

Madame Bovary: Gustave Flaubert

Discussion Questions:

Part Two, Chapter X and XI.

Analyze most carefully the section of Chapter X which begins with Emma's father's letter (p. 148 in your books).

- 1) Why does Emma respond with contempt to this letter? - Reminded of her loneliness
ruthlessness - disinterest detachment
- 2) Discuss the passage which describes her lost illusions. Why had marriage and motherhood failed her so miserably?
- notes — 3) She is momentarily caught in a sudden mood of maternal affection. What prompts this mood and how does it appear to the child and the maid?
- 4) Rodolphe is becoming inattentive, how does Emma react to this?
- 5) What is Emma's motive for urging Charles to make his reputation as a surgeon?
- 6) Why is she able at this point to consider Charles capable of such skill, when she had previously assured herself of his mediocrity?

What does this particular section of the book make possible for the story line? If Emma has been failed in marriage and motherhood, has she succeeded with her adultery? everything has failed her so far

- 2) Analyze with meticulous care the characters Rodolphe and Léon. Exactly how different were they as men, in character, in psychology and in moral fibre? Compare and contrast their respective relationships with Emma. see thru see mask
- 3) This question permits you some speculation and hypothesis. Given Emma's nature, psychology, and character, speculate upon her chances of a happy and successful marriage with either Rodolphe or Léon. What might have been the end result of a union with either of these men? Base your deductions upon the characters as they are described by Flaubert, invent nothing that they would not be likely to do.
- 4) If Emma Bovary's romantic sentimentality is most responsible for her degradation that precisely is most responsible for the success and honour of a man such as Homais? What comment on life, character, and judgement is Flaubert making through the construction of this character -- Homais' actions and influences?
- 5) Analyze the section Part Two XI (page 156 in your book) concerning the priest Bournisien and his administering to the excruciating need of Hippolyte. Discuss the role of the Church and its representatives in rural Yonville L'Abbaye. Discuss, also, the position of Hippolyte who is present during the conversation between Canivet the Paris surgeon, and Homais. How does the world of such men treat simple creatures as Hippolyte?
- 6) M. Lheureux, the shopkeeper, supplies the necessary means which permit Emma to exact a possessiveness over Rodolphe. Lheureux with an expert's eye finds out her weakness and begins to press her. Discuss the scene Part Two Chapter XII in which they play "cat and mouse" with each other. (page 163 in your books) Who really wins this game?
- 7) Was Emma Bovary a pathetic victim of Fate or circumstances, or was she a victim of her own desires and will? Discuss. There must be no speculation or opinion, seek evidence and example to support your claims.

1. She is reminded of the loneliness and detachment associated with her childhood - she is reminded of the dismal, uncultured society she came from - she wishes to block out that part of her

life altogether.

2. What an abundance of illusion, she had none left now. Each new venture had cost her some of them, each of her successive conditions: as virgin, wife and mistress; she had lost them all along the course of her life, like a traveler who leaves some of his wealth at every inn along the road.

she entered into both conditions with idealism and romantic notions as to how each was going to be - then she discovers that things will not go according to her dreams - she becomes disillusioned.

3. She doesn't see herself - she sees herself as a

2 desire to make appeasement of childhood - repentance for detachment from her father - child enjoys attention but does not trust Emma, - the maid is dumbfounded

4. she "repents" she becomes cold inattentive herself. she turns

to Charley and begins to wonder why she hates him so.

5. she wants him to be successful so that she can be rich and she can respect him. His ineptitude gives her justification to carry out her offer.

6. Due to the failure of marriage and motherhood, she expects more from adultery. The disappointment is greater.

7. Rodolphe sees thru Emma out to get what he wants at any cost is not romantic Leon sees Emma facade only which behind middle class morality - pretends to be sentimental.

8. Rodolphe realist takes leadership role in relationship - Leon takes role as mistress

9. she would be bored with Leon. Rodolphe would be bored with her.

10. Homais is a total fraud, yet he projects an elegant, romantic image of a learned man. The crowd will grasp and hold to this image and make him a success. They love the image. Homais will produce nothing for society just as Emma's illusions will contribute nothing to her life. A total fraud is given free reign in society.