

Anex Especial

L'òpera Lucie de Lammermoor, a la novel·la "Madame Bovary"

En la meua cerca d'informació a l'hora de fer aquest treball, vaig anar als confins de la terra, o quasi. Una de les pistes que vaig seguir em va portar a localitzar un americà, professor de Llengua i Literatura franceses a la Universitat de South Carolina, el Sr. Buford Norman, que és a la vegada músic i especialista en òpera francesa. Ha tret una pila d'articles, llibres, conferències, etc. i actualment ha publicat un llibre sobre el llibretista Quinault i l'òpera francesa del XVII. A Internet hi havia el seu curriculum i és impressionant. L'adjunto al final.

Bé, resulta que el Sr. Norman va fer una conferència l'any 1984, a un centre dels E.U.A. anomenat Kentucky Foreign Language, amb un títol que era:

*Emma Bovary at the
Theater: Flaubert's use of
Donizetti's Lucia de
Lammermoor*

Em semblava increïble haver donat tant de plè a la diana, i per tant em vaig posar en contacte amb l'autor, que ha resultat ser a més, una persona encantadora. Malhauradament el text no estava en format electrònic, perquè encara que sembli que vivim amb ordinadors de tota la vida, a l'any 1984 no era una cosa corrent. El Sr. Norman va haver de localitzar el text, refer el final que estava poc legible, i enviar-me'l per correu. No va arribar doncs a temps perquè el pogués utilitzar en el meu treball, que m'hagués donat idees per a arrodonir-lo des del punt de vista textual.

Però és un text tant interessant i tant ben fet, el discurs està tant ben construït, sobretot des del punt de vista de l'interès literari, que crec que val la pena que el coneixis, i per tant et demano que el consideris adjuntat al meu treball com a Anex especial.

Francesc Rius

print

note
more I.

could do: lit hist, more extended look at music in whole novel
theory, scenarios, narrative shifts
Lucia, Edgar

Lucia-Bovary, 1

Emma Bovary at the Theater:
Flaubert's Use of Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor

EP

The evening at the theater in Rouen is obviously a scene of great importance in Mme Bovary. Coming at the end of part two, the trip to Rouen is designed to help ^{Emma} ~~her~~ recover from the illness which, as only ^{she} ~~Emma~~ and the reader know, was caused by the sudden end of her affair with Rodolphe, by the end of her hopes for a much longer journey. Ironically, however, the trip serves only to prepare her affair with Léon and the ever-increasing falsehoods and debts which lead to her suicide.

Any trip would have accomplished this transition, but Flaubert was too much of an artist to let Emma bump into Léon just anywhere.* By the time Charles has brought Léon to say hello to Emma, between the second and third acts of Lucia, Emma has rediscovered the idealized world of her adolescent readings, identified with the heroine and her desire to escape an unhappy marriage, realized the illusory ~~and exaggerated~~ nature of this kind of exaggerated passion only to return enthusiastically to these illusions, envied the heroine her perfect lover, fallen in love with the tenor, and dreamed of fleeing with him into an existence which would fulfil "toutes mes ardeurs et tous mes rêves" (p. 271). And of course, as usual, Charles doesn't understand a thing that is going on, either on stage or inside his wife.

It is not necessary to know Lucia very well to see, even from the extremely brief description of Emma's reactions which I have just given (which is very similar to that of Flaubert's scenario LI), that it is perfectly suited to Emma's taste and to

her situation. We already know that she devoured Walter Scott's novels (Lucia is based on Scott's The Bride of Lammermoor), and that just as she enjoys literature "pour ses excitations passionnelles," she enjoys music not only for "pour les paroles des romances" (p. 57), but for the "réalités sentimentales" which she perceives "à travers les notes" (p. 55). When Emma sees and hears a beautiful young woman and her passionate lover, who are separated because she must marry a man she does not love, how can she help but identify with her? And when this perfect lover returns, out of love for her, to face all of his enemies alone, how can she help but dream of someone better than Rodolphe, of someone who has left but who returns when he is in danger of losing her?

All of this has been analyzed very well by critics such as Bopp and Bailbé,[§] and it is not my intention to repeat it here. What I would like to look at, however, and what does require a more thorough knowledge of Donizetti's opera, is the great care which Flaubert devoted to his description of the action of the opera, and the great skill with which he worked it into his novel. I would then like to discuss how this scene helps understand the importance of music throughout the novel, and how all of this helps us appreciate Mme Bovary even more.

Before I begin describing the opera, and how Flaubert uses it in his text, let me say that I realize I have up till now neglected parts of the action which do not correspond to Emma's situation. So did Flaubert, or rather, so did his heroine--if anyone mentions these parts of the action, it is Charles. What

Emma does not notice, and especially what she does not even see, since she leaves during the third act, is as important as what she does notice.

What I am describing here is the French version of Lucia, or rather of Lucie, which premiered in Paris on August 6, 1839,

~~[This version was prepared by Alphonse Royer and Gustave Vaës]~~

with new music by Donizetti. The major changes are the elimination of the character of Lucie's maid Alisa, the

enlargement of the role of the Normanno (now the villain Gilbert),

~~and the substitution of a different aria for the one in the first scene~~ *the aria*

Que n'importe rien de ailes
("Perche non ho del vento") for "Regnava nel silenzio" in Lucie's first scene.]

The Ravenswoods were long the dominant family in the Lammermoor area, but they have lost their power, lands and wealth to a new family, the Ashtons. The last remaining Ravenswood, Edgard, swears vengeance on the Ashtons, especially Henri, the head of the family, ^{who} ~~Henri~~, to assure his political fortunes, has arranged for his sister Lucie to marry the powerful Lord Arthur Bucklaw. She, however, loves Edgard, and has been using the excuse of her mother's recent death to avoid the marriage with Bucklaw.

two column presentation of novel-libretto 3 min.

You will notice immediately, from comparing the two columns, that Flaubert follows the libretto very closely, and that he was extremely familiar with the opera, perhaps as much as with the effects of arsenic poisoning. (It is certainly not coincidental that Emma's trip to Rouen is preceded by a discussion of the

evils of the theater; pp. 261-2. Poison is not mentioned specifically, but the famous accusation of playwrights as "empoisonneurs publics" is certainly suggested.) One can identify all but two scenes of the thirteen of the first two acts, and eighteen of the twenty-four of the entire opera, even though Emma, Charles and Léon leave in the middle of act three. Of the two scenes of the first two acts that are not mentioned, one (I,5) is extremely brief, adds nothing to the story, and was quite possibly cut in performance. The other (II,3) adds nothing new about Arthur that we did not learn in I,4. Flaubert ignores it on purpose, since ~~at that time~~ Emma is trying to explain to Charles what has been going on in the first two scenes of the act, and their conversation continues until, "impatienteée," she tells him to be quiet as Lucie advances at the beginning of II,4 (p. 269).

Most of the scenes which only serve to advance the action, and which do not involve Lucie or Edgard directly, are mentioned only briefly. In contrast, Lucie's solo and the love duet in act one, and her appearance in act two, followed by Edgard's sudden appearance and the famous sextet, are described in considerable detail. Flaubert describes not only the décor, costumes, and actions, ^{which any spectator could observe,} but also the content of the arias—^{for example} he mentions what each character is singing in the sextet, which is almost impossible to understand in performance—^{He} often including specific words ("elle demandait des ailes," in I,7, for example) ^{or Charles' reference to I,4} and sometimes even the key (I,7 and III,3)! It is extremely doubtful that Flaubert had a good enough ear to distinguish among keys; he obviously studied the score in some detail, ^{or at least discussed it with experts.}

+ of preceding
in score

ii
re p. 9

There is, of course, less detail for the last two acts, since Emma and Charles leave in the middle of act three. The narrator tells us only what Emma did not pay attention to (scenes one through three), and doesn't mention scenes four and five at all. We learn that Emma was not interested in the mad scene, did not like the soprano's acting, but that Charles was starting to get interested. Maybe he would even begin to realize the similarities between Lucie's situation and Emma's, but he does not get the chance. Emma is way ahead of him, as usual, ^{and Charles,} in deference to "le respect qu'il portait aux opinions de sa femme" (p. 273), agrees to leave.

The decision to leave during Lucie's famous mad scene (III,6-7), marks the beginning of Emma's affair with Léon. It is a new beginning for her, a decision to try a different type of love rather than give up on love altogether, as she had started to do after her illness. This movement from love to an abandonment of it to a return to it is also reflected in her reaction to the opera. During the first scene between Lucie and Edgar (I, 8), Emma

s'emplissait le coeur de ces lamentations mélodieuses, . . . reconnaissait tous les enivrements et les angoisses dont elle avait manqué mourir. La voix de la chanteuse ne lui semblait être que le retentissement de sa conscience, et cette illusion qui la charmait quelque chose même de sa vie. (p. 268)

During

In Act II, scene 4, however, Emma watches a pale Lucie advance to sign the ill-fated marriage contract, begins to dream of her own wedding, wonders why she didn't resist as Lucie does, and then realizes "la petitesse des passions que l'art exagérait. . . . Emma voulait ne plus voir dans cette reproduction de ses douleurs qu'une fantaisie plastique bonne à abuser les yeux" (p. 269). But suddenly, "au fond du théâtre, sous le portière de velours, un homme apparut en manteau noir" (p. 270). Edgar has returned, though too late, to save Lucie, and as Emma listens to the great sextet (III, 5),

Toutes ses velléités de dénigrement s'évanouissaient sous la poésie du rôle qui l'envahissait, et, entraînée vers l'homme par l'illusion du personnage, elle tâcha de se figurer sa vie . . . qu'elle aurait pu mener, cependant, si le hasard l'avait voulu.

(p. 270)

Emma's return to a life of passion with Léon is thus prepared by her reactions to the opera. Listening to Lucie alone, she realizes the illusory nature of such passion, but falls immediately prey to passion when Edgar appears. Similarly, as soon as Léon joins her and Charles at the theater, her interest in the opera disappears, and she thinks only of Léon.

It is not just the fact that Emma leaves the theater that is important, but also when she leaves. Throughout the first two acts she has empathized with the heroine, loved the hero and the tenor who plays him (they have the same first name), and Flaubert has described her reactions only to the parts of the opera which

apply to her situation. ^{If it is} Charles ^{who} has mentioned ^s the false ring, for example, and the role of Lucie's brother ~~Henri~~, but while the narrator's statement that her memories of the Scott novel enabled her to follow the story "phrase à phrase" (p. 267) makes it clear that she understands what is going on, she ^{needs to} ~~mentions~~ these parts of the plot only in response to Charles' questions.

What would Emma have said about the famous mad scene, in which a passionate woman murders her husband rather than be faithful to him, if Léon had not appeared? Even with her overriding interest (and that of her period, in contrast to ours) in the tenor rather than in the soprano, she could hardly have remained insensitive to this great scene, nor avoided reflecting about how she could possibly murder her husband and/or go mad, under the influence of her great love for another man. She will go mad, in a way, and die a sad death, and one could even say that she causes the death of Charles, or at least his ruin, but it does not happen at the end of part two of the novel. The arrival of Léon has caused Emma to go from seeing her situation in the action on stage to looking forward to new adventures with ^{in real life} him. She does make an effort to resist the temptation to plunge into the memories of evenings with Léon but, "sans doute obéissant à l'attraction d'une volonté plus forte" which is perhaps that of the music she just heard and the accompanying emotions, she becomes so wrapped up in wondering "quelle combinaison d'aventures le replaçait dans la vie" that she no longer pays attention to the performance before her. "La scène de la folie n'intéressait pas Emma, et le jeu de la chanteuse lui

parut exagéré" (p. 272). This is definitely the reaction of a woman who is looking for any excuse to leave, but is it not also the reaction of a woman who does not want to believe what she is seeing could happen to her? Everything is fine if she would like to play one of the parts, to enter into the story, but not if the story does not turn out to her liking. Emma would have to admit to not loving her husband and to loving another, but she would not like to admit that the result of this behavior could be madness, murder and death. It is much more pleasant to contemplate the beginning of another affair, of another means of escape.

Music is heard in more places in Mme Bovary than in the Rouen theater. I have already quoted some of Emma's reactions to the music she heard in the convent ("entrevoit les réalités sentimentales à travers les notes;" p. 57), and you will remember her excitement at the ball at Vaubyessard--"elle oublia les airs des contredanses; . . . quelques détails s'en allèrent," but, as with the "réalités sentimentales," le regret lui resta" (p. 77). You will also remember that she and Léon discussed music during their long conversations in Yonville.

Less obvious, however, is the recurrence of musical metaphors, such as those which use vibration. When Léon leaves Yonville, Emma feels the pain "que vous apportent l'interruption de tout mouvement accoutumé, la cessation brusque d'une vibration prolongée" (p. 152). Vibrations also occur at another emotional moment, after she makes love with Rodolphe for the first time-- "un cri vague et prolongé, une voix qui se traînait, et elle

l'écoutait silencieusement, se mêlant comme une musique aux dernières vibrations de ses nerfs émus" (p. 196). This passage is strikingly similar to Emma's reaction to Lucia--Emma not only cries out in pleasure as the soprano and tenor hit a high B flat at the end of act one (p. 268), she also feels herself, as she listens, "vibrer de tout son être comme si les archets des violons se fussent promenés sur ses nerfs" (p. 267). The scene at the opera would not set off so many sympathetic vibrations, if you will pardon the phrase, were it not for the earlier associations of vibrations with moments of emotional intensity.

Music continues to play a major role in part three. Most obviously, it is music lessons that provide Emma with the excuse for going to Rouen to meet Léon. I have not noticed other vibration metaphors, but ^{there} are few moments of real emotional intensity, at least not pleasant moments. The affair with Léon lacks the innocence of their first meetings, and the novelty of the affair with Rodolphe. Emma still hopes for happiness during the performance of Lucia, but is soon disillusioned in part three. She does associate her memories of ^{the ball} Edgar Lagardy with those of the beginning of her marriage, ^{of} the ball, and of Rodolphe and Léon (p. 335). By now, however, "Léon lui parut dans le même éloignement que les autres," and Flaubert's style indirect libre tells us that "elle n'était pas heureuse, ne l'avait jamais été."

There is something similar to the vibration metaphors, however, but it has undergone a transformation similar to that which has taken place in Emma's life. After she has taken the

poison, she reaches a moment of calme, where she no longer hates anyone. "Emma n'entendait plus que l'intermittente lamentation de ce pauvre coeur, douce et indistincte, comme le dernier écho d'une symphonie qui s'éloigne" (p. 375). Her nerves are no longer vibrating with pleasure, nor is she even saying good-bye to someone she loves; everything is distant, her cries of pleasure (when making love with Rodolphe or when listening to Lucia) are only distant echos. One could compare this distance to that of the characters and music during act three of Lucia when Emma loses interest and begins thinking of Léon, but that work continued, and she found a way to avoid its tragedy. The imaginary symphony, ^{on the other hand,} is over, along with Emma's life and dreams; there is no more escape.

I would like to suggest that there is one other musical element that has undergone a transformation--the voice which haunts Emma as she dies is not that of Lagardy, but of the blind man, who finally finishes his song of sexual promiscuity (p.

384): *It is a "voix rauque" (p. 384), like the rite of Emma just before she leaves her final song, but also like the "rite élégiaque" of Lagardy (p. 268), which is the first description of the voice of the great tenor.*
 Pour amasser diligence

Les épis que la faux moissonne,
 Ma Nanette va s'inclinant
 Vers le sillon qui nous les donne.
 Il souffla bien fort ce jour-là,
 Et le jupon court s'envola. (p. 384)

Emma cried out earlier at his song (p. 317), as she had at that of Lucie and Edgar at the end of act one. But now the phallic épis are less important than the faux of death, and it is not just the

petticoat of Nanette which flies away, but also the soul of Emma Bovary.

There is not enough time to consider the theoretical implications of the role of the theater and of music in the novel, of how Emma's reactions to the opera could serve as a model for the reader's reactions to the novel. It is a fascinating example of intertextuality, or rather of "intergenerality," where an awareness of the role of a musical, theatrical work, and of music in general, causes one to read in a somewhat different way.

Let me simply conclude by emphasizing the importance of the scene at the theater in Rouen for our understanding of Mme Bovary, character and novel. Just as Emma identifies herself with Lucie and reflects on her own situation, so the reader should make the comparison between the two tragic heroines. It is not so much that we can understand Emma better, but that we can see several other possibilities for the outcome of her story – like Lucie, she could have resisted the marriage with Charles, or she could have gone mad and murdered him; like Henri, Charles could have found out about her affairs; the priest of Yonville, like the minister at Ravenswood, could have been more involved; and almost *ad infinitum*. We know that Flaubert considered many different ways for the story to develop, and though I am not sure he could have improved it, I am glad he gave us a few more possibilities to think about.

Act I

Mais on entendit trois coups sur la scene; un roulement de timbales commença, les instruments de cuivre plaquèrent des accords, et le rideau, se levant, découvrit un paysage.

C'était le carrefour d'un bois, avec une fontaine, à gauche, ombragée par un chêne. Des paysans et des seigneurs, le plaid sur l'épaule, chantaient tous ensemble une chanson de chasse;

puis il survint un capitaine

qui invoquait l'ange du mal en levant au ciel ses deux bras;

un autre parut; ils s'en allèrent, et les chasseurs reprirent.

Mais une jeune femme s'avança en jetant une bourse à un écuyer vert.

Elle resta seule, et alors on entendit une flûte qui faisait comme un murmure de fontaine ou comme des gazouillements d'oiseau. Lucie entama d'un air grave sa cavatine en sol majeur; elle se plaignait d'amour, elle demandait des ailes.

I,1: Place in the woods where two paths cross; at the left is a fountain shaded by an oak.

Chorus sings a hunting song.

I,2: Ashton explains the situation to Gilbert, who offers to kill Edgard; Ashton refuses.

I,3: Ashton learns Edgard has been seen nearby, and accepts Gilbert's offer. Gilbert looks forward to the deed.

I,4: Arthur loves Lucie, but wants to be reassured that her love for Edgard is no longer a problem. The chorus sings of the beginning of the hunt.

I,5: Gilbert is upset that Edgard is leaving the country; he won't get paid for killing him.

I,6: Lucie pays Gilbert to stand guard.

I,7: Lucie is at the fountain where she first saw Edgard.

She sings of her love for Edgard, of the family hatred which keeps them apart.

Mme Bovary

Tout à coup, Edgar Lagardy parut. Dès la première scène, il enthousiasma. Il pressait Lucie dans ses bras, il la quittait, il revenait, il semblait désespéré: il avait des éclats de colère, puis des râles élégiaques d'une douceur infinie, et les notes s'échappaient de son cou nu, pleines de sanglots et de baisers. Il ne pleurait pas comme Edgar, le dernier soir, au clair de lune, lorsqu'ils se disaient: "A demain, à demain!..." Quand ils poussèrent l'adieu final, Emma jeta un cri aigu, qui se confondit avec la vibration des derniers accords.

Lucie de Lammermoor

I,8: Edgard has to leave to fight in France. He hopes Ashton will let him marry Lucie, but then realizes it is hopeless. He curses Ashton, and Lucie gets upset. He gives her a ring, and they swear to love each other till death; their thoughts and prayers will fly to each other.

They bid each other farewell.

Between Acts I and II

"Pourquoi donc, demanda Bovary, ce seigneur est-il à la persécuter?
--Mais non, répondit-elle; c'est son amant.

--Pourtant il jure de se venger sur sa famille, tandis que l'autre, celui qui est venu tout à l'heure, disait: "J'aime Lucie et je m'en crois aimé." D'ailleurs, il est parti avec son père, bras dessus, bras dessous. Car c'est bien son père, n'est-ce pas, le petit laid qui porte une plume de coq à son chapeau?"

Refers to I,8. (Edgard="ce seigneur")

Refers to I,4 (Arthur="l'autre")

(Ashton="son père"; really her brother)

Act II

Malgré les explications d'Emma, dès le duo récitatif où Gilbert expose à son maître Ashton ses abominables manoeuvres,

Charles, en voyant le faux anneau de fiançailles qui doit abuser Lucie, crut que c'était un souvenir d'amour envoyé par Edgar.

II,1: Gilbert has intercepted the letters from Lucie to Edgard, and has copied the ring Edgard gave her.

II,2: Ashton tells Lucie Edgard has forgotten her, and shows her the false ring. Lucie is in despair.

II,3: Chorus follows Arthur to the wedding. He still doubts that Lucie really loves him.

Act III

--Silence! cria une voix de parterre, car le troisième acte commençait.

Mais, à partir de ce moment, elle n'écoula plus; et le chœur des conviés,

la scène d'Ashton et de son valet,

grand duo en ré majeur, tout passa pour elle dans l'éloignement,

"Ah! pas encore! restons! dit Bovary. Elle a les cheveux dénoués: cela promet d'être tragique."

Mais la scène de la folie n'intéressait point Emma. et le jeu de la chanteuse lui parut exagéré.

"Elle crie trop fort, dit-elle."

III,1: Chorus sings of the wedding night.

III,2: Gilbert says a stranger wants to talk to Ashton.

III,3: Edgard and Ashton decide to fight a duel later.

III,4: The chorus sings again.

III,5: Minister says Lucie has stabbed Arthur to death.

III,6-7 (Mad Scene):

Lucie imagines she sees Edgard.

Lucie sings high, difficult notes.

Act IV

Des gens qui sortaient du spectacle passèrent sur le trottoir, tout en fredonnant ou braillant à plein gosier: O bel ange, ma Lucie!

"Pourtant, interrompit Charles qui mordait à petits coups son sorbet au rhum, on prétend qu'au dernier acte il est admirable tout à fait; je regrette d'être parti avant la fin, car ça commençait à m'amuser.

Et, changeant de manoeuvre devant cette occasion inattendue qui s'offrait à son espoir, le jeune homme entama l'éloge de Lagardy dans le morceau final. C'était quelque chose de superbe, de sublime!

IV,1: Edgard decides to die in the duel.

IV,2: Messenger tells Edgard that Ashton cannot come because Lucie is dying.

IV,3: Minister tells Edgard Lucie is dead.

Edgard sings aria, "O bel ange, ma Lucie," and stabs himself.

IV,4: Edgard forgives Ashton, goes to join Lucie in heaven.

Ashton is full of remorse, and is blamed for the tragedy by the chorus.

Mme Bovary

Lucie s'avancait, à demi soutenue par ses femmes, une couronne d'oranger dans les cheveux, ~~et plus pâle une couronne d'oranger dans les cheveux,~~ et plus pâle que le satin blanc de sa robe.

Au fond du théâtre, sous la portière de velours, un homme apparut en manteau noir.

Son grand chapeau à l'espagnole tomba dans un geste qu'il fit; et aussitôt les instruments et les chanteurs entonnèrent le sextuor. Edgar, étincelant de furie, dominait tous les autres de sa voix plus claire; Ashton lui lançait en notes graves des provocations homicides; Lucie poussait sa

plainte aiguë; Arthur modulait à l'écart des sons moyens, et la base-taille du ministre ronflait comme un orgue tandis que les voix de femmes, répétant ses paroles, reprenaient en chœur, délicieusement. Ils étaient tous sur la même ligne à gesticuler; et la colère, la vengeance, la jalousie, la terreur, la miséricorde et la stupéfaction s'exhalaient à la fois de leurs bouches entrouvertes. L'amoureux outragé brandissait son épée nue: sa collerette de guipure se levait par saccades, selon les mouvements de sa poitrine, et il allait de droite et de gauche, à grands pas, faisant sonner contre les planches les éperons vermeils de ses bottes molles, qui s'évasaient à la cheville.

Le rideau se baissa.

Lucie de Lammermoor

II,4: Lucie signs the wedding contract.

A noise is heard outside.

II,5: Edgard bursts in.

(Sextet)

Edgard hates Ashton, is mad at Lucie, but still loves her. Ashton threatens to kill Edgard.

Lucie realizes Edgard was not unfaithful.

Arthur realizes Edgard and Lucie are still in love, threatens Edgard. The minister prays for mercy for Lucia, that the fighting stop. Chorus repeats Lucie's words of misery.

Edgard (colère), Ashton (vengeance)
Arthur (jalousie), Lucie (terreur)
Minister (miséricorde), chorus
(stupéfaction)

Minister shows Edgard the contract.
Lucie admits she signed it.

Edgard leaves, thinking himself betrayed by Lucie.