for her; she forces Fernand to depend on her as though he were still a small child. Maria Cross destroys men; she causes Dr. Courreges to suffer silently; she turns Raymond into a monster of revenge. Thérèse destroys Anne and Bernard somewhat sadistically; she condemns Marie and Georges to a life of misery by trying to be a faithful mother. Isa causes her husband to doubt her love for him; and he, like Raymond in Le Désert, seeks revenge on other women. Blanche destroys herself by refusing to remarry and let her husband bear the burden of the business. Brigitte brings misery to her daughter Michèle, to Jean de Mirbel, to M. Puybaraud and Octavie, to M. Calou and eventually even causes the death of her husband. Paule drives her husband and son to suicide. The heroines all sound like monsters when viewed from this angle; however, they appear generally sympathetically portrayed when carefully examined.

Noémi seems the most naive and generous of the heroines. She is very young, about eighteen. She is innocent, chaste,

and simple. She rarely indulges in self-analysis; she reads only her prayer book. She is industrious and competent around the house. In her effort to love Jean, she is courageous and genuinely Christian. She seems like one of the most noble of the heroines according to Mauriac's treatment of her.

Mathilde seems vindictive and cynical. Yet, on her deathbed, she has moments of remorse. As she is Félicité's victim, she seems pitiful. She dies an agnostic. Basically, Mauriac's attitude towards Mathilde seems to be sympathetic.

Félicité is the most jealous of all the heroines. She is the first one considered who seems to be truly psychologically disoriented. She is incestuous. She murders; she spies on others; she is nearly always idle. She has a terrible temper, as is so vividly demonstrated in the scene where she finds her picture missing. She is possibly an atheist. She appears to be depicted with very little sympathy. She seems truly evil.

Maria Cross is more psychologically complex than all the previous heroines and is, perhaps, Mauriac's most mysterious heroine examined, for it is never really certain what she believes or who she cares for. Mauriac's attitude towards her seems ambiguous. She appears to be the most lazy and the most incompetent of all the heroines, except, perhaps, for Paule. She seems impractical, somewhat naïve and opportunistic. Maria is always idle. She feels some shame about

her reputation in town. She is the sole heroine who reads only parts of books over a period of time. Sometimes she appears to be saintly and at others she seems evil. She lives closer to a church than any other heroine examined, but never seems to give it any consideration. She reads Pascal and talks religiously to the doctor, has very high ideals, but otherwise seems irreligious.

Thérèse is probably the most intellectual and best educated of the heroines, but she, too, is usually idle. She is extremely self-centered and cruel in her younger days. She rebels against complacency and self-effacement; she refuses to conform to the demands of society. She appears to be more seriously disoriented psychologically than Félicité and Maria Cross. Her dual personality and black moods make her appear to be schizophrenic. As an older woman, Thérèse desires to be self-sacrificing rather than self-indulging and often seems quite noble in her attempt to subdue self. She has become less of a rebel in her later years, though she still claims to hate ignorance. The older Thérèse, like Maria Cross, appears to be both saintly and evil. Both Thérèses often strongly resemble Maria, yet they are distinctly different. Thérèse seems to have much worse psychological problems than Maria. She is, in Thérèse at least, much less aware than Maria of what she is doing and why. Mauriac considers Thérèse to be a much more evil heroine; nevertheless, he seems more obviously sympathetic with her.

Isa seems to be one of the most feminine of the heroines. Like Maria, she is flirtatious, and is rather naïve in her conduct towards the man she loves. She appears to be quite a snob. Isa is one of the most talented heroines-- she paints, sings, and plays the piano. She is an overly indulgent mother but a competent housewife. Like Noémi, she does charity for the Church; however, she seems rather hypocritical in her religious activity. Like Félicité, who spies on Fernand, Isa spies on Louis. Mauriac seems to present a softened image of Isa at the end of the novel. It appears that she has never been quite as bad a woman as Louis has thought her to be, but that he has misjudged her throughout the years. Blanche is the only business woman in the group of heroines studied. She is the only mother to demonstrate both love and wisdom in her care for her children. She seems practical in her business dealings and in her raising of the children. She is pious but very human. Her fiery temper often flares up, but she tries hard to control it. Blanche worries much about the children. She seems gentle, understanding and loving, yet is a firm disciplinarian and staunchly believes that the good of the entire family must come before the interests of one member of the group. Like Noémi and the older Thérèse, Blanche is a self-sacrificing and noble heroine. Mauriac's attitude towards Blanche seems to be sympathetic and somewhat filled with awe.

Before her conversion, Brigitte Pian is perhaps the most lacking in love of all the heroines which have been studied. Like Félicité and Blanche, she is described as having a nature de feu. She is filled with false pride until she begins to see her true evil nature. Like Félicité and Isa, Brigitte often spies on others. At first she puts on the airs of being a saint and so is obnoxious, but she seems quite genuinely repentant in the final scenes of the novel and thus becomes quite tolerable, if not likeable.

Paule has no rival among the heroines for slovenliness. She is the only one who is depicted as being unkempt. Her appearance shows that she cares nothing about herself. She, like Félicité, Maria, and Thérèse, is usually idle. Like Mathilde, she seems cynical and vindictive. Her temper seems quite violent, as does that of Félicité, Blanche and Brigitte. Like Maria and Thérèse, Paule is ashamed of her name, which is a symbol of scorn in the town of Cernès. Mauriac describes her, like Félicité, as a Gorgone. She feels persecuted by the Church and retaliates with hate. She is the only heroine who appears to have no redeemable traits and could, in that sense perhaps, be considered a monster. Yet, she, like the other heroines, seems very human. It appears likely that Mauriac dislikes her because she has given up and makes no effort to improve her lot.

Throughout the study, the heroines have been described according to their physical features. With only a few strokes

of his pen, Mauriac seems to sketch a powerful portrait of each heroine, though none are elaborately described. Though he may give a brief description of the heroine, the author then often seems to focus on one particular trait. For example, the reader may recall that in many scenes in Chapter II of the thesis Mauriac stresses Noémi's child-like qualities. He presents Mathilde Cazenave as the invisible foe even while she is alive by her ghost-like appearance. Mauriac presents Félicité as a dominant, but ageing heroine. Maria Cross, as Raymond sees her in the bar in Chapter II, and the latter Thérèse, in Chapter III, seem like women in their decline. Raymond particularly thinks of Maria's sensuality when he looks at her lips. Both Thérèse and Blanche seem utterly worn out, as does Isa in her latter years. Mauriac seems to particularly admire high foreheads, a sign, evidently, of intelligence. He often draws the reader's attention to the magnificent foreheads of Maria Cross, Thérèse and Brigitte. In Chapter III, the older Thérèse's main feature is her balding forehead, a sign of her decline and a reminder of her struggle to be self-sacrificing. The many scenes depicting Paule as a slovenly heroine in Chapter IV remind the reader that, unlike the other heroines, she has given up any effort to improve herself or her lot in life, even though she is still young. There could scarcely be a greater contrast between people than there appears to be between Paule and Mauriac's first heroine that was examined, Noémi.

In order to leave the reader one last final impression of each heroine, perhaps it would be helpful to mention what seems to be the most important or most vivid scenes in each novel. It also seems appropriate to include one or two quotes with each heroine that appear to show something significant about her.

The scenes that seem to best depict Noémi are the ones describing her desire to remain chaste, the scene in which she gives the kiss to the leper, Jean, and the one in which she embraces the burnt tree trunk that looks like Jean. Remember that Mauriac often compares her to a wilting flower. One of the most memorable lines from Le Baiser as quoted in Chapter II is, "On ne refuse pas le fils Péloueyre." It is that idea that dooms Noémi to a life of despair.

The most outstanding scenes involving Mathilde Cazenave are the ones that depict her intense suffering. Included in the most important scenes should be the one in which Félicité enters Mathilde's bedroom looking much like the monster in a horror movie. Mauriac's memorable epitaph of Mathilde as quoted in Chapter II reads, "Elle n'avait aimé personne. Elle n'avait pas été aimée."

Félicité seems best remembered in the scene depicting her rushing through the house, trying to repossess Fernand. Also vivid is the scene in which the heroine is described listening to her son's breathing at night. After failing to repossess Fernand, Félicité begins to believe in the power

of the dead. It is then that Mauriac pens the following unforgettable words as quoted in Chapter II, "Elle commençait de savoir que les absents ont toujours raison . . . ce sont les présents qui ont tort."

Maria is best remembered, perhaps, by her unread books, chain smoking, and her idle hours on the couch. The most impressionable scenes are those which take place in her dark drawing-room: the times Dr. Courrèges sees her and then the visits from Raymond. There are many outstanding lines in Le Désert, but the one quoted in Chapter II which best describes Maria as Raymond's seductress is, "Elle s'en approchait sur la pointe des pieds, en retenant son souffle." A later quote shows that Maria desperately longs for an experience that will free her from her boredom as is seen when Mauriac writes as quoted in Chapter II: ". . . un démon obscur lui soufflait: 'Tu meurs, mais tu ne t'ennuies plus.'" Perhaps the quote that best depicts the symbolic meaning of the name and which shows Raymond's excitement at having met Maria is the one which reads: "Maria Cross! Maria Cross! ce nom l'étouffait comme un caillot de sang. . . ."

The young Thérèse seems best remembered in the numerous scenes that show her in the dark, her cigarette butt glowing. Certainly the scenes depicting her sadism are memorable; however, those that seem even more significant are the ones that portray her as the victim of the family, which she visualizes as her cage. The older Thérèse is best remembered

by her balding forehead and her makeup. The best scene, and the only really important one, is the part of La Fin where the heroine pulls back her hair. Perhaps the best epitaph for Thérèse as quoted in Chapter III would be, "Elle était condamnée à la solitude éternelle."

The things that seem to stand out the most with Isa in Chapter III of the thesis are her obsession for white before she marries Louis, her coquettish airs, her complete subservience to her children, her spying on Louis, and finally the joy she brings her husband in the fireplace scene. If Louis had not discovered her letter assuring him of her love, certainly he would have always said of her the words he often repeated in the novel: "Tu étais mère, tu n'étais que mère."

Blanche seems constantly weary, suffering from her tumor, but forever busy. She is always loving towards the children for whom she feels a strong devoir. Her children mean everything to her. Though she is very pious, Blanche cannot bear the thought of dying and leaving them behind until Yves assures her that Love is eternal. Perhaps one of her most memorable conversations with her youngest son is the one in Chapter III of the thesis in which she expresses the worry of leaving her children and being without them. During the conversation she asks him the question that has plagued her for so long: ". . . comment imaginer un monde où vous ne seriez plus tout pour moi, mes chéris?" She is, of course, referring to all of her children when she uses the

words mes chéris. The question symbolizes Blanche's love and concern for her family and is also important because Yves' answer to it seems to satisfy her and give her the courage to face her approaching death courageously.

Some of the most memorable scenes in La Pharisienne in Chapter IV of the thesis are those which describe Brigitte weaving her fabric of perfection, those which show her dressed for bed, her hair braided and looking like a large snake about her neck, and the scene in which she visits the Puybarauds, where she flies into a rage because they have dared rent a piano with the money she has given them. Michèle perhaps best puts into words the feeling of those who have contact with Brigitte when she tells Louis: ". . . plutôt en enfer sans elle qu'au ciel avec elle."

Paule can best be remembered, perhaps, for her slovenly appearance, her hairy face, her utter indifference towards herself and her cruelty to Guillou. The scenes which seem to best depict Paule in Chapter IV of the thesis are those showing her beating Guillou, the one of her night orgy, and the one in which she goes to Bordas' the day following her orgy. Probably the words which best depict the heroine's attitude in the novel are the ones she mutters the night she withdraws to her room and feasts on the fantasies of her mind, aided by an abundant supply of alcohol. Having just terminated another battle with her mother-in-law, Paule sprawls out on the

floor of her bedroom muttering: "C'est bon de faire la haine, ça repose, ça détend."

From the study of the treatment of the heroines in representative works of Mauriac, it appears that he is a powerful painter of both men and women, but his heroines are particularly unforgettable. The author has so skillfully portrayed each heroine that she will undoubtedly long remain in the reader's mind, even when other characters have been forgotten. The reader will take with him the memory of both noble and wicked women, of women suffering the anguish of loneliness with no hope on their part of assuagement. He will long recall heroines who fight exhausting battles with their consciences, trying to rise above what seems to be a fatal destiny of evil. He will also recall a few who have apparently given in to that destiny. Though the reader may remember heroines who all come from one region and who share a common plight, he will remember each heroine as a distinct individual. Mauriac seems to share the burden of that evil with the heroines rather than to point an accusing finger at them. From the scenes studied, it appears that he becomes harsh in his treatment of the heroines only when they are indifferent and self-satisfied. Otherwise, he seems quite sympathetic towards them.

Mauriac's apparent admiration for the heroines who quite obviously refuse to conform to the role they most easily could play in life, who refuse to become indifferent in

their misfortunes, such as Noémi, Mathilde, Thérèse, Isa, Blanche, Brigitte and perhaps Maria Cross, seems to indicate that he would be in sympathy with the main objectives of the women's liberation movement. Throughout the study of his treatment of women, it appears that the author pities women because they, for one reason or another, have to play roles they do not wish to play, roles which give them no sense of fulfillment, but which rather trap them and make them feel useless and frustrated. If Thérèse is Mauriac's favorite heroine, which she seems to be according to the overwhelmingly sympathetic attitude he seems to have for her, then it seems likely that the author believes strongly that a woman should assert her independence, and perhaps not become a housewife if she feels that she is better suited for another purpose in life. Mauriac seems to feel pity for every heroine who is trying to find self-fulfillment and a meaningful existence, but who does not seem able to do so.

An examination of Mauriac's treatment of women in this study seems to indicate that the author has created nine distinct individuals who share in common the anguish of loneliness and the despair of a meaningless existence. Though many of them appear evil at first, Mauriac seems to portray only two of them as being consistently wicked; Félicité and Paule make little or no attempt to overcome their desires to destroy others. From this study it seems that Mauriac should be remembered primarily for his depiction of women who struggle

for a sense of self-fulfillment. His women who do not appear to be involved in such a conflict, Félicité and Paule, appear to be in the minority. The evidence found in this study seems to show that Mauriac is overwhelmingly sympathetic to women and that he is often disturbed by their lack of freedom.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Brée, Germaine and Margaret Guiton, The French Novel from Gide to Camus, New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962.
- Cormeau, Nelly, L'Art de François Mauriac, Paris, Bernard Grasset Editeur, 1951.
- Fillon, Amélie, François Mauriac, Paris, Société française d'éditions littéraires et techniques, 1936.
- Flower, John Ernest, Intention and Achievement, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1969.
- Hamilton, Edith, Mythology, New York, The New American Library, Inc., 1942.
- Jeanneau, Augustin and Louis Chaigne, Petit guide de la littérature d'aujourd'hui, Paris, Fernand Lanore, 1966.
- Jenkins, Cecil, Mauriac, New York, Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1965.
- Keeler, Sister Mary Jerome, Catholic Literary France from Verlaine to the Present Time, Freeport, New York, Librairies Press, 1969.
- Lanson, Gustave, Manuel illustré d'histoire de la littérature française, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1953.
- Mauriac, François, Commencements d'une vie, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1932.
- _____, Le Romancier et ses personnages, Paris, Buchet/Chastel, 1933.
- _____, Le Sagouin, Paris, Librairie Plon, 1954.
- _____, Oeuvres complètes, Volumes I-V, Paris, Bibliothèque Bernard Grasset chez Arthème Fayard, 1950-51.
- Maurois, André, Etudes littéraires II, New York, Editions de la maison française, Inc., 1944.

- Maurois, André, From Proust to Camus; Profiles of Modern French Writers, translated by Carl Morse and Renaud Bruce, Garden City, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966.
- Moore, Harry T., Twentieth-century French Literature to World War II, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1966.
- Pell, Elsie, François Mauriac: In Search of the Infinite, New York, Philosophical Library, 1947.
- Peyre, Henri, French Novelists of Today, New York, Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Robichon, Jacques, François Mauriac, Paris, Editions Universitaires, 1953.
- Smith, Maxwell A., François Mauriac, New York, Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970.
- Suhl, Benjamin, Jean-Paul Sartre: The Philosopher as a Literary Critic, New York, Columbia University Press, 1970.
- Turnell, Martin, The Art of French Fiction, Norfolk, Connecticut, James Laughlin, 1959.

Dictionaries

- "Sagouin," The New Cassell's French Dictionary, 2nd ed., New York, Funk and Wagnalls Company, Inc., 1965.