Madame Bovary

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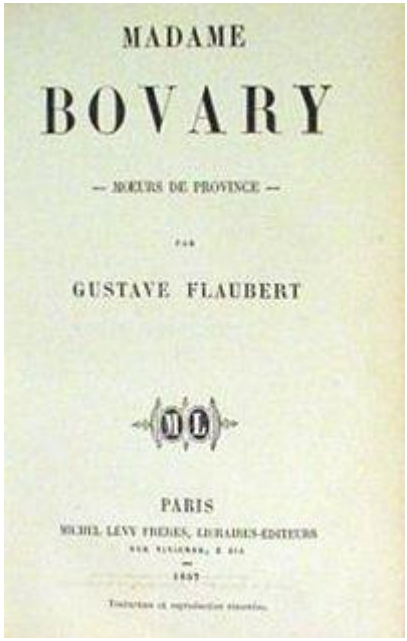
Madame Bovary



Title page of the original French edition, 1857

Author(s)	Gustave Flaubert
Country	France
Language	French
Genre(s)	Novel
Publisher	*Revue de Paris* (in serial) & Michel Lévy Frères (in book form, 2 Vols)
Publication date	1856 (in serial) & April 1857 (in book form)
Media type	Print (Hardback & Paperback)
ISBN	NA

Madame Bovary (1856) is Gustave Flaubert's first published novel and is, nonetheless, considered by many critics to be a masterpiece. The story focuses on a doctor's wife, Emma Bovary, who has adulterous affairs and lives beyond her means in order to escape the banalities and emptiness of provincial life. Though the basic plot is rather simple, even archetypal, the novel's true art lies in its details and hidden patterns. Flaubert was a notorious perfectionist and claimed always to be searching for *le mot juste* ("the right word").

When it was first serialized in *La Revue de Paris* between 1 October 1856 and 15 December 1856, the novel was attacked for obscenity by public prosecutors. The resulting trial, held in January 1857, made the story notorious. After Flaubert's acquittal on 7 February 1857, *Madame Bovary* became a bestseller when it was published as a single volume in April 1857. Flaubert's masterpiece is now considered a seminal work of Realism and one of the most influential novels ever written. In fact, the notable, British-American critic, James Woods writes in *How Fiction Works*, "Flaubert established for good or ill, what most readers think of as modern realist narration, and his influence is almost too familiar to be visible".[1]

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[edit] Plot summary

Madame Bovary takes place in provincial northern France, near the town of Rouen in Normandy. The story begins and ends with Charles Bovary, a stolid, kindhearted man without much ability or ambition. As the novel opens, Charles is a shy, oddly-dressed teenager arriving at a new school amidst the ridicule of his new classmates. Later, Charles struggles his way to a second-rate medical degree and becomes an *officier de santé* in the Public Health Service. His mother chooses a wife for him, an unpleasant but supposedly rich widow, and Charles sets out to build a practice in the village of Tostes (now Tôtes).

One day, Charles visits a local farm to set the owner's broken leg, and meets his client's daughter, Emma Rouault. Emma is a beautiful, daintily-dressed young woman who has received a "good education" in a convent and who has a latent but powerful yearning for luxury and romance imbibed from the popular novels she has read. Charles is immediately attracted to her, and begins checking on his patient far more often than necessary until his wife's jealousy puts a stop to the visits. When his wife dies, Charles waits a decent interval, then begins courting Emma in earnest. Her father gives his consent, and Emma and Charles are married.

At this point, the novel begins to focus on Emma. Charles means well, but is boring and clumsy, and after he and Emma attend a ball given by the Marquis d'Andervilliers, Emma grows disillusioned with married life and becomes dull and listless. Charles consequently decides that his wife needs a change of scenery, and moves from the village of Tostes into a larger, but equally stultifying market town, Yonville (traditionally based on the town of Ry). Here, Emma gives birth to a daughter, Berthe; however, motherhood, too, proves to be a disappointment to Emma. She then becomes infatuated with one of the first intelligent young men she meets in Yonville, a young law student, Léon Dupuis, who seems to share her appreciation for "the finer things in life", and who returns her admiration. Out of fear and shame, however, Emma hides her love for Léon and her contempt for Charles, and plays the role of the devoted wife and mother, all the while consoling herself with thoughts and self-congratulations of her own virtue. Finally, in despair of ever gaining Emma's affection, Léon departs to study in Paris.

One day, a rich and rakish landowner, Rodolphe Boulanger, brings a servant to the doctor's office to be bled. He casts his eye over Emma and decides she is ripe for seduction. To this end, he invites Emma to go riding with him for the sake of her health; solicitous only for Emma's health, Charles embraces the plan, suspecting nothing. A four-year affair follows. Swept away by romantic fantasy, Emma risks compromising herself with indiscreet letters and visits to her lover, and finally insists on making a plan to run away with him. Rodolphe, however, has no intention of carrying Emma off, and ends the relationship on the eve of the great elopement with an apologetic, self-excusing letter delivered at the bottom of a basket of apricots. The shock is so great that Emma falls deathly ill, and briefly turns to religion.

When Emma is nearly fully recovered, she and Charles attend the opera, on Charles' insistence, in nearby Rouen. The opera reawakens Emma's passions, and she re-encounters Léon who, now educated and working in Rouen, is also attending the opera. They begin an affair. While Charles believes that she is taking piano lessons, Emma travels to the city each week to meet Léon, always in the same room of the same hotel, which the two come to view as their "home." The love affair is, at first, ecstatic; then, by degrees, Léon grows bored with Emma's emotional excesses, and Emma grows ambivalent about Léon, who becoming himself more like the mistress in the relationship, compares poorly, at least implicitly, to the rakish and domineering Rodolphe. Meanwhile, Emma, given over to vanity, purchases increasing amounts of luxury items on credit from the crafty merchant, Lheureux, who arranges for her to obtain power of attorney over Charles' estate, and crushing levels of debts mount quickly.

When Lheureux calls in Bovary's debt, Emma pleads for money from several people, including Léon and Rodolphe, only to be turned down. In despair, she swallows arsenic and dies an agonizing death; even the romance of suicide fails her. Charles, heartbroken, abandons himself to grief, preserves Emma's room as if it is a shrine, and in an attempt to

keep her memory alive, adopts several of her attitudes and tastes. In his last months, he stops working and lives off the sale of his possessions. When he by chance discovers Rodolphe and Léon's love letters, he still tries to understand and forgive. Soon after, he becomes reclusive; what has not already been sold of his possessions is seized to pay off Lheureux, and he dies, leaving his young daughter Berthe to live with distant relatives and she is eventually sent to work at a cotton mill.

[edit] Characters

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[edit] Emma Bovary

Emma is the novel's protagonist and is the main source of the novel's title (Charles's mother and his former wife are also referred to as Madame Bovary). She has a highly romanticized view of the world and craves beauty, wealth, passion, and high society. It is the disparity between these romantic ideals and the realities of her country life that drive most of the novel, most notably leading her into two extramarital love affairs as well as causing her to accrue an insurmountable amount of debt that eventually leads to her suicide.

Emma is quite intelligent, but she never has a chance to develop her mind. As an adult, Emma's capacity for imagination is far greater than her capacity for analysis. She is observant about surface details, such as how people are dressed. As a result, Emma not only believes in the false fronts other people present to her, but she despises the very few people (Charles's mother, Madame Homais, and Monsieur Binet) who are exactly as they appear to be.

Convinced that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence, Emma does not realize that extreme joy, even for the wealthy and powerful, comes rarely. Emma is surprised to see that aristocrats do not serve fancy food and drink at their everyday breakfasts: she prefers to believe that for the nobility, life is really an excitement-filled drama. Later, she fails to see that Rodolphe's wealth has not made him happy, despite obvious evidence of this fact.

Since Emma lives chiefly in her own fantasy world, other people's opinions or perceptions of her are not important except to the extent that they serve some aspect of whatever drama she's trying to act out. At the ball, she's convinced that her aristocratic hosts have fully accepted her as one of their own, so much so that she expects an invitation the following year. In reality, the hosts condescended to invite Charles and Emma to the ball as reward for a favor, intending for it to be a once-in-a-lifetime treat. Indeed, Emma waltzes so badly that she tangles her dress up with her dance partner, and she uses the gaffe as an excuse to rest her head on his chest. She does not attempt to establish new social contacts at the party, nor does she write a thank-you note afterwards. She does not attempt to return the cigar-case she and Charles find later, which may have been a reasonable pretext to resume correspondence with their host. She fails to do the things that could, under the right circumstances, lead to real social connections in high places.

Emma seldom makes an effort to cultivate friendships with other people, unless doing so serves the image she has of herself. She wants desperately to be an aristocrat, particularly after the d'Andervilliers ball, but although she is very good at aping the superficial behaviors (such as clothing and figures of speech), she lacks the manners and savoir-faire to actually operate in their culture. No matter what social group she decides she belongs to (aristocrats, the people of Yonville, people with "noble souls", adulteresses, religious martyrs, dramatic heroines, etc.), every time her role requires interaction with someone who actually is in that group, Emma fails in her professed role. She does not go out of her way to ingratiate herself with others. This indifference causes her to be rejected by most people in Tostes and Yonville, and to be very careless of her reputation and actions once she starts having extramarital affairs. Binet, Homais, Charles's mother, and Lheureux all catch her in compromising situations, and though she initially panics, she blatantly continues her affairs. Not only does she want the excitement of taking the risk, but possibly the drama that would result from being caught.

Emma seeks out the extremes in life, both positive and negative. Unless she's experiencing the peak of ecstasy, she is convinced that she is miserable. She also re-writes her own history and memory, telling herself that she has "never" been happy every time it appears to her that, by indulging some whim, she can achieve the emotional experiences to which she feels entitled. Her appetite for stimulation grows to the point where she becomes jaded enough not to appreciate the small pleasures in life, simply because they are small pleasures. The more she experiences, the less she is satisfied with more normal activities. For instance, her taste in literature starts out with romances and bourgeois women's magazines targeted to her real social and economic position. From there she graduates to high-fashion women's magazines that advocate conspicuous consumption, then commences to overwrought romantic poetry, followed by tragic opera, and culminates in the violent pornography which she reads between assignations with Léon. As Vladimir Nabokov observes, Emma "reads books emotionally, in a shallow juvenile manner, putting herself in this or that female character's place." [2] Moreover, as a girl, Emma is rewarded for an overblown, somewhat fake display of grief after her mother's death. Her father caters to her whims, as does Charles, who responds to Emma's ennui and psychosomatic illnesses by ignoring his patients and concentrating solely on his wife. Emma's fleeting but intense fascination with religion is much the same: people reward her pious conduct with extra attention and treat her as though she's superior, which reinforces her feelings of entitlement.

Over the course of the book, Emma finds different ways to rationalize her feeling of entitlement at different times of her life. Before her marriage, she craves excitement because she is bored. In Tostes, particularly after the ball, she believes she was unjustly born into the wrong socioeconomic class and that everything would be better if only she was rich. Later, after being introduced to poetry, she believes she suffers because she has a noble soul. Ultimately she casts herself as a tragic heroine.

Emma's sense of superiority and entitlement makes her vulnerable to people who seek to use and manipulate her. Anyone who plays along with Emma's pretentiousness is assured of her good graces. Lheureux, the predatory money-lender who fleeces Emma and Charles, is obsequious to Emma in order to get her to spend more money on unnecessary purchases. He takes advantage of her sense of entitlement by treating her like a grand lady and by indicating that she deserves all the impractical luxuries he persuades her to buy. By giving Emma credit for business sense and experience she doesn't actually possess, Lheureux takes advantage of Emma's financial inexperience. He skims ridiculous sums off the top of every promissory

note he has Emma sign, and bluffs her into believing that large commissions are somehow customary in business. Unwilling to admit her ignorance, Emma lets herself be conned instead.

Throughout her life, Emma selects dramatic, exaggerated depictions of human existence and adopts them as a romantic or personal ideal; moreover, she convinces herself that her ideal is somehow the norm, and that the reality she experiences is the exception to the rule. As a teenager, she seeks to emulate the romantic novels she read while at the convent. After the ball, she seeks to emulate the nobility and the wealthy and creates a new romantic ideal based on a man she met at the ball. After being introduced to poetry, she adopts a romantic martyr-like facade. After being exposed to the melodramatic opera "Lucia di Lammermoor", Emma adopts the insane fictional character Lucy Ashton as her role model and becomes convinced that the correct way to respond to adversity is to lose her mind and commit suicide, which she eventually does.

Certain patterns which Emma exhibits - such as her reckless expenditures and her long period of "illness" when she is bedridden, seem to be descriptive of a person with a manic depressive syndrome, sometime known as a bipolar disorder. Flaubert's inclusion of her early overexposure to the Catholic religion and to Romantic novels cannot be ignored. Flaubert in his quest for realism and with his family background in frivolous medical matters of the mind was likely describing the social institutions of power and ideological violence that cultivate in the mind such a desire to escape reality at any cost.

[edit] Charles Bovary

Emma's husband, Charles Bovary, is a very simple and common man. He is a country doctor by profession, but is, as in everything else, not very good at it. He is in fact not qualified enough to be termed a doctor, but is instead an *officier de santé*, or "health officer". When he is persuaded by Homais, the local pharmacist, to attempt a difficult operation on a patient's clubfoot, the effort is an enormous failure, and his patient's leg must be amputated by a better doctor.

Charles adores his wife and finds her faultless, despite obvious evidence to the contrary. He never suspects her affairs and gives her complete control over his finances, thereby securing his own ruin. Despite Charles's complete devotion to Emma, she despises him as he is the epitome of all that is dull and common. When Charles discovers Emma's deceptions after her death he is devastated and dies soon after, but not before frittering away the very last of the assets remaining after his bankruptcy by living the way he believed Emma would have wanted him to live.

Charles is presented from the start as a likeable and well-meaning fool who happens to have a good memory and a way with people. Although it annoys Emma that Charles doesn't deduce her attitude toward him based on her very subtle hints and cues, she would need a far more blunt approach to get her message across. Charles's lack of insight regarding Emma is not unique. He fails to realize that Homais is not his friend but his enemy and lets the pharmacist isolate him from the other people in town. He fails to realize that Rodolphe has designs on Emma. He trusts Léon implicitly even though he's aware Emma is emotionally attached to the young clerk. He fails to realize that Emma's expenditures have put the household in debt, and he doesn't realize that Lheureux is a financial predator. He also ignores potential allies in the town who might have pointed out what everybody else thought was obvious.

Charles is no genius, but at the time he meets Emma he's doing well financially. He's married, he's got a thriving practice that has grown in response to his popularity with his patients, and he's got a good reputation in the community. After he moves to a new town, he never regains his former position, and Emma is part of the reason why. He knows he is in financial trouble, but continues to enable Emma's spendthrift ways. He takes on more than his share of his responsibility for the success of the marriage, and he tries to cover for Emma's lapses. Meanwhile, he gives up control over the financial aspects of his practice, which allows Emma to start embezzling. In fact, he borrows from a moneylender and does not tell Emma.

During Emma's first mysterious collapse, which is in response to her realization that she's not getting a second ball invitation, Charles abandons his patients and acts as her full-time nurse even though her life is not obviously in danger. The more he hovers, the worse Emma's "health problem" becomes. He gives up a thriving practice and moves to an area where he knows nobody. He nurses her through two more collapses, and allows her to talk him into attempting an operation he is not qualified to perform.

[edit] Monsieur Homais

Monsieur Homais is the town pharmacist. In one incident, he convinces Charles to perform corrective surgery on a young stable boy, afflicted with a club foot. During this era, correcting or eliminating a disability was a daring option and he may have considered this an opportunity to garner personal attention and praise. The operation is a disaster, and the stable boy is left with his leg amputated at the thigh.

Despite having been convicted of practicing medicine without a license, he continues to give "consultations" in his pharmacy. This means that the presence of a licensed health officer in town is a threat to him. Not only are he and Charles in competition for patients, but if Charles were to report Homais for practicing medicine without a license, the courts would deal strictly with Homais given that it would be a second conviction. So, to keep the clueless Charles from turning him in to the authorities should Charles ever find out about the "consultations", Homais becomes Charles's best friend, at least on the surface. Meanwhile he undermines Charles at every opportunity. Convincing him to attempt the risky club foot operation may have been part of an ongoing strategy to discredit Charles so as to run him out of town. At the end of the book, after Charles's death, Homais uses similar strategies to get rid of subsequent doctors and is left in sole control of the medical profession in Yonville.

He is also vehemently anti-clerical and an atheist. He is the one who insists that Emma should go riding with Rodolphe, that Charles take her to see the opera in Rouen, and that she be allowed to take expensive music lessons in Rouen. Flaubert's bete noire, the universal little man, Homais always has his ear to the ground for gossip. He appears to be completely unaware of Emma's adultery but subtly goes out of his way to make it easier for her. He also directly enables her ultimate act of self-destruction by detailing in her presence the means by which his supply of arsenic might be accessed.

[edit] Madame Homais

The wife of Monsieur Homais, Madame Homais is a simple woman whose life revolves around her husband and four children. Caring for four children is no trivial task, especially without electricity, hot running water, or any form of public schooling beyond occasional classes offered by the parish priest. Furthermore, in addition to her own four children

Madame Homais cares for Justin, a teenage relative who lives with the Homais family and who helps Monsieur Homais out in the pharmacy. She also takes care of a boarder: a young male student by the name of Léon Dupuis. With that many people in the household, Madame Homais also employs a live-in maid to help with the housework. Even with the maid's help, Madame Homais works very hard.

Madame Homais serves chiefly as a foil for Emma. Whereas Madame Homais, or even Charles's infirm first wife, has a legitimate reason for wanting a maid, Emma is able-bodied aside from her drama-induced fainting fits and collapses. She simply chooses to do no housework, and to refrain from any of the activities bourgeois women generally did in order to earn money on the side. She does not sub-let an upstairs bedroom to a tenant the way Madame Homais rents to Léon, she leaves all the housekeeping to the maid, and does no work herself unless it suits whatever religious or social fantasy she has about herself at the time. Madame Homais does not dress fashionably or even well, whereas Emma is always dressed in the latest expensive fashions that are more lavish than what anyone else in Yonville seems able to afford. Madame Homais dotes on her children, while Emma ignores and despises her daughter unless she's acting out a maternal fantasy.

Emma despises Madame Homais for her simplicity, unless she's in the mood to pretend to idealize good mothers. Madame Homais, however, seems unaware that Emma dislikes her. Even when other people gossip about Emma, Madame Homais defends her. That naive loyalty is rewarded with nothing but contempt most of the time.

[edit] Léon Dupuis

First befriending Emma when she moves to Yonville, Léon seems a perfect match for her. He shares her romantic ideals as well as her disdain for common life. He worships Emma from afar before leaving to study law in Paris. A chance encounter brings the two together several years later and this time they begin an affair. Though the relationship is passionate at first, after a time the mystique wears off.

Financially, Léon cannot afford to carry on the affair, so Emma pays more and more of the bills. Eventually she assumes the whole financial burden. She also takes the lead in planning meetings and setting up communication, which is a reversal of the role she had with Rodolphe. Léon does not seem to find Emma's financial aggression disturbing or inappropriate, although when Emma asks him to pawn some spoons she'd received as a wedding gift from her father, Léon does become uncomfortable. He objects to the heavy spending, but does not press too hard when Emma overrules him. He's content to be the recipient of Emma's largesse, and to not think too much about where the money is coming from. He also does not feel particularly obligated to reciprocate later, when Emma asks him for help in her hour of financial need.

Over time, Léon becomes disenchanted with Emma, particularly after her attentions start to affect his work. The first time she arrives at his office, he's charmed and leaves work quickly. After a while, the interruptions have an effect on his work and his attitude to the other clerks. Eventually someone sends word to Léon's mother that her son is "ruining himself with a married woman", and Léon's mother and employer insist that he break off the affair. Léon does, briefly, but cannot stay away from Emma. His reluctance is tempered with relief because Emma's pursuit of him has become increasingly disturbing. When Emma's debts finally come due, she attempts to seduce Léon into stealing money from his employer to

cover her debts. At this point, he becomes genuinely afraid. He fobs her off with an excuse and disappears from her life.

[edit] Rodolphe Boulanger

Rodolphe is a wealthy local man who seduces Emma as one more addition to a long string of mistresses. Though occasionally charmed by Emma, Rodolphe feels little true emotion towards her. As Emma becomes more and more desperate, Rodolphe loses interest and worries about her lack of caution. He eventually ends their relationship, but not before going through a collection of letters and tokens from previous mistresses, all of whom ended up wanting either love or money.

Rodolphe's deteriorating feelings for Emma do not keep him from accepting the valuable gifts she showers on him throughout their relationship, even though he realizes at some level that she can't afford to be so generous. The gifts she gives him are of the same value and quality as she imagines an aristocrat such as the Vicount might receive from a similarly aristocratic mistress. Rodolphe's gifts to Emma are nowhere near as valuable even though he is by far the wealthier of the two. He does not feel particularly obligated by having accepted the gifts, even though they create a large part of Emma's debt to Lheureux.

When Emma asks Rodolphe for help at the peak of her financial crisis, after refusing the sex-for-money exchange offered by the wealthy Monsieur Guillaumin, she essentially attempts to initiate a sex-for-money exchange with Rodolphe. She pretends at first to have returned out of love, then when the timing feels right she asks him for money, using an obvious lie about why she needs a loan. She therefore comes across as among the most mercenary of Rodolphe's past mistresses. Rodolphe therefore sees no need to help her, though he could perhaps not afford to lend her enough money to keep her creditors at bay even if he desired to.

[edit] Monsieur Lheureux

A manipulative and sly merchant who continually convinces Emma to buy goods on credit and borrow money from him. Lheureux plays Emma masterfully and eventually leads her so far into debt as to cause her financial ruin and subsequent suicide.

Lheureux's reputation as an aggressive money lender is well known in Yonville. Had Emma or Charles had the wit to make inquiries about him or even to listen to the gossip, they would have realized that Lheureux had ruined at least one other person in town through his stratagems. Yet the only "friend" they trust, Homais, is fully aware of Lheureux's treachery but disinclined to warn Emma or Charles. So both Emma and Charles end up borrowing money from Lheureux without each other's knowledge.

[edit] Setting

The setting of Madame Bovary is crucial to the novel for several reasons. First, it is important as it applies to Flaubert's realist style and social commentary. Secondly, the setting is important in how it relates to the protagonist Emma.

It has been calculated that the novel begins in October 1827 and ends in August 1846 (Francis Steegmuller). This is around the era known as the "July Monarchy", or the rule of King Louis-Philippe. This was a period in which there was a great up-surge in the power of the bourgeois middle class. Flaubert detested the bourgeoisie. Much of the time and effort, therefore, that he spends detailing the customs of the rural French people can be interpreted as social criticism.

Flaubert put much effort into making sure his depictions of common life were accurate. This was aided by the fact that he chose a subject that was very familiar to him. He chose to set the story in and around the city of Rouen in Normandy, the setting of his own birth and childhood. This care and detail that Flaubert gives to his setting is important in looking at the style of the novel. It is this faithfulness to the mundane elements of country life that has garnered the book its reputation as the beginning of the literary movement known as "literary realism".

Flaubert also deliberately used his setting to contrast with his protagonist. Emma's romantic fantasies are strikingly foiled by the practicalities of the common life around her. Flaubert uses this juxtaposition to reflect on both subjects. Emma becomes more capricious and ludicrous in the harsh light of everyday reality. By the same token, however, the self-important banality of the local people is magnified in comparison to Emma, who, though impractical, still reflects an appreciation of beauty and greatness that seems entirely absent in the bourgeois class.

[edit] Style

The book, loosely based on the life story of a schoolfriend who had become a doctor, was written at the urging of friends, who were trying (unsuccessfully) to "cure" Flaubert of his deep-dyed Romanticism by assigning him the dreariest subject they could think of, and challenging him to make it interesting without allowing anything out-of-the-way to occur. Although Flaubert had little liking for the styles of Balzac or Zola, the novel is now seen as a prime example of Realism, a fact which contributed to the trial for obscenity (which was a politically-motivated attack by the government on the liberal newspaper in which it was being serialized, *La Revue de Paris*). Flaubert, as the author of the story, does not comment directly on the moral character of Emma Bovary and abstains from explicitly condemning her adultery. This decision caused some to accuse Flaubert of glorifying adultery and creating a scandal.

The Realist movement used verisimilitude through a focus on character development. Realism was a reaction against Romanticism. Emma may be said to be the embodiment of a romantic; in her mental and emotional process, she has no relation to the realities of her world. She inevitably becomes dissatisfied since her larger-than-life fantasies are impossible to realize. Flaubert declared that much of what is in the novel is in his own life by saying, "Madame Bovary, c'est moi" ("Madame Bovary is me").

Madame Bovary, on the whole, is a commentary on the entire self-satisfied, deluded, bourgeois culture of Flaubert's time period. His contempt for the bourgeoisie is expressed through his characters: Emma and Charles Bovary lost in romantic delusions; absurd and harmful scientific characters, a self-serving money lender, lovers seeking excitement finding

only the banality of marriage in their adulterous affairs. All are seeking escape in empty church rituals, unrealistic romantic novels, or delusions of one sort or another.

[edit] Literary significance and reception

Long established as one of the greatest novels ever written, the book has often been described as a "perfect" work of fiction. Henry James writes: "*Madame Bovary* has a perfection that not only stamps it, but that makes it stand almost alone; it holds itself with such a supreme unapproachable assurance as both excites and defies judgment."[3]

[edit] Adaptations

Madame Bovary has been made into several films, beginning with Albert Ray's 1932 version. It has also been the subject of multiple television miniseries and made-for-TV movies. The most notable of these adaptations was the 1949 film produced by MGM. Directed by Vincente Minnelli, it starred Jennifer Jones in the title role, co-starring James Mason, Van Heflin, Louis Jourdan, and Gene Lockhart. It was adapted by Giles Cooper for the BBC in 1964, with the same script being used for a new production in 1975. A 2000 miniseries adaptation by Heidi Thomas was made for the BBC, starring Frances O'Connor, Hugh Bonneville and Hugh Dancy.

David Lean's film *Ryan's Daughter* (1970) was a loose adaptation of the story, relocating it to Ireland during the time of the Easter Rebellion. The script had begun life as a straight adaptation of *Bovary*, but Lean convinced writer Robert Bolt to re-work it into another setting.

Claude Chabrol made his version starring Isabelle Huppert in 1991. In Chabrol's remake, critics claimed the direction was sumptuous, that the period piece was a "pertinent tragic drama."[4]

Indian director Ketan Mehta adapted the novel into a 1992 Hindi film *Maya Memsaab*.

Madame Blueberry is an 1998 film in the *Veggietales* animated series. It is a loose parody of *Madame Bovary*, in which Madame Blueberry, an anthropomorphic blueberry, gathers material possessions in a vain attempt to find happiness.

Academy Award nominated film *Little Children* features the novel as part of a book club discussion, and shares a few elements of the main idea.

Naomi Ragen loosely based her 2007 novel *The Saturday Wife* on *Madame Bovary*.

Posy Simmonds graphic novel *Gemma Bovery* reworked the story into a satirical tale of English expatriates in France.

Vale Abraão (1993) (Abraham's Vale) by Manoel de Oliveira is a close interpretation set in Portugal, even referencing and discussing Flaubert's novel several times.

Madame Bovary has been adapted into a piece of musical theatre, entitled *The Bovary Tale*. Composer: Anne Freier. Librettist: Laura Steel. The first performance was at the Gatehouse Theatre in Highgate Village in September 2009.

"Madame Ovary" is the name of a character in DC Comics' *The Adventures of the Outsiders* #33-35. Madame Ovary's name was really Dr. Ovarin, and she was created by Mike W. Barr and Alan Davis.

[edit] See also

Novels portal

- *The Perpetual Orgy*

[edit] References

1. ^ Wood, James. *How Fiction Works.*New York: Picador. 2008. 39.
2. ^ Nabokov, Vladimir (1980). *Lectures on Literature*. New York, New York: Harvest. pp. 136–138. ISBN 0-15-649589-.
3. ^ James, Henry (1914). *Notes on Novelists*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. pp. 80.
4. ^ www.Film4.com

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- Les manuscrits de Madame Bovary – Site with images and transcriptions of Flaubert's original manuscripts, plus 4500 pages deleted/censored material
- *Madame Bovary* (original version) with English annotations at Tailored Texts
- Dr.Fajardo-Acosta's World Literature Website, with study questions
- Commentary on *Madame Bovary* by A. S. Byatt
- Commentary on *Madame Bovary* by Erica Jong
- List of Madame Bovary films
- Madame Bovary: A Study Guide
- *Madame Bovary*, LibriVox free audio recording.
- *Madame Bovary*, 13-part Globe Radio adaptation, aired on NPR Playhouse in the late 1980s.
- The Bovary Tale

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- Memoirs of a Madman
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- Salammbô
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