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EFFACEMENT OF THE AUTHOR AND
THE FUNCTION OF SADISM
IN FLAUBERT'S SALAMMBO

ROMAN JAKOBSON HAS DEFINED THE DOMINANT OF AN ARTISTIC WORK AS "THE FOCUSING COMPONENT OF A WORK OF ART: IT RULES, DETERMINES, AND TRANSFORMS THE REMAINING COMPONENTS" (RUSSIAN POETICS 82). IT IS THAT ELEMENT IN THE SYSTEM OF ONE LITERARY TEXT (OR OF AN OEUVE OF A PARTICULAR AUTHOR OR OF A WHOLE LITERARY MOVEMENT) TO WHICH ALL OTHER TEXTUAL ELEMENTS ARE HIERARCHICALLY SUBORDINATE. AS ONE CRITIC HAS PUT IT, THE DOMINANT OF A TEXT ACTS "LIKE A STRUCTURE OF BONES IN AN ORGANIC BODY."


THE FREQUENT USE OF FOCALIZATION OF THE TEXT (THAT IS, FOCUSING OF THE POINT OF VIEW) MAY BE CONSIDERED ONE OF THE TECHNIQUES ENGENDERED BY THE DOMINANT. FOCALIZATION OF DESCRIPTIONS AND FOCALIZATION OF TEXTUAL

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**Symposium**

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discourse serve not only the needs of the dominant, but also explain in a
sense the abundant use of sadism in the novel. For example, focalization
eliminates, in fact replaces, the need for direct narratorial interventions,
while it dictates to a certain extent what is reported in the text. The text is
produced to a large degree by the focalizing device.

On the simplest level, focalization, ambitiously practiced throughout
_Salammbô_, is used for generating descriptions without the help of an
omniscient narrator. In the first chapter, the scene of the Mercenaries' celebra-
tion is largely described through the eyes of the Mercenaries them-
selves:

et l'on voyait au milieu du jardin, comme sur un champ de bataille
quand on brûle les morts, de grands feux clairs où rôtissaient des
boeufs.\(^2\)

The theme of the regard ("l'on voyait"), repeated continuously in
the novel, and the use of the military metaphor indicate that the description
is focalized through the Mercenaries' eyes. Similarly, the first description of
_Salammbô_, related almost entirely in terms of the jewels that she is
wearing, also implies focalization: the Mercenaries' eyes are naturally
drawn to her riches.

On the level of the sadistic motif, focalization of description plays the
same role. The sadistic description of the crucified lions, transmitted
through the Barbarians' eyes, follows only logically in the context of the
monotonous journey from Carthage to Sicca across the desert. The fact
that what is seen is "quelque chose d'extraordinaire" (29) for the traveling
soldiers reinforces the textual necessity of a detailed description.
Thus, if the scene depicts sadism ("du sang noir, coulant parmi ses poils,
avait amassé des stalactites au bas de sa queue" [29]), it is so because the
focalization requires it. In other words, by necessitating focalization of
description, the dominant indirectly influences the wording of what is
described.

A second example of a focalized sadistic scene, this one perceived
through the eyes of Mâtho, is the following:

Parmi ses soldats, au bord des tentes, des hommes presque nus dor-
maient sur le dos . . . Quelques-uns décollaient de leurs jambes des
bandelettes ensanglantées. Ceux qui allaient Mourir roulaient leur
tête, tout doucement . . . . (178-9)

Both the positioning of Mâtho, who is looking down upon the soldiers' encampment, and the use of the possessive pronoun "ses" in the actual
description imply the focalized nature of the description. The narrator
has no role in this portion of the text.

Sadistic description is not only focalized from the Barbarians' point of
view. The Carthaginian soldiers, for example, are the medium through
which a gruesome description of the Mercenaries' prisoners is related:

A peine pouvait-on reconnaître ces misérables, tant leur visage
disparaissait sous la vermine et les ordures. Leurs cheveux arrachés
par endroits laissaient à nu les ulcères de leur tête. . . . (193)

Here the verb "reconnaître" signifies focalization. Moreover, reinforcing
the focalization, further on in the same passage another verb of
perception is used when the Carthaginians recognize Giscon among the
prisoners: "Bien que la place fût dangereuse, ils se poussaient pour le
voir" (193). The fact that the Carthaginians are horrified to see their rich
fellow citizens reduced to such a state may well be the justification for
the abundance of sadistic detail: the focalizing circumstances transform
the actual content of the text.

Instances of focalized description are often even physically apparent in
the context of the narrative. After a battle between the mercenary Army
and the Carthaginian Army, soldiers of the former return to the battle-
field to take stock of their losses. They arrive after dark at a field littered
with bodies. The text reads: "Puis on promenait la torche sur leur visage,
lentement. Des armes hideuses leur avaient fait des blessures compliquées"
(238). Not surprisingly, what follows is a detailed description of the com-
plexity of the injuries. The detached adverb "lentement" in the text
allows and indeed requires just such a detailed rendering of the injuries,
especially considering that the soldiers' field of vision is limited to the
small area lit by the torch. The bodies and their injuries are the center of
attention. Once again, focalization dictates to a not insignificant degree
the content of the passage.

Focalization of description in this manner leads almost to self-genera-
tion of the text, thus contributing to preservation of the effacement of
both the author and the narrator. For example, before the description of
the ten emmissaries of the trapped Mercenaries, the text reads: "En aperce-
vant ces hommes, il [Hamilcar] fit un geste en arrière, puis il se pencha
pour les examiner" (315). The implied attention with which Hamilcar
views his captives, evident in the bending motion toward them ("se pen-
cha") and the use of the explicit verb "examiner" instead of the more
simple "voir," dictates here as elsewhere the necessity of the morbid
details that follow. The description itself lasts a full paragraph, all of
which is in a sense perceived by Hamilcar's eyes. The narrator partici-
3pates in the scene only extratextually as a recorder of the event.

Descriptions of this kind continue up to the very end of the novel. One
of the last descriptions is a focalized portrait of the tortured Mâtho fil-
tered through the concerned eyes of Salammbo. The description is preceded by a typical focalization marker: “Dès le premier pas qu’il avait fait, ... elle n’avait aperçu que Mâtho” (351). The sketch of the dying Mâtho, repulsively and sadistically precise, is accompanied by the addition of the following focalized discourse: “et le misérable marchait toujours!” (352). The use of discourse is itself another device that is required by the dominant.

The use of focalization in nondescriptive textual discourse can be considered a more refined technique than simple focalization of description. What often results with the use of this technique is discours indirect libre: reported speech is incorporated directly into the text without preparatory markers. Distinctions between free indirect discourse of the characters and narratorial discourse may seem at times unclear, although frequently markers of the use of the former device, such as question marks or exclamation points, appear in the speech.

On a simple level, the focalization of discourse can occur in one sentence or phrase in the middle or at the end of a passage. For example, after the ailing Hannon, having lost the battle with Spendius in front of Utique, watches the bloody execution of several captives, the text reads: “Le Suffete trempa sa main dans cette fange toute chaude, et il s’en frota les genoux: c’était un remède” (116). Although the act of rubbing the blood on his knees does not appear to be focalized, the qualifying phrase, one can argue, has a voice distinct from the voice of the narrator. It cannot be the otherwise objective or even historical narrator who considers the blood a remedy; Hannon, however, who is always searching for any way of alleviating his sickness, would be inclined to do so. What occurs after the colon is therefore an example of free indirect discourse. The narrator’s discourse is effaced and replaced by the discourse of one of the characters. This technique, like focalization of description, is especially effective at introducing and justifying sadistic details, such as the one considered above.

The use of a question mark or an exclamation point, or a combination of the two, in what seems like straightforward narratorial discourse implies focalization. The passage quoted above, where Salammbo marvels at the fact that the tortured Mâtho is still walking, is an example of the exclamation point adding emotional voice to the text, indicating that discourse thus marked cannot belong to the narrator. With this device, the discourse of the crowd is often reported indirectly in the text:

C’était une prudence inutile; tous accusaient Barca de s’être conduit avec mollesse. Il aurait dû, après sa victoire, anéantir les Mercenaires. Pourquoi avait-il ravagé les tribus? On

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s’était cependant imposé d’assez lourds sacrifices! ... On se rappelait les désastres de Sicile, tout le fardeau de son orgueil qu’on avait si longtemps porté! (196–7)

The voice of the Carthaginian crowd, condemning Hamilcar for his actions, is highlighted by the combination of the rhetorical question followed immediately by an emotionally charged response as well as by the second emotional outburst later on in the passage. The focalized nature of the discourse once again relieves the narrator of the necessity of direct intervention. The combination of rhetorical question followed immediately by a response under exclamation is not limited to the one passage cited. The discourse of the Barbarians, for example, is felt in the text through the same device:

En les [les Carthaginois] voyant si faibles, les Barbares, trois fois plus nombreux, furent pris d’une joie désordonnée; on n’appréciait pas Hamilcar. Il était resté là-bas, peut-être? Qu’il importait d’ailleurs! ... (171)

The subtlety of emotion among the Barbarians, their fearful hesitation upon noticing Hamilcar’s absence, is brought out skillfully by the “peut-être” tacked on to the question. Had the narrator directly intervened in the passage to explain the Barbarians’ thoughts, the effect produced would not have so actively engaged the reader as the indirect discourse does. Besides serving the needs of the dominant, the indirect discourse happens to allow for a more efficient presentation of the content of the text itself.

Focalization of discourse occurs on a large scale as well as on a small scale in the novel. Mixed with focalization of description, it is the guiding element in the long scene of the immolation of the children to the god Moloch. The accumulation of verbs of perception throughout the passage focalizes description largely from the point of view of the Carthaginian crowd gathered to view the sacrifice. Focalization of discourse supplements this:

Avant de rien entreprendre, il était bon d’essayer les bras du Dieu. (296)

Il fallait un sacrifice individuel, une oblation toute volontaire et qui était considérée comme entraînant les autres. (296)

The value judgment evident in the first quotation (“il était bon”) and the tone of obligation in the second (“il fallait”) both indicate that the discourse is nonnarratorial. In the second quotation, moreover, the ques-
tion can be posed: "Considered by whom?" The answer, obviously by the Carthaginians, reinforces the presence of voice.

The appearance of voiced discourse continues to alternate with focalized descriptions in the course of the scene. At one point the crowd judges: "Cependant l'appétit du Dieu ne s'apaisait pas. Il en voulait toujours" (298). More victims are consequently added to the fire to the point that "on aperçu des chairs qui brûlaient..." (298). Later on in the same passage "on entendait les cris des mères et le grésillement de la graisse qui tombait sur les charbons" (299). The focalization continues even beyond the passage itself. After the immersion, when the rain begins to fall, the text reads: "le tonnerre grondait; c'était la voix de Moloch; il avait vaincu Tanit..." (300). The religious interpretation of the rainstorm can only be attributed to the focalized discourse of the Carthaginian crowd. The scene thus reported consists almost entirely of focalized text: the thoughts of the crowd as well as what it sees and hears make up the text of the passage. The narrator's role is kept to an absolute minimum and the context of the text itself, in all its sadistic detail, is transformed by the special demands of the focalizing technique.

Focalization, then, is used in the novel to replace narratorial interventions in description and discourse. The text can accomplish this blatantly with verbs of perception surrounding the descriptions or voice markers implanted in the focalized discourse, or even more subtly. It is easy to confuse the more subtle usage of focalization with narratorial discourse or description. The following example will illustrate a more subtle use of focalization:

Narr'Havas lui [Salammbô] annonça la défaite des Barbares... il se mit à raconter toute la campagne.

Les colomeres, sur les palmers autour d'eux, rougeaient doucement, et d'autres oiseaux volaient parmi les herbes... Le jardin, depuis longtemps inculée, avait multiplié ses verdures;... Les bêtes domestiques, redevenues sauvages, s'enfuyaient au moindre bruit... Le ciel était tout bleu, pas une voile n'apparaissait sur la mer.

Narr'Havas ne parlait plus... (323)

Despite initial appearances, the full paragraph of description in the above scene does not originate with the narrator. It is instead focalized through Salammbô to indicate that she is not listening to Narr'Havas's description of the campaign. The narrator is therefore not obliged to interfere in the text with "Salammbô did not listen to Narr'Havas" or a similar statement.

This instance of focalization, much like a passage in Un cœur simple in which a focalized description replaces a kiss (Trois Contes 19-20), serves a specific narrative function that would otherwise fall under the domain of the narrator. As a system unto itself, the text becomes all but self-generating in the process. It should be reiterated that the dominant in the novel, that is, the need to efface the author and narrator in the text, ultimately requires the use of focalization of this sort and transforms the text accordingly.

In the structure of Salammbô the sadistic motif serves as a thread tying together diverse parts of the narrative on various levels (characterization, theme, plot, description, etc.). In a letter, Flaubert used the following metaphor in reference to a work of literature: "les perles ne font pas le collier; c'est le fil" (Tondeur 33). Not only was Flaubert acutely aware of the necessity of precise structural cohesion, but, as the quotation indicates, the thread (or threads) of a novel must be introduced subtly, buried beneath the events of the plot, the narrative gems. The Russian Formalists would see in this a distinction between the story material of a work (fabula) and the composition or arranging of that material (suzhiet). Sadism, as will be shown by an analysis of foreshadowing and parallelism in Salammbô, belongs to the latter category.

To state that there is absolutely no intervention of the narrator during the whole course of Salammbô would be absurd. However, R. J. Sherrington has noted that even when traditional third-person narrative passages occur, "they have little importance for the over-all technique" (Sherrington 178). One could argue that the narrator largely limits his interventions to the artistic or structural level of the novel. His voice and presence are felt in the suzhet, not in the fabula. The sadistic (and other) elements used structurally through foreshadowing and parallelism are examples of this type of artful intervention.

The device of foreshadowing is used in the novel to justify later events in the text and establish a structurally cohesive work. One nonsadistic thread that runs throughout Salammbô, for example, is the question of Narr'Havas's loyalty to the Barbarian cause. Narr'Havas's eventual betrayal of the Mercenaries is anticipated in the first chapter of the novel, where he distinguishes himself from the mass of soldiers at the celebration: "C'était par hasard qu'il se trouvait au festin" (15). This motif is solidified later by Spendius's suspicions: "il savait gré à Narr'Havas des futures perfidies dont il le soupçonnait" (32). Narr'Havas's conspicuous absence from active participation in the war adds to the intrigue. On one occasion, after letting Hannon's army pass by peacefully, Narr'Havas attempts to communicate his perfidious intentions to the Carthaginian general: "Narr'Havas s'inclina pour le saluer, en faisant un signe qu'il ne comprit pas" (116). This thread of foreshadowing culminates in the actual betrayal of the Mercenaries by Narr'
Havas and his soldiers during the siege of Hamilcar's army. The anticipation of just such a plot shift is, on the level of the syuzhet, the justification of its occurrence.

A sadistic motif centering on the character of Hamilcar can be viewed from a similar perspective. Upon his return to Carthage, Hamilcar inflicts tortures on his own palace slaves simply out of anger for what the Barbarians did to his gardens during the celebration. For a whole chapter, Hamilcar's cruelty is underlined. Hamilcar commits small-scale sadistic acts (on his private estate) in the same way that he will later commit large-scale ones against the entire mercenary army. It is significant that the Mercenaries are compared with slaves in the text: "Mais Hamilcar voulut d'abord montrer aux Mercenaires qu'il les châtierait comme des esclaves" (326). Hamilcar's heartlessness toward his own slaves foreshadows and justifies his sadistic cruelty toward the Mercenaries, whom he views as slaves. At the moment of the latter cruelty, the text even specifically invokes the former sadism against the slaves to drive home the connection.

The almost constant equating of the Mercenaries to various animals functions as an important aspect of foreshadowing in the novel. In the first chapter alone, the Mercenaries are compared with animals five distinct times. This motif is continued throughout the rest of the novel. It explains, perhaps, the reason for Spendidius's continual success with the Barbarians: "[Spendidius] savait ... apprivoiser les bêtes farouches ..." (27). The motif also justifies the whole conclusion of the war. The Carthaginians are known for their cruelty toward dangerous beasts. The text comments on the crucifixion of the lions as viewed by the Mercenaries in the following manner: "Ainsi se vengeaient les paysans carthaginois quand ils avaient pris quelque bête féroce ..." (29). The fact that the leading Mercenaries are later crucified is thus also foreshadowed by this comparison. Spendidius on the cross even refers to the fate of the lions:

'Te rappelles-tu les lions sur la route de Sicca?' 'C'étaient nos frères!' répondit le Gaulois ... (330)

The lion motif recurs in the structure of the novel when the remaining Barbarians and the remains of the dead are fed to lions. The comparison with animals is equally used in reference to Mâtho at the end of the novel when he is captured "avec un de ces larges filets à prendre les bêtes farouches ..." (340). The violence subsequently inflicted upon Mâtho by the Carthaginian crowd is to be expected. The foreshadowing justifies the event on both a thematic and a structural level.

One of the most sadistic scenes in the novel, the immolation of the children in sacrifice to Moloch, is also heavily foreshadowed. The temple of Moloch, where the sacrifice takes place, is thus described:

Le temple de Moloch était bâti au pied d'une gorge escarpée, dans un endroit sinistre. On n'apercevait d'en bas que de hautes murailles ..., telles que les parois d'un monstreux tombeau ... [La mer] battait contre la falaise avec un bruit de râles et de sanglots. ... (125)

The immolation itself is foreshadowed by this description, although more than 150 pages separate the two parts of the text. One need not even know that Moloch's actual temple in Carthage looked completely different from the description given in the text to postulate the use of a structural device. Generally conscious of historicity, the text itself is transformed by the need to establish foreshadowing on the concrete level of description. The immolation motif is continued after the temple's description. Several times the Carthaginian crowd looks toward immolation as a means of solving crises: "La vague idée d'une immolation bientôt circula dans le peuple" (198). When the sacrifice finally takes place, the reader should not be too surprised. Through manipulation of the text, the narrator has created the conditions for and the justification of its occurrence.

Foreshadowing as a technique in Salammbô influences even small parts of the text. For instance, when Hamilcar is being pressured to give up his son for the sacrifice, the text reads: "Hamilcar retint un cri, comme à la brûlure d'un fer rouge" (287). The comparison of Hamilcar's reaction to torture by fire is significant, of course, in that this scene is connected to the immolation scene. Even at the minute level of metaphor, the foreshadowing device molds the text to further its own purposes; and as with the other examples of foreshadowing, the metaphor continues the particular structural thread leading up to the immolation, thereby binding diverse elements in the composition of the narrative.

Much like the foreshadowing device, parallelism is also used by the narrator to create structural cohesion. Parallelisms in the novel develop into mini-motifs acting as threads which bind together other motifs and events. The parallel threads are often intertwined with the foreshadowing motifs. The result is a more self-sustaining structure. As with foreshadowing, parallelisms occur on both small and large scales in the novel. They can be simple, as when Salammbô is referred to for the first and last time in the novel as "la fille d'Hamilcar" (11 and 353). The large-scale parallelisms are more interesting because they exert a greater influence on the composition. Not surprisingly, these parallelisms are often connected with the sadistic motif.
Two major sadistic parallelisms relate the beginning of the novel to the end. Of the sadistic acts committed by the Mercenaries during the celebration in Hamilcar’s gardens (chapter one), the maiming of Hamilcar’s prize elephants influences the later text in the form of a parallelism. One elephant that survived the Barbarians’ rampage returns during the dramatic final battle to tip the scales in favor of the Carthaginians. The captured Mâtho is even tied to the elephant’s back and led into Carthage. This same elephant figures in the scene of Hamilcar’s return in the middle of the novel, and the sadistic acts perpetrated upon it influence Hamilcar to take command of the Carthaginian Army.

An analogous thread is followed by the celebration motif in Salammbo. This motif, which appears for the first time in the opening chapter, reappears with Hamilcar’s return, and recurs in the last chapter of the novel during the celebration of Salammbo’s marriage to Narr’Havas. Each celebration in question is interrupted by acts of sadism. In the first instance, the Barbarians destroy Hamilcar’s gardens, killing his slaves and animals in the process. In the second instance, which also takes place in Hamilcar’s palace, the festive atmosphere brought about by Hamilcar’s long-awaited return is suspended by the sadistic outbreaks of Hamilcar’s anger. In the final chapter, the marriage celebration itself is interrupted by the torturing of the last mercenary left alive, Mâtho. In each instance Salammbo plays a central if not theatrical role. At the Barbarians’ celebration, Salammbo emerges on the terrace of the palace and slowly descends the stairs. At her father’s return, Salammbo is also seen pacing on the terrace, but does not choose to descend. In the last instance, she is placed high on a reviewing stand for the people to see. The stand is even specifically referred to as “la terrasse du temple de Khamon” (343).

Perhaps most significantly, in the latter two scenes there are precise references to the original celebration of the Mercenary army. During the scene of Hamilcar’s return, the lions seem to act as if they recalled the Barbarian celebration (158). In the last chapter, the actual usage of the word “festin” establishes a parallel with the soldiers’ “festin,” and at one point the text reads: “quelques-uns se rappelaient le banquet des Mercenaires . . .” (348). All these details result in the three scenes being naturally paralleled to each other. The parallelism itself manages to bind the novel’s exposition with its dénouement by means of the reappearance of the motif in the middle.

In the actual war between the Carthaginians and the Mercenaries, there is a direct parallelism established between three sieges: the siege of Hamilcar’s army, the siege of Carthage, and the siege of the trapped Mercenary army. The physical locus of all three sieges is compared to an amphitheater. In the first case, the text reads: “Du fond de l’amphithéâtre où ils se trouvaient resserrés . . .” (192). In the second case, the houses of Carthage are “comme les gradins d’un amphithéâtre en ruine” (282). Finally, in the last siege, the location is described as “l’un arceau de l’hippodrome” (308), which has much the same purpose and shape as an amphitheater and therefore can be considered parallel.

Two of the sieges, the first and the last, take place in what is specifically described as a “gorge”; and the second siege, occurring beyond the steep walls of Carthage, could also be regarded as a gorge. In all three cases, there is fighting, thirst, and famine among the besieged. Furthermore, there is a logical progression designed to stave off death by starvation: first, all the animals are killed for food, then those besieged resort to cannibalism or human sacrifice through immersion. Finally, in the first and last case, the remains of the besieged are eventually eaten, from the stomach outward, by wild dogs and lions, respectively (237 and 342). Such details may be considered only natural occurrences in any siege, which could possibly reduce the impact of the parallelism; but the fact that specifically these details are similarly presented in all three instances in the text renders the scenes effectively parallel. The structure of the novel is again reinforced by the presence of such a strong, largely sadistic, parallel.

Another important sadistic parallel in Salammbo concerns the treatment of the war prisoners by both the Carthaginians and the Mercenaries. Hamilcar sends his prisoners back to Carthage where they are against his orders sadistically tortured by the men, women, and even children inhabiting the city (184). The Carthaginian prisoners, Giscon and the rest, are eventually tortured and murdered in much the same way, the soldiers letting their women participate in the brutalization of the captives (241).

A central parallel in the novel centers on the character of Mâtho. During the course of Salammbo, Mâtho walks through the city of Carthage on two occasions in full view of its inhabitants. The first time, after stealing the sacred veil of the goddess Tanit, Mâtho walks to his freedom wearing it as protection against the wrath of the Carthaginians who line the streets along his route and yet cannot attack him for fear of damaging religious relics. The second time as a prisoner and the last surviving mercenary, Mâtho walks to his death and is sadistically tortured by the Carthaginians who line the streets along his preestablished path for that purpose. The parallel significantly relates two otherwise diverse sections of the novel while reinforcing the radical change in the fate of Mâtho and the Mercenary army.
On the level of characterization, one parallelism, which happens to be intertwined with the sadistic motif, stands out. Hannon and Spendius are set up almost as mirror-images of each other throughout the novel. Both, for example, act as right-hand men during the war, Hannon for Carthage, and Spendius for the Mercenaries. Both characters participate in the war for purely selfish reasons. Both lose major battles because of cowardice and incompetence. Both are eventually crucified. Moreover, the crucifixions occur for generally the same reasons. Spendius selfishly selects himself as emissary to avoid dying of starvation in the siege, not knowing that Hamilcar intends to crucify the Barbarian emissaries as punishment for the war; and Hannon, disobeying Hamilcar's orders during a battle to gain greater personal glory, ends up being taken prisoner by Mātho's forces. Both characters, finally, are central to their individual crucifixion scenes, which are, incidentally, physically and temporally paralleled in the text itself.

Although not necessarily essential to the *fabula*, both parallelisms and foreshadowing in the novel do play an important role in the *synchret* of the novel. Common techniques in poetic composition, both devices lay down structural threads that tie together the plot of this work. The text itself, moreover, is transformed under the influence of the use of the techniques: sadism becomes an important structural element in *Salammbo*.

The Russian Formalist Boris Tomashevskij has divided prose motifs into two categories: bound motifs and free motifs (Tomashevskij 68). Sadism as used in *Salammbo* is not a bound motif in that it is not absolutely necessary for relating the basic story line (*fabula*). That sadism should be viewed as a free motif, however, does not imply that it is gratuitously used, especially to the extent that Saint-Beuve and other contemporaries of Flaubert would have had us believe. That sadistic scenes (i.e., free motifs) can be used in the construction of the story (in the *synchret*) apparently did not occur to Saint-Beuve, although Flaubert himself was well aware of the possibilities:

"Ce qui me choque dans mes amis Saint-Beuve et Taine, c'est qu'ils ne tiennent pas compte de l'Art, de l'oeuvre en soi, de la composition, du style...." (Galliy 15)

In *Salammbo*, certain sadistic scenes do play an important role in the composition of the *synchret*, in the advancement of the plot line. This role, moreover, is dictated by the dominant. Sadistic scenes become a surrogate for direct narratorial intervention. The plot is maintained not by an omniscient, actively interceding narrator, but by an almost effaced narrator indirectly and passively guiding the plot in part through the use of scenes of violence.

Dunaher

The first sadistic scene in the novel, for example, the Mercenaries' celebration in the gardens of Hamilcar's palace, later has direct bearing on the plot. Although Hamilcar at first refuses to accept command of the army of Carthage against the Mercenaries, whose grievances against Carthage he does not consider unjust, he decides after seeing the violence committed by the Barbarians to his gardens, slaves, and elephants: **"j'accepte le commandement des forces puniques contre l'armée des Barbarens!"** (160). At this point in the novel, the sadistic scene in the first chapter serves the plot by becoming a means of justifying Hamilcar's decision. The narrator, it should be noted, is not obliged to intervene to inform the reader that this is the case. By viewing the destruction from Hamilcar's viewpoint, the reader easily understands Hamilcar's change of mind and, consequently, the shift in the plot.

The sadistic immolation scene similarly influences the events of the narrative. On the point of despair before sacrificing the children to Moloch, Carthage is revived by the immolation and the god's favorable response to it, as is indicated by the indirect discourse of the Carthaginian crowd: **"Un tel sacrifice ne devait pas être inutile"** (301). The sadism acts as a stimulant for the Carthaginians in the war, and therefore, for the plot itself. As a result of the sacrifice, "[l]'a patrie encore une fois renaissait" (301). Without bringing his potentially important influence to bear, the narrator makes skillful use of the text and justifies the ambitious continuation of the war.

More directly, the character of Spendius twice invokes sadistic description to bring about important advances in the plot. In his effort to convince the love-struck Mātho to retake command of the Barbarian Army—the similarity with Hamilcar's situation is obvious—Spendius orders: **"Crie, blasphème, ravage et tue. La douleur s'apaise avec du sang,.... gorge ta haine; elle te soutiendra!"** (59) The next paragraph begins with Mātho's implied response to this exhortation: **"Mātho reprit le commandement de ses soldats"** (60).

Spendius accomplishes a similar goal on a much larger scale by invoking sadistic description to convince the fatigued Barbarians to continue the war. After several failed attempts to rally the men, Spendius uses the physical horrors of the battlefield to his advantage:

"Une odeur nauséeuse s'exhalait des cadavres mal enouis. Quelques-uns même sortaient de terre, jusqu'au ventre. Spendius les appelait à lui pour témoigner des choses qu'il disait; et il levait ses poings du côté d'Hamilcar." (244)

The antecedent of the italicized direct object is purposefully left unclear: is he symbolically calling the corpses to him or the actual men spread
across the battlefield? Whatever the case, the rallying call thus communicated has the desired effect. The Mercenaries massacre the remaining Carthaginian captives, Zarxas decapitates Giscon and hurls his head up into the air for all to see, and the war is renewed. The Barbarians declare spiritedly

qu'il n'y avait plus désormais, entre les Carthaginois et les Bar-

bres, ni foi, ni pitié, ni dieux, qu'ils se refusaient d'avance à toutes
les ouvertures et que l'on renverrait les parlementaires avec les
mains coupées. (246)

What was barely a moment before all but a lost cause becomes once again through sadism an all-out war. And although the plot undergoes significant revision, the narrator's voice is not felt.

Sadistic scenes are used not only to bring about certain desired plot shifts without direct intervention of the narrator's discourse but also to justify the nonoccurrence of potential, although evidently undesirable, events. For example, during the siege of Hamilcar's army by the combined Barbarian force, Zarxas commits a sadistic act in full view of all combatants:

[Zarxas] lui [un soldat carthaginois] enfonça un poignard dans la
gorge; il l'envira, se jeta sur la blessure, —et, la bouche collée
contre elle, avec des grondements de joie... il pompaient le sang à
pleine poitrine... . (194)

The Carthaginian response to this is predictable:

Les Carthaginois, à partir de ce moment, ne tentèrent aucune sor-
tie; —et ils ne songeaien pas à se rendre, certains de périr dans les
supplices. (194)

Sadism prevents the Carthaginians from taking what otherwise might be considered a wise course of action. The siege is thus preserved until Sallambo's arrival. The narrator indirectly avoids a possible weakness in the plot by manipulating the text without intervening.

The crucifixion of the Carthaginian elders, including Hannon, in what could have easily been the final battle between the warring armies, causes Carthage to lose and consequently prolongs the novel. Upon viewing the thirty crosses, the Carthaginian soldiers react in the following way:

l'armée punique s'arrêta. Cette catastrophe tombant au milieu de
leur victoire, les stupéfait. Ils n'entendaient plus les ordres d'Hami-

lcar. (330)

Hamilcar's army, on the point of decimating the Barbarians, allows them to escape. The change in the plot's direction is caused by the influence of the sadistic act. The narrator can proceed to the staging of the dramatic final battle because the crucifixion's interference in the scene serves as a justification for the inconclusive termination of the battle in progress. As a device to advance the plot, the crucifixion eliminates the need for direct narratorial manipulation of the text.

The sadistic description that most actively transforms the plot and provides the impetus for the war itself is delivered in the second chapter by the character Zarxas. Focalized through Zarxas, the text recounts the massacre of the soldiers remaining in Carthage after the general exodus:

On fit à leurs corps d'infâmes mutilations; les prêtres brûlèrent
leurs cheveux pour tourmenter leur âme; on les suspendit par mor-
ceaux chez les marchands de viandes... . (43)

The indignation against Carthage, combined with Spedius's goading, incites the Mercenaries to leave Sicca and begin the campaign. Zarxas's description initiates the whole intrigue of the war.

This same description is invoked by Zarxas at a later point. Addressing Giscon, who is paying the Mercenaries their dues, Zarxas says: "'En as-tu réservé pour les cadavres?" " (69) The reference to Carthage's sadistic injustice once again incenses the Barbarians and inspires a sadistic scene as well, Giscon's interpreters being brutally murdered by the disgruntled soldiers. After a considerable lacuna in action, which Spedius's attempts to stir discontent were unable to stop, Zarxas's simple remark restarts the war. The text definitely reads: "La rébellion dès lors ne s'arrêta plus" (70).

This particular thread of the sadistic free motif continues to influence the course of the narrative many pages later. The fact that Giscon is taken prisoner by the Barbarians after Zarxas invokes the sadistic scene transforms the action during the Mercenaries' siege of Hamilcar's army. Giscon's presence in the Mercenaries' camp allows him to influence the events of the plot. After being tortured for so long, for example, he appears to Sallambo in Mâtho's tent as "une forme monstrueuse" (228).

Giscon informs Sallambo not only of the proximity of Hamilcar's army but also of its exact location. His gruesome appearance provides the impetus for Sallambo's flight from the tent to her father's army with the sacred veil. Her departure is described as an escape: "Elle avait peur de Giscon, et il lui semblait que des cris et des pas la poursuivaient" (231). Giscon's presence, made possible by Zarxas's comment, justifies the subsequent defeat of the Barbarians and Sallambo's central role in that defeat. Both the original sadistic description and Giscon's hideous ap-
pearance advance the plot without the need for the narrator to make his presence in the text overt. The novel’s *suzhet* thus relies heavily on *sacritic* scenes. They generate action, prevent undesirable although verisimilar action, and bind the events of the novel together. At the same time, their subtle use does not betray the dominant: the narrator’s presence, and by analogy the author’s presence, remain detectable only to a low degree.

In a letter to a friend about *Salammbô*, Flaubert wrote: “Quand on lira *Salammbô*, on ne pensera pas, je pense, à l’auteur” (Ballème 209). Flaubert’s hope was demonstrably fulfilled. It became more than the dominating (and transforming) element of the work, it became the very means of its fulfillment. A deeper evaluation needs to be made, however: how does the desire to efface the author in *Salammbô* transform the artistic work as a whole? Tomashovskij speaks of motivation of the device, the artistic purpose behind the use of a particular technique (Tomashovskij 78). What effect do the dominant and its related textual transformations have on the novel? In *Salammbô*, effacement of the author both dominates the stylistic production of the text and fundamentally influences the ultimate meaning inherent in the artistic work.

On the simplest level, the effacement of the narrator leaves readers on their own to interpret the meaning of the text. No interpretive narratorial remarks accompany *Salammbô* as they are, for example, in Balzac’s. The reader does not know how to respond to what is presented. This mystification of the reader is particularly strong in *Salammbô*. If the religious and historical themes struggle for dominance throughout the novel, the effaced narrator gives no signal as to which interpretation deserves validity. Is the war between Carthage and the Mercenaries due to the intervention of the gods or to the Realpolitik of the two groups? Is the love motif involving Mâtho and Salammbô genuine or are they the gods’ mortal puppets? These questions are posed without direct prompting from the narrator, and are left unanswerable because of his interpretive silence. The last sentence in the novel, set off as an isolated paragraph, reads: “Ainsi mourut la fille d’Hamilkar pour avoir touché au manteau de Tanit” (553). The interpretation of the final scene, that Salammbô died out of love for Mâtho, is questioned by the abrupt intrusion of a religious justification. Is the last sentence simply the voice of the Carthaginian crowd? Is the novel more historical than fanciful? The narrator’s deliberate silence does not allow for any sure interpretive answers.

The readers’ mystification is increased because he expects to be confronted with an historical-archaeological novel and is faced instead with a novel in which historicity is not used constructively. Andreas Wetzel has remarked that the unfavorable reception of *Salammbô* by both liter-

ary critics and prominent archaeologists of nineteenth-century France has its roots in this type of mystification:

The novel does not, as it is supposed to (as a proper historical novel does), domesticate the unfamiliar by rendering it intelligible in both narrative and historical terms, by relating the fictionalized past to the present through an implicitly posited notion of continuity. (Wetzel 20)

Despite Flaubert’s painstaking preparatory research on ancient Carthage and alleged “intentions” to communicate the historical “truth,” *Salammbô* does not fulfill the function of an historical novel precisely because it is not one. Critics were naturally frustrated because they misinterpreted the full significance of the work. Archaeological and historical material in the novel functions on the formal level. The result is not the readers’ instruction but their ultimate mystification.

Mystification of the reader deriving from these sources also precludes any justifiable interpretation of *Salammbô* as an overt literary response to the political, economic, and social situation in nineteenth-century France. As one critic recently averred:

I read *Salammbô* as, on the one hand, a curious “confessional” history of French activities in North Africa and Egypt during the first half of the 19th century and, on the other hand, as a “therapeutic” attempt to come to terms with both the brutality and the failure of the revolts of 1848. (Lowe 47)

Examination of the text itself casts serious doubts, however, on such a (fundamentally irrelevant) reading of *Salammbô*. The use of authorial effacement as a dominating technique in the novel seemingly does not facilitate parallelisms between Carthage and Flaubert’s France.

Mystification of the reader in *Salammbô* could be seen as a form of estrangement. Although Shklovskij spoke of estrangement or *ostranenie* (OCTalleHEH) in his writings, Flaubertian estrangement slightly redefines the Formalist notion. Whereas Formalists perceived estrangement as alienating the meaning of a text from the reader to heighten artistic perception, the reader of *Salammbô* is estranged not only from the meaning of the text but, in a sense, from the text as well. One might even argue that the reader is effaced from participation in the text, especially its prolific use of unexplained historical material, in much the same way as the narrator himself. The result of this process is similar: perception of the artistic form of the work is heightened. It might be added that in *Salammbô* the content is so estranged from the reader as to be insignificant. What little content there is has no value assigned to it by the effaced narrator. The style dominates the work.
The devaluing of the content is accomplished in many ways, all of which relate to the work's dominant. The proliferation of historical lists, which serve both to impersonalize the text and to mystify the nonerudite reader, and the obscure, exotic subject of the novel that deprives the reader of any cultural or temporal references, significantly alienate the reader from the novel's content. Moreover, the constant, subtle change in points of view, while allowing for minimal narratorial interference, results in semantic confusion. Often, as in the case of the last sentence, it is difficult to pinpoint the source of the voice in the text.

The sadistic motif also contributes to the reader's estrangement. Justified in the structure of the work and prolific as a necessary element of focalization of description, the sadism in Salammbo more often than not inspires the reader's disgust. The sadistic motif is so strong that the reader is physically alienated from the text and may not even want to continue reading it. The images associated with the sadistic scenes correspond appropriately, moreover, to the image inherent in the work's dominant. Sadism is a devaluing of human life, as effacement of the author is a devaluing of the role of the text's creator. Similarly, the reader's role is devalued and, as R. J. Sherrington observes, the focalization of description and narrative largely through "collective subjectivity" suppresses even the individual character's role (Sherrington 167-76). The human, individual element is thus purged from the novel on several different levels. Ultimately, the result of the strong sadistic motif is a minimization of the novel's content. Preoccupation with the meaning of the words leads to physical revulsion and, consequently, to alienation from the text. Perception of the artistic form is the only non-pathological way to appreciate it.

In another letter to a friend about his intentions in writing Salammbo, Flaubert wrote: "Ce sera de l'Art, de l'Art pur et pas autre chose" (Ballème 200). The cumulative effect of the dominant and its influence on Salammbo is to create pure art and nothing else. In Jakobsonian terms, the emphasis is on the literariness (literaturamost) of the work, that is, on what makes the text artistic. The message of the novel is not therefore on the level of content, but on the level of form. It is an artistic message, not a political, historical, or social one. Had content been Flaubert's primary consideration, the use of effacement of the author as the dominating structural element would hardly have been appropriate. Transformed by the dominant, content, including sadistic description, becomes little more than a necessary vehicle for the reification of form.
In a number of ways, Flaubert's individualism society.

Balzac's Sentimental Education...