

**BILDUNG BLOCKS: PROBLEMATIC MASCULINITIES IN STENDHAL**

by

**Aaron R. Boalick**

Submitted to the Faculty of  
the University Honors College in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2007

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

This thesis was presented

by

Aaron R. Boalick

It was defended on

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007

and approved by

Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Professor, French

Nicholas Dobelbower, Assistant Professor, French, Macalester College

Giuseppina Mecchia, Assistant Professor, French and Italian

Thesis Director: Todd W. Reeser, Assistant Professor, French

Copyright © by Aaron R. Boalick

2007

## **BILDUNG BLOCKS: PROBLEMATIC MASCULINITIES IN STENDHAL**

Aaron R. Boalick

University of Pittsburgh, 2007

This study of Stendhal and the Bildungsroman extends theoretical work by John Smith that draws attention to the relationship between the idea of *bildung* as it is established by its critics and the construction of masculine identity in the male subject. Inflected by gender theory, my investigation does not attempt to contribute to genre studies, but rather to strengthen a theoretical approach to texts dealing with formation and coming-of-age narratives that exposes their rapport with gender socialization and normalization. I implement this approach to perform a reading of three of Stendhal's major novels that ultimately intends to identify their dismantling of the Bildungsroman through their problematization of idealized French heteronormative masculinity.

In order to accomplish this task, I first examine a classic work of scholarship on the Bildungsroman by Jerome Buckley, and I then move on to an analysis of more recent critical studies of *bildung*, all of which contribute to the establishment of a general idea of the outline of the genre while acknowledging its contradictions and instabilities. I examine parallels between the oscillating construction of the genre as a coherent type constantly under threat of collapsing into itself, and the tenuous formation of its protagonist as a *uomo universale*. Finally, I am concerned with questioning the Bildungsroman theorists' conflicted yet confirmed incorporation of three of Stendhal's novels into the genre, proving that, in fact, Stendhal rejects the idea of *bildung*. My new readings of these narratives incorporates important advances in gender theory by Judith Butler and Eve Sedgwick to demonstrate how Beyle refuses to construct idealized boy-

becomes-man masculine fictions, even while creating narratives that are extremely similar in content to what are considered typical Bildungsromans. Stendhal challenges idealized masculinity itself in his representations of the young male protagonists in three of his major novels. I describe these works as non-Bildungsromans that problematize the goals of *bildung*'s supportive critics and their aspirations for the category that they struggle to construct.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>PREFACE.....</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CAPTER I. MASCULINE PERFORMANCES IN <i>LE ROUGE ET LE NOIR</i> .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CHAPTER II. <i>LUCIEN LEUWEN</i> AND THE REJECTION OF MASCULINE SEXUAL POLITICS .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>CHAPTER III. THE NON-BILDUNG OF FABRICE DEL DONGO .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>78</b>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this thesis would have been as impossible as “becoming a man” were it not for a number of dedicated individuals. First, I owe many thanks to Dr. Giuseppina Mecchia for introducing me to the fascinating universe of Stendhal in a graduate seminar on “Modernity and its Discontents” and for encouraging me to read and pursue a study of problematic masculinities in the novels that make up the foundation of this investigation. I would also like to extend my thanks and appreciation to my thesis committee: to my guest examiner Dr. Nicholas Dobelbower from Macalester College for taking interest in my research, and to Professor Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski for being an inspiring teacher and encouraging my interests in gender studies. It would have been much more difficult to pursue this project without the support of a Brackenridge Fellowship from the University of Pittsburgh’s Honors College during the summer of 2006 and Dean “Doc” Stewart’s strong commitment to undergraduate research. I would like to thank my Brackenridge cohorts for their questions during a presentation I gave on problematic masculinities in Stendhal in June that helped me to think about the topic in new ways. Dr. Todd Reeser’s mentorship and advising made writing this thesis possible. I am grateful to him for helping his students realize that it is ok to problematize masculinities in the first place through his teaching and research, and for providing a stimulating context in which I began to develop my own interest in gender studies in his seminar entitled “Masculinities in Theory and in

Practice.” Finally, I extend my gratitude and my love to my friends and family for their continuous support.



## PREFACE

*Quelle vue magnifique ! c'est donc ici que la Transfiguration de Raphaël a été admirée pendant deux siècles et demi. Quelle différence avec la triste galerie de marbre gris où elle est enterrée aujourd'hui au fond du Vatican ! Ainsi pendant deux cent cinquante ans !...Ah! Dans trois mois j'aurai cinquante ans, est-il bien possible! 1783, 93, 1803, je suis tout le compte sur mes doigts...et 1833 cinquante. Est-il bien possible ! cinquante ! Je vais avoir la cinquantaine et je chantais l'air de Grétry :*

*Quand on a la cinquantaine*

*Cette découverte imprévue ne m'irrita point, je venais de songer à Annibal et aux Romains. De plus grands que moi sont bien morts !...Après tout, me dis-je, je n'ai pas mal occupé ma vie, occupé ! Ah ! c'est-à-dire que le hasard ne m'a pas donné trop de malheurs, car en vérité ai-je dirigé le moins du monde ma vie ?[...]*

*Je me suis assis sur les marches de San Pietro et là j'ai rêvé une heure ou deux à cette idée. Je vais avoir cinquante ans, il serait bien temps de me connaître. Qu'ai-je été, que suis-je, en vérité je serais bien embarrassé de le dire.*

*Je passe pour un homme de beaucoup d'es[prit] et fort insensible, roué même, et je vois que j'ai été constamment occupé par des amours malheureuses. J'ai aimé éperdument Madame Kubly, Mlle de Griesheim, Mme. de Dipholtz, Métilde, et je ne les ai point eues, et plusieurs de ces amours ont duré trois ou quatre ans. [...]*

*Qu'ai-je donc été? Je ne le saurais. A quel ami, quelque éclairé qu'il soit, puis-je le demander ? M. di Fior[i] lui-même ne pourrait me donner d'avis. A quel ami ai-je jamais dit un mot de mes chagrins d'amour ?*

*Et ce qu'il y a de singulier et de bien malheureux, me disais-je ce matin, c'est que mes victoires (comme je les appelais alors, la tête remplie de choses militaires) ne m'ont pas fait un plaisir qui fût la moitié seulement du profond malheur que me causèrent mes défaites. [...]*

*Ai-je été un homme d'esprit ? Ai-je eu du talent pour quelque chose ? M. Daru disait que j'étais ignorant comme une carpe, oui mais c'est Besan[çon] qui m'a rapporté cela et la gaieté de mon caractère rendait fort jalouse la morosité de cet ancien secrétaire-général de Besan[çon]. Mais ai-je eu le caractère gai ? [...]*

*Le soir en rentrant assez ennuyé de la soirée de l'ambassadeur je me suis dit : je devrais écrire ma vie, je saurai peut-être enfin, quand cela sera fini dans deux ou trois ans, ce que j'ai été, gai ou triste, homme d'esprit ou sot, homme de courage ou peureux, et enfin au total heureux ou malheureux, je pourrai faire lire ce manuscrit à di Fiori.*

(What a magnificent view ! So it was here that Raphael's *Transfiguration* was admired during two and a half centuries. What a difference with the sad gallery of grey marble where it is buried today in the back of the Vatican! It was there for two hundred and fifty years!...Ah ! In three months I will be fifty years old, is that really possible! 1783, 93, 1803, I trace the whole count on my fingers...and 1833 fifty. Is that really possible! fifty ! I am going to be fifty and I sung the air of Grétrey :

When one is fifty

This unexpected discovery did not irritate me at all, I had just dreamed about Hannibal and the Romans. Greater than I are already long dead!...After all, I told myself, I have not poorly occupied my life, occupied! Ah! That means that chance has not given me too many misfortunes, because, truthfully, have I directed my life in the least way? [...]

I sat down on the steps of Saint Peter's and there I dreamed about this idea for an hour or two. I am going to be fifty, it is really time to know myself. What have I been, who am I, truthfully I would be very embarrassed to say it.

I pass for a man of much wit and very insensitive, battered even, and I see that I have constantly been occupied by misfortunate loves. I passionately loved Madame Kubly, Mlle de Griesheim, Mme de Dipholtz, Métilde, and I did not have them, and many of these loves lasted three or four years. [...]

What have I been then? I would not know. Which friend, as illuminated as he be, could I ask? M. di Fior[i] himself could not give me advice. To which friend have I ever said a word to about my amorous sorrows?

And that which is peculiar and very unfortunate, I told myself this morning, is that my victories (like I called them then, the head filled with military things) did not grant me a pleasure that was even half of that of the deep sorrow that my defeats caused me. [...]

Have I been a witty man ? Have I been talented at anything? M. Daru used to tell me that I was ignorant like a carp, yes but it is Besan[çon] that gave me that and my character's gaiety made the morosity of this former secretary general of Besan[çon] jealous. But have I had a gay character? [...]

That night in returning rather bored from the ambassador's party I told myself: I should write my life, I will know then maybe, finally, when it is over in two or three years, what I have been, happy or said, a witty man or an idiot, a courageous man or frightful, and finally in sum happy or unhappy, I will be able to make di Fiori read this manuscript.)<sup>1</sup>

-Henry Brulard, *Vie de Henry Brulard*

Marie-Henri Beyle, known as Stendhal, a prolific writer from early nineteenth century France, wrote the preceding excerpt from his autobiography *Vie de Henry Brulard (The Life of Henry Brulard)* in 1835 at the age of fifty two, seven years before his death. The opening pages of his work introduce a narrator to the reader, who is commonly assumed to be the author, reflecting on his life as he prepares to turn fifty years old. Brulard is full of doubts and uncertainties as to whether or not he did well in life, and whether he was of any worth as a lover or of any interest as a writer. This portrait of fragility and uncertainty does not seem appropriate of Stendhal, a diplomat and a man who would go on to become an esteemed member of the French literary canon, but he writes his doubts and hesitations, nonetheless, and talks about his reservations in the first person. A close reading of such ruminations, which are common to many of Stendhal's male protagonists, highlights problematic relationships between Brulard and idealized heteronormative masculinity by scrutinizing the subject's position as a "spirited man," and underlining his failed amorous conquests. By heteronormative I mean any discourse or ideology that serves to normalize dichotomous notions of sex, gender, or sexuality. A heteronormative

---

<sup>1</sup> Translations of Stendhal's work throughout the entire thesis are my own.

discourse, then, reinforces the idea that there are male sexed bodies that are distinct from female sexed bodies, masculine forms of gender expression that are opposed to feminine forms of gender expression, and “hetero” – sexual acts that differ from “homo” – sexual acts.

In a similar way that reading Stendhal problematizes masculinities, an analysis of select recent criticism of the Bildungsroman, most frequently referred to as the “coming-of-age novel” or the “novel of education” in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, reveals seemingly pathological tensions and hesitations in the theorization of the genre from within the body of distinctively male scholarship that appropriates it as its object of study. This genre trouble becomes apparent in disagreements between theorists concerning the existence of the type, its definition, the establishment of a corpus or canon of Bildungsroman, the question of whether or not to include the development of female subjectivities in the tradition of the form, and the debate over whether one should criticize or celebrate its potential political utility.

My study of the Bildungsroman will not attempt to participate in these debates or construct a stable definition of the genre, but rather I will extend the work of pioneer John H. Smith of making visible the relationship between the idea of *bildung* as it is established by its critics and what Smith refers to as “the cultivation of gender” (206), or what I shall call for my purposes the construction of masculinity in the male subject. Inflected by gender theory, my study will not attempt to contribute to genre studies, but rather to strengthen a theoretical approach to texts dealing with formation and coming-of-age narratives that exposes their rapport with gender socialization and normalization. I will implement this approach to perform a new reading of three of Stendhal’s major novels that ultimately intends to identify their dismantling of the “phantom genre” (Redfield) through their problematization of idealized French heteronormative masculinity.

In order to accomplish this task, I will first examine a classic work of scholarship on the Bildungsroman, and I will then move on to an analysis of more recent critical studies, all of which contribute to the establishment of a general idea of the outline of the genre while acknowledging its contradictions and instabilities. In analyzing the work of Jerome Buckley and Thomas Jeffers, I will be most interested in examining the ways they construct a definition for the genre and what their texts implicitly say about their visions of masculine subjectivities. I will then expand on the work of Marc Redfield, who examines the genre as ideology, and John Smith, who was the first to relate *bildung* to gender, by theorizing the relationship between the formative process of *bildung* that the genre intends to both represent and achieve and the constitution of the *habitus* that perpetually integrates and maintains male subjects within heteronormative masculinity. I will examine parallels between the oscillating construction of the genre as a coherent type constantly under threat of collapsing into itself, the tenuous formation of its protagonist as a *uomo universale*, and a theoretical approach to the study of masculinity via Pierre Bourdieu. This revision of Smith will amplify his study in light of significant contributions to gender studies by Judith Butler and Eve Sedgwick, which are lacking from his primarily psychoanalytical approach to the problem of *Bildung* that was written before Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990).

Finally, I will be concerned with questioning the Bildungsroman theorists' conflicted yet confirmed incorporation of three of Stendhal's novels into the genre, proving that, in fact, Stendhal rejects the idea of *bildung*. Beyle refuses to construct idealized boy-becomes-man masculine fictions, even while creating narratives that are extremely similar in content to what are called typical Bildungsromans, and in doing this he challenges idealized masculinity itself in his representations of the young male protagonists in three of his major novels. I will describe

these works, in fact, as non-Bildungsromans that problematize the goals of *bildung*'s supportive critics and their aspirations for the category that they struggle to construct.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Genre Trouble: The Bildungsroman and the Perpetual Construction of Masculinity**

Jerome Buckley in *Season of Youth* (1974) determines typical characteristics of the Bildungsroman, as he conceives it, based on plot similarities drawn from the examples of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, *Le Rouge et le Noir* (*The Red and the Black*), *Great Expectations*, *The Way of All Flesh*, *Sons and Lovers*, "and many others" (18). According to Buckley, a typical generic narrative will be that of a young "child of some sensibility" who grows up in a suffocating provincial town until one day, frustrated by his surroundings, he moves to the big city:

There his real 'education' begins [...] The latter involves at least two love affairs or sexual encounters, one debasing, one exalting, and demands that in this respect and others the hero reappraise his values. By the time he has decided, after painful soul-searching, the sort of accommodation to the modern world he can honestly make, he has left his adolescence behind and entered upon his maturity. His initiation *complete*, he may then visit his old home, to demonstrate by his presence the degree of his success or the wisdom of his choice. (17-18, my emphasis)

For Buckley, the genre can be identified by a young man's vertical ascent from boyhood to manhood, a progressive move from a small town to a large city that parallels a move from one stage of life to another via an initiatory experience. Buckley's subject is explicitly a male and, based on his examples, one concludes he must be a white western European male. Buckley



discusses the male subject in universal terms, and he does not recognize the ideological nature of his categorization of his subject as a man or a boy and the way that this action contributes to a reinforcement of gender. The type of integration into adulthood he then describes has the same ends as a mythical-ritual initiation ceremony into manhood, but its resemblance to what some would label primitive and tribal coming-of-age structures is masked by the progressive process-oriented design of the so-called “transition” that veils its unoriginal task-based nature. The important aspects of Buckley’s definition of the genre are that the subject be a male and that his initiation be conceived of as “complete” at the end of the narrative. Protagonist John X is married and integrated at the end of the tale. What is not overtly stated in his work, however, is that the male subject is automatically assumed to be heterosexual in order to be successful, and he must learn how to perform in certain masculine spheres.

The concise and straightforward definition of the Bildungsroman that *Season of Youth* proposes is most remarkably problematized and contradicted by Marc Redfield’s *Phantom Formations: Aesthetic Ideology and the Bildungsroman* (1996). Redfield asserts that the genre itself does not properly exist, but “haunts literary criticism” as a specter that exemplifies “the ideological construction of literature by criticism” (vii). This recognition of *Bildung* as an ideological structure that calls for dissection rather than a more accurate definition most strongly serves Redfield’s critique of the genre. He discusses the very problem of constructing a definition of the type:

The idea of this genre persistently drives it in the direction of universality, but since its particularity is constantly in danger of disappearing, a ‘disturbing dialectic of everything and nothing,’ as Amrine puts it (‘Rethinking,’ 124) comes to afflict the notion of the *Bildungsroman* as it vacillates between signifying in vague fashion a narrative in which a

protagonist matures (such that 'precious few novels would *not* qualify as 'Bildungsromane' '[122]) and signifying in more rigorous fashion an aesthetic synthesis that threatens to disappear into sheer illusion. (Redfield 43)

Redfield is acknowledging that Buckley's definition, and others that attempt to create a distinctive and stable meaning for the Bildungsroman out of a dichotomy of being and not being, are too narrow to support even their own logic, while broader and more inclusive terms for the genre's significance threaten to make its application universal and, consequently, irrelevant for genre studies. Redfield argues, most accurately I believe, that this dialectic tension in the genre's formation reflects the narratives of the exemplars of the genre themselves as they attempt to construct a universal story for men through the experience of one specific protagonist. *Phantom Formations* recognizes the Bildungsroman as an ideological structure created to describe texts, but it is more concerned with questions and problems of aesthetic theory meant to deconstruct the genre itself than with the significance that such an ideological structure might have for gender studies. Redfield's critical approach to the genre has not, however, successfully ended the debate over its definition or silenced those critics who perform its ideological construction and reinforcement.

Thomas Jeffer's recent *Apprenticeships: The Bildungsroman from Goethe to Santayana* (2005) reads like a celebration of the Bildungsroman and takes what might be called a middle-of-the-road approach between the reduction of the genre to a phantom-like ideological structure by Redfield and the strict and exclusive, albeit argumentatively unstable, definition by Buckley. Jeffers warns his readers that his definition will be more fluid than others because he recognizes that stringent requirements of inclusion impose frustrating limitations on the type (49). He uses Buckley's criteria as a basis for his argument with some significant revisions, saying, "This

synopsis-[Buckley's, cited pg. 1]-is adequate as far as it goes, but I would supplement it with a list of initiatory tests that every inwardly developing *Bildungsheld* must at least *try* to pass, and that constitute the rite-of-passage peripeties of Buckley's archetypal plot" (52, my emphasis). The former requirement of a demonstrated achieved or complete initiation is done away with in Jeffer's analysis to accommodate some of the novels he wishes to analyze as Bildungsromans in which the protagonists *attempt* to integrate and assimilate themselves into "adulthood" but are not always successful on all fronts.

Jeffers, like Buckley, is primarily interested in talking about boys becoming men and he is not interested in exploring specifically female Bildungsromans for his study, declaring "in any event, youthful white males have come to seem like the segment of our society that one needs to worry about, and precisely because they constitute a large segment that-often fatherless, guilt-heaped, and feeling undervalued-tests lower, goes to college less often, and gets into legal trouble more than white females do" (7). This explicit declaration of focus could be considered an implicit argument for female exclusion from his construction and definition of the "real" genre, and a demonstration of how Jeffers wishes to impose a certain interpretation on a variety of modern texts, via genre studies, to employ them for political purposes today. It has the appearance of an anxious plea addressed to both youthful white males and those who know them to participate in the *bildung* process he sets out to describe by reading and appropriating the "lessons" of the novels of his text. This implicit plea is made in the prologue of his study while an explicit one is made to the potential writer of the next great Bildungsroman in his conclusion. In closing his book, he writes:

I like to imagine our next great *Bildungsroman* recognizing the contributions that all kinds of workers [...] make to the liberal democratic society that, returning to my first

point above, has all along created the conditions in which such workers can even *think* about cultivating a self and pursuing their ideas of happiness. Such a *Bildungsroman* [...] would be frankly patriotic, a celebration of a political and social system that promotes the well being of the individuated many against the individuated (and isolated) few. What it would be patriotically committed to is a particular country, one of the Western democracies, say, but beyond that to the comity of democracies that in principle every country might one day belong to. (191)

At the end of his text Jeffers suggests in imperial fashion that not only could young men benefit from *Bildung*, but Non-Western countries might be able to as well by adapting Western norms.

Indeed, Jeffers is all too aware of how a novel's example of *bildung* can further a reader's own *bildung* and yet, unlike Redfield, he is uncritical of this ideological function of the genre. Before discussing some of the specific problems that his approach presents for gender studies, I should clarify more exactly what the idea of *bildung* is and how it is generally accepted and conceived of by the three aforementioned theorists. Both their recent and earlier discussions of *bildung* fail to align it with the normalization and engendering of hetero-masculinities. The etymology of the word *bildung* reveals that it is intrinsically linked to both "representation," or "portrait" *bild*, and "formation" *bildung*. Redfield explains, "The rise of the word Bildung calls rather on the ancient mystical tradition, according to which man carries in his soul the image [Bild] of God after whom he is fashioned and must cultivate in himself" (47). Jeffers, like Buckley, grants this process the power of a positive association with a vertical movement upward, symbolizing man's progressing towards a more-divine state (49). In his discussion of *bildung* he mentions the ancient mystical tradition as well, but in modernized terms. He claims that the process is now achieved between man and literature and, before literature existed, was

realized “from the psychophysical experience of human beings themselves [...] from the pre- or scarcely linguistic, largely physical, homo-erectian encounter with the world” (54). In other words, not only is Jeffers aware of *bildung*'s mimetic structure, but he is claiming that somewhere along the line the conventions and narratives it conveys were originally born out of a divine reality, rather than being mere constructions that have been normalized by the mimetic process. He encourages people to engage in such a process of socialization because he believes it reflects some essential truth, even though it is currently reflecting literature itself. Redfield alerts us to the relationship between reading and the genre of the *Bildungsroman*:

Reading is a process of *Bildung* inscribed in the text itself as the text's reflection on its own human essence; consequently, *Bildungsromane* are the most 'realist' as well as the most 'self-conscious' of novels [...] They are the most pedagogically efficient of novels, since they thematize and enact the very motion of aesthetic education.” (55)

The result is that *bildung* has the dangerous effect of being conceived of as a reflective teacher of reality for those like Jeffers who see it as representing a “natural program” or “design.”

Remarkably, while Jeffers and Buckley's texts are obsessed with relating the *Bildungsroman* to Schiller's notion of the acculturation of the *uomo universale*, or the universal man, and overflow with discussions of masculine subjectivity, only Redfield's study, informed by the work of Judith Butler, acknowledges that the idea of *bildung* is related to heteronormative masculinity by recognizing that it is related to gendered subjectivity. Redfield is aware that *bildung* contributes to the illusion of a natural or essential masculine gender core (and, conversely, how it reveals itself as one of the mechanisms of the construction of gender itself when it is understood as a genre) while the other theorists praise its potential pedagogic utility (i.e. the ways in which it maintains that illusion). It should be clear now that Jeffers and Buckley

effectively avoid the problem of *Bildung*'s constructing and reinforcing heteronormative masculinity in their treatment of the topic by granting it a universal character that calls for the participation of all men and nations.

### ***Bildung* and the Construction of Masculinity**

In his article "Cultivating Gender: Sexual Difference, *Bildung*, and the Bildungsroman," (1987) John H. Smith first recognized *Bildung* as an ideological process that is inextricably linked to the construction of a "gendered 'identity'" that I shall refer to as heteronormative masculinity (216). He demonstrates this relationship by using Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to deconstruct the philosophical concept of *Bildung* and its political utility. Outlining the major thesis of his study, he says:

I would argue that *Bildung*, and its narrativization in the *Bildungsroman* is not an 'organic' but a social phenomenon that leads to the construction of male identity in our sex-gender system by granting men access to self-representation in the patriarchal Symbolic order. As such *Bildung* is a central form of the institutional cultivation of gender roles. (216)

Smith is recognizing the role that the representation of a masculinity plays in its own construction and self-perpetuation, allowing an individual to "attain 'validity and reality'" (211) in what is really just a reflection of other masculine performances. In doing so, he is making visible the ways in which *Bildung*, or the construction of the *uomo\_universale* as a mimetic process, would be more appropriately described as a horizontal mechanism whose only end is its own reproduction and self-perpetuation, rather than a vertical structure that pretends to bring man nearer to some metaphysically ideal masculinity. Redfield confirms the validity of this conceptual model for this phenomenon:

Bildung is not achieved in the manner of a technical construction but grows out of the inner process of formation and cultivation, and therefore remains in a constant state of further continued Bildung. It is not accidental that in this the word Bildung resembles the Greek physis. Like nature, Bildung has no goals outside itself. (47)

*Bildung* is a self-sustaining structure, one that propagates certain constructs of masculinity, but remains in a constant state of process and tension while doing so.

Pierre Bourdieu also theorizes the importance of *bildung* in *La domination masculine* (*Masculine Domination*) [1998] in a similar way during his discussion of the *habitus*. According to Bourdieu, “The formative process, *Bildung*, in the full sense, which brings about this social construction of the body only very partially takes the form of explicit and express pedagogic action” (24). Later he explains that the *habitus* differentiates what he conceives of as a stable sexed male body from a stable sexed female body through mimetic suggestion and symbolic construction of the biological body (55). For Bourdieu, *Bildung* itself represents one of the ways that the *habitus* is assimilated and inscribed onto bodies. Todd Reeser and Lewis Seifert theorize the significance of Bourdieu’s model of the *habitus* as an approach to the study of masculinity:

On balance, then, DM [*Masculine Domination*] seems to posit that masculinity is both sex and gender, and is linked to both a stable male body and a social construction in the process of being naturalized (9). The significance of this oscillation should not be overlooked. [...] The Masculine *habitus* could be understood as an existing form of domination that, in needing to propagate its hegemony, is at the same time unstable. (91)

This understanding of masculinity and the *habitus* corresponds with the problem of being and becoming (95), which is central both to the plot in which the protagonist of the *Bildungsroman* is entangled and to criticism’s construction of the genre itself that must simultaneously expand and

narrow its scope as a category so that it may subsist. This model suggests that the perceived pathologies and crises of the young heroes, like the disagreements and perceived instability constituting the body of criticism that defines the study of the genre, actually serve to strengthen the hegemonic grip of their specificities, universalizing them to create a shared experience for as many males or a generic label for as many narratives as possible.

While the theories of Smith and Bourdieu, informed by Reeser and Seifert's reading of Bourdieu, demonstrate how *Bildung* can be conceived of as a tool that serves the process of normalization of masculinity and, consequently, how the Bildungsroman is a narrative that performs this ideological task, they do not account for all of its social ramifications. Two other important implications of the structural processes of *Bildung* are its normalizations of binary sexed conceptualizations of the body and heteronormative sexuality.

In her seminal work, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler famously theorizes that gender is performative in nature:

acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. [...] That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality." (173)

Bourdieu recognizes the constructed nature of what Butler calls gender, but he associates it with a stable sexed-body. Butler proposes that sex, rather, is also a gendered category, calling the body a "politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts" (11). This means that aside from participating in the construction of a gendered identity, *Bildung* could also participate in the sexing of bodies, as the acts that a young *Bildungsheld* performs and perpetuates through the



representation of his own performances serve to differentiate members of a constructed male sex from a constructed female sex within the masculine *Bildungsroman* tradition and theory.

Butler also argues that the illusion of an interior gender core must be preserved discursively for the maintenance of sexual interactions within reproductive heterosexuality (173). *Bildung* is a clear discursive example of how the construction of the appearance of a gendered core serves to maintain heterosexuality's normalized position. This becomes apparent in both the heterosexual criteria for the *Bildungsroman* genre (e.g. Buckley's definition for the genre mandates "at least two love affairs or sexual encounters" [3]), and the homosocial<sup>2</sup> nature of the *Bildung* process itself. Buckley and Jeffers do not need to clarify that the "sexual education" of a young male protagonist shall be heterosexual in nature because this is assumed to be automatically and universally understood. This lack of specification and acknowledgement is exposed as paradoxical when one considers that the *Bildung* process itself is achieved through male identification with and desire for other males that is lived out through an incorporative mimesis through which the protagonist assumes the identities of his masculine models in his attempt to act as they do.

Redfield confirms this aspect of the process of engendering masculinity in his discussion of aesthetic education when he states:

An identity must be formed through identification with an example: a model that on the one hand is the true identity of the identity-to-be-formed, but on the other hand is separated from the ephebe by the temporality or process of *Bildung* itself. (49)

He does not theorize the significance of the fact that this male-identifying-with-male model is truly a male-desiring-male model even as he acknowledges the role of identification with a

---

<sup>2</sup> See Page 11 for a discussion of Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* for a definition of homosociality.

model in the process of identity formation itself, which is a part of the construction of masculinity. The wish to become the model is precisely what makes it the object of one's desire. In this way, the process of *bildung* aligns itself with and forms an integral part of the model of homosociality formulated by Eve Sedgwick in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985), insofar as the young *Bildungsheld* is expected to identify with a male model and live out that identification through a mediatory sexual experience with a female. Sedgwick theorizes:

Heidi Hartmann's definition of patriarchy in terms of 'relationships between men' (see Introduction i), in making the power relationships between men and women appear to be dependent on the power relationships between men and men, suggests that that large-scale social structures are congruent with the male-male-female erotic triangles described most forcefully by Girard and articulated most thoughtfully by others. (25)

As a process that is experienced both by the protagonist *Bildungsheld* and a reader, *bildung* can be thought of as one of those triangular power relationships with two men forming the base of the triangle and a female that represents symbolic property positioned at its apex. The men in the model desire one another but this desire must be masked by rivalry, competition, or homophobia so that the erotic admiration they have for one another cannot be qualified as sexual. This mask maintains the discursive illusion of a normalized heterosexuality. The base of this *specific* triangle is made up of a protagonist and his masculine hero or an author suggesting a certain masculine model to a reader who identifies with this ideal, and the power dynamics between all of these men mandate a certain type of sexual act with a female. Public acknowledgment of participating in a sexual act with a female serves as symbolic capital for

men: it both reifies their virility in the eyes of other men and serves to stabilize the appearance of a heteronormative sexuality.

Thomas Jeffers lauds this normalizing function without recognizing how his awareness of it could destabilize hegemonic notions of heterosexual normalcy. In elaborating, once again, his definition of the genre of the *Bildungsroman*, he writes, “To some degree, for example, it is a convention of the *Bildungsroman* to have a young man go through several love affairs, in order to make him aware of what kinds of female presence satisfy what kinds of male needs” (53). This uncritical recognition of the genre’s sexual pedagogic function is articulated in a way that strips women of agency in their sexual interactions with men since their role, as Jeffers describes it, is to “satisfy male needs.” Such a reduction of feminine characters in narratives can be conceived as the result of a masculine fantasy of domination projected on texts through which masculine readers can experience sexual pleasure vicariously through the sexual performances and acts of the male protagonists of *Bildungsromane*. Jeffers provides an example of *bildung*’s homosocial function, and he offers a complicit strengthening of this homosocial function by discussing it without recognizing it or giving it a name that articulates what it does.

The theoretical work of Judith Butler and Eve Sedgwick provides a significant revision to much criticism relating the *Bildungsroman* as an ideological structure to masculinity and the process of *bildung* to the construction of masculinities. They inform an approach to the genre as an ideological perpetuation of masculine ideals by showing the roles it plays in maintaining binary sexed notions of the body and reinforcing heteronormative sexuality which adheres to a strict system of labeling that sharply delineates heterosexual desire from homosexual desire. This broader understanding of the genre will be important for my study and analysis of three of

Stendhal's novels closely associated with the Bildungsroman that I believe collectively problematize the genre itself through their refusal to represent successful *bildung* processes.

### **Stendhal and the non-Bildungsroman**

The discussion of Stendhal in criticism of the Bildungsroman is apprehensive and individual theorists sometimes contradict even their own inclusion of *Le Rouge et le Noir* and other Stendhalian novels in the canon of Bildungsromane they construct. And, yet, Jerome Buckley and Thomas Jeffers are compelled to use at least the story of Julien Sorel in their texts as an exemplar of the *bildung* process, but they do so without making any direct mention of his decapitation at the end of the novel. I chose to study Thomas Jeffers and Gregory Castle for this investigation because of their recent publications and the discussion of Stendhal in their texts. Their works refer back to Jerome Buckley for a classical definition of the genre, and to Marc Redfield for his destabilization of the genre through his revealing it as an ideology.

Jerome Buckley talks about how Julien fits his provincial boy –ascending-to-city-life model without concisely stating how he fails to integrate into French society when he is sentenced to death by a jury of upper-class men at the end of the novel. Only gently alluding to the protagonist's execution, he writes:

On his last day, permitted to walk briefly in the bright sun, he is able to tell himself, 'Well, then, everything's going to be all right; I have no lack of courage.' If he has learned nothing else in his sad, brief, ambitious career, he has at least discovered the importance of self assertion, indeed self-creation, through defiant action and courageous gesture." (16-17)

If Buckley fully acknowledged the beheading, he might as well be saying "This is a sad situation, but Julien's maturation is allowing him to take it like a man." Buckley focuses on Julien's

bravery in the face of death, but he does not acknowledge how the young protagonist's refusal to comply with the rules governing his actions as a lower-class male leads to his imprisonment and execution in the first place. This focus also overshadows the pervading sense of resignation and submission that Julien exudes in the novel's last pages and the significance of his desire to escape from the demands of society (the very demands that require the process of *Bildung*) should not be underestimated.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, Buckley's failure to suggest the possibility that *Bildung* has been unsuccessful in Julien's case serves to assert the universality of the Bildungsroman genre insofar as he contributes to its construction as a genre that can successfully include the depiction of even "failed" men. In a similar fashion, Jeffers classifies *Le Rouge et le Noir* as a "novel of ordeal" (2) in his text and, later, as a Bildungsroman (52), without acknowledging or considering the ways in which the protagonist's death problematizes this classification. Furthermore, Julien's fate is not particularly unique or different from other Stendhalian protagonists. Octave of *Armance* commits suicide because of an inability to "perform," and young Fabrice dies of heartbreak in seclusion after his love Clélia passes away (509). Jeffer's synopsis of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (12) reveals many structural parallels between this archetypal work of the Bildungsroman and Stendhal's *Lucien Leuwen*, but Stendhal was never able or willing to finish the novel, sending Lucien on a diplomatic mission outside of France after his father's death without ever showing him successfully integrating himself into society as a man through a marriage like Wilhelm did.

---

<sup>3</sup> See pages 36-38 for a discussion of Julien's time in prison and his execution.

Gregory Castle discusses the way in which the tradition of the Bildungsroman incorporates and benefits from its inclusion of cases of “failed *Bildung*” in his work *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (2006). Castle theorizes on unachieved bildung:

If the process failed, as it often did in the French Bildungsroman, it did not mean that society had somehow failed in its duty nor that dialectics had failed to signify the ideal relations of the individual to the social totality. Rather, such failures remind the hero (and the reader) that social maturity involves knowing one’s limits and accepting one’s place in the order of things. (8-9)

He uses the failures of the “French Bildungsroman” to establish this argument that later serves as the basis for his examination of what he calls the “modernist Bildungsroman” of the Anglo-Saxon tradition, and he examines the way that the “failures” they represent brought about a renaissance of the genre in the twentieth century. I agree with Castle’s assertion that these “French failures,” along with the modernist texts that are the main focus of his study, have been appropriated and used for the reinforcement of the genre, and that they have been conceived of as not disrupting the “ideal relations of the individual to the social totality.” But this appropriation has been executed by critics and theorists who refuse to recognize or problematize the gendered nature of the genre and acknowledge its role in the construction of masculinity. It is not enough to say that these characters represent digressions from the normative in their failure to become men or learn to become men. Their narratives work against the very idea of having to “become” or perform certain masculine acts in order to survive, and so they provide discursive examples of non-bildung.

At the very least, the three novels by Stendhal that are my object of study, *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830), *Lucien Leuwen* (1836), and *La Chartreuse de Parme* (*The Charterhouse of Parma*)

[1839], may be conceived of as non-Bildungsromans that problematize the genre that they are often associated with because of their structure and content. The “failures” of these heroes, who all die tragically or whose stories remain unwritten after they “fail to integrate,” cannot remind them “that social maturity involves knowing one’s limits and accepting one’s place in the order of things,” as Castle says, precisely because they no longer exist to be reminded. Readers too, I believe, may pity or admire these characters rather than chastise them for being immature and not recognizing their place in the social order. Regardless, it seems that there is more at play in the narratives of these young protagonists than their individual failures at integrating into society or what the critics conceive of as their inability to complete a linear journey from boyhood to manhood. Stendhal portrays them as resisting pressures to perform normative masculinity from the beginning to the end of their histories, just as he shows how those men who are already “matured” and “initiated” in his novels show fissures or cracks in their own performances of masculinity as well.

Perhaps it is this resistance to and disdain of performance that motivates what Gabrielle Pascal calls:

la tentation permanente du héros stendhalien, qui consiste à vouloir se supprimer lui-même dans un mouvement de violence suicidaire et quasi irrésistible. La désertion, la démission, le rejet de son identité apparaissent comme des suicides symboliques.

(the permanent temptation of the Stendhalian hero, which consists of his wanting to erase himself in a movement of suicidal and almost irresistible violence. Desertion, demission, and the rejection of his identity look like symbolic suicides.) [Pascal 177]

I would revise Pascal’s observation to say that the Stendhalian protagonists reject the identity (the masculinity) that the *bildung* process imposes on them. Their unwillingness to perform,

then, is an intratextual current in the three novels of my study, culminating in actual deaths or unfinished stories for each of the protagonists, and this means *genre trouble* for the Bildungsroman. The problematization of masculinities in Stendhal's novels will exonerate his narratives from the category of the Bildungsroman they have been placed in, because gender trouble will demonstrate how they propose a critique of the ideological apparatus of the genre itself.

The following study of problematic masculinities in the work of Stendhal will employ a gender studies theoretical approach to the representations of Julien Sorel, Lucien Leuwen, and Fabrice del Dongo to show how Stendhal's portrayal of these young male protagonists destabilizes normative notions of heterosexual masculinity and coming-of-age fictions. The chapters are ordered chronologically following the order in which Beyle wrote the novels in order to develop a sense of how Stendhal's treatment of masculinities may have evolved over the course of a decade. While all of the works share common threads concerning the problems careers, amorous relationships, and masculine models pose for each of the young non-heroes, each work has been selected for the way it highlights a specific avenue to the attempted *bildung* of a normative masculinity. In *Le Rouge et le Noir* Julien Sorel attempts to mimic Napoleon and consciously performs different masculine roles in his failed quest to satisfy his ambition. Lucien Leuwen must decide whether to accept or reject the masculine sexual politics of his father in the novel that shares his name. Finally, the relationship between masculinity and the Italian imaginary Stendhal constructs in *La Chartreuse de Parme* will demonstrate that he does not limit "gender trouble" to Restoration France. These works will help dismantle linear notions of gendered masculine development and the very idea of *bildung*.



## CAPTER I. MASCULINE PERFORMANCES IN *LE ROUGE ET LE NOIR*

In his book, *Stendhal Revisited*, critic Emile Talbot proposes one compelling explanation of the ambiguous and much debated title of the *Le Rouge et le Noir* (*Red and Black*). “In his *Journal*,” he explains, “Stendhal speaks of playing Red and Black [J, 1:195], a nineteenth-century game of chance to which there are references in other writers. In choosing *Red and Black* as the title of his novel, might Stendhal not be signaling that this text is also a game and inviting us as readers to play along?” (53). To support this theory, Talbot discusses the “false” epigraphs that preface many of the novel’s chapters, some instances of extraordinary intervention in the text by the narrator, and two particular anagrams found in the protagonist’s name, Julien Sorel. The first can be found explicitly in the novel itself by the careful reader in a printed mention of an executed *Louis Jenrel* that Julien prophetically comes across at the church of Verrières on his journey to the Rênal chateau. The other, not present in the work and first proposed by Armand Hoog in an article entitled “*Le ‘rôle’ de Julien*,” (“Julien’s role”) reveals an approach to understanding this profound character: *Je lis un rôle* (“I read a role”) [Talbot 58].

Although surprising for its ingenuity, this anagram does not suggest anything about the person of Julien that is not explicitly mentioned by the narrator throughout the course of the novel. There are many situations in which Julien is said to be playing a part, and more often than not his various roles contradict themselves. In fact, as Hoog points out, Stendhal mentions Julien’s « rôle » twenty two times throughout the novel and, « Sauf en deux passages (où le mot

prend le sens d' 'emploi' ou de 'position sociale'), les 'rôles' de Julien signifient toujours que le héros joue, en acteur, un personnage dramatique, romanesque ou politique qu'il a décidé d'incarner. » (“In all but two passages [where the word takes on the sense of ‘employment’ or ‘social position’], the ‘roles’ of Julien always mean that the hero plays, like an actor, a storybook or political character that he has decided to incarnate”) [131].

While Hoog's article, and other theoretical works concerned with mimetic desire in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, successfully demonstrate that the protagonist often engages in performance, they fail to thoroughly investigate the cause and effect dynamics of this phenomenon. Hoog states « Julien est si complètement voué à l'interprétation scénique de son existence que, même dans les (rares) moments de rémission où le vrai moi l'emporte, c'est encore sous les apparences d'un récitant de théâtre que joue la spontanéité. » (“Julien is so completely devoted to the theatrical interpretation of his existence that even during the [rare] moments of remission when his true ego takes over it is still under the appearances of a theatrical narrator that performs with spontaneity”) [132]. Hoog suggests that spectacle and form are the main concerns of his existence, but there is substantial evidence that his theatricality is actually motivated by another end: the satisfaction of his ambition.

To mention Julien's devotion to scenic interpretation without considering his concern for the utility of performance is to paint him as an artist, or one who is ultimately concerned with the Beautiful and Sublime. This picture ignores his political character. The complexity of his person lies precisely in that he is most frequently concerned with admiring and mimicking idealized forms of utility and power, which means that he is conscious of and sensitive to the Sublime while he attempts to be brilliant in the most mundane contexts and situations. This chapter will analyze the ways in which Julien's theatricality is directly linked to his ambition that

can only be satisfied in a patriarchal society by his engagement in a masculine social order, even if this complicity is consciously feigned. Most importantly, it is the desire for advancement, power, and victory that drives Julien to perform multiple masculine roles, portraying whichever proves most useful at the time so that he may achieve an end. In his entry into any new social position or amorous relationship, he calculates what roles will maximize his success and advantages, and whether or not such an endeavor is worthy of his time. This analysis will demonstrate how the illusion of *bildung* can be linked to a series of performed masculine acts through the character of Julien Sorel. It will also show that Julien's initial commitment to "becoming a man" seems to be founded in his love and admiration for "great men" and what they have accomplished.

In order to prove that Julien is performing multiple masculinities and that this spectacle is the result of his ambition, one must first consider whether or not this is possible. If we are to be correct in saying that Julien plays multiple masculine roles then gender itself must be a fluid entity. According to theorist Judith Butler:

gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*...This formulation moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of gender as a constituted social temporality." (*Gender Trouble*, 140-141)

Butler validates this approach to the understanding of our protagonist, not only by stating that gender is a fluid entity, but also that it is theatrical-like in nature, a stylized repetition of acts. The temporal nature of the masculinity Julien attempts to assume becomes clear in its choice of a Napoleonic model as its point of reference to be mimicked. It is the performance of gender,

Butler says, that retroactively produces the illusion that there is an inner gender core (“Melancholy”, 31).

The first type of masculinity that Julien performs in the novel is one of a young man of the faith devoted to becoming a priest. One might question whether or not *priest* can be conceived of as a gendered masculine category, but certain behavioral assumptions that govern expectations and representations of priestly behavior including the required gendered male biological sex for membership, a continued demonstration of faith, and a mandated absence of sexual activity and desire from daily life, should allow for its fair consideration. When Julien perceives a historical shift in power and influence in Restoration France from those in charge of the military to those in the Church he quickly decides to pursue the priesthood and makes himself the pupil of the parish priest of Verrières, M Chélan.

At this time, the narrator informs us, « on le vit constamment, dans la scie de son père, occupé à apprendre par coeur une bible latine que le curé lui avait prêtée. » (“one saw him constantly, in his father’s sawmill, busy learning a Latin bible by heart that the priest had lent him”) [52]. We know that it is not religious fervor that drives Julien to memorize the Bible because Rousseau’s *Confessions* was « le seul livre à l’aide duquel son imagination se figurait le monde. Le recueil des bulletins de la grande armée et le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène complétaient son Coran. Il se serait fait tuer pour ces trois ouvrages » (“the only book that helped his imagination conceive of the world. The collection of reports from the great army and the Memoir from St. Helena completed his Koran. He would have let himself be killed for these three works”) [49]. The aforementioned texts, and especially the word *Coran*, separate the protagonist radically enough from the Catholic faith so that the reader knows that Julien is

learning the Bible by heart as he would a script that he will need to perform at a later date, and not out of devotion. In fact, « Pour gagner le vieux curé Chélan, duquel il voyait bien que dépendait son sort à venir, il avait appris par cœur tout le Nouveau Testament en latin, il savait aussi le livre *du Pape* de M. de Maistre et croyait à l'un aussi peu qu'à l'autre. » (“To win over the old Priest Chélan, on whom he saw his future clearly depended, he had learned the New Testament in Latin by heart, he also knew the book *of the Pope* by M. de Maistre and believed in the one as little as the other”) [49].

It is not merely Julien’s concern for spectacle that causes him to perform this role of Tartuffe, but also his need “to win over the old priest.” His brilliance is not to be wasted on trivial matters, but rather pointedly directed towards advancing his future prospects. Memorizing the entire New Testament in Latin is not sufficient, for Julien, to play the role of an aspiring young priest during the Restoration. He decides to learn to cite de Maistre as well, in order to engage in the political discourse of those who “think well,” or rather those both inside and outside of the clergy that are anti-liberal, support the Divine Right of Kings, and believe in the infallibility of the Pope. His initial success in fooling the clergy is impressive. The narrator informs us:

Ce bon vieillard, émerveillé de ses progrès, passait des soirées entières à lui enseigner la théologie. Julien ne faisait paraître devant lui que des sentiments pieux. Qui eût pu deviner que cette figure de jeune fille, si pâle et si douce, cachait la résolution inébranlable de s’exposer à mille morts plutôt que de ne pas faire fortune !

(This good old man, stunned by his progress, spent entire evenings teaching him theology. Julien did not allow anything but pious sentiments to appear before him. Who

could have guessed that this figure of a young girl, so pale and so soft, hid the unshakable resolution to expose itself to a thousand deaths rather than not make a fortune.) [52]

Julien is assuming a virtue to aid himself in his quest to become a distinguished member of the clergy and this role-play is directly linked with his ambition. His pious masculine performances serve a political function that strengthens his esteem in the eyes of other men. He only displays a devout character in front of the priest because he eventually wants to be rich. In a similar way, Julien performs a non-clerical heterosexual masculinity in his amorous relationships with Mme de Rênal and Mathilde in order to satisfy his ambition that is sparked by the interest these noble women show in him, a poor commoner.

The first encounter between Julien and Mme de Rênal is not one of intense romantic passion or love at first sight, by which the reader could predict the affair that would emerge from their relationship, but rather more maternal in nature. When she initially sees him, « l'esprit un peu romanesque de Mme de Rênal eu d'abord l'idée que ce pouvait être une jeune fille déguisée, qui venait demander quelque grâce à M. le maire. » (“the slightly fanciful spirit of Mme de Rênal first had the idea that it could be a young disguised girl, who was coming to demand some favor of the mayor”) [55]. She asks him, « Que voulez-vous ici, mon enfant ? » (“What do you want here my child?”) [55]. This initial rapport verifies in some sense Julien's claim at his trial that « Mme de Rênal avait été pour moi comme une mère » (“Mme De Rênal had been like a mother to me”) [476], but more importantly it aids in establishing the fact that Julien has no premeditated plans of seducing her upon his arrival at her estate.

Even though Julien is impressed by Mme de Rênal's beauty, and surprised by the warm reception she gives him, he is clearly more concerned with the fact that he is socially inferior in his position at the mayor's chateau than he is with charming his mistress, and immediately

becomes cold and business-like when Mme de Rênal questions his reputation as a Latinist (57). Later, when he sees that she continues to receive him warmly:

Il eut sur-le-champ l'idée hardie de lui baiser la main. Bientôt il eut peur de son idée ; un instant après il se dit : Il y aurait de la lâcheté à moi de ne pas exécuter une action qui peut m'être utile, et diminuer le mépris que cette belle dame a probablement pour un pauvre ouvrier à peine arraché à la scie.

(He suddenly had the hardy idea of kissing her hand. Soon he feared his idea; one instant later he told himself: It would be cowardly of me to not execute an action that could be useful to me, and diminish the scorn that this woman probably has for a poor worker barely removed from the mill.) [58]

The idea of kissing the hand of Madame scares Julien at first, but he eventually decides to execute this action because it is a social formality that could be useful in his position at the estate. This is Julien's first contact with a woman from high society, and he is very much aware of the differences between the class she belongs to and his own. He is also aware of the potential benefits her good favor could bring him, and he is ready to gain and exploit that favor.

When Julien establishes himself in the Rênal household as a brilliant tutor, and becomes the admired friend of Mme de Rênal, he decides to try and hold her hand. But he only attempts this after: « Certaines choses que Napoléon dit des femmes, plusieurs discussions sur le mérite des romans à la mode sous son règne lui donnèrent alors, pour la première fois, quelques idées que tout autre jeune homme de son âge aurait eues depuis longtemps » (“Certain things that Napoleon said about women, many discussions on the merit of popular novels during his reign gave him, then, for the first time, some ideas that any other young man his age would have had for a long time”) [78]. It is not some natural impulse or sexual drive that incites Julien to reach

out for her hand, but a desire to mimic an idealized masculinity. One wonders why Julien has these ideas that “any other young man of his age would have had for quite some time” only after reading in books that he should have them.

When his first attempt to retain her hand fails « Julien pensa qu’il était son devoir d’obtenir que l’on ne retirât pas cette main quand il la touchait. L’idée d’un devoir à accomplir, et d’un ridicule ou plutôt d’un sentiment d’infériorité à encourir si l’on n’y parvenait pas, éloigna sur-le-champ tout plaisir de son cœur. » (“Julien thought that it was his duty to obtain that one did not withdraw this hand when he touched it. The idea of a duty to accomplish, and of a ridicule or rather a sentiment of inferiority to incur if one did not attain it, immediately removed all pleasure from his heart”) [79]. Pleasure is less of a concern for our protagonist at this moment than his respect of duty, which is only a compliance with masculine norms, and his desire to mimic great men. When he attempts to hold her hand again and she draws it away as she did the first time, he takes it back and holds it tightly. « Il la serrait avec une force convulsive; on fit un dernier effort pour la lui ôter, mais enfin cette main lui resta. Son âme fut inondée de bonheur, non qu’il aimât Mme de Rênal, mais un affreux supplice venait de cesser. » (“He held it tight with a convulsive force; she made a final effort to take it away, but finally this hand stayed in his. His soul was flooded by happiness, not that he loved Mme de Rênal, but a horrible torture had just ceased.”) [80-81]. The possibility that he might not succeed in holding this woman’s hand tortures Julien, not because he loves her, but because he might not have the same type of success with women as his models have. Julien must do more than just mimic his masculine heroes; he must succeed as they did because his ambition drives his desire to perform.

He continues to attempt to seduce Mme de Rênal, slowly becoming bolder in his advances, and it remains clear that neither her pleasure nor his own are the object of his pursuits.



« Julien, usant de son ancien privilège, osa approcher les lèvres du bras de sa jolie voisine, et lui prendre la main. Il pensait à la hardiesse dont Fouqué avait fait preuve avec ses maîtresses, et non à Mme de Rênal ; le mot *bien nés* pesait encore sur son cœur. On lui serra la main, ce qui ne lui fit aucun plaisir. » (“Julien, using his ancient privilege, dared to approach his lips to the arm of his pretty neighbor, and take her hand. He thought of the boldness that Fouqué had shown with his mistresses, and not about Mme de Rênal; the world *well born* still weighed on his heart. She grabbed onto his hand, which did not give him any pleasure”) [102-103]. Julien relates and compares each of his small victories with Mme de Rênal to those of his best friend or Napoleon. He does so with such frequency that he is actually thinking about his best friend, Fouqué, while he holds Mme de Rênal’s hand instead of being captivated by her. This scene is exemplary of an unspoken contradiction in certain instances of heterosexual desire in a patriarchal society that Eve Sedgwick describes in *Between Men*. She calls this phenomenon the traffic in women and says “it is the use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men” (26). There is a rivalry that Julien is imagining between himself and Napoleon and himself and Fouqué in which they are competing to see who is better at courting and “conquering” women. It is obvious that Julien’s desire to mimic great men first inspires him to try and hold Mme de Rênal’s hand and when he accomplishes this act he directs most of his thoughts to how it will more closely align his experiences with Fouqué’s “conquests.”

This rivalry Julien establishes between himself and Fouqué can be described in the Sedgwickian model as masking Julien’s desire for Fouqué. In the homosocial model there is always a “threat” of homosexuality between men that must be offset by competition or homophobia. Homosexuality is a potential “threat” for Julien’s character that is particularly

strong whenever Fouqué invites him to live with him and join him in the logging industry. Julien seems to think that his friend will become too attached to him if he joins him in his business:

Mais Fouqué renonce à se marier, il me répète que la solitude le rend malheureux. Il est évident que s'il prend un associé qui n'a pas de fonds à verser dans son commerce, c'est dans l'espoir de se faire un compagnon qui ne le quitte jamais. Tromperai-je mon ami ? s'écria Julien avec humeur. Cet être, dont l'hypocrisie et l'absence de toute sympathie étaient les moyens ordinaires de salut, ne put cette fois supporter l'idée du plus petit manque de délicatesse envers un homme qui l'aimait.

(But Fouqué renounces getting married; he repeats to me that his solitude is making him miserable. It is obvious that if he is taking an associate who does not have any funds to pour into his business, it is in the hope of making himself a companion that never leaves him. Would I trick my friend? cries Julien temperamentally. This being, whose hypocrisy and the absence of all sympathy were ordinary means of salvation, was not able to stand the idea of the smallest slight of delicacy towards a man that loves him.)

[99]

Why does Julien mention the fact that Fouqué refuses to get married and hopes to find a companion that will never leave him? It seems that he could be questioning whether or not his friend really does pose a threat of latent homosexuality, and the way that he references his lack of wife makes this seem true.

It is not merely his concern with mimesis that drives Julien to pursue a relationship with Mme de Rênal, however. The young Sorel is obsessed with the fear that his mistress will never be able to love him because she is noble and he is not. This fear prompts him to stop pursuing a

victory that he thinks will never be realized when one night Mme de Rênal takes his hand by her own initiative because she is afraid of losing his attention, and

Cette action réveilla ce jeune ambitieux: il eût voulu qu'elle eût pour témoins tous ces nobles si fiers qui, à table, lorsqu'il était au bas bout avec les enfants, le regardaient avec un sourire si protecteur. Cette femme ne peut plus me mépriser : dans ce cas, se dit-il, je dois être sensible à sa beauté ; je me dois à moi-même d'être son amant.

(This action awoke this young ambitious man: he would have wanted to have as a witness all those prideful nobles who, at the table, whenever he was at the far end with the children, look at him with such a protective smile. This woman can no longer despise me: in this case, he told himself, I should be sensible to her beauty; I owe it to myself to be her lover.) [103]

Mme de Rênal's attention augments Julien's pride and ambition, and one of the reasons he feels that he should love her, or at least play the part of her lover, is because he thinks he owes it to himself to be her lover. He sees the potential to impress or embarrass men that are members of a higher class than he is in his relationship with the mayor's wife, and this incites him to continue playing the role of her lover.

Julien soon realizes and admits how useful being Mme de Rênal's lover could prove as a pretext for his lowly tutoring work. « Je me dois d'autant plus, continua la petite vanité de Julien, de réussir auprès de cette femme, que si jamais je fais fortune, et que quelqu'un me reproche le bas emploi de précepteur, je pourrai faire entendre que l'amour m'avait jeté à cette place. » (“I owe it to myself even more, continued the vanity of Julien, to succeed after this woman, so that if I ever make a fortune, and someone reproaches me the lowly employment of preceptor, I can make them understand that love threw me to this position”) [104]. In this

instant Julien is not concerned with his mistress but rather with making a good impression and proving his superiority over other men during a time of personal prosperity that does not even exist yet. Mme Derville, Mme de Rênal's closest friend, seems to perceive Julien's ambitious and calculated character and warns her friend: « Je lui trouve l'air de penser toujours et de n'agir qu'avec politique. » (“I find he has the appearance of always thinking and never acting but politically”) [106]. Mme de Rênal, however, seems to disregard this aspect of Julien's character, blinded by what she considers his superior qualities. In examining Julien's first interactions with Mme de Rênal and his thoughts as he begins to seduce her we can see that in spite of whatever love or passion might eventually emerge between them, at this time « Son amour était encore de l'ambition ; c'était de la joie de posséder, lui pauvre être malheureux et si méprisé, une femme aussi noble et aussi belle. » (“His love was still ambition; it was the joy of possessing, him poor and miserable and so hated, a woman so pretty”) [114].

Julien's romance with Mlle. de La Mole is even less incited by desire than his first affair was. The first time Julien sees Mathilde during his first dinner at the Marquis's house he does not even like her. In seeing her, « il aperçut une jeune personne, extrêmement blonde et fort bien faite, qui vint s'asseoir vis-à-vis de lui. Elle ne lui plut point ; cependant en la regardant attentivement, il pensa qu'il n'avait jamais vu des yeux aussi beaux ; mais ils annonçaient une grande froideur d'âme. » (“he sees a young person, extremely blond and very well made, who comes to sit down facing him. She does not please him at all; still in looking at her attentively, he thinks that he had never seen such beautiful eyes; but they announced a great coldness of soul”) [257]. This coldness that Julien sees in Mathilde is later described as a masculine characteristic that does not attract him. The narrator even informs us that, « Il venait de décider que Mlle de La Mole ne serait jamais une femme à ses yeux. » (“He came to decide that Mlle.

De la Mole would never be a woman in his eyes”) [258]. Upon running into her in the library during his second day at the Hôtel de La Mole he remains unimpressed: « Julien lui trouva en papillotes l’air dur, hautain et presque masculin. » (“Julien saw her unclearly with a tough appearance, haughty and almost masculine”) [260]. This means that Julien does not believe that women can be tough and haughty and still be feminine. It is also a reminder of how gendered notions of sex construct women as different from men. Julien is moving them to the position of symbolic property in his mind which is to be shared between men.

It is not until the Ball of the Duc de Retz, when a group of young men are discussing Mathilde, that Julien sees that she is the object of admiration of many of Paris’s most eligible bachelors: « Et qui peut être digne de la sublime Mathilde? Dit le premier : quelque prince souverain, beau, spirituel, bien fait, un héros à la guerre, et âgé de vingt ans tout au plus. » (“And who can be worthy of the sublime Mathilde? The first says: some sovereign prince, handsome, spiritual, and well-made, a war hero, and twenty years old tops”) [294]. After hearing so many compliments made in her honor Julien says to himself : « Puisqu’elle passe pour si remarquable aux yeux de ces poupées, elle vaut la peine que je l’étudie, pensa-t-il. Je comprendrai quelle est la perfection pour ces gens-là » (Since she passes as so remarkable in the eyes of these dolls, it is worth the trouble to study her, he thought. I will understand what perfection is for these people”) [294]. The dialogue among young men of the noble class inspires Julien’s initial interest in Mathilde, and not any “natural” desire or passion of his own, just like the discourse of men inspired him to attempt and hold Mme. de Rênal’s hand. Both of these instances in the novel suggest that what one might try and call Julien’s “sexuality,” or at least his choice of lovers is not naturally heterosexual or unproblematic in any way, but rather a social construct mediated by homosocial desire and practices.

When he first goes to visit Mathilde in her room, the narrator informs us that «Il n’y avait rien de tendre dans ses sentiments de ce premier moment. C’était le plus vif bonheur d’ambition, et Julien était surtout ambitieux. » (“There was not anything tender in his feelings of this first moment. It was the most vibrant happiness of ambition, and Julien was ambitious above all else”) [346]. His actions are once again motivated by his ambition and his sense of duty to himself, and he is unconcerned with his mistress’s pleasure and his own. He verbalizes his sense of victory to his mistress and, « En l’écoutant parler, Mathilde était choquée de cet air de triomphe. Il est donc mon maître! » (“In listening to him speak Mathilde was shocked by this appearance of triumph. So he is my master!”) [347].

After this initial “victory” Mathilde insists she no longer loves him and acts very coldly towards him. Julien is convinced that he is desperately in love, even though his wounded pride is making him lose sleep, when he is sent away by the Marquis on a secret mission for the political purposes of the far right. The contact he goes to meet instructs him to stay in Strasbourg for eight days, and in his isolation he wishes he had a friend he could talk to about the love that he has lost. He is elated to find the Prince Korasoff, a dandy that he met in London and admires greatly, to whom he gives a hypothetical account of his situation, and the Prince teaches him how he can win Mathilde back.

Vous avez la mine d’un trappiste, dit-il à Julien, vous outre le principe de la gravité que je vous ai donné à Londres. L’air triste ne peut être de bon ton ; c’est l’air ennuyé qu’il faut. Si vous êtes triste, c’est donc quelque chose qui vous manque, quelque chose qui ne vous a pas réussi. *C’est montrer soi inférieur.* Êtes-vous ennuyé, au contraire, c’est ce qui a essayé vainement de vous plaire qui est inférieur. Comprenez don, mon cher, combien la méprise est grave.

(You seem like a Trappist, he tells Julien, you are outraging the principle of seriousness that I gave you in London. The sad look cannot be a good tone; it is the bored look that is necessary. If you are sad, it is because of something you are missing, something you did not succeed at. *That is showing oneself inferior*. If you are bored, on the contrary, it is that which vainly tried to please you that is inferior. Understand then, my dear, how serious the misunderstanding is.) [394]

The Prince insists that Julien play the role of a man that is not saddened by the loss of a fickle mistress's love. He details the specific actions that will help him win back Mathilde's attention. At this moment Korasoff is serving as a masculine model, whom Julien desires homosocially, that will serve as a guide to him in his quest to seduce Mathilde. It appears that *bildung* is taking place because Korasoff seems to be teaching Julien to be a man, but we will see that this "learning" is not actually achieved or stable at the end of the novel.

The Prince advises Julien to take the following measures to win back Mathilde: « I<sup>o</sup> Vous la verrez tous les jours ; 2<sup>o</sup> Vous ferez la cour à une femme de sa société, mais sans vous donner les apparences de la passion, entendez-vous ? Je ne vous le cache pas, votre rôle est difficile ; vous jouez la comédie, et si l'on devine que vous la jouez, vous êtes perdu. » (“1<sup>st</sup> You will see her every day; 2<sup>nd</sup> You will court a woman from her society, but without giving yourself the appearance of passion, do you understand? I will not hide it from you, your role is difficult; you are playing a comedy, and if one guesses that you are acting, you are lost”) [395]. The Prince even gives him a set of pre-written letters so that he will not have to go to the trouble of inventing virtuous prose to send to the false mistress. At this point Julien seems to be pursuing Mathilde because he desires her and she has some power over him, but the nature of the beginnings of their relationship proves that he truly desires her because of his ambition. His

need to dominate her and possess her love stems from that ambition. He agrees to follow the Prince's rules and play this specific masculine part, one of a man who experiences no grief or loss and is disinterested in his former mistresses, in order to possess her again. It is the less interested member of a couple that has a greater capacity to control the relationship. We see in his willingness to play a role and be insincere that the possession of Mathilde's desire, or his control over her, will bring him more happiness than her actual love would itself were it sincere.

The Prince's formula for success with Mathilde proves accurate, but once Julien succeeds in gaining her admiration and attention again his first concern is with how to conquer and retain that affection. He forces himself to read some more of Napoleon's *Mémoires dictés à Sainte-Hélène* (*Memoirs dictated at St. Helena*) to come up with this answer: « Lui faire peur, s'écria-t-il tout à coup en jetant le livre au loin. L'ennemi ne m'obéira qu'autant que je lui ferai peur, alors il n'osera me mépriser. Il se promenait dans sa petite chambre, ivre de joie. À la vérité, ce bonheur était plus d'orgueil que d'amour. » (“Scare him, he cried suddenly in throwing his book far. The enemy will only obey me as long as I scare him, then he will not dare despise me. He walked in his little room, drunk with happiness. Truthfully, this happiness was more pride than love”) [423-4]. He succeeds in conquering and taming Mathilde through this strategy, one that sounds more like a battle plan than an approach to a relationship. After assuring this victory, he tells himself in a congratulatory manner, « mon roman est fini, et à moi seul tout le mérite. J'ai su me faire aimer de ce monstre d'orgueil, ajoutait-il en regardant Mathilde ; son père ne peut vivre sans elle et elle sans moi. » (“my novel is finished, and I deserve all of the credit. I knew how to make this prideful monster love me, he added in looking at Mathilde; her father cannot live without her and she cannot live without me”) [442]. Not only has Julien succeeded in



seducing a woman, but he is also now in a position to benefit from her father's fortune, and Julien's greatest concern has always been to be admired and esteemed by men.

This desire to be great among men began during Julien's childhood and is a product of his own admiration for men. « Dès sa première enfance, la vue de certains dragons du 6<sup>e</sup>, aux longs manteaux blancs, et la tête couverte de casques aux longs crins noirs, qui revenaient d'Italie, et que Julien vit attacher leurs chevaux à la fenêtre grillée de la maison de son père, le rendit fou de l'état militaire. » (“Since his early infancy, the sight of certain dragoons from the 6<sup>th</sup>, in their long white coats, and heads covered by hats of long black horsehair that came from Italy, and Julien saw them attach their horses to the barred window of his father's house, he became crazy about the military state”) [51]. The military is an institution that women are completely absent from in the 19th century, and to be obsessed with it is to be obsessed with other men. Napoleon is a symbol of this glorified lifestyle and the most prominent masculine model for Julien. A source of conflict in their relationship comes from his proclaiming to the conservative Mme. de Rênal who is a part of those who *think well*: « Ah ! s'écria-t-il, que Napoléon était bien l'homme envoyé de Dieu pour les jeunes Français !. » (“Ah! he cried, Napoleon was the man sent from God for the young French”) [116]! The Emperor causes other problems in their relationship without her realizing it because it is his portrait that Julien has hidden in his mattress. She expects the picture to be of some young woman that Julien must have a hidden affinity for, but she is wrong, it is a portrait of a powerful man that Julien proves to be most passionate about (85). The portrait demonstrates how important Napoleon's image is to Julien because he keeps it with him all the time, close to where he sleeps. We cannot doubt that he is attempting to mimic this image that is so dear to him.

In the same way that Julien is fascinated by Napoleon's image, Count Norbert's image is more interesting to him than his sister Mathilde's is initially. His first impression of the young nobleman is definitely more favorable than that of his sister. The day of his arrival at the Hôtel de La Mole Julien meets:

Un joli jeune homme, avec des moustaches, très pale et très élancé, [qui] entra vers les six heures et demie ; il avait une tête fort petite [...] Julien comprit que c'était le comte de La Mole. Il le trouva charmant dès le premier abord [...] À force d'examiner le comte Norbert, Julien remarqua qu'il était en bottes et en éperons ; et moi je dois être en souliers, apparemment comme inférieur.

(A young handsome man, with a mustache, very pale and very slender, [who] entered near six thirty; he had a very small head [...] Julien understood that it was the Count de La Mole. He found him charming right from the beginning [...] In examining Count Norbert, Julien remarked that he was in boots and spurs; and I must wear shoes, apparently as an inferior.) [257]

Again, the image that the young Count presents Julien is one that he wishes he could match, wearing the same boots that the young nobleman is. He notices that Norbert's sister Mathilde has fiery eyes, but « Du reste, elle ressemblait cruellement à sa mère, qui lui déplaisait de plus en plus, et il cessa de la regarder. En revanche, le comte Norbert lui semblait admirable de tous points. Julien était tellement séduit, qu'il n'eut pas l'idée d'en être jaloux et de le haïr, parce qu'il était plus riche et plus noble que lui. » (“For the rest, she cruelly resembled her mother, who displeased him more and more, and he ceased looking at her. In return, the Count Norbert seemed admirable to him in all points. Julien was so seduced, that he did not even think of being jealous or hating him, because he was more rich than he was”) [258]. In this instant Julien is

seduced by the young Count while his sister is not even a recipient of his attention. This fits into a larger pattern of his behavior in which men are the primary objects of his natural or initial attention and fascination, while women prove to be objects useful for improving his relationships with men, who then succeed in obtaining his full attention and devotion.

The final proof that Julien's theatrical masculinities, or quest to integrate into high society, are performed to satisfy his ambition, is that when he loses his ambition while on trial for the attempted murder of Mme. de Renal, his performances stop. Near the end of his days in the dungeon we learn a little more about his "natural role." « L'ambition était morte en son coeur, une autre passion y était sortie de ses cendres; il l'appelait le remords d'avoir assassiné Mme de Rênal. Dans le fait, il en était éperdument amoureux. » ("The ambition was dead in his heart, another passion had arisen from its ashes; he called it the remorse of having assassinated Mme de Rênal. Actually, he was passionately in love with her") [466]. He is no longer worried about performing for other men, perhaps because he has found true love for a woman, but he cannot escape death without continuing to perform for men in a specific way.

Que m'importe les autres ? Mes relations avec les autres vont être tranchées brusquement [...] Au fait, se disait-il à lui-même, il paraît que mon destin est de mourir en rêvant. Un être obscur tel que moi, sûr d'être oublié avant quinze jours, serait bien dupe, il faut l'avouer, de jouer la comédie... Il est singulier pourtant que je n'aie connu l'art de jouir de la vie que depuis que j'en vois le terme si près de moi.

(What do I care about others ? My relations with others are going to be brusquely cut off [...] In fact, he told himself, it seems that my destiny is to die dreaming. A dark being like me, sure to be forgotten before 15 days are over, would be very naïve, I must admit,

to play a part...It is peculiar though that I have only learned the art of enjoying life since I see its end so close to me.) [469]

At this point Julien has lost his fascination with men, and he is now in love with a woman, Mme de Rênal. He has no need to role play now because his ambition is gone. He no longer has to perform acts that demonstrate *bildung* because he has lost the will to try and become a man.

When he speaks to the jury that will decide his fate Julien does not calculate or plan what type of role might free him from their cruel judgement, but rather speaks from his conscience without meditation. He tells them of his maternal love for Mme. de Rênal and the unfair position he is in being judged by men from a class higher than his own, but he speaks sincerely. We know this because he later asks Mathilde and Fouqué: « N'étais-je pas beau hier quand j'ai pris la parole ? [...] J'improvisais et pour la première fois de ma vie ! » (“Was I not handsome yesterday when I began to speak? [...] I improvised and for the first time in my life!”) [480]. With no more ambition driving his performances Julien cannot survive in 19th century France because, as he said at his trial, he had the « audace de se mêler à ce que l'orgueil des gens riches appelle la société, » (“audacity to mix himself with what the pride of rich people calls society”) [476] and this society requires that those in power within it mimic a masculine ideal that no one really ever embodies.

*Bildung* has failed in Julien's case in ways that problematize both Jerome Buckley and Thomas Jeffer's incorporation of *Le Rouge et le Noir* in their respective *Bildungsroman* canons. It is clear that Buckley's definition is problematic because Julien is not married or integrated into society at the end of the novel; on the contrary, he is assassinated by society. His rejection of ambitious performance at the end of his life, as well, indicates that he does not embrace Jeffer's “learning how to learn” model of *bildung* either. In order for *bildung* or integration into society

to occur a young male must perform certain normative acts in order to survive, and Julien has rejected ambitious performance at his tragic end.

## CHAPTER II. *LUCIEN LEUWEN* AND THE REJECTION OF MASCULINE SEXUAL POLITICS

*A te voir, on dirait un enfant, et, qui pis est, un enfant content. On commence à te prendre au mot, je t'en avertis, et, malgré les millions de ton père, tu ne comptes dans rien ; tu n'as pas de consistance, tu n'es qu'un écolier gentil. A vingt ans, cela est presque ridicule, et, pour t'achever, tu passes des heures entières à ta toilette, et on le sait.*

(Upon seeing you, one would say a child and, what is worst, a happy child. They are beginning to describe you to the letter, I am warning you, and, despite your father's millions, you are not worth anything; you have no consistency, you are nothing but a pleasant schoolboy. At twenty years that is almost ridiculous and, to finish yourself off, you spend entire hours grooming, and people know it.)

-Ernest Dévelroy to Lucien Leuwen, *Lucien Leuwen*

Many critics of *Lucien Leuwen* from the nineteen-sixties, including Lee Brotherson and Robert M. Viti, considered the story of the young “anti-hero” exemplary of a crisis of youth or maturation experienced by a protagonist who finds himself obliged to form his own identity because of his age and the pressure he feels to distinguish himself from his father in the domains of work and love. This approach is supported by Lacanian psychoanalytic theory that posits a crisis of independence in work and love as essential for the maturation of the adolescent, and it

will be useful to examine this theoretical approach because it helps to establish conceived notions of the psychological context of the character as it relates to *bildung*.

Nevertheless, once this context is established, its conceptualization should be elaborated so that one considers the calamity Lucien suffers to be a crisis of masculinity as well. After one has determined that Lucien is troubled by the questions of identity that he is dealing with and tormented, in fact, by those that his father imposes upon him concerning his amorous relationships, his courage, and his wit, the links between the novel and the discourse of the *Bildungsroman* will become evident. Lucien seeks to live-out his ideal love relationship during the entire novel but he cannot decide which masculine model should serve to guide him in this venture, and when his love with Mme de Chasteller is not realized he finds himself disgusted by modern relationships in a society where love, courtship, and marriage have political consequences and are a part of a patriarchal system dominated by men.

To accomplish this analysis it is necessary to have an idea of the potential political consequences of affective relationships when one considers the way in which men view and comprehend one another through women. Eve Sedgwick discusses Gayle Rubin's concept of "the traffic in women" in her book *Between Men*: "patriarchal heterosexuality can best be discussed in terms of one or another form of the traffic of women: it is the use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men" (Sedgwick 26). M. Leuwen is representative of this masculine model in the novel because he participates in this social construction and, eventually, Lucien must decide if he wants to accept or reject the example of his father. But before looking at the specific manner in which François Leuwen attempts to impose a masculine model upon his son, it will be useful to

try and comprehend the psychological situation of Lucien as it relates to his father, his age, and the large identity problems that he must face at the beginning of the novel.

Critic John Brenkman, in his book *Straight Male Modern: A Cultural Critique of Psychoanalysis*, says of the famous psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan:

Lacan does consider vocation and marriage the decisive moments in male maturation. He also shares the view that maturational crises are a process of forming an identity through experiences of mutual recognition. Classical psychoanalytic doctrine saw in the outbreak of neurosis a revival of infantile relationships prompted in adolescence or early adult life by the demands of independence. For middle-class men those demands typically build up around getting a job and deciding to marry. (Brenkman 50)

Lacan's theory is supported by Lucien's character because he lives a crisis of maturation *par excellence*, provoked by the demands of his independence at Nancy and the social pressures, which lead him to question his ability to earn his own living and prove his merit. Lacan considers the relationship between father and son to be the source of these pathologies (Brenkman 52) because the father should be the model the son identifies himself with and Stendhal's novel demonstrates this phenomenon as well. In the schematization of the *Bildungsroman* the young hero must liberate himself from the dominance and control his father has over him in order to assert his masculinity, but this act in itself is not a rejection of the patriarchal model the father provides insofar as he had to have done the same when he was a boy "in order to become a man." It will be essential, therefore, in order to determine whether or not *Lucien Leuwen* as a work rejects the concept of *bildung*, to analyze the last days of Lucien's relationship with his father and determine whether or not his separation from François falls within masculine expectations for *bildung* or not.



Lucien's crisis begins in the first volume of the novel when he learns that he has not accomplished anything in his life without the help of his father, and that his position in the world is good because of his father and not because of his own merit. Lucien despairs after his cousin Ernest Dévelroy blames him for his dependence on his dad's money and accuses him of being nothing but a child. He runs to his father, upset, proclaiming:

il vient de me prouver que je n'ai d'autre mérite au monde que d'avoir pris la peine de naître fils d'un homme d'esprit. Je n'ai jamais gagné par mon savoir faire le prix d'un cigare ; sans vous je serais à l'hôpital, etc.

(he just proved to me that I do not have any other merit in the world but to have gone to the trouble of being born the son of a man of wit. I have never earned by my own *savoir faire* the price of a cigar; without you I would be in the poor house, etc.) [T1. 72]

Dévelroy blames Lucien for his own situation and pressures his cousin to change his habits and become what he thinks a man should be.

M. Leuwen's response to his son's crisis is curious and it recurs several times during the novel. He begins by offering him money, and when Lucien says that he actually does not need money he asks: « Est-ce que tu deviendrais saint-simonien par hasard ? Comme tu vas être ennuyeux ! » (Would you become saint-simonian by chance? You are going to be annoying") [T1. 73]! Then he demands that he go to the opera to dine with the women in his lodge during the evenings. This is the first time in the story when he forces his son to enter into the company of women. M. Leuwen perceives Lucien's worries concerning his self-worth as a sign of weakness and associates his son with a group of industrial idealists that form a quasi-religious cult and who call themselves saint-simonians.

He insults his son's masculinity in this way because, in his opinion, a modern man should not be bothering himself with such pathetic questions, especially when he is the son of a rich banker. One can even question whether or not, in using the name saint-simonian, he is jokingly qualifying his son as a homosexual or queer before these specific terms existed in France (Badinter 154). This seems even more likely to be true when he immediately insists that Lucien spend his evenings with pretty women in order to forget his worries and demonstrate to the public that he participates in masculine activities. This masculine *performance* before a public audience is fundamental to the father's plans and aspirations for his son, and Stendhal cleverly juxtaposes Lucien's gendered performance with the explicit spectacle of the Opera. Later in the novel the father warns the son that « on a organisé la mise en circulation d'une calomnie qui tend à te faire passer pour un saint-simonien retenu à grand-peine dans le monde par ton amitié pour moi » ("they have organized the circulation of a calumny that sets you up as a saint-simonian barely retained in society by your friendship with me") [T.II. 190]. The saint-simonian designation is so shameful that the father feels obliged to defend the honor of his son even at his age of sixty five.

The realization that he is dependant on his father is devastating for Lucien when it manifests itself to him via Dévelroy, and Brenkman explains why this could be the case by paraphrasing Lacan:

To schematize, let us say that when a male subject is involved, his moral and psychic equilibrium requires him to assume his own function – he must gain recognition as such in his virile function and in his work, he must gather their fruits without conflict, without having the feeling that someone else deserves it and that he has it only by fluke, without there being any internal division that makes the subject the alienated witness of the acts

of his own self. That is the first requirement. The other is this: an enjoyment one might characterize as tranquil and univocal of the sexual object, once it is chosen, granted to the subject's life. (Brenkman 50)

Lucien is told that he is unmanly because he has not earned his own boots and cigars, and he has not been successful in obtaining the female company that could otherwise remedy his lack of economic prowess.

The need Lucien has for his father's aid obliges him to follow his father's example when he attempts to become independent in the domains of work and love. He often tells himself: « Mon père est un sage...et moi je suis un sot » (“My father is a wise man...and I am nothing but a fool”) [T1. 157], and he tries to behave as his father would if it were him that wanted to seduce Madame de Chasteller, or if he were ordered to ruin the election of M. Mairobert. There is even one occasion when he is attempting to please Madame de Chasteller with his charm in which he says: « Quels miracles mon père ne ferait – il à ma place » (“What miracles my father would perform in my place”) [T1. 419]. He thinks that his father would win over Bathilde while it is almost impossible for him to make any progress with her.

This identification or constant comparison between father and son is considered part of the learning process that constitutes the formation of the young adult male (Badinter 108). Lucien's thought process and ruminations clearly fall within the discourse of *bildung*, but a continued analysis of the relationship between the protagonist and his father will reveal the truth in Gabrielle Pascal's assertion that: « *Lucien Leuwen* apparaît comme le roman d'une formation qui n'en finit pas d'échouer et dont le projet est finalement rejeté au profit d'une libération des émotions qui prend la place de la 'Bildung' » (“*Lucien Leuwen* seems like the story of a

formation which never stops failing and whose project is finally rejected in favor of a liberation of emotions that takes the place of ‘Bildung’”) [171].

This crisis of consciousness continues during the first volume of the novel and even finds itself reinforced by Lucien’s “failure” to realize his love for Madame de Chasteller in Nancy. When he thinks that he has not succeeded in procuring a love that was his own desire and which he found beautiful he returns to his parent’s house in Paris where his dad organizes his entire life for him so that his son might help him accomplish his personal projects. In accepting the conditions his father places on his return home and the employment he procures him, Lucien praises his father:

L’excès de votre indulgence m’étonne et augmente ma reconnaissance et mon respect. Par l’effet de malheurs sur lesquels je ne puis m’expliquer, même avec mon père, je me trouve dégoûté de moi-même et de la vie. Comment choisir telle ou telle carrière ? Tout m’est également indifférent, et je puis dire odieux [...] Cela n’est ni beau ni honorable pour un homme de vingt-quatre ans, aussi personne au monde n’aura jamais cette confiance...

(The excess of your indulgence surprises me and increases my gratitude and my respect. Due to some misfortunes that I cannot explain, even to my father, I am disgusted with myself and with life. How does one choose one career or the other? Everything is equally indifferent to me, and I can even say odious [...] That is neither beautiful nor honorable for a twenty four year old man, and no one in the world will ever have this confidence...) [T.II 103]

It is clear that Lucien does not feel like an “achieved man,” liberated from his father at the beginning of the second volume of the novel, and M. Leuwen exercises a considerable power over his son while he is in Paris.

In returning to his father’s house, Lucien is forced to submit himself to his “amorous politics” which require, first, that he go to the Opera as he did before to be seen with women, but this time he must go there every night for at least a half hour. When Lucien learns that he must do this he says « Ah ! mon père, ces plaisirs me font peur. » (“Ah! Father, these pleasures frighten me.”) [T.II. 130]. M. Leuwen responds by reminding Lucien of the power he holds over him:

Vous m’avez accordé dix-huit mois au lieu d’un an pour une certaine position dans le monde. Pour rendre la grâce complète, promettez-moi de passer une demi-heure chaque soir dans ces *temples du plaisir*, particulièrement vers la fin des plaisirs, à onze heures. (You granted me eighteen months instead of a year for a certain position in the world. To complete the favor, promise me to pass a half-hour each evening in these *temples of pleasure*, especially near the end of the pleasures, at eleven.) [T.II. 130]

Even though it is clear that Lucien does not truly enjoy the company he must keep at the opera M. Leuwen decides that this site will be a “temple of pleasure” for his son. François demands that Lucien appear to be pleased and content in the company of these women, and in doing so he determines how his son should act in the domain of love in addition to that of work in order to integrate him into the political world.

In speaking about Lucien and Mme de Chasteller, who had become the common enemy of the Leuwen parents because of the state that “she” had plunged Lucien into, François tells his wife that he hopes his son will forget her by the end of the year but that he has his doubts:

Je ne sais, vous lui avez fait un cœur si constant ! Vous n'avez jamais pu vous dépendre de moi, vous m'avez toujours aimé en dépit de ma conduite abominable. Pour un cœur tout d'une pièce tel que celui que vous avez fait à votre fils, il faudrait un nouveau goût. J'attends une occasion favorable pour le présenter à Mme Grandet.

(I do not know; you made his heart so steadfast! You were never able to free yourself from me; you have always loved me in spite of my abominable conduct. For a heart all of one piece like the one you gave your son, a new liking will be necessary. I am waiting for a favorable occasion to present him to Mme Grandet.) [T.II. 133]

This declaration simultaneously describes two of M. Leuwen's projects. The first is explicit, and it is to make Lucien forget Madame de Chasteller through a new love interest that will serve to distract him. The second project, which is more difficult to decipher, is to encourage masculine traits in his son by forcing him to distinguish himself from his mother.

According to François Leuwen, a man should not have a "steadfast heart" like a woman. He wants his son to break from his maternal identification in order to become "a man." His intentions are clear from the beginning of the second volume of the novel when Lucien asks him, «Et que désirez-vous que je sois ?» ("And what do you want me to be?" and M. Leuwen declares precisely « Un coquin » ("A rascal") [T.II. 97]. Lucien's father says that not only is a man to be inconstant, in order to be unlike a woman, but he must also be mischievous in order to be successful. Badinter might see M. Leuwen as pushing Lucien towards a heteronormative masculinity. According to her, « le devenir-homme est une fabrication volontariste, et on peut se demander avec G. Corneau si la masculinité des fils s'éveillerait jamais si elle n'y était pas forcée à un moment déterminé de son développement. » ("becoming a man is a voluntary fabrication and one can ask oneself with G. Corneau whether the sons' masculinity would ever

awaken itself if it was not forced at a determined moment in their development ») [Badinter 108]. The illusion of becoming a man, therefore, which is perpetuated by what Butler calls stylized acts, may have as one of its causes certain pressures to perform masculine gendered tasks in order to conform to the homosocial order.

The “voluntary fabrication” of becoming a man that Badinter described, which aligns itself with critical notions of the Bildungsroman, involves a process in which the son stops to identify himself with his mother and begins to identify himself more closely with his father. François Leuwen wants Lucien to change his behavior so that it matches his idea of masculine behavior, and this involves getting him to stop being such a “momma’s boy.”

It is clear that Lucien is closer to his mother than his father during the first volume of the novel. This is especially apparent during the first conversation he has with her upon his return from Nancy. He tells her “Maman, je suis fou. Je n’ai pas manqué à l’honneur, mais à cela près je suis le plus malheureux des hommes » (“Mom, I am crazy. I have not failed my honor, but even so I am the most miserable of men.”). She responds to his anguish by trying to console him in a dialogue between mother and son: « Je vous pardonne tout, (...) en lui sautant au cou. Ne crains aucun reproche, mon Lucien. Est-ce une affaire d’argent ? J’en ai – C’est bien autre chose. J’aimais, et j’ai été trompé. » (“I forgive you for everything (...) in rushing to his neck. Do not fear any reproach, my Lucien. Is money the problem? I have some – It is a very different matter. I was in love, and I was cheated on”) [T1. 488]. Lucien’s mother does not even know what the subject of his anguish is but she is ready to forgive him and help him financially without asking any questions. He is heartbroken and needs his mother’s reassurance and love. This complicity between mother and son exists still in the second volume of the work but it is hidden during most of the novel due to the necessity that he work with his father which requires

that they be on good terms. In any case François Leuwen blames his wife for giving Lucien a constant heart and making his becoming a man more problematic, and this idea is supported by Badinter's assertion that « la masculinité n'est obtenue que par un détour d'autant plus long et douloureux que la symbiose mère/fils s'est prolongée. » (“masculinity is only obtained through a detour that is even more long and painful than the mother/son symbiosis prolonged itself”) [Badinter 117]. This means that Lucien's intimacy with his mother is not going to facilitate the change his father hopes to see in him, and she is not going to help expedite the “normal” process of change “from boy to man.”

Beyond the obligatory soirees at the Opera that François demands of Lucien to accompany his position in the political world, one day he demands that his son have a mistress. He tells Lucien he should take a mistress after explaining: « Je vous aime, et par conséquent, vous me rendez malheureux ; car la première des duperies, c'est d'aimer. » (“I love you and, consequently, you make me miserable; because the greatest of all duperies is to love”) [T.II.186]. He is only capable of telling Lucien that he is worried about him after he qualifies his love, which is what he names as the cause of his worries while his concern is to maintain politically correct appearances. Love is “the greatest of all duperies” for François Leuwen. Why does he do this? According to Badinter masculinity requires that men hide their feelings in order to demonstrate that they are not weak. Talking with his son in a more open and frank manner would be an intimate act more appropriate of the mother in the father's eyes.

M. Leuwen continues his discussion with his son and adds a new requirement for his behavior: « Il faut que le public sache que tu as une maîtresse. » (“The public must know that you have a mistress”) [T.II. 187]. François does not care whether Lucien has Mme Grandet or Mlle. Gosselin as a mistress, but it must be a woman who is well regarded in Parisian society. It



does not matter to him if Lucien is in a relationship that makes him happy, like he was at the *Chasseur Vert*, where he spent time with a woman that he loved passionately, but rather François wants his son's amorous relationship to fulfill a social and political function.

For David Place, this mandate is very significant when it appears in the work of Stendhal, for whom according to Place:

the conviction that the highest human happiness lies in the ideal love relationship remained constant and pre-eminent throughout his mature life, and was transposed into his novels in the form of a central plot which is always a variation on the basic pattern of the love-quest. More than a plot, however, this basic pattern may be called a 'rhetoric', which promotes a certain view of the world and certain human values- the primacy of the personal over the political, the necessity for naturalness, honesty, and self-knowledge in personal relations. (39)

The intentions and demands of M. Leuwen are even more vulgar when one considers the fact that his project opposes the Stendhalian love that Lucien has for Mme de Chasteller that would be beyond social conventions given that he is not noble. Place thinks that "Lucien's involvement with Mme Grandet is the culminating example of his subordination to his father, and as such it expresses in microcosm all the complex problematics of his relation to French history" (46). This subordination to the father is also a culminating example of his attempt to participate in normative homosocial masculinity.

Even if his affair with Mme Grandet is the greatest demonstration of Lucien's submission to his father's will, the mandate that Lucien court Mme Grandet does not show to what extent M. Leuwen is ready to control his son's amorous life. At the beginning of their "love" relationship, when Mme Grandet learns that Lucien "wants" to be her lover, she does not care for him at all

because: « Il est hors de son pouvoir de rien ajouter à position. » (“It is beyond his power to add anything to my position”) [T.II. 210]. Here is a woman that envisages love relationships in a way similar to M. Leuwen. She wants to have a lover that will better her social and political status, but when she meets Lucien his father does not yet possess the power that he will gain in the Chamber of Deputies near the end of the novel. Mme Grandet only considers the possibility of “loving” Lucien after his father gains a powerful political advantage that will allow him to promise to make her husband Minister of the Interior.

Actually, after talking with M. Leuwen, who promises to help her husband if she takes interest in his son, she indirectly prostitutes herself in order to satisfy her ambition. One might say she exhibits a desire and takes an initiative that would typically be classified as “masculine,” as she is a woman taking an active role in sexual politics. But there is even some fluidity to her gender, and her female masculinity is problematized, because she comes to fall in love with Lucien and regrets her Machiavellian decisions. The situation is sad when our “hero” thinks that maybe he has found happiness in the projects and designs of his father, or in his engagement with the dominant and competitive masculine order. He is happy because his father is going to make a man a minister and « la femme la plus brillante de Paris semble céder à ma prétendue passion. » (“The most radiant woman of Paris seems to be ceding to my feigned passion”) [T.II. 396]. He believes, if only for a moment, that he is actually in control of his own situation and has chosen to accept and enjoy the masculine model offered by his father, but he realizes too late that this love was only an illusion founded on the political ambitions of Mme Grandet and M. Leuwen.

By “paying” Mme Grandet for the attention she is giving Lucien, M. Leuwen intervenes in his son’s personal and emotional life in a surprising way. One might propose that he wants to

engage in a romance with Mme Grandet vicariously through his son, but his insistence that Lucien participate in some relationship with a mistress remains a constant throughout the novel, so it seems that he only wants to manipulate his son's love life in order to ascertain the stability of his political situation. He hopes he will convey a good image to the public in order to secure the esteem of other men, and immunity from the ridicule of those who called his son a saint-simonian.

There is proof, however, that Lucien decides to separate himself from the designs and ambitions of his father before the latter dies, thereby separating himself from the masculine model he represents to Lucien. While M. Leuwen gains favor in the Chamber of deputies he loses that of his son:

Dans cette crise ministérielle vint se joindre à ce sujet de tristesse le remords cuisant de ne pas avoir d'amitié ou de tendresse pour son père. Le chasme entre ces deux êtres était trop profond. Tout ce qui, à tort ou à raison, paraissait sublime, généreux, tendre à Lucien, toutes les choses desquelles il pensait qu'il était noble de mourir pour elles, ou beau de vivre avec elles, étaient des sujets de bonne plaisanterie pour son père et une duperie à ses yeux.

(This ministerial crisis was joined by the sad subject of the bitter remorse of not having any friendship or tenderness for his father. The chasm between these two beings was too deep. Anything that, whether rightly or wrongly, seemed sublime, generous, or tender to Lucien, everything that he felt it was noble to die for or beautiful to live with were the subjects of good jokes for his father and silliness in his eyes.) [T. II. 362]

This revelation precedes Lucien's resolution to "wake himself up" and recognize that in this affair : « je n'ai à ménager dans tout ceci que le cœur de ma mère et la vanité de mon père. » ("I

do not have anything to manage but the heart of my mother and the vanity of my father”) [T. II 406-407]. Finally, for what concerns his independence he does not have a choice, he is separated from his father at the end of the second volume when François dies. This end to the control that François had over Lucien is not effectively achieved through any action or initiative on his behalf, and, in fact, one could argue that Lucien might have even stayed in the job that François gave him and continued following his instructions for a while had he not died. But the narrator makes it clear that Lucien has internally rejected the idea of being like his dad. He does not want to act like his father in the domains of work and love.

The notion that Lucien could ever “free himself” from his mother or his father itself needs to be problematized because it is this action that is supposed to “make him a man.” It is clear that he rejects his father’s ideal vision of masculinity by refusing the love that he did not gain or pursue by his own means and criticizing his father’s non-sublime character, but this internal resentment or rejection of his father’s masculinity needs to be distinguished from the performative *bildung* act of “liberating himself” from his father that Lucien does not ever do. It is not sufficient to say that he refused the “love object” that his father insisted that he take, but rather that he rejected the masculine model that M. Leuwen incarnated and Lucien hated. *Bildung* is rejected at the end of *Lucien Leuwen* because no act of liberation from the paternal figure, or desire to continue learning how to perform in order to “become a man,” exists on behalf of the protagonist of the unfinished novel.

### CHAPTER III. THE NON-BILDUNG OF FABRICE DEL DONGO

*Ce qu'on appelle amour, ajoutait-il, serait-ce donc encore un mensonge ? J'aime sans doute, comme j'ai bon appétit à six heures ! Serait-ce cette propension quelque peu vulgaire dont ces menteurs auraient fait l'amour d'Othello, l'amour de Tancrède ? ou bien faut-il croire que je suis organisé autrement que les autres hommes ? Mon âme manquerait d'une passion, pourquoi cela ? ce serait une singulière destinée!*

(That which one calls love, he added, could it be just a lie? I love without a doubt, like I am hungry at six o'clock! Could it be from this somewhat vulgar propensity that those liars made the love of Othello, the love of Tancred? Or should I believe that I am organized differently than other men? My soul might lack a passion, why that? That would be a peculiar destiny!)

-Fabrice del Dongo, *La Chartreuse de Parme*

An analysis of Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme* (*The Charterhouse of Parma*) is essential for a study of problematic masculinities in Beyle's work and, in a more specific sense, for an investigation of the disruption of masculine narratives in his novels associated with the *Bildungsroman* genre. While the work's direct relationship with the genre as it is constructed by its theorists is not explicitly defined, one of its major contributions to this current endeavor is the

unique national and cultural background of protagonist Fabrice del Dongo. His context differs from that of the other Stendhalian novel “heroes” who hail from the specific milieu of political instability and male-malaise characteristic of Restoration France and the July Monarchy. This distinction demonstrates that not only is it impossible for boys to become men in post-Napoleonic France for Stendhal, but that the impossibility of becoming surpasses national borders. An exploration of Stendhal’s Italian imaginary and its implication for masculine gender performances will form a necessary base for a discussion of the problematic nature of *bildung*, desire, and initiation in *La Chartreuse de Parme*. Such a discussion will reveal the ways in which Fabrice’s experiences and difficulties remain unique among his fictional contemporaries while reflecting some deep intratextual trends in Stendhal’s narratives. I am attempting to underline these masculine difficulties in this investigation that problematizes the construction of the *Bildungsroman* genre.

Italy played an important role in Stendhal’s life and works, and the Italian imaginary that he constructs in *La Chartreuse de Parme* must be the result of some combination of his readings from the Italian Renaissance up until the end of the eighteenth century, the stories he was told and the experiences that he accumulated during his own travels and work in the country. Indeed, Michel Crouzet confirms that at least one of Fabrice’s misadventures is directly taken from Italian manuscripts detailing an assassination of a rival organized by the Cardinal Aldobrandini (25). But while Stendhal’s narrative is verisimilar, its context actually represents a fusion of disparate historical and individual milieux. No Farnese reigned over Parma during the nineteenth century and the totalitarian flavor Stendhal gives to the city was inaccurate enough to merit a reproach by Balzac (Crouzet 24). According to Stendhal scholar Michel Crouzet:

Stendhal a allié l'incertitude géographique à la confusion des plans temporels ; les deux erreurs font une vérité mythique. [...] 'La Chartreuse' pourrait être un roman historique, à l'instar de Scott ou de Manzoni. Avec plus de profondeur, Stendhal a joué de la confusion des temps ; toujours le passé descend dans le présent du roman, et le présent lui-même est le répondant d'un ascendant lointain et prestigieux.

(Stendhal combined geographic uncertainty with the confusion of temporal planes; the two errors make a mythic truth. [...] 'The Charterhouse' could be a historic novel, like Scott's or Manzoni's. With more depth, Stendhal has played with the confusion of time; the past is constantly descending in the present of the novel, and the present itself is the guarantor of a distant and prestigious ascendant.) [25]

It is important to identify and outline the specificity of this "mythic truth" and the mélange of temporal planes that comes to define the setting of the novel in order to discuss their implications for gender expectations governing masculine behavior, and therefore *bildung*, in order to show how the problems and failures of formation and initiation transcend space as well as time in Stendhal's novels.

Free from the discontents of modernity that constrain nineteenth-century French society and render it banal, Fabrice's homeland is impassioned and irrational, a land governed by the imagination. Stendhal makes it clear from the beginning of the novel that his Italy has only experienced tremors of the earthquakes of the French Revolution and Enlightenment Rationalism. This is significant because his portrayal makes Italy seem to be a more exotic, and a less "civilized" setting than France. He demarcates the Italian setting from French socio-historical realities by alluding to a tyrannical (and historically misplaced) absolute monarchy in Parma, the superstitious religious convictions of Fabrice that would be out of place in Parisian

society, and a noteworthy lack of modern capitalist influence on the Italian countryside. In a French setting these manifestations of traditional and conservative ways of life would be constantly under attack and as unstable as the political institutions of the period, but they are relatively unwavering in this constructed Italian pre-modern context.

Fabrice is raised in the *château de Grianta* and in the second chapter of the first book of the novel his aunt, Gina del Dongo, describes the region surrounding the castle in the following way:

Le lac de Côme, se disait-elle, n'est point environné, comme le lac de Genève, de grandes pièces de terre bien closes et cultivées selon les meilleures méthodes, choses qui rappellent l'argent et la spéculation. Ici de tous côtés je vois des collines d'inégales hauteurs couvertes de bouquets d'arbres plantés par le hasard, et que la main de l'homme n'a point encore gâtés et forcés à rendre du revenu... Tout est noble et tendre, tout parle d'amour, rien ne rappelle les laideurs de la civilisation.

(Lake Como, she said to herself, is not at all surrounded like Lake Geneva by great pieces of land that are closed off and cultivated according to the best methods, things that recall money and speculation. Here on all sides I see hills of unequal heights covered by bouquets of trees planted by chance, and that the hand of man still has not ruined and forced to produce revenue. Everything is noble and tender, everything speaks of love, and nothing recalls the ugliness of civilization.) [58]

The peaceful landscape surrounding Lake Como that Stendhal describes differs strikingly from his description of the path to Verrières in *Le Rouge et le Noir* that is problematized (and indeed, ruined) by the presence of a nail factory imposed upon an otherwise sublime setting, and this difference should not go unnoticed. It is important to acknowledge that Fabrice has grown up in



an environment beyond the reach of exploitative capitalism and, more importantly, “civilization,” because it signals to the reader that there is supposed to be something “primitive” or unique about his character. The Stendhalian representation of Italy will go on to parallel that of his characterization of Fabrice as it is precisely the distance both the setting and protagonist maintain from modern “civilization” that makes them sublime. The unspoiled tree-laden hills surrounding Lake Como do not invoke the problems and hassles of money and industrialization and signal to the reader that, unlike Julien and Lucien, Fabrice is free from the constraints of modern civilization to develop an unproblematic identity.

This exceptional context has diverse implications for expectations concerning masculine gender performances. For Stendhal, Italian masculinities are supposed to be naturally unproblematic, (free from the pathologies and insecurities of modernity that haunt French masculinities like the land is free from industry), and, above all, defined by a great and all-consuming heterosexual romantic passion. Nonetheless, the quote that I used to introduce this chapter alerts us to the fact that Fabrice has a problem precisely because he lacks a passionate love at the beginning of the text, but that will be addressed later. It helps us to see, however, that the Italian male should only be dedicated to sublime occupations such as God or Country, and even then he must be even more devoted to his mistress. The Italian nationalism was just beginning at the time of the early *Risorgimento* movement after the fall of Napoleon. Apparently, because of Napoleon’s defeat and the loss of this French national hero, Stendhal does not think French men are capable of being consumed by such passions, but he finds hope for encountering a sublime man in Italy.

Stendhal’s short story “*Vanina Vanini*” (1829) provides further evidence of this model for masculinity. Young Italian nationalist Pietro Missirilli finds that he can only dedicate himself to

one mistress, and he convinces himself that he must eventually choose the cause of Italian unification over the charming princess Vanina. Pietro is not very successful at separating himself from his lover, however, and returns to her multiple times when she seeks his company. Eventually Vanina betrays his cause and revolutionary comrades who are imprisoned or killed while he is visiting her in her chateau, so that she would always have his full attention. Missirilli is ashamed of his absence from the revolutionary meeting, though, and hands himself over to the authorities to be with his compatriots in prison to Vanina's dismay.

At the end of the story he asks her to leave him alone in prison and bids her farewell: « Adieu, Vanina ; promettez-moi de ne jamais m'écrire, de ne jamais chercher à me voir ; laissez-moi tout à la patrie, je suis mort pour vous : adieu. » (“Farewell, Vanina; promise me to never write me, to never attempt to see me; leave me all to the motherland, I am dead to you: farewell” [67].) Pietro must constantly push Vanina away from him so that he will be able to be more devoted to the Nation than his romantic interest in order to contradict a statement Napoleon made about Italian men being more interested in discussing liberty with their lovers than acting to achieve it, a statement that Missirilli apparently adopted as a personal challenge (39). What we learn about Italian masculinities as they are interpreted by Stendhal and echoed through the words of Bonaparte in this story is that, even if an Italian should have another passion or object of devotion, his mistress shall always retain the most central part of his focus and attentions. Therefore this female love interest becomes an essential part of what it means to be Italian and a man.

Fabrice initially lacks this essential attribute of amorous passion before he sees Clelia on his way to the Citadel and this problem, the lack of a love-object, along with the initial lack of a career as well as his youth are red-flag themes that relate the novel to the discourse of the

*Bildungsroman* genre. *La Chartreuse de Parme* is only very loosely associated with the *Bildungsroman* in the criticism that has been the object of this study. Gregory Castle extensively discusses Julien Sorel and Stendhal without explicitly mentioning Fabrice, but he does delineate a “French *Bildungromans*” tradition and alludes to Stendhal’s heroes in such a way that one could presume he is including the young Italian as part of the discussion (15). In his epilogue to *Apprenticeships*, Thomas Jeffers lists books he read in his youth that “help us understand what as adolescents and young adults we have been going through” (185), naming *La Chartreuse* as part of the “wider range [...] of the novel panoramically focused on the state of a society or nation” (185). Whether or not this means it should be included in the *Bildungsroman* tradition according to Jeffers remains ambiguous, but this does not seem fundamentally important to my discussion as the problems Fabrice faces parallel some of those motifs that Jeffers establishes as constitutive of the constructed genre.

Indeed, the general notion of pedagogy is central to the entire novel and it never fails to, well, *fail* throughout the course of the text. This is especially true when the learning that is meant to occur is concerned with work or love as it is always overridden by one of Fabrice’s seemingly unproblematic inclinations or impulses. An analysis centered on those two areas of vocation and love, which are minor problems or concerns at the beginning of the novel and both “resolved,” albeit problematically at its end, will underline the tension between the representation of the difficulties masculinities encounter and the sublime and idealized nature of Italian masculinities in the text.

Before discussing the specifics of Fabrice’s formations as they relate to love and work, however, it will be useful to outline his general relationship to individualized and institutionalized pedagogy as it is described by Stendhal. At the age of ten Fabrice still does not

know how to read (48). Within the first ten pages of the novel he is described by his aunt and mother as a young man who is « ignorant à plaisir, et sachant à peine écrire » (“happily uneducated, and barely knowing how to write”) [48] and « peu instruit » (“poorly educated”) [50]. Gina must bribe the head of the Jesuit middle school he attends with her protection later on when Fabrice lives with her and her husband so that he will win some academic prizes. Even though at the end of the school year he is « plus ignorant que jamais » (“more ignorant than ever”), he still wins five prizes [48].

In these passages, Stendhal is highlighting a resistance to “becoming civilized” that Fabrice exhibits from a very young age. He manages, however to be « singulier, spirituel, fort sérieux, mais joli garçon » (“remarkable, witty, highly serious, but a handsome boy”) [48] without any difficulties or need for instruction. This precedent of rejected pedagogy sets the tone of resistance to outside pressures or models that Stendhal’s narrator claims Fabrice can boast in matters of love, while he actually demonstrates how models and societal pressures come to play a role in his career and military aspirations and thereby nullifies the narrator’s claims that he resists such imitation of others. In fact, I shall argue that Fabrice’s very acknowledgement of his lacking or missing a passion is evidence of his employing models as precedents for masculine behaviors in his amorous encounters. Such an acknowledgement surely draws into question and makes one suspicious of his sudden and intense attraction to Clélia Conti. Indeed, Fabrice’s interest in warfare that only serves to get him into trouble and his acknowledged problematic lack of a love interest display to what extent he is like the other *Bildungsroman* heroes in their problematic relationships with their masculine models, potential careers, and female love-interests.

Before Fabrice ever sets foot on a battlefield, the reader knows why he is drawn to an idealized military career. At a time when he was a young child who was ready to learn how to read,

Le marquis son père exigea qu'on lui montrât le latin, non point d'après ces vieux auteurs qui parlent toujours des républiques, mais sur un magnifique volume orné de plus de cent gravures, chef-d'œuvre des artistes du XVIIe siècle ; c'était la généalogie latine des Valserra, marquis del Dongo, publiée en 1650 par Fabrice del Dongo, archevêque de Parme. La fortune des Valserra étant surtout militaire, les gravures représentaient force batailles, et toujours on voyait quelque héros de ce nom donnant de grands coups d'épée. Ce livre plaisait fort au jeune Fabrice.

(His father the Marquis demanded that he be shown Latin, not according to those old authors which are always talking of republics, but in a magnificent volume decorated with more than one hundred engravings, a masterpiece of seventeenth century artists; it was the Latin genealogy of the Valserras, the Marquises of Dongo, published in 1650 by Fabrice del Dongo, archbishop of Parma. The Valserra fortune being above all military, the engravings represented many battles, and one always saw some hero of that name inflicting great blows with his sword.) [48]

Fabrice's father wants him to appreciate this text that glorifies his family's history more than he wants him to learn to read Latin. He does not want his son to be exposed to the classical philosopher's writings about republics but, rather, he wishes to pass on to him some type of patriarchal knowledge and pride surrounding what it means to be a Valserra and to be a man. Battles, warriors, and the sword are glorified in the engravings which capture his interest through visual stimulation while the prose bores him.

It is no surprise, therefore, that while Fabrice's literary and philosophical educations have failed, his patriarchal masculine education seems to have succeeded at first: Fabrice is passionate about becoming a soldier and fighting for Napoleon. His aunt Gina will later comment, after he returns from Waterloo and runs into trouble with the Italian authorities, that his joining Napoleon's army was « une véritable étourderie de jeunesse » (“a truly thoughtless youthful action”) [116]. Explaining why he chose to follow Napoleon, she says:

Vous savez que j'avais, dans mon bel appartement du palais Dugnani, les estampes des batailles gagnées par Napoléon : c'est en lisant les légendes de ces gravures que mon neveu apprit à lire.

(You know I had in my handsome Dugnani Palace apartment images of battles won by Napoleon: it was by reading the legends of these engravings that my nephew learned how to read.) [116]

This excuse for his politically unacceptable behavior explains his passion for Napoleon which is developed while he is being taught to read Italian by Gina in the same way that his interest in battle was inspired by the drawings from the genealogy which was supposedly meant to teach him Latin. Fabrice finds in Napoleon the type of hero worthy of a seventeenth century artist's representation in these stamps and he passionately desires to be a gallant soldier and to meet the Emperor.

At first glance it appears that, indeed, Fabrice has been quick to adopt and perform a patriarchal masculinity. He believes in his ancestors' glory and the glory of Napoleon. He desires to become a soldier, to see gunfire, to really make war, and participate in battle. How much he desires to become a hero is evident during his description of Marshall Ney when he first sees him:

Le maréchal s'arrêta, et regarda de nouveau avec sa lorgnette. Fabrice, cette fois, put le voir tout à son aise ; il le trouva très blond, avec une grosse tête rouge. Nous n'avons point des figures comme celle-là en Italie, se dit-il. Jamais, moi qui suis si pâle et qui ai des cheveux châtain, je ne serai comme ça, ajoutait-il avec tristesse. Pour lui ces paroles voulaient dire : Jamais je ne serai un héros.

(The Marshall stopped himself, and looked again with his spyglass. This time Fabrice could see him easily; he found him to be very blond, with a red fat head. We do not have any figures like that in Italy, he told himself. I who am so pale and with dark hair, I will never be like that he added sadly. For him these words meant: I will never be a hero.)

[77]

This encounter relates back to Fabrice's fascination with the engravings of the Valserra warriors and Napoleon which make him think that one must convey a certain image in order to be a hero. After checking out Marshall Ney, Fabrice is discouraged because he does not share his Italian features. His desire to be a hero is so great that he thinks that it is not enough to merely act like Marshall Ney, he must look like him too.

By what mechanisms can one explain this *bildung* or the gendering of Fabrice as a masculine subject? In the First Book of *La Chartreuse*, his interests and interactions are clearly homosocial. The Sedgwickian model of triangular desire, however, only goes so far to explain his situation. It is clear that Fabrice is identifying with another man (Napoleon or Marshall Ney), or multiple men (his own fighting ancestors), and I will shortly draw attention to how it is also explicit that he has a homosocial desire for these men, but his initial lack of a female love-object makes him an imperfect example for the Sedgwickian triangular model. This simultaneously

distinguishes him from his contemporary, Julien Sorel, who clearly invokes his models or the men with whom he identifies to guide him in his interactions with women.

Fabrice is also unlike Julien and a male from the Sedgwickian model in that he does not seem to be interested in competing with other men for either women or greatness but, rather, he wishes to befriend them and participate in a war with them that is a « noble et commun élan d'âmes amantes de la gloire » (“noble and common movement of glory-loving souls”) [82]. He is very disappointed when his fellow soldiers betray his trust by stealing his horse because he thought they had forged true metaphysical bonds after he bought enough brandy to share with all of them on the battlefield. The idealized vision of warfare he holds as it is articulated by the narrator is revealing in that, structurally speaking, the reader's attention is first drawn to the fact that he wants war to be a pursuit between *âmes amantes* (loving souls). This remains ambiguous or suggestive even after that prepositional phrase *de la gloire* (of glory) is added to define their common love-object. This presence of a common love-object of *glory* shared between men in the place of a woman suggests that alternative forms of symbolic property can find themselves at the apex of Sedgwick's pyramid while maintaining a cohesive model for male homosocial desire. Glory relates to rivalry, which forms a fundamental part of the Sedgwickian model of homosociality, insofar as men essentially compete with each other in order to win glory and gain the symbolic capital of the honors and awards of other men. But Fabrice strays from the archetypal homosocial ideal insofar as he is uninterested in competing for glory, but rather he wishes to share it with other males who aspire to be glorious. He is distinct from Julien in that he does not have any use for ambition as he is already a *marchesino* who enjoys the privileges of the noble and higher classes by default, but he takes the most pleasure in nature, battles, and horses, none of which require him to be ambitious.



No matter how much Fabrice desires to be a hero, though, it quickly becomes evident at Waterloo that he is not a competent soldier. His interest in being a military man does not correspond with his talents or capabilities because he lacks experience and is easily distracted by the pompous theatricality of the military experience while he remains ignorant and inept when it comes to practical battlefield matters. In the midst of the action he is more concerned about whether he can say that he has really been to war than actually achieving any common military objective or aiding in the advance of the French army. He is not even officially a member of any squadron or troop and merely buys himself a handsome horse and joins up with a brigade in order to see gunfire and participate in the battle. After wandering around the battlefield for the better part of a day, he is concerned that he is not going to have the chance to shoot a gun and, therefore, will not really be able to say that he fought in a battle. When the moment arrives to attack an incoming soldier, he gets excited:

Enfin je vais me battre réellement, se disait-il, tuer un ennemi ! [...] il suivit bien le cavalier du bout de son fusil et enfin pressa la détente ; le cavalier tomba avec son cheval. Notre héros se croyait à la chasse : il courut tout joyeux sur la pièce qu'il venait d'abattre. Il touchait déjà l'homme qui lui semblait mourant, lorsque, avec une rapidité incroyable deux cavaliers prussiens arrivèrent sur lui pour le sabrer. Fabrice se sauva à toutes jambes vers le bois ; pour mieux courir il jeta son fusil.

(Finally I am really going to fight, he said to himself, kill an enemy! [...] he followed the soldier with the tip of his gun and finally pressed the trigger: the soldier fell with his horse. Our hero thought he was hunting: he ran joyously to the piece he had just killed. He touched the man that already seemed to be dying when, with incredible speed, two

Prussian soldiers arrived to saber him. Fabrice saved himself directing both legs towards the woods: in order to run better he threw away his gun.) [85]

Again, this reflection demonstrates how he is attempting to participate in the reproduction of a scene from one of the engravings he saw in his youth. He is going to achieve this imitation by killing someone who will play the role of an enemy. When the narrator tells us that Fabrice thinks he is hunting, the reader realizes that he is not actually conscious of the actual danger he is in, the harm he is causing to another human, or the larger strategic significance of his actions. But rather, he is participating in a game or sport, reliving an experience that he thinks he recognizes by its familiarity and rules.

Most unsurprisingly, Fabrice's military career fails before it truly even begins, even though he really did think that he would one day have such a profession (145). Count Mosca tells Gina that Fabrice cannot hope to become a general in Italy after having fought for Napoleon at Waterloo and declares: « Ainsi la carrière militaire pour Fabrice, c'est la vie de l'écureuil dans la cage qui tourne : beaucoup de mouvement pour n'avancer en rien. » (“So a military career for Fabrice is the life of a squirrel in a turning cage: a lot of movement advancing nowhere”) [143]. In order to guarantee a no-less honorable future for his lover's nephew, however, he promises to make him a bishop somewhere and, eventually, the Archbishop of Parma (143). This change of career plans is initially a disappointment for Fabrice who is touched that his aunt is so concerned about his well-being that she helps secure him such a prestigious position, but upset that he will not be able to become one of the men from the engravings. Since, as I already remarked, he was concerned when he realized he would not be able to be Marshall Ney because he does not look like him, it follows that he should be very disappointed when he does not even get to continue to “follow in his footsteps” professionally.

*Bildung* has failed here in the matter of careers for multiple reasons. Not only has Fabrice failed to become a soldier (thereby falling short of Buckeley's initiation and integration requirements), but it also seems like he has not left the battlefield with any new experience or knowledge that will serve him later on in life and help him through the so-named continuous vertical process of learning to be and becoming a man (thereby not satisfying Jeffer's requirements). This lack of learning any lesson from the "school of life" seems impossible, and yet we know that when Fabrice kills an enemy he thinks he is hunting, when he is betrayed by his comrades he is very deeply hurt, and in all instances his pride has suffered more damage than his particular way of viewing the world. He does not reason, moralize, or draw conclusions from his misadventures, but rather he remains concerned with peripheral and superficial aspects of each situation. Fabrice's return to Italy from Waterloo and the sudden change in his career's direction bring new challenges with them, specifically as they relate to another highly-regulated "coming of age" ritual: the love interest.

Upon Fabrice's return, a canon informs him of the multiple conditions of his exile, which is to take place at Romagnan. Aside from being obliged to go to mass every day, take a royalist confessor, and show that he does not like to read any works printed after 1720, one of the conditions of Fabrice's return is that he have a mistress. Specifically:

ajouta le chanoine avec un peu de malice, il faut surtout qu'il fasse ouvertement la cour à quelqu'une des jolies femmes du pays, de la classe noble, bien entendu ; cela montrera qu'il n'a pas le génie sombre et mécontent d'un conspirateur en herbe.

(the canon added, slightly maliciously, above-all he must openly court some pretty girl from the country, of the noble class of course ; this will show that he does not have the somber and unhappy tendencies of a budding conspirator.) [119]

Like he did in *Lucien Leuwen*, Stendhal is underlining the peculiar role a masculine homosocial order assigns women when they are needed to perform some socially integrative function for a male of questionable political loyalties. In this system, the woman is used as a symbol or an accessory worn by a male wishing to display some type of political affiliation reflective of a conservative masculine social order to other men. Fabrice finds this requirement amusing and follows it to the letter, but he is more interested in his horse and his newspaper than his “well-thinking mistress” (119).

In fact, at this point in his life he is generally more enamored with his horses than he is with women. Indeed, the contrast between his lack of desire for female companionship and the pleasure he takes in riding horses is frequently invoked when he begins to think that maybe he is different than other men because he is not enamored of a woman:

Mais n'est-ce pas une chose bien plaisante, se disait-il quelquefois, que je ne sois pas susceptible de cette préoccupation exclusive et passionnée qu'ils appellent de l'amour ? Parmi les liaisons que le hasard m'a données à Novare ou à Naples, ai-je jamais rencontré de femme dont la présence, même dans les premiers jours, fût pour moi préférable à une promenade sur un joli cheval inconnu ?

(Isn't it amusing, he told himself sometimes, that I am not susceptible to that exclusive and passionate preoccupation called love? Among the liaisons that chance has brought me at Novare or Naples have I ever found a woman whose presence, even in the first days, was preferable to me than a ride on a pretty unknown horse?) [237]

The horse is a masculine symbol for Fabrice, taken directly from the battlefield and the mythological image of the pre-modern ideal male that Fabrice assimilated through the study of

his family's seventeenth century genealogy.<sup>4</sup> His constantly switching and riding different anonymous horses during his mishaps at Waterloo and, especially, his preference for spending time with his horse once he returns to Italy show his desire to remain within the homosocial imaginary. Men judge other men by the quality of their horses, and one can imagine that Fabrice's "pretty unknown horses" replace women as forms of symbolic property in the homosocial order. It is when he acknowledges that he finds spending time with his horses to be more enjoyable than engaging in sentimental activities with his female companions, though, that Fabrice discovers that he might be "organized differently than other men" (237).

The narrator attributes his lack of an amorous passion for women to his having « l'âme trop haute pour chercher à imiter les autres jeunes gens, et, par exemple, pour vouloir jouer avec un certain sérieux le rôle d'amoureux » ("a too-elevated soul to seek to imitate other young people and, for example, to desire to seriously play the role of a lover") [155]. This means that the narrator finds him sublime because he is not seeking to mimic boys his age, but we know the narrator is mistaken in this observation as far as it relates to his former career ambitions and homosocial identification with fighting men, so how can we be sure that it holds true for his amorous life as well? Fabrice himself contradicts this assertion in acknowledging his perceived singularity among his masculine contemporaries for his lack of spontaneity in his love life and, later, in pursuing romantic adventures with the young actress Marietta and the opera star La Fausta merely for the sake of attempting to force an amorous passion upon himself. After both attempts fail, one ending in the murder of a jealous rival and yet another exile while the other ends in a republican uprising in Parma, Fabrice admits that he was not even truly devoted to these young women:

---

<sup>4</sup> Earlier references to Fabrice's preference for and love of horses, which are explicitly set up in opposition to his lack of amorous passion for women, can be found on pages 119, 143, and 187.

J'étais amoureux de l'amour, disait-il à la duchesse; j'ai fait tout au monde pour le connaître, mais il paraît que la nature m'a refusé un coeur pour aimer et être mélancolique; je ne puis m'élever plus haut que le vulgaire plaisir, etc., etc.....

(I was in love with love, he told the duchess; I did everything I could to know it, but it seems that nature refused me a heart to love and be melancholic; I cannot elevate myself above the vulgar pleasure, etc. etc...) [251]

His adventures in courting La Fausta were a staged performance meant to produce in him a certain emotion that he did not feel for the singer. Unlike Octave from *Armance*, Fabrice is able to enjoy sexual relations with women in an unproblematic fashion (one gets the impression that Stendhal even constructs him as a good lover due to his fine looks and natural prowess), but Lee Brotherson has identified him as « un impuissant sentimental » (“a sentimental impotent”).

What is the significance of this sentimental impotency? It is problematic because it does not correspond with the imagined Italian masculine ideal that Stendhal constructs in the opening chapters of *La Chartreuse* and in his Italian short story *Vanina Vanini*, and it does not make up part of the ideal to which Fabrice has compared himself during his lifetime. In Italy, men are supposed to have a mistress and be wildly passionate about her. Fabrice has had lovers, but he has lacked a passion.

This is true, anyways, until he becomes enamored with Clélia Conti as he is escorted to the Farnese Tower after he is eventually arrested for having killed Marietta's lover Giletti. When Fabrice falls for Clélia it seems that he is finally meeting the norms for masculine behavior in Italy as they are established by Stendhal's specific context for the novel, but there is nothing normative about the way these two young lovers live out their romance. Now that Fabrice has become enamored with a woman it seems that, actually, his love interest could actually be

described as a feminine passion. He does not insist on taking a traditional “active role” in his love for Clélia defying family, Nation, and even death in order to “have her,” but rather he takes pleasure in being in the more passive position of the prison cell (in an imposing Citadel whose towering phallic structure is symbolic of masculine power), reproaching himself for having been so libertine with the girls from Naples and Romagnon in his past (397). He can watch her there from this cell and contemplate his love for her without interruption. He says of the view from his window:

C'est donc dans ce monde ravissant que vit Clélia Conti ! avec son âme pensive et sérieuse, elle doit jouir de cette vue plus qu'un autre ; on est ici comme dans des montagnes solitaires à cent lieues de Parme. Ce ne fut qu'après avoir passé plus de deux heures à la fenêtre, admirant cet horizon qui parlait à son âme, et souvent aussi arrêtant sa vue sur le joli palais du gouverneur que Fabrice s'écria tout à coup : Mais ceci est-il une prison ? est-ce là ce que j'ai tant redouté ? Au lieu d'apercevoir à chaque pas des désagréments et des motifs d'aigreur, notre héros se laissait charmer par les douceurs de la prison.

(This is the ravishing world that Clélia Conti sees then! With her pensive and serious soul she should enjoy this view more than another; here it is as if one is in the solitary mountains a hundred leagues from Parma. It was not until after having passed more than two hours at the window, admiring this horizon that spoke to his soul, and often stopping his regard on the pretty palace of the governor as well that Fabrice suddenly cried: But this is a prison? Is this what I dreaded? Instead of perceiving disagreement with every step and causes for sourness, our hero let himself be charmed by the sweetness of the prison.) [324]

This is an inverse maiden in a tower scenario that Fabrice has clearly come to enjoy, which transforms the maiden into a male and removes the distress from the cliché formula. His prison is transformed into a sublime space from which he does not want to be saved (368) and his contemplation of Clélia is almost that of a devout mystic, reveling in the glory of her love from afar. But can such a pleasure form part of a *Bildung* experience?

The reason why *bildung* has failed in matters of love for Fabrice, just as it has in the matter of his career, is because its ultimate goal is to form masculine subjects who fit into a homosocial and patriarchal order. Granted, the result of Fabrice's experiences and personality is a male who *has* achieved a great passion, but it is one which has effeminized him according to the gender rules of that same system which pushed him to develop a passion.

Perhaps the ending of the novel itself is most illuminating as to why the passion of Fabrice is not an "achieved" one. After he has fallen in love with Clélia he is not at all interested in pursuing other romances, even though his position as the Archbishop of Parma could procure him other women, especially due to his moving predications, and he continues to live out his love for her in a mystical and extraordinary fashion. Due to the oaths she made to the Virgin while saving Fabrice from the Citadel, and therefore betraying her father, Clélia will only meet him in a dark unlit apartment where she cannot see him (504). After their child dies, Clélia dies out of guilt and Fabrice only survives a year in *La Chartreuse*, passing away before seeing the age of 30. No *bildung* is achieved in *La Chartreuse de Parme*. At the end of the novel both the masculine career and amorous conduct the "hero" was supposed to have assimilated are altered or inversed before his untimely death, which leaves no room to speculate whether or not he has been initiated into the masculine social order. At the end of the novel, Fabrice's natural and spirited character, which were supposed to bring him closer to an Italian masculine ideal, have



left him heart-broken and dead, far from being the “achieved” young man *bildung* was supposed to make him.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study of Stendhal and the Bildungsroman has highlighted how boys do not become men in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, *Lucien Leuwen*, and *La Chartreuse de Parme*. A more complete investigation of problematic masculinities in the work of Marie-Henri Beyle, however, would include a detailed analysis of at least three of the older male characters in these novels. It would be particularly useful, I think, to consider the Marquis de la Mole, François Leuwen, and Count Mosca as examples of successful men that still show fissures or cracks in their gendered performances. An examination of their personal ruminations, the ways in which they interact with their younger male counterparts, and how they manage their political affairs would reveal that their own identities remain unstable even as they manage to perform a heteronormative masculinity which allows them to function in their respective social milieus. Such a study would help destabilize the notion of *bildung*, also, by showing that even the “initiated” have not “become” the infallible masculine figures they are expected to be.

When we consider the stories of the three young protagonists together, common themes and problems become apparent: these range from the protagonists’ respective struggles with employment and love, to their universal admiration for Napoleon. Portraits, genealogies, and other representations of masculine models exert pressures on each of these characters to pursue a career proper of a general, a “spirited man,” or a distant ancestor who was an Archbishop of Parma. Their ability to succeed in each of these careers will depend on their ability to perform,

whether that entails memorizing the Bible in Latin, ruining the election of a dangerous deputy, or leading moving masses that make women weep. To become men these boys must learn how to behave like men through *bildung*, but, ultimately, none of them are able to survive in the homosocial order that the pressures of *bildung* place them in.

Napoleon represents a masculine ideal for Julien, Lucien, and Fabrice, that they will never be able to attain, and the imagined memory of the General helps drive their performances at some point or another towards a normative mimetic model of masculinity so that they might share in his Glory. Homosociality in Stendhal, then, can be both a sublime and a vulgar mechanism. It is partially sublime because Glory is concerned with transcending the normal and banal and serves as symbolic capital in the homosocial order that is granted an elevated position in the eyes of men. The same order, however, is vulgar because Glory is at the service of power within the homosocial model. It is earned by serving the interests of the established ruling powers, and none of the young non-heroes is able to satisfy the demands of those who are in control.

The collective analysis of shared themes in these three novels also suggests that Stendhal's approach to the representation of male subjectivity evolved over the course of a decade, and that this evolution can be accounted for by his own aging. During the nine years between the writing of *Le Rouge et le Noir* and *La Chartreuse de Parme* Stendhal was drifting further and further away from the days of his youth and the glory of Napoleon on the continuum of time. This passage of time coincides with a shift in the subject of the most intensely insecure male ruminations between *Le Rouge et le Noir* and *La Chartreuse de Parme*.

Julien Sorel is the character who dwells on the problematic nature of his masculine performances the most in the first novel, and he is a young admirer of Napoleon who is in the

process of trying to “conquer” women like his hero did. In the later work, however, the young protagonist, Fabrice, appears to have a less problematic relationship with his own masculine subjectivity, while the Count Mosca must worry about threats to his masculinity because his amorous and political prowess hang by a thread. The fact that Stendhal dictated *La Chartreuse* and the implications of its orality make it all the more probable that these changes represent a shift in personal insecurities from a younger to an older Beyle, voicing his concerns about his own problematic relationship to aging and masculine performances through Mosca. Further investigation of this topic should be carried out via *Vie de Henry Brulard* as well, which demonstrates how these ruminations continued to haunt the author until the end of his life.

Ultimately, the novels that make up the corpus of my investigation are case studies of *non-bildung* that can be conceived as narratives that demystify the process of aging and the myth of a linear transitioning from boyhood to manhood. A theoretical approach similar to the one used to examine these young protagonists’ actions and thought processes should be applied to other so-called *Bildungsroman* works in order to show how they either align themselves with or reject the idea of the ideological formation of heteronormative masculinity in the male subject through their portrayal of young men.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Badinter, Elisabeth. *XY De l'identité masculine*. Paris : Éditions Odile Jacob, 1992.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Masculine Domination*. Trans Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Brenkman, John. *Straight Male Modern: A Cultural Critique of Psychoanalysis*. NY: Routledge, 1993.
- Brotherson, Lee. « Fabrice del Dongo...impuissant sentimental? » *Stendhal Club*. Oct. 1975. V. 69. (46-55).
- « Lucien Leuwen ou la crise de l'enfance. » *Stendhal Club: Revue Internationale d'études Stendhaliennes Nouvelle Serie Revue Trimestrielle*. 18 (1975): 137.
- Buckley, Jerome Hamilton. *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- “Melancholy Gender, Refused Identification”. Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson, eds., *Constructing Masculinity*, pp. 21-36. New York & London: Routledge, 1995.
- Castle, Gregory. *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006.

- Crouzet, Michel. *La Chartreuse de Parme*. Introduction. Paris : Garnier-Flammarion, 1964.
- Hoog, Armand. « Le 'rôle' de Julien. » *Stendhal Club: Revue Internationale d'études Stendhaliennes Nouvelle Série Revue Trimestrielle*. 20 (1978) : 131-42.
- Jeffers, Thomas L. *Apprenticeships: The Bildungsroman from Goethe to Santayana*.  
New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Pascal, Gabrielle. « Les Avatars de la *Bildung* dans *Lucien Leuwen*. » *Stendhal Club*. No. 118.  
(15 janvier, 1988): 171-78.
- Place, David. "Stendhal's Rhetoric of Love in 'Lucien Leuwen.'" *Modern Language Review*.  
74 (1979): 39-48.
- Redfield, Marc. *Phantom Formations: Aesthetic Ideology and the Bildungsroman*. Ithaca:  
Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Reeser, Todd W. and Lewis C. Seifert. "Oscillating Masculinity in Bourdieu's *La Domination masculine*." *L'Esprit Créateur*. Vol. XLIII, No. 3 (Fall 2003): 87-97.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New  
York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Smith, John H. "Cultivating Gender: Sexual Difference, *Bildung*, and the Bildungsroman." *Michigan Germanic Studies*. Vol. 13 (Fall 1987): 206-25.
- Stendhal. *Le Rouge et le Noir*. Paris: Garnier- Flammarion, 1964.  
*Lucien Leuwen I*. Paris: Flammarion, 1982.  
*Lucien Leuwen II*. Paris: Flammarion, 1982.  
*Vanina Vanini*. Paris : Garnier- Flammarion, 1996.  
*Vie de Henry Brulard*. Paris: Garnier-Flammarion,
- Talbot, Emile. *Stendhal Revisited*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993.