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METONYMY'S SUBVERSION OF METAPHOR: (DIS)FIGURING THE BODY IN FLAUBERT, CELINE, SARTRE, AND PONGE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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*****

The Ohio State University 1999

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ABSTRACT

Lurking in the shadows of metaphor, the all-embracing and privileged trope that has monopolized literary discourse, metonymy finds itself in an inferior position. Considered to lack metaphor's intelligibility and defying easy interpretation, metonymy has not reached the grand heights of its counterpart. Undeniably, it is metaphor that has achieved a revered status in our literary culture, esteemed by many to be the trope par excellence.

But attitudes are changing. Just a cursory glance at recent critical work reveals a new interest in metonymy. Not only is metonymy being looked at as a basic conceptual framework, but as a cultural and linguistic device for questioning norms and traditions. Indeed, metonymy's strength comes from its capacity to challenge unities. It offers resistance to totalizing claims, suspending identity and closure. Thus, its unauthoritative qualities, instead of being its weakness, are now being regarded its strength, lending it a subversive and, at times, threatening presence.

The subversive qualities of metonymy, which can dismantle metaphor's pretensions, are particularly revealing in bodily depictions. Challenging the body as whole, metonymy (dis)figures and disperses it,
revealing instead its imminent, fragmented parts. Flaubert, Céline, Sartre, and Ponge all employ metonymic structures in relation to the body. While much scholarship has been devoted to studying the metonymic body in Flaubert, it has not received full treatment in Céline, Sartre, and Ponge. Thus, deriving from Flaubert metonymic structures of subversion, this dissertation demonstrates the trope's reappearance in more modern texts, where it continues to challenge and debase the metaphoric body.
Dedicated to my parents
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO METONYMY

Lurking in the shadows of metaphor, the central, all-embracing, and privileged trope that has traditionally monopolized literary discourse, metonymy often finds itself in an inferior and subordinate position. Indeed, the comments of several prominent critics betray metonymy's lesser status. Stephen Ullmann, in *Language and Style*, casts doubt on metonymy's creative potential: "It is true that metonymy lacks the originality and the expressive power of metaphor" (177), and George Lakoff, in *Metaphors We Live By*, attributes our conceptual system largely to metaphorical thought processes, touching only briefly on the role of metonymy. Roman Jakobson, in a similar vein, discusses the mediocrity of metonymy, a trope that "défie facilement l'interprétation" and that consequently has not attained the grand heights of its more august counterpart, metaphor: "C'est pourquoi rien de comparable à la
riche littérature écrite sur la métaphore ne peut être cité en ce qui concerne la théorie de la métonymie" (66). In the hierarchy of literary tropes, metonymy has in effect been eclipsed by metaphor, "the all-encompassing trope" according to Aristotle (Shapiro 5), and "the figure of figures," as Culler cogently demonstrates (Pursuit 189). Relying on "conventional associations between objects and concepts rather than on 'originally' observed similarities" (Warhol 75), metonymy has not been accorded the same attention, nor gained the same appeal, as metaphor. Undeniably, it is metaphor that has achieved a revered status in our literary culture; the various encomia bestowed upon metaphor include the trope par excellence, the trope most likely to be taught in a beginning literature class, and the trope most subjected to critical and analytical investigation.

The Rise of Metonymy

But perspectives and attitudes are changing. Just a cursory glance at the critical work produced in recent years shows a new interest in metonymy. In addition to undergoing critical examination in such disciplines as film, painting, dramaturgy, and literature, metonymy is being considered part of a conceptual framework through which we contemplate and make sense of the world. As Raymond Gibbs explains, "The fact that people easily use and understand metonymic expressions attests to the automatic, effortless, and unconscious way that people structure their experiences in terms of metonymic relations" (13). Thus, just as metaphoric devices have provided us with insight into the
human capacity to understand, so too do metonymical ones, the structure of which contributes to our intelligibility of the universe. Metonymy is no longer being perceived as a misunderstood linguistic peculiarity, but as a basic and essential component of language, aesthetics, and the human experience.

Certain publications are noteworthy for their reconsideration of metonymy and should be mentioned for providing an impetus for this study. Among them is Jutka Dévényi's *Metonymy and Drama*, which persuasively examines the relationship between metonymic structures and the absence of an overriding, dominant vision in dramaturgy. This study is unprecedented in that it regards metonymy as a primary structure of a play's composition, contrary to its traditional, insignificant status in dramatic imagery. As Dévényi herself explains about the originality of her research, "the study elevates metonymy to the level of an overall organizing force and attempts to catalog its symptoms" (11). Metonymy is thus considered central, primary, and indispensable, equally expressive and original as metaphor.

Similarly, Jill Matus's article, "Proxy and Proximity: Metonymic Signing," by exploring the ways metonymy has been variously understood, elevates metonymy to a level of linguistic and literary credibility, and gives voice to "different ways of seeing things and saying things" (305). In so doing, Matus valorizes metonymy as a rich tool of our interpretative strategies, a tool that possesses "great capacity to reveal the way we habitually conceive of our world" (308). Matus's article thereby invites and encourages an approach to literary texts
that is sensitive to this neglected trope, an approach that includes "attention to context, positionality, and interrelationships" (323).

In a like manner, "Tropical Dominions: The Figurative Struggle over Domains of Belonging and Apartness in Africa" by Deborah Durham and James Fernandez, concerns itself with the metonymic, calling for greater interest in this trope that has traditionally played second fiddle to metaphor. In particular, this study focuses on the rebellious qualities of metonymy that contrast with metaphor's authoritarian nature. It accordingly presents metonymy as a trope well-suited for the questioning and challenging of norms and traditions, containing the capacity for manipulation and destruction:

It is in the realm of metonymic associations, indeed, that conventions may be challenged, and hence metonymy is a trope most suitable for either asserting or challenging established hierarchies and conventions--for asserting and/or challenging worldviews indeed! (198)

Although this study, by pointing out the beneficial qualities of metonymy in the restructuring of social order, primarily addresses the concerns of anthropologists, it is applicable to other scholarly domains in that it recognizes metonymy as a valid and equally revealing discursive and cultural structure.

In addition to elevating metonymy to a status worthy of critical and analytical attention, these studies share, among the many other aspects to be discussed hereafter, a desire to reveal the subversive and, at times, threatening qualities of the trope. Its unstable and unauthoritative features, instead of being its weakness, are now being regarded as its strength. By pointing out contingencies and
discontinuities in language and in the world at large, metonymy is capable of undermining absolute and essentializing discourse. It offers resistance to totalizing claims in a text, disrupting and suspending any movement toward identity and closure. So while it has long been considered that metonymy lacks the force of metaphor, it is possible and necessary at this time to explain this lack in positive terms.

Thus, by exposing the intricacies of metonymy, a trope that can enrich our interpretive experience, these studies bring metonymy into the libraries of scholars and critics, not as a point in passing, but as an integral part of linguistic, stylistic, and cultural material deserving of an entire study. Metonymy, as we shall see, has indeed stepped into the spotlight of critical and analytical debate. So perhaps, and despite Jakobson's pejorative assessment of the trope, there will come a time when metonymy will garner as much critical attention, even praise, about itself as metaphor.

The Elevation of the Fragment

The question thus arises: Why, until recent years, has metonymy been accorded so little attention? And how can we explain this sudden eruption of interest in this overlooked trope? In Reading in Detail, Naomi Shor raises similar questions, and, while not examining metonymy per se, she addresses the question of why "the detail" (which, as the following analysis will reveal, metonymy often privileges) has hitherto been neglected and concludes that it has long been censured: "The censure of the particular is one of the enabling gestures of neo-
classicism, which recycled into the modern age the classical equation of the Ideal with the absence of all particularity" (3). In other words, classicism's reverence for the Ideal took place at the expense of particulars, individuals, and specifics. The detail was therefore suppressed, rejected, and for a long time excluded from the field of representation.

Today, however, and as Shor points out, "the detail enjoys a rare prominence" (3). Likewise, metonymy finds itself on center stage, its recent stardom occurring at a point in time when our critical thought and discourse have turned toward skepticism and disbelief concerning the construction and basis of meaning. That is to say, while metonymy has always existed as a fundamental component of language, interest in this trope has not. However, its ability to valorize the fragment at the expense of the whole has recently been seen as a positive trait of the trope, and in many ways complements the postmodern project, as they both dismantle and reject absolutist, essentialist, and authoritarian discourse. Hillman and Mazzio bring out this very point in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe:*

The elevation of the fragment to a position of central significance is, indeed, very much a topical matter in contemporary culture; the rejection of all forms of totality, including the corporeal, is one of the defining characteristics of postmodernism. (xii)

Rightly so, metonymy's strength comes from its capacity to challenge totalities and unities, suggesting as it does the impossibility of completely integrated entities. Metonymy renders coherent and complete essences virtually indistinguishable and replaces them with disordered and fragmented parts. Such features, while long believed to weaken
metonymy's expressive potential, are now, in the contemporary, postmodern era, considered fitting for the rejection and questioning of all-encompassing modes of thought.

This, as Shor explains, provides a reason for the rise to prominence of the detail: "the ongoing valorization of the detail appears to be an essential aspect of that dismantling of Idealist metaphysics" (3-4). Linda Nochlin in *The Body in Pieces* confirms the view that the fragment is a powerful tool of subversion: "In postmodernist production, the fragment assumes new, and differently transgressive, forms . . . the part/object serves as the subverter of modernist rationality and formalist abstraction" (54). Thus, metonymic discourse and the postmodern project are both marked by their validation of the fragment, subverting as they both do absolutist and idealist discourse.

Another possible explanation for metonymy's emergence in literary and critical discussions can be found in its corroborative effort with cultural relativism, the turn toward the singular and context-dependent versus the universal and all-embracing. In other words, because metonymy is based on contiguous and proximate relations (a point to be taken up later), it relies on the contextual, the specific, and the temporal. Unlike metaphor, which, as we shall see, often asserts a vision of the world that is abstract, metonymy is based on what is particular and individual, what is specific to culture and to social situations. This point is brought out by Durham and Fernandez:

> Therefore, associative relations, which Jakobson and others have likened to metaphor, are widely recognized and should be shared by all speakers; syntagmatic ones on the other
hand, likened to metonymy, are more highly individualized and are freely assembled and disassembled according to particular experience and circumstance. (195)

While such features of metonymy have previously made it the less celebrated trope, they now lend the trope great appeal in cultural and social research. Metonymy's traits are in this way consistent with the aim of cultural relativism, since both take into consideration specific and contextual relationships, and since they both allow for the valorization of difference, all of which runs contrary to the metaphoric drive to universalize and totalize.

Such a similarity between metonymy and cultural relativism is further acknowledged by Matus, who explains the rejection of the former as tantamount to the exclusion of the latter: "Inherent in the devaluation of metonymy . . . is a dismissal of context and contextual relativism" (310). Contrary to such a dismissal, Matus calls for a reconsideration of position and context, a recognition that what is contiguous and adjacent is equally significant to that which is unified and integrated. Metonymy, asserts Matus, accomplishes this reconsideration. It presents the marginal, the excluded, and the seemingly unimportant as paramount and worthy of our critical attention:

Perhaps when the totalizing claims of metaphor are demystified, metonymy's humility (that which is of the ground) will gain ground. Marking the co-ordinates of position and expressing the relativity of contextual relationships, metonymy (if we are content to go relative rather than absolute) reveals . . . the marginal. (311)

Embracing the local, the situational, and the singular, metonymy, like cultural relativism, is a new source of legitimization.
Metonymy has also gained the attention of feminist critics, who find in the trope an affinity with the disadvantaged, and comparably feminine, position. The assumption is that just like the feminine has been dominated by the masculine, metonymy has been dominated by metaphor. As a result, metaphor is often associated with the masculine (paternal) and metonymy with the feminine (maternal). Is it therefore possible that the recent intrigue with metonymy includes a desire to elevate the feminine? In other words, can we explain the interest in metonymy as part of the drive in contemporary culture to take side with the oppressed and the excluded, with the perceived weaker half of all binary oppositions? Once again, Matus provides rich insight into the trope's recent appeal. Feminists now pay attention to this trope, says Matus, "possibly because it is the underprivileged half of a binary opposition" (306). If Matus is correct, it is feasible to see metonymy, like the feminine, as being long misunderstood and unjustly neglected, but that currently is gaining unprecedented critical attention.

Although only speculative, these arguments provide a framework from which one may attempt to understand metonymy's recent notoriety and concomitant ability to detract from metaphor, the trope that has for so long usurped our attention. In a postmodern era that celebrates cultural relativism and the feminine voice, metonymy is ripe for examination and legitimization. The present study, like those mentioned above, attempts to lend a voice to this "other" trope, to explore its multifaceted impact on the ways we approach and ultimately come to understand literary texts. At the same time it argues that metonymy
should no longer be considered secondary to metaphor in the hierarchy of rhetorical figures, but fundamental, a primary structure of language and of our interpretive strategies that has come forth to assert itself in critical discourse. Essential not only to the reading of literary texts, metonymy is basic to our perceptual understanding of human existence; its structures express an alienation felt in the writing of so many authors of the modern world. As Nochlin explains regarding the larger social significance of fragmentation:

But what of the larger implications of the topic, what of that sense of social, psychological, even metaphysical fragmentation that so seems to mark the modern experience--a loss of wholeness, a shattering of connection, a destruction or disintegration of permanent value that is so universally felt . . . as to be often identified with modernity itself? (23-24)

Metaphor and Metonymy

Before metonymy can be appreciated as a trope that provides such perspectives, it is important to examine its relationship to metaphor, a task not without its challenges, due to the enormity of available material on the subject and the seemingly disparate views. While some critics claim that the two tropes are polar opposites, others contend that a clear-cut distinction between the two is difficult when they are examined in a literary text. Jakobson, in his seminal work, "Deux aspects du langage et deux types d'aphasie," represents the former view, and presents metaphor and metonymy in a binary opposition: "La structure bipolaire du langage" (63). Jakobson opposes these two tropes, because, as he points out, they are formed in quite different ways. Metaphor is
based on associations of similarity, while metonymy is based on
associations of contiguity:

Le développement d'un discours peut se faire le long de deux
lignes sémantiques différentes: un thème (topic) en amène un
autre soit par similarité soit par contiguïté. Le mieux
serait sans doute de parler de procès métaphorique dans le
premier cas et de procès métonymique dans le second
puisqu'ils trouvent leur expression la plus condensée, l'un
dans la métaphore, l'autre dans la métonymie. (61)

While making such a distinction does not appear to be the purpose of
Jakobson's essay, which is to speculate on the different types of
aphasia, he does provide us with a general outline of these tropes, and
of the two incongruous poles of discourse.

Among the various binary oppositions that Jakobson establishes in
his essay is the opposition between selection and combination, which, as
Hugh Bredin points out, is closely associated with the distinction
between similarity and contiguity ("Roman Jakobson" 90). More
specifically, in utilizing metaphor, the speaker or writer selects words
because of their similarity and resemblance. As a result, metaphor is
based on an internal relationship, contrary to the external relationship
between words found in metonymy, which relies on contiguity, proximity,
and context. As Jakobson explains, "c'est une relation externe de
contiguïté qui unit les constituants d'un contexte et une relation
interne de similarité qui sert de base à la substitution" (55).

Such a fundamental distinction between these two tropes leads
Jakobson to apply this dichotomy to other areas of discourse, for
instance, to cultural and artistic domains. He even goes so far as to
distinguish between basic types of literature: Romantic and Symbolist
writing is essentially metaphorical, while Realist writing is predominately metonymic: "si on a généralement aperçu les liens étroits qui unissent le romantisme à la métaphore, on a le plus souvent méconnu l'affinité profonde qui lie le réalisme à la métonymie" (66). Generally speaking, therefore, Jakobson's essay puts forth the notion that a polarity exists in discourse, that there is a twofold character of language. Accordingly, the fundamental distinction he makes between metaphor and metonymy is one among a whole host of oppositions he identifies. These oppositions, which have been neatly arranged by David Lodge in The Modes of Modern Writing, include paradigm and syntagm, similarity and continuity, selection and combination, and Romanticism and Realism, to name a few (81).

While Jakobson's essay, which is important for its general discussion of metaphor and metonymy and their basic features, should not be overlooked, it has been seen by many as overly simplistic. That there is a certain reductive quality to his argument, in its placing of metaphor and metonymy in such stark opposition, cannot be denied. Jakobson's essay fails to take into account the complicated and, at times, indiscernible interactions between the two tropes, how they intermingle, and how they can even slip in and out of each other. Frederic Jameson is sensitive to such a view, acknowledging the possibility of a more complex relationship between the two tropes than has in the past been recognized:

In the long run, however, the concepts of metaphor and metonymy cannot be isolated from each other and undergo a ceaseless metamorphosis from one into the other before our very eyes . . . they are really little more than a
hypostasis of that basic dialectic of Identity and Difference with which Saussurean linguistics began.  
*(Prison-House* 123)

Matus similarly views Jakobson's theory on the tropes as oversimplified: "Rigid borders between selection and combination deny the traffic between the two and prohibit acknowledgment of a complex interaction" (306). Likewise, this study, rather than perpetuating the view that metaphor and metonymy exist as polar opposites, will attempt to demonstrate how they are interrelated, creating complex tropic creations in a text, fluctuations, in other words, between all-encompassing world views and those that are purely situational and context-based.

Gérard Genette, in a critical work on metonymy, makes a similar claim about these tropes, though in the context of Proust's literary world: "métaphore et métonymie se soutiennent et s'interpénètrent" ("Métonymie chez Proust" 42). More specifically, these two tropes, according to Genette, are interdependent in Proust; their coexistence is a result of the fact that metaphor is able to expand and develop in a text through the use of metonymy: "Proust lui-même, bien qu'il donne l'impression de ne retenir que le moment métaphorique de l'expérience . . . insiste à plusieurs reprises sur l'importance de cet élargissement par contiguïté" (57). Accordingly, the joining of experiences based on resemblance--the metaphoric mode--evolves by means of a temporal-spatial expansion--the metonymic mode.

To demonstrate this interdependent relationship between metaphor and metonymy, Genette examines two descriptions of church steeples, one found in *Du côté de chez Swann*, where the narrator reflects on the plain
of Méséglise, the other found in *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, where Marcel, at Balbec, conjures up in his mind the church of Saint-Mars-le-Vêtu.

Genette concludes that although the two church steeples are alike physically, Proust's descriptions of them are not. While the church steeples in *Du côté de chez Swann* are compared to two ears of corn: "on apercevait par-delà les blés les deux clochers ciselés et rustiques de Saint-André-des-champs, eux-mêmes effilés, écailleux, imbriqués d'alvéoles, guillochés, jaunissants et grumeleux, comme deux épis," those in *Sodome et Gomorrhe* are compared to pointed fish:

Saint-Mars, dont, par ces temps ardents où on ne pensait qu'au bain, les deux antiques clochers d'un rose saumon, aux tuiles en losange, légèrement infléchis et comme palpitants, avaient l'air de vieux poissons aigus, imbriqués d'écailles moussus et roux. (quoted in Genette 42-43)

The reason for such different metaphorical statements, explains Genette, can be found in the descriptions themselves, particularly in the second one where there is an emphasis on context and spatial-temporal factors: "par ces temps ardents où on ne pensait qu'au bain" (43). In other words, the different locales—the plain of Méséglise and the sea of Balbec—require different analogies. Church steeples compared to ears of corn constitute an authentic comparison for the surroundings at Méséglise, just like fish provide a natural comparison for the sea of Balbec. Analogical relationships in Proust are, as Genette explains, dependent on proximate and contiguous ones: "cette tendance fondamentale de l'écriture et de l'imagination proustiennes... à l'assimilation par voisinage, à la projection du rapport analogique sur la relation de contiguïté" (53). So, while recall in Proust appears to be purely
Metaphoric, it is actually, as Genette's article clearly demonstrates, dependent on the metonymic, on proximate relations in time and space.

Metonymy's active presence in metaphor is likewise examined by Paul de Man who, in *Allegories of Reading*, shows how ostensibly pure Proustian metaphors, when sufficiently examined, are actually subverted and suspended by metonymies. He does this by dismantling the superiority of metaphor over metonymy, exposing a double movement in all literary texts: "a literary text simultaneously asserts and denies the authority of its own rhetorical mode" (17). More specifically, de Man demonstrates how "the rhetoric is superseded by a grammar that deconstructs it," by a syntax that is metonymic (18). A Proustian text, therefore, as de Man contends, deconstructs its own metaphors, displacing and postponing any movement toward precise interpretation and meaning. The binary opposition between the two tropes, as put forth by Jakobson's structuralist formulation, is challenged by de Man, who reveals every metaphor to be somewhat metonymic.

In a similar vein, Barbara Johnson, in *The Critical Difference*, explores the complex relationship between metaphor and metonymy, demonstrating how analogical discourse is not immune to syntagmatic enumeration and accumulation. Among the texts she examines is Baudelaire's "Invitation au voyage," where she exposes the inability of metaphor to reach totality and closure, susceptible as it is to metonymic dissemination. The all-encompassing "tout n'est que" of the poem would seem to result in a definitive expression, giving the poem a singular and "unique poetic essence" (46). However, as Johnson
perceptively points out, instead of totality and metaphoric identity, the poem gives way to a succession of terms. That is, the poem proceeds by way of a list, by way of a series of properties: "ordre . . . beauté . . . luxe . . . calme . . . volupté" (49). So while the refrain begins by suggesting metaphoric unity, it concludes in enumeration: "The passage from essence to attribute is a passage from totality to partition" (46). The "all" of this poem, in effect, gives way metonymically to fragmentation, to parts, and to lists: "Thus consisting of an extensible collection of miscellaneous properties and fragmentary descriptions, the prosaic all is metonymic rather than metaphoric, inclusive rather than exclusive, circumstantial rather than essential" (46).

As these critical works reveal, metaphor is not independent of metonymy, but co-exists with it and is even threatened by its subversive and deconstructive qualities. This being the case, a metaphor can at any time slide into a metonym, by giving way to accumulation, or by sustaining itself in temporal, spatial, and proximate terms. For some, this occurrence is not out of the ordinary, for, as Durham and Fernandez say, "Practically every metaphor . . . carries metonymic implications" (193). Indeed, metaphoric discourse often relies on metonymy to test its essentializing claims in the world of the concrete and the tangible, where things are explained in terms of their close association and proximity, and where the human experience is often fragmented and incomplete. Metonymy provides metaphor with a material, corporeal, and, at times, more realistic means of expression. An examination of
metonymy's varied impact in literary texts is consequently inseparable from a consideration of metaphor.

Metaphor

O Aristotle! if you had the advantage of being the 'freshest modern' instead of being the greatest ancient, would you not have mingled your praise of metaphorical speech, as a sign of high intelligence, with a lamentation that intelligence so rarely shows itself in speech without metaphor, --that we can so seldom declare a thing what it is, except by saying that it is something else? --George Eliot
(The Mill on the Floss 149)

Before metonymy and metaphor can be examined in a selection of literary texts, it is necessary to look at each trope independently and in detail in order to appreciate more fully their complex interactions. Contrary to the belief that these two tropes surface in completely different types of texts and additionally perform disparate functions, it is possible to see in them a fascinating interrelationship. While metaphor has the potential of elevating metonymic discourse into the realm of the abstract and transcendent, metonymy's power lies in its being able to diminish the totalizing tendencies of metaphor, keeping its essentializing claims at bay. As Mellard in Using Lacan explains of these two tropes, "Metaphor is thus tied to . . . idealism, metonymy to . . . materialism" (204). Metonymy, in this regard, is metaphor's best ally and worst adversary: it can help metaphor express itself in the physical world, and yet at the same time it can dismantle metaphor's metaphysical tendencies altogether. But let us now turn to metaphor.
While the definitions of metaphor are numerous, an exhaustive list is not possible within the scope of this study. Instead, a survey of selected critical texts will ultimately serve to advance the view that the basic differences between metaphor and metonymy can actually be complimentary. One of metaphor’s most basic traits that surfaces in fundamental works on the trope is the fact that its expressive powers are heightened by the verb "to be." Otherwise stated, and as highlighted by Inge Crosman, metaphor is "basically a semantic phenomenon" (16). The verb "to be" gives metaphor an essentializing syntax, as seen in Baudelaire's famous sonnet, "Correspondances": "La Nature est un temple . . . ." Although "Nature" and "temple" do not belong to the same semantic group and appear to be unlike entities, there is an identification and resemblance between them established by the equalizing quality of the verb "est." The identity of the first term in this metaphorical statement is completed by the second term, and a similarity is assumed between them. So although "nature" and "temple" are seemingly disparate concepts, whose correspondence may not be readily apparent, they are united by the metaphorical "this-is-that" equation.

As a result, there is in metaphor a tendency toward resemblance. Two different entities, from distinct frames of reference, are drawn together in an expression of sameness and comparability: "La métaphore . . . met en jeu deux réalités qui se trouvent dans un rapport de similarité" (Bacry 57). Carl Hausman, in Metaphor and Art, brings out this quality of the trope with regard to the Shakespearean metaphor,
"The world is an unweeded garden," which unites two different but similar concepts, garden and world (7). Such a statement creates out of an ostensible difference an expression of identity and similarity. Thus, where there is opposition between concepts, metaphor creates harmony; where there is difference, it creates unity. In this sense, one could say that metaphor leads to the perception of things in terms of coherent and well-integrated wholes, in terms of similarity and likeness, despite any seeming disparities.

Metaphor, however, is not the only trope that asserts a likeness. Simile and analogy, among others, also lend themselves to a vision of the world in similarities and correspondences. Yet, there is healthy debate on the distinctions between these rhetorical devices. For instance, while metaphor asserts an equivalency between two concepts, simile remains in the realm of similarity: "Metaphor, it is sometimes said, asserts identity, simile merely likeness" (Lodge 112). In contrast, therefore, to metaphor's bold, and, at times, unexpected assertions, simile is more cautious and indirect, suggesting and hinting at a possible likeness. Derrida highlights this subtle difference: "La métaphore met ainsi sous les yeux, avec vivacité, ce que la comparaison, plus traînante, reconstruit indirectement" ("La Mythologie blanche" 25). Nevertheless, Derrida refers to these tropes as "Des tropes par ressemblance" (21), as does Bacry, who claims that both figures function under the concept of resemblance, "Figures de la Ressemblance" (Bacry 30-77). Lodge, additionally, while first recognizing a difference between metaphor and simile, finishes by highlighting their shared
features: "metaphorical expressions (i.e. those which draw our conscious
attention to a relationship of similarity between dissimilar s) are in
fact similes" (Lodge 114). Thus, while most studies acknowledge that
metaphor is a direct assertion of sameness, simile only a suggested
likeness, they also find in these two tropes a shared movement toward
resemblance, which justifies grouping them in the same category. This
study will therefore consider the metaphoric to include, in addition to
metaphor, analogy, comparison, and simile, placing all figures of
resemblance under what Derrida terms the umbrella of metaphoricity--"la
métaphoricité" ("La Mythologie blanche" 50).

This tendency of metaphor to assert similarity and resemblance has
been highlighted by several critics, including Kenneth Burke, who, in
The Grammar of Motives, says the following about metaphor: "It brings
out the thisness of that, or the thatness of a this" (503), and
similarly by Derrida in "La Mythologie blanche": "Que trouver d'autre
que ce retour du même quand on cherche la métaphore? c'est-à-dire la
resemblance?" (48). Resemblance, as Derrida points out, has been
deemed metaphor's most common feature: "La métaphore a toujours été
définie comme le trope de la ressemblance . . . C'est son trait le plus
général" (5). According to Aristotle, whose seminal view on metaphor
has made him the most cited theoretician on the matter, a good metaphor
is a metaphor that asserts likeness: "Bien faire des métaphores, c'est
bien voir le semblable" (quoted in Derrida 24).

Thus, as the above-mentioned line from Baudelaire's
"Correspondances" demonstrates, metaphoric resemblance, which is
assisted by the verb "être," does more than establish a relation between subject and predicate; it further performs an ontological task. It presents concepts in terms of being and existence; subjects are defined and essences are portrayed. "La nature" is equated with a "temple," and the "world" is equated with an "unweeded garden." Subjects, in other words, are equated with something else. Metaphor, therefore, does more than create artistic and poetic effects in a text. As Hausman underscores, "questions of epistemology and metaphysics clearly extend the topic of metaphor beyond the domain of aesthetics" (9).

In this way, there is a certain creative act in metaphor, the bestowal upon a subject a new-founded identity, "un sens neuf" (Bacry 60). This metaphoric tendency to ascribe and equate one term with something else is called by Hausman, an "illocutionary function." According to him, metaphors "are performative as instances of naming... they have the force of acts of generating or bringing something into being" (111). Indeed, metaphors assert new relationships, create new identities, and construct new world visions.

Such a view of metaphor is additionally called "the interactive view," and is, according to Gibbs, "perhaps the dominant theory in the multidisciplinary study of metaphor" (234). As was highlighted above, this interactive view claims that metaphor creates a similarity rather than drawing our attention to a pre-existing one (Gibbs 233). As such, it is possible to see in metaphoric discourse the creation of new meanings, relationships, and "new frameworks of connotations" (233). Metaphoric activity is, in this way, empowering, as subjects are
defined, illuminated, and elucidated by one another. This aspect is
highlighted by Matus: "Metaphoric activity gives the subject a sense of
power" (309).

Thus, as we have seen, the semantic objective of metaphor has
ontological implications. Metaphor connects, associates, and brings
together its various components; there is a movement toward unity and an
assertion of similarity. Metaphoric discourse leads one to believe that
the essentializing nature of the verb "to be" is more than just verbal
and can be found ontologically in things. Accordingly, metaphor
contains an inferred assertion of truth, the sense that what is stated
with the verb "to be" is irrefutable. As Schaldenbrand points out in
"Metaphoric Imagination": "Implicit in metaphoric reference is the
question of metaphoric truth . . . can we create metaphors without
believing that, in some way, they say 'what is'?" (75).

However, while Aristotle valued in metaphor this proclivity toward
unity, others have found it limiting. Derrida, for instance, uncovers
what is problematic about metaphor, more specifically, what is
problematic about the trope's connection to philosophical discourse. He
argues that philosophy will never be divested of metaphoric language,
since it will always rely on what is metaphysical about the trope. This
is because philosophy, by nature, is essentially metaphoric, based on
figurative and metaphysical language: "La métaphore est moins dans le
texte philosophique . . . que celui-ci n'est dans la métaphore" (42).
Accordingly, metaphor is seen by Derrida to be tied to sources of truth,
to assertions of meaning, and to strategies of knowing.
Johnson, in The Critical Difference, examines metaphor with an equally critical eye. As do many critics, Johnson finds metaphor "seemingly transparent and referential," but reminds us that while it represents "the writing of resemblance," it is also the "erasing of difference" (27). Johnson makes this assertion in reference to Baudelaire's "Invitation au voyage," where instead of a metonymic relationship between a person and land, based on contingency, she finds a metaphoric one, based on resemblance: "Mon enfant, ma soeur/Songe à la douceur/D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble!/Aimer à loisir/Aimer et mourir/Au pays qui te ressemble!" (quoted in Johnson 26). In other words, "Au pays qui te ressemble," masks the relationship between a person and land, which is, as Johnson notes, metonymic, and transforms it into a relationship of conformity and homogeneity, which is by definition metaphoric: "while a person's relation to place is by definition metonymic, that is, arbitrary and contingent, here it is said to be metaphorical, that is, motivated and symmetrical" (27).

This leads Johnson to conclude:

What is being proposed to the woman is a place created in her own image, a place toward which she would stand in necessary and symmetrical relation, a place, in other words, that would serve as her mirror. . . . Its desired end is the perfect metaphorical union of the destinatrice with the destination. (26)

Difference, in this way, is lost to an alleged convergence between the lady and the land, the erasing of difference occurring at the expense of the writing of resemblance.

In addition to creating unity, sameness, resemblance, and similarity, metaphoric discourse creates a transcendental dimension, an
ability to represent ideal and otherworldly fundamentals. Because metaphor presents one subject in terms of another, it turns away from an experience of concrete, everyday reality, toward a desired experience of what is unfamiliar and unknown. Karsten Harries, in "Metaphor and Transcendence," underscores these qualities of the trope:

Metaphor no longer has its telos in reality. It still invites us to take leave from familiar reality . . . metaphors become weapons directed against reality, instruments to break the referentiality of language, to deliver language . . . and thus to confer on the poet's words a magical presence that lets us forget the world. (78)

Metaphor can thus be seen as a derealization of the human experience, as it exaggerates, overstates, and enriches the real (Harries 81). It supplies the artist with the means of glimpsing, if only within the confines of a work, an infinite, boundless, and limitless world.

But as Gibbs points out in The Poetics of Mind, and as we will see when examining metaphor in certain literary texts, such a capacity to embellish makes metaphor potentially deceptive and illusionary. Gibbs accordingly cautions against its use, particularly in the context of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, where certain therapists have found it "addictive," and are careful of not "being captured by the 'magic' of metaphor" when employed by their patients (127). This is precisely because metaphor can be used to misrepresent and to fool, to "mislead the speaker or listener by a false analogy" (127). Therapists must therefore attempt to unveil what has been veiled by their patients, "unmask what is being hidden" (127). Metaphors, likewise, in certain literary texts, can disguise, falsify and inflate, presenting contiguous
relations in time and space as symmetrical and unified relations in the desired world beyond.

So although metaphor has the remarkable capacity to create rich and nuanced imagery by fusing one conceptual domain with another, it is also potentially misleading in its presentation of reality. Although the copula "être" of metaphoric discourse may have us believe otherwise, the resemblance and identity that it asserts between two disparate entities does not exist beyond the creatively ornamental language of the speaker or writer.

**Metonymy**

Cowardly metonymy, that can never call a spade a spade, but must designate it a handle! Metonymy sends us from pillar to post, signifier to signifier, whispering forever, "Not here, close, but not quite here."

--Jill Matus

("Proxy and Proximity" 315)

In contrast to metaphor, metonymy produces quite a different aesthetic effect. Rather than aspiring toward ideal and transcendent heights, metonymy is rooted in the concrete and the real: "metonymy articulates a world in which things happen without any touchstones of transcendental meaning" (Schleifer 9). Its basic structure is not one of similarity, but of contiguity, denying the metaphoric ability to join different domains in a unified and coherent vision of the world. Thus, unlike metaphor which creates discernible wholes, metonymy creates multiple fragments and parts. Accentuating the singular, the separate, and the detached, metonymy directs our vision toward what is often
overlooked and disregarded, toward the minuscule and marginal, yet 
sometimes at the expense of ever regaining well-integrated entities.

The following example will help illustrate these features. The 
well-known metonymic structure, "buvons une bonne bouteille" (Bacry 82), 
relies not on a relationship of identity between two ostensibly 
different terms, but on a relationship of proximity in use between two 
words that are found in the same semantic domain:

In other words, while the above example creates the image that one 
drinks wine and not glass, "bouteille" can nonetheless be used to evoke 
wine, metonymy in this case designating the contained by the container.²

Thus, in contrast to metaphor, which involves two conceptual or semantic 
domains, one "understood in terms of the other" (Lakoff, More Than Cool 103), metonymy involves only one; "bouteille" is semantically associated 
to "vin," while at the same time being a substitute for it.

Thus, compared to metaphor, which, as we have seen, depends on the 
aesthetic outlook of the artist, who posits a relationship of similarity 
between two different entities and then asserts an identity between 
them, metonymy is created purely by language itself, by words that are 
semantically proximate and contiguous to each other in a certain 
context. Bacry emphasizes this point in his examination of the two 
tropes:
Otherwise stated, words in a metonymic relationship can occur in a
naturally ordered sequence, for instance, Paris, Parisiens, or violon,
violoniste (85). That being the case, the creative act is not the same
as in metaphor. Metaphor reformulates, recreates, and reorders reality,
while metonymy merely reinforces it. Metonymy, by operating through
words that are semantically close to one another—by words that relate
to each other naturally in language—is the trope that names and
renames, and states and restates, the world as we already know it.

Matus highlights this feature of metonymy: "Metonymy can therefore
reinforce what we already accept" (307).

This is probably why metonymy has been labeled inferior to the
rich creativity of metaphor, the trope capable of inventing and
producing new world visions. Since metonymy relies on readily accepted
relationships, and on words that are found in the same conceptual
domain, there seems, at first glance, to be no originality in the trope.

Matus brings out this commonly held misconception of metonymy: "Because
it is based on relationships that are familiar and habitual, metonymy
has been described as being unable to make new connections and having to
rely on what is already known" (307). And so it follows that metonymy
has been regarded by many as aesthetically weak: "metaphor creates the
relation between its objects, while metonymy presupposes that relation."

This is why, according to Bredin, "metonymy can never articulate a newly
discovered insight, why it lacks the creative depth of metaphor" ("Metonymy" 57). But an examination of metonymy in selected texts will demonstrate new ways of conceptualizing this trope that are not bound by the shackles of traditional approaches, belittling and discrediting as these approaches have been. As we will see, this emerging tropic parvenu promotes new ways of knowing, ways that are not restricted to resemblance, identity, and totalities, but are sensitive to the importance of context, the relative, and the marginal.

It is impossible to discuss metonymy without mentioning synecdoche, particularly as most theoretical discussions of the former invariably include a discussion of the latter. This is because the essential feature of synecdoche, that being the part for the whole--"On dit communément que la synecdoque exprime la partie pour le tout" (Bacry 89)--has much in common with metonymy's activity. As David Lodge points out, "Metonymy is closely associated with synecdoche" (75). In fact, in Bacry's examination of metonymy, he includes synecdoche as one of its variants, and demonstrates (referring to examples of synecdoche previously given) how both tropes are based on a relationship of neighborship:

On se convaincra de cette similitude en examinant les exemples courants que nous avons donnés: toit pour maison ("il cherche un toit à la campagne"), voile pour bateau ("une flottille de douze voiles")--ou bien encore Paris pour la France ("Paris vaut bien une messe"). Quoi d'autre ici que le remplacement d'un mot par un autre qui peut lui être contigu sur l'axe syntagmatique? La maison a un toit, la France a Paris pour capitale, les voiliers ont des voiles. Le procédé est bien le même dans la métonymie que dans la synecdoque: le mot synecdochique, tout comme le mot métonymique, est pris dans le voisinage potentiel du mot propre (le toit d'une maison, la voile d'un bateau, etc.). La synecdoque est donc une métonymie. (90)
Bonhomme further supports the idea that synecdoche can be categorized under metonymy: "Le domaine de la métonymie peut absorber celui de la synecdoque" (3). Thus, for the purpose of this study, which does not aim to differentiate between these two tropes, cases of synecdoche will be referred to as cases of metonymy, particularly since the majority of critical work on the two tropes appears to prefer this very grouping: "A la métonymie, on rattache habituellement la synecdoque" (Le Guern 12).

It is now possible to formulate a definition of metonymy. While metaphor represents a relationship of identity between different wholes, metonymy represents a relationship of substitution between parts that belong to the same whole. Accordingly, identity is never realized in metonymy, due to the lack of the verb "to be," but, in a Derridean sense, is constantly deferred and displaced. That there is a postponement in metonymy—a perpetual rhythm forward and a constant suspension—can be seen in the above example, "buvons une bonne bouteille," where the absent referent (vin) is capable of being endlessly replaced by words which stand in some kind of close association to it (glass, bottle, vine, grape). So while metaphoric activity achieves closure and identity, capable as it is of capturing and arresting an image, metonymic activity is continuous and on-going: "Metonymies are neither definitive nor absolute; they suspend sentence and make every formulation a probation" (Matus 310). Metonymy, in this way, is the trope that never quits; it sends us here, there, and everywhere, vainly in search of a final, culminating point.
This repetitive and never-ending quality of the trope is underscored by Jacques Lacan. As is well known, Lacan further continues the discussion of metaphor and metonymy initiated by Jakobson in "Deux aspects du langage et deux types d'aphasie," as he considers the two tropes not just the foundation of language, but of the unconscious: "c'est toute la structure du langage que l'expérience psychanalytique découvre dans l'inconscient" (495). More specifically, Lacan postulates that metaphor is "le franchissement de la barre . . . et . . . l'émergence de la signification" (515); that is, metaphor occurs when "le sens se produit dans le non-sens" (508). For Lacan, and as highlighted by Mellard, metaphor is the emergence of knowledge: "Metaphor defines knowledge" (Mellard, Using Lacan 23). It is "la condition de passage du signifiant dans le signifié," relying on the relationship of one word for another (515-16). Compared to the metonymic function, the metaphoric function is relatively easy to understand; its formula is $S/S$. Jane Gallop explains this as follows: "The replaced word (old signifier) becomes the signified of the new word (signifier)" (Reading Lacan 121).

By contrast, the metonymic function, which is defined as $(S \ldots S')$, represents a "mot à mot," or word-to-word relationship (Écrits 515, 506). Metonymy, therefore, never crosses the bar which separates signifier from signified, word from meaning, and non-sense from sense. Rather, it perpetuates itself in an endless chain of signifiers. This repetitive quality of metonymy allows Lacan to align the trope with human desire and to assert that "le désir est une
métonymie" (528). Desire and metonymy both experience a lack by the fact that they can never experience any real satisfaction; metonymy will never cross the bar and emerge into meaning like metaphor, just as desire is rarely in possession of its object. In this sense, the structure of desire resembles the structure of language: metonymy and desire both undergo an unending quest or search for the unattainable.

Another quality of metonymy is its tendency to weaken the subject that it describes. Unlike metaphor, which defines essences and assigns identities, metonymy undermines a stable sense of existence and being. Several critics emphasize this effect of metonymy. Debray-Genette, in "Some Functions of Figures in Novelistic Description," shows that metonymy achieves "a depersonalization of beings" and "implies the abolition of any supremacy of the human order" (683-84). Matus would likely agree with the claim that metonymy undermines a reliable and permanent human subject. As she says of the trope, "The value of metonymy is that it discourages false certainty and fixity" (318). And Ginsburg, in Flaubert Writing, exposes the process by which the metonymical structures in a text serve to demystify "a certain concept of the self (characterized by unity and permanence)" (137).

Although the above-mentioned critics do not comprise an exhaustive list of those who think metonymy is capable of destabilizing the human subject, they confirm for now the important Lacanian notion of the split subject when confronted with language. In other words, the Lacanian subject is not a fixed subject, but dependent on language, which shapes and molds it. As Lacan says of language, "le langage avec sa structure
préexiste à l'entrée qu'y fait chaque sujet" (Écrits 495). It is the linguistic dimension, with all its signifying processes, that characterizes Lacanian thought and the subject about which he writes. Accordingly, Lacan overturns the well-known Cartesian cogito, so as to place the subject in the hands of language, which splits, divides, and decents it. As Lacan says, "je pense où je ne suis pas, donc je suis où je ne pense pas" (Écrits 517).

In this sense, because the presence of language splits the subject and takes possession of it, is it not possible to say that the metonymic experience is a reflection of our inability to access a totalized and holistic notion of the self? Metonymy in many ways allows for a realistic expression of the human condition, especially if, according to Lacanian thought, "our knowledge of the self is constituted in and by discourse," which means that "we can only construct for ourselves a body in pieces, a corps morcelé" (Michie 149). The self that is described metonymically is a self that is unable through language to construct a complete portrait of itself; it is a self that is relegated to the experience of fragments and approximations.

It is already possible to speculate how these basic differences between metaphor and metonymy could have ramifications in a literary text. As Hayden White says in Tropics of Discourse, "each of the linguistic modes . . . has affinities with a specific ideological position" (129). Otherwise stated, a text posits a certain understanding about the relationship between language, consciousness, and the world--the predominance of metaphor favoring a unified way of
looking at things, metonymy offering a partialized and fragmented vision. Lacan concisely distinguishes between these two tropes and the implication of their use when, in *Écrits*, he assigns "la métaphore à la question de l'être et la métonymie à son manque" (528). Thus, metonymy may be viewed from this angle: as a trope of fragmentation, parts, substitution, and lack. But, let us not forget, these traits are also the basis of metonymy's strength, of its ability to subvert and overthrow the essentializing nature of metaphoric discourse, because, as the following analysis will show, these two tropes are not divorced from one another, but are found side by side in the same literary works.

**The Metonymic Body**

> the body is the house of the soul.  
> --David Krell (*Architecture 4*)

> Although the body often seems opposed to spirit, its other, the realm of unmeaning, it can also be spirit's very material support.  
> --Peter Brooks (*Body Work 21*)

While it is possible to examine the relationship between metonymy and various thematic and narrative categories, this study, in an effort to show that metonymy's power to question metaphorical discourse includes the human body and our conception of the self, limits its examination of the trope to the body. Because metonymy operates on the basis of a substitution of parts for the whole, it does so when used for the purpose of evoking the body by presenting its various regions and components. The metonymic body is therefore a fragmented body, a body without wholeness or totality, but a body comprised of many pieces and
parts. It is a body whose transcendental and abstract notions are questioned, and whose earthly and immanent qualities are accentuated. Depicting the body through the use of metonymy transforms the body into a place of loss, a place of lack, and a place of existential insecurity.

However, and as an examination of certain literary texts will reveal, metonymy is not alone in its portrayal of the body. That is to say, figurations of the body frequently oscillate between wholeness and fragmentation, since metaphor and metonymy are not dichotomized tropes, but interrelated, and often alternate in the very same passage. Interchangeably, the body is represented as transcendent and abstract (the realm of metaphor), and immanent and concrete (the realm of metonymy). Thus, rather than only considering the metonymic body, this study will attempt to explore the intricate interactions between metaphoric and metonymic bodily depictions. Occasionally, metonymy expands upon the metaphoric body by providing physical and tangible examples, while it is also quite capable of questioning its abstract representation altogether. So while at times the body may reach the metaphorical comfort of being and essences, achieving unity and identity, at other times the body is thoroughly metonymized, an indeterminate and nonidentifiable site of unfulfilled desire and endless expression. But let us now turn to a consideration of the metonymic body.

The metonymic body has undeniably over the years prompted much critical attention and commentary. As its very basic function, the metonymic body contributes to "un effet de réel," the focalization on
body parts emphasizing the very real and tangible qualities of human existence. Jakobson would probably agree that such an effect is produced, since for him, as we have seen, metonymy is the trope closely associated with Realism. As underscored by Gibbs, "Literary texts rely extensively on metonymy as a source of realism, exactness, and detail" (11).

Metonymy, however, can do more than assist the writer in his or her effort to recreate the real. Many critics, for instance, demonstrate metonymy's ability to become a fetish in a text. That is to say, visual focalization on the part can, in turn, eroticize the part, leading to scopic voyeurism, to the discourse of desire, and to textual perversion. Emily Apter, in Feminizing the Fetish: Psychoanalysis and Narrative Obsession in Turn-of-the-Century France, brings out these very qualities of the trope, as she investigates the process by which the detail becomes eroticized:

Inanimate objects registered as erogenous zones in the narrator's eye, bodily extremities tinctured with redness or "split" in a mock-staging of castration, repulsive details . . . and physical mutilation, these are among the signs of a metonymic poetics encoded as fetishistic. (29)

Thus, the metonymic body, because of its emphasis on the part at the expense of a completed, organic whole, carries with it carnal and sexual potential. It can become a fetish, in an erotic and voyeuristic literary game of veilings and unveilings.

Although such a perspective of the metonymic body will not be developed in this study, it provides us nonetheless with a physical and material conception of the body, versus one that is spiritual and
otherworldly. Unlike the metaphoric body, which reaches infinite heights and timeless abstractions, the metonymic body is firmly and solidly grounded on the earth, where it is anchored in the relative concepts of time and space, and where it is materially constructed and perceived. Bonhomme highlights these traits of the trope: "La métonymie a l'avantage d'être doublement immédiate . . . par rapport à l'infinitude de la métaphore" (212).

In this sense, the metonymic body has no fixed or hidden essence. It is a body, rather, whose universal traits are emptied out, and whose qualities are not posited as being like something else. As such, the metonymic body is a reified body, a body that is physically and tangibly there, and whose bits and pieces are before our eyes, reminding us of the inescapable corporeality of human existence. Such qualities fortify the metonymic body in instances when it struggles to dismantle metaphoric discourse, thereby subverting metaphysical and idealistic notions of the body: the body as whole, the body as transcendent, and the body as essence.

At the same time, the metonymic body creates a sense of existential insecurity. As a dismembered mass of body parts, the human subject experiences a crisis in identity. The subject's ontological status is questioned and no longer serves as a reliable referent. Confusing one body part with another, and undermining a sense of homogeneity and wholeness, metonymy, it could be argued, dehumanizes the subject. The subject is no longer, when metonymically presented,
in possession of a center or origin, but scattered, dispersed, and existentially unstable.

There are many perspectives from which to speculate on these different depictions of the body. One such perspective is informed by feminist theory. As previously mentioned, feminist theory tends to explain metaphoric and metonymic representation as having gendered connotations, metaphor associated with the masculine, metonymy with the feminine. Accordingly, feminist theory will be particularly useful in chapter two of this study, since in the works examined there is a high occurrence of female metonymic bodies constructed by an explicitly male subjective gaze. In chapters three and four, where the metonymized body is often neither strictly female nor male but more ambiguously gendered, other theories of the fragmented body will be examined, theories that do not rely primarily on an opposition between the masculine and feminine, but look, rather, at changes in the body’s representation across time, regardless of gender.

Henri Mitterand, in "L'Espace du corps dans le roman réaliste," theorizes on such changes in the body, particularly during the latter half of nineteenth-century France, indicating, first of all, that characters became bodies: "Tout se passe comme si, entre 1850 et 1880, le personnage devenait un corps" (342). More specifically, Mitterand points out that the body, because of cultural influence—the influx of scientific and medical discourse—began to occupy an increasingly material and physical space in the novel:

En effet, la transformation du discours culturel sur le corps, à partir de la génération post-romantique, et à plus forte raison l'entrée d'une thématique corporelle nouvelle
Therefore, the body is examined, probed, and dissected, not only in the scientific domain of nineteenth-century France, but in literary fields as well, where it became textual and poetic matter in and of itself. Discourse, consequently, became gradually more categorical and reductive, as it strove to explicate and label the unknown body. Peter Brooks underscores this effect of nineteenth-century sciences on the ways the body was articulated:

The body in the nineteenth century, we noted, is predominately a body scrutinized, and not only in literary discourse. At a time when the positivist sciences were vastly extending their mastery over nature, there was necessarily a greatly increased attempt to master the body in systematic discourses principally founded on its visual inspection. (221)

The body thereby became material for intellectual mastery.⁵ Considering, therefore, that the body became, on an increasingly greater scale, a subject of study in the natural sciences, is it not possible that the notion of self became more materialistic, that along with the explosion of knowledge in nineteenth-century natural sciences, self-perception became more dependent on quantifiable and measurable attributes, and that a holistically organic sense of self was lost to a fragmented and dispersed one? In "The Materialization of the Body: A History of Western Medicine, A History in Process," Maxine Sheets-Johnstone offers this perspective. She attributes a "fossilization"
effect on the body to the burgeoning fields of medical science and biology, a progressively more dehumanizing way of perceiving the body (although not limited to the nineteenth century) as something merely to dissect and to section. Here she explains this thesis to be found in the above-mentioned essay:

In chronicling the materialization of the Western body--its progressive "fossilization," first at the hands of the developing medical sciences of anatomy and physiology in the sixteenth century, and then at the later hands of developing medical aspects of molecular biology in the twentieth century--the essay focuses on the progressive fragmentation of the body as a purely physical object.  
("Charting the Interdisciplinary Course" 8)

The history of medical sciences, therefore, starting with the sixteenth century and continuing up until present time, has enacted an atomization of the body. Rather than progressing toward something more unified and harmonious, the body has become a mass of individuated and carefully sectioned parts. This has been particularly apparent, explains Sheets-Johnstone, in the modern age, where there has been a "radically materializing march of Western medicine . . . a march whose aim is to reduce the body ultimately to lumps of tissue and chains of molecules" ("Materialization of the Body" 150). And people are continually reminded of their essential physicality, as Western medical remedies strive to fix the ailing part, while overlooking the entire person to which the ailing part belongs.

Although in her essay Sheets-Johnstone detects the beginnings of a movement away from a thoroughly materialist conception of the body, she recognizes that, overall, the propensity in Western culture is to consider the body as pure physical matter: "This strictly material body
has been progressively constructed by Western medicine over the past several centuries, particularly the present one, and is still in the process of being built" (133), and it is a tendency that has had devastating consequences on one's self-perception, creating "an eroded sense of self" (8). With the Western propulsion to magnify and compute, we are far from a metaphoric conception of the body, where the body's identity is explained in terms of its analogical compatibility with the cosmos, but closer to a metonymic conception of the body, where identity is explained in terms of multiple and disparate parts.

Indeed, as Mitterand, Brooks, and Sheets-Johnstone suggest above, the aim of medical and scientific thought has been to reduce the body to a moleculized and anatomized state, so as to quantify it, record it, and explicate it. What has changed is not the bodily experience, but the ways in which it is represented and explained. As the world became more modern, the body became more fragmented. And as body parts became more autonomous, the individual's sense of self became more disintegrated, seen not in metaphoric unity with the world, but as a mere fragment in it.⁴

Yet, as the following textual analysis will also suggest, integrated and holistic portraits of the self have not entirely disappeared due to modern medical and scientific discourse. Rather, totalized conceptualizations of the self linger in a yearned-for state, as they are imagined, fictitiously constructed, and nostalgically longed-for. Totality and uniqueness of being may indeed be challenged in the modern world, where individuals are quantified and sectioned,
alienated from each other, and living in a state of unsatisfied desire, but unity and harmony are nonetheless hoped for and passionately desired. Thus, while an opposition has been created between the mind and the body, and between the transcendent and the material, in certain fictional texts this opposition is not rigidly and irreversibly in place. As Sheets-Johnstone suggests, there are spirited and irrepressible interactions between the mind and body, and Genette uncovers the same complementary interplay, but between metaphoric and metonymic expressions. This interaction is further underscored by Gibbs, who calls attention to the inextricable bond between abstract expression and that which is concrete and of the body: "contemporary scholars have been especially influential in putting 'the body back into the mind' . . . metaphorical understanding is grounded in . . . everyday bodily experience" (17). And so it follows that the metonymic and the metaphoric body can often be found in rotation.

At times, we will see that these differing bodily portrayals serve to enhance and even balance each other out, and yet at other times we will see that one overshadows the other. But what is important to consider is that these two depictions of the body are equally at work in the same literary texts. Unable to sustain itself throughout an entire work, metaphor is not alone, but right beside metonymy, which interacts with it, occasionally overturning overly idealistic depictions of the body. Thus, despite the pronouncement of theoretical texts on the matter, metaphor is not the dominating rhetorical figure, but vulnerable and susceptible to the power of metonymy.
Flaubert, Céline, Sartre, and Ponge are all writers who, in addition to using metaphor, employ metonymy in their depiction of the body. Though these writers are far from being the only ones who do so, they have been chosen for their capacity to revolutionize literary discourse, in other words, to question all-encompassing modes of thought. An examination of the metonymized body in a selection of their works will illustrate this capacity. While much scholarship has already been devoted to studying the predominance of metonymy in the works of Flaubert, the use of metonymy in the works of Céline, Sartre, and Ponge has not received full treatment. In addition, more work remains to be done in regard to the metonymized Flaubertian body and how it resurfaces in the above-mentioned writers who inherited his legacy. Flaubert has been and still is considered to be "le précurseur" of the twentieth-century novel, his influence readily recognized in the field of narrative techniques, as Sarraute has shown in "Flaubert, le précurseur." His influence, however, should likewise be acknowledged in depictions of the body. The Flaubertian body, in all its parts, dissipating moments, and dissolved states, is not a body that has completely vanished from our sight. It is a body, rather, whose pieces, parts, and fragments are easily glimpsed in the modern novel.

Metonymy in Flaubert

Il n'y a peut-être dans tout Flaubert une seule belle métaphore. --Proust
("A propos du 'style' de Flaubert" 73)

One need not search long before finding metonymic depictions of the body in Flaubert's works. Most readers are familiar with the scene
at the end of *Madame Bovary* where Emma's dying body is described part by part: "le coin de sa bouche . . . les deux pouces . . . les cils . . . ses yeux . . ." (390), and ultimately remembered metonymically by the skin scratched off from her body as Homais cuts off a lock of her hair. And most readers recall how the fragmented representation of Mme Arnoux throughout *L'Éducation sentimentale* culminates in her transformation into an object that is contiguously related to her—a jewel box—which Mme Dambreuse purchases at the sale of Mme Arnoux's possessions and that Frédéric uses as justification to leave the former so as to better avenge the latter.

In addition to these famous scenes, moments of the metonymic body proliferate in Flaubert's works and have consequently been examined by numerous critics. Some explain Flaubert's metonymic tendencies as a movement toward death and materiality, or, as Michal Ginsburg puts it, "metonymic substitutes . . . try to hide an absence and, in doing so, declare it" (93). Others find psychoanalytic meanings in Flaubert's predisposition for metonymy, as seen in Bernheimer's *Flaubert and Kafka*, where the author argues that parts take on a fetishistic nature in Flaubert, a basic psychological response to the problem of sexuality (108-09). Many critics, such as Steele, in *Realism and the Drama of Reference*, argue that the preponderance of parts in Flaubert incites higher philosophical reflection; in other words, it serves to question the ontology of the represented world (25). And still others explain Flaubertian discontinuity and fragmentation as a pantheistic attempt on the part of the writer (especially in his early works) to fuse with all
forms of life; this argument is implied in Georges Poulet's article "Flaubert," as well as in Kitty Mrosovsky's introduction to Flaubert's La Tentation de Saint Antoine (8).

That the body occupies a material presence in Flaubert cannot be denied. The graphic dissemination of Emma's body, or the decomposition of Rosanette's baby's body, are two scenes, among many, that attest to such physicality. This does not mean, however, that symbolic, transcendent depictions of the body are altogether absent. There is in Flaubert, albeit at times ridiculed by the narrator, a romantic conception of the body, an idealization of the body that characters may attempt to conjure up in their minds, but that cannot ultimately be sustained in reality. Flaubert's Frédéric Moreau is one such victim. While he has made for himself an image of what the ideal woman should be and what she should look like, it is a portrait that reality is unable to deliver. It follows that Frédéric can only obtain for himself fragments of this idealized and romanticized woman, fragments that he hopelessly looks for in the streets of Paris and in the boudoirs of more readily accessible women. As we shall see, Flaubert's work posits a tension between an idealized and a material notion of the body, and it is an interplay that is articulated within the framework of rhetorical devices. Metaphoric representations convey the former notion of the body, while metonymic representations convey the latter.

Michal Ginsburg's Flaubert Writing is one work, among the many devoted to fragmentation in Flaubert, that looks into the friction between metaphorical discourse, which conveys unity, and metonymic
discourse, which conveys dispersion. More specifically, Ginsburg shows how certain Flaubertian characters, for instance Emma, try to "metaphorize the metonymical" (95), by transforming arbitrary relations into necessary relations." However, as Ginsburg demonstrates, there is an equally present "counter-movement," which reverses this process to reveal a metonymization of the metaphorical (95). As a result, desired metaphoric relations are not shown to be based on anything more meaningful than mere random associations of contiguity and substitution.

To illustrate this process, Ginsburg examines a passage from Madame Bovary, which, in free indirect discourse, sets up a parallel between love and plants, the former needing a special setting, just as the latter needs a special soil:

Ne fallait-il pas à l'amour, comme aux plantes indiennes, des terrains préparés, une température particulière? Les soupirs au clair de lune, les longues étreintes, les larmes qui coulent sur les mains qu'on abandonne, toutes les fièvres de la chair et les langueurs de la tendresse ne se séparaient donc pas au balcon des grands châteaux qui sont pleins de loisirs, d'un boudoir à stores de soie, avec un tapis bien épais, des jardinières remplies, un lit monté sur une estrade, ni du scintillement des pierres précieuses et des aiguillettes de la livrée. (96)

On the one hand, Ginsburg explains, the passage establishes a metaphor, as it tries to present the "relation between 'love' and 'setting'" as "not arbitrary but necessary" (96). But on the other hand, Ginsburg points out, the passage does not leave the metaphor untainted. There is concurrently at work in this passage an undoing of the metaphor, in that "love" is ultimately contiguous to terms that serve as its substitutes: "moonlight," "sighs," "tears." Thus, in the end "love" turns out to be

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"just a signifier," failing as it does to remain a signified, and therefore a metaphor (96-97).

This leads Ginsburg to conclude that Emma's attempt to metaphorize the metonymical, to perceive the fragmentary as unified, and the substitutional as unique, is dealt with "ironically" by Flaubert (96). Emma, as the text reveals, foolishly tries to idealize her surroundings, the men she loves, and herself, attempting to imbue them with a unique and unequaled presence. All the while, however, she fails to see the mere repetition and unoriginality of her life, to comprehend the fact that everything she thinks she discovers anew is really just a substitution.

These interpretations, among countless others, provide fascinating insight into the ramifications of Flaubert's rhetorical choices and lend weight to the idea that meaning is reflected in rhetoric. The purpose of this study, however, is neither to explore nor contest the diverse explanations of metonymy in Flaubert; such an undertaking is beyond its scope. Rather, the aim is to focus solely on the Flaubertian body in its various metonymic manifestations as a way to understand further the body in Céline, Sartre, and Ponge. As in Flaubert, in Céline, Sartre, and Ponge, there is an oscillation regarding the representation of the body, a back and forth movement between a metaphorically described body and a metonymically described one, between the notion of the body as transcendent and mystical, and the notion of the body as incomplete and material. And it is a tension, as we shall see, that prevents the body from taking on full metaphorical significance. By consistently
challenging the "this-is-that" discourse, and by bringing the body down to the realm of the physical and the material, metonymy reveals the illusory and risky wholeness sought in metaphor. Starting with a comparison of Flaubert and Céline and ending with a comparison of Flaubert and Ponge, we will see how, through the dismembered body, we gain access into a world where wholes can no longer be named, where origins can no longer be found, and where centers are altogether absent.

While few if any critics go so far as to claim that Céline, Sartre, and Ponge purposefully emulated the Flaubertian body, there are, in biographical sources and in the fictional works of these twentieth-century writers, direct references that indicate a familiarity with Flaubert and suggest the possibility of an influence by him. In The Crippled Giant, a book dedicated to the Céline-Hindus correspondence, Céline's letter of August 22, 1947, confirms his awareness and appreciation of Flaubert: "Dostoyevsky--too sinister, too Russian... A genius, sure--but then, I prefer Flaubert" (120). The very existence of the three-volume L'Idiot de la famille attests to Flaubert's impact on Sartre, which is obviously more explicit than in either Céline or Ponge, and Sartre specifically relates the body to Flaubert's passivity: "le corps manipulé des hétébêtes et de l'impuissance..." (1743). Ponge's poem "Ardens Organum," moreover, demonstrates a knowledge and recognition of Flaubert's artistic abilities: "Le comportement de Flaubert est sans conteste celui d'un artiste" (Power 258). So while these direct quotations do not reveal the extent to which Céline, Sartre, and Ponge were (consciously or unconsciously) influenced by
Flaubert in their representation of the body, they do suggest an
awareness and possible engagement with the great nineteenth-century
innovator's writing techniques.

Furthermore, Céline, Sartre, and Ponge have been chosen, not only
because of an apparent affinity with Flaubert, but also because, in
general, critics have overemphasized the importance of metaphor in their
works and have overlooked the presence of metonymy. Thus, this study
will attempt to show that metonymy is a cornerstone in Céline, Sartre,
and Ponge, and that its presence is particularly revealing in
representations of the body. The purpose is not to deny a metaphorical
reading of these twentieth-century authors; it is rather to uncover a
metonymical one.

This is not to say that such a combination of writers is void of
complications. Positioning Flaubert as a pillar to which every other
writer will be compared makes him into somewhat of a father figure. And
his pervasive presence in every chapter of this study could possibly be
seen as authoritative and domineering, precisely the kind of role that
has been defined as characteristic of metaphoric discourse. However,
the intention is not to weaken the artistic abilities of Céline, Sartre,
and Ponge by comparing these writers to their nineteenth-century
predecessor. It is rather to explore a common stylistic device that has
been actively examined in Flaubert, but less so in Céline, Sartre, and
Ponge. In addition, this study seeks to uncover the interpretative
adaptability of Flaubert, to show his remarkable applicability to
writers of the twentieth century. And lastly, this study aims to
examine certain nineteenth-century depictions of the body, representations that have been maintained and even further developed into the twentieth.

Metonymy in Céline, Sartre, and Ponge

Metonymy's ability in Flaubert to strip the body of its illusions operates in a similar manner in Céline, Sartre, and Ponge. As chapter two will demonstrate, the Lacanian association between metonymy and desire is particularly helpful for an examination of how the Flaubertian body reappears in Céline. In both writers, there is an abundance of imagery that depicts the body in fragments and parts, and aligns such a body with unquenched desire. Although such imagery can be found in several of Céline's works, chapter two will treat *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, and compare it with Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* because of the similar nature the two protagonists, Bardamu and Frédéric, display in their respective journeys. They are both perverse travelers, passively, albeit voyeuristically, strolling through life, as they displace metonymically their unfulfilled desire on objects they encounter: landscapes, women, and buildings, to name a few, all carrying implicit overtones of the body. The body, therefore, never appears in its totality but remains fragmented, diffused, and dispersed throughout the two texts, as it is forever sought after by the two protagonists who look for it in various forms, guises, and shapes.

Such a dispersal of the body in these two texts by Flaubert and Céline prohibits it from attaining long-lasting metaphorical signification. While there are moments when the body seems to achieve
an otherworldly status, attaining heights of symbolic and abstract meaning, metonymy intervenes to bring the body down to its inescapable earthiness and finitude. So while Frédéric and Bardamu may at times fall prey to the abstract, metaphoric body, which alludes to a transcendental and spiritual love, they are challenged by a metonymic perception of the world, in which the body is reduced to mere limbs and organs--to pure material effect.

Metonymy is an equally revealing device in an examination of the body in Sartre, where, as chapter three will show, fragmented and dismembered, the body does not lead to an experience of the self as unified or whole, but to an experience of the self as a conglomerate of disparate body parts. Many of Flaubert's characters, as early as in his oeuvres de jeunesse, experience this very dispersal of the self, in which existential dissolution is represented metonymically through a fragmented body: "Voyons comme cette âme, comme cette conscience est élastique . . . comme elle se ploie facilement sous le corps qui pèse sur elle ou qui appuie sur le corps qui s'incline . . . C'est elle qui vend le corps, la main, la tête et la langue" (Mémoires d'un fou 535).

It is a sense of loss via the body that Sartre similarly takes up in La Nausée.

Pierre Danger, in Sensations et objets dans le roman de Flaubert, acknowledges this interesting similarity between Flaubert and Sartre. He recognizes how Sartre's character Roquentin echoes the words of anguish and despair once uttered by Flaubert's Frédéric, and he perceptively attributes their similar experiences of anxiety to the
threatening presence of objects and the body. While both factors--
objects and the body--precipitate Sartrean and Flaubertian nausea, the
focus of this study is on the presence of the body, which derives its
power from the privileging of metonymy in bodily descriptions. That is
to say, feelings of existential nausea are commensurate with a
metonymical perception of the body. Just as metaphor is the trope of
ontological certainty, metonymy is the trope of ontological doubt, which
supports Burke's statement, in A Grammar of Motives, that "The basic
'strategy' in metonymy is this: to convey some incorporeal or intangible
state in terms of the corporeal or tangible" (506). The metonymic body,
as chapter three intends to show, is a body riddled with metaphysical
nothingness.

In many ways, then, a partialized body, stripped of its totality,
abstractions, and absolutes, is a reified body, a body regarded as a
material and concrete thing. This is because, when fragmented, the body
is turned into matter. As Deborah Harter explains in Body in Pieces:
Fantastic Narrative and the Poetics of the Fragment, partialization
produces "displaced parts that are vulnerable to successive changes in
their ontological status" (35). As chapter four will show, this is
precisely the way in which the metonymic body can be seen to be working
in certain prose poems of Francis Ponge. Far from remaining intact, the
body in these works undergoes a process in which it passes from a state
of totality to a state of partitions. It is through metonymy that
Ponge, just as he explores the rich particularities of the tangible
world around him, probes and investigates the human body. By means of
this poetic disassemblyment, the body becomes a thing, part of the material world that Ponge artfully and skillfully dissects.

Metonymy is similarly at work in Flaubert's text, where descriptions partialize the body to such an extent that they reify the body. Body parts no longer refer to the human subject to whom they belong, but are rather distinct material entities to be explored in and of themselves. Harter even questions whether or not a shift takes place in which "partial bodies begin to function as though ontologically complete" (29), an illusion brought about by language itself. In this way, when metonymy describes the body, it tends to present the body as being comprised of separate and distinct material elements, producing a perception of the body as a concrete, physical thing.

Challenging the totalizing and essentializing claims of metaphor that present the body as something abstract, symbolic, transcendent, and ideal, metonymy transforms the body into something fragmented, dispersed, immanent, and unstable. As such, the metonymic body is unable to satisfy human desire, raises doubts about the metaphysical beyond, and incites speculation about whether or not our status is merely that of a thing.

Some other common metonymic relationships include: "cause and effect, inventor and invented, user and instrument, doer and thing done, and passion and object of passion." See Hugh Bredin, "Metonymy," *Poetics Today* 5.1 (1984): 45-48. In addition to providing a list of metonymic relations, Bredin discusses metonymy's various articulations by theoreticians and rhetoricians.

See, for example, his well-known explanation of the concept "différence." Jacques Derrida, "La Différence," *Théorie d'ensemble* (Seuil, 1968) 44-47.

This concept, "L'effet de réel," was articulated by Roland Barthes in "L'effet de réel," *Communications II* (1968): 84-89, to communicate the idea that descriptions of objects can contribute to the creation of a reality effect.

Foucault discusses the various ramifications of positivist sciences on the body. Medical practices, for instance, in an effort to better know and master the body, opened the body up, by dissecting, documenting, and recording it. For further discussion, see Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité I: La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976); *Naissance de la clinique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963).

This notion that the body is a mere material object divorced from metaphysicality, was advanced not only by medical thought, but by philosophical thought as well. For instance, one can go back to Descartes, who greatly impacted Western thinking when he posited the idea that the mind and body are split. With his famous dictum, "cogito ergo sum," Descartes promoted the idea that bodily activity is severed from our essential being, which is comprised of thinking matter. Thus, the body became increasingly disassociated from the mind, and rationality became something immaterial and incorporeal. This point serves as the crux of Antonio Damasio's argument in his book, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994), where he exposes Descartes' fundamental error of mistakenly separating the mind from the body: "And since we know that Descartes imagined thinking as an activity quite separate from the body, it does celebrate the separation of mind the 'thinking thing' (res cogitans), from the nonthinking body, that which has extension and mechanical parts (res extensa)" (248).


I have substituted the original French version for Ginsburg’s translation.
CHAPTER 2

METONYMY AND THE BODY: DISILLUSIONMENT AND UNFULFILLED DESIRE IN FLAUBERT AND CELINE

un livre sur rien --Flaubert
qu'on n'en parle plus --Céline

The journey on which both Bardamu and Frédéric embark in, respectively, the novels *Voyage au bout de la nuit* and *L'Éducation sentimentale* represents a fairly traditional narrative structure in literature. However, while most journeys strive toward some sort of enlightenment on the part of their protagonist, these two do not. Rather than developing in any significant way, these novels are comprised of a series of displacements, repetitions, and substitutions. What proliferates in these two novels, at the expense of an evolving narrative, is an excessive amount of imagery of desire and of the body in pieces. The rhetorical figure at work in these two novels is metonymy.

While metonymy is a fundamental presence in these two novels, it is not the only figure of speech, but frequently found alongside metaphoric expressions. That is to say, metaphor and metonymy often
rotate in depicting human subjects, principally the female subject, who is desired by the protagonists both as a totalized, idealized whole and as fragmented, compartmentalized body parts. We will therefore see how the female subject is metaphorized during moments of romantic reverie, yet metonymized during moments of lack. In this regard, metonymy's activity in *L'Éducation sentimentale* and *Voyage au bout de la nuit* is subversive. There is a metonymization of metaphor, a passage from the transcendent to the immanent and from the ideal to the real. This will be seen in the shuffling that takes place between people, places, and things, in which identity, totalization, and essence are lost and replaced by substitution, exchange, and proximity. Thus, the female body that is originally presented as a symbol of infinite abstractions and boundless promises becomes a structure of metonymical contiguities and accidental connections.¹

The Transcendent and Metaphysical Female Body

The common assumption is that the body, in particular the female body, houses a mystery, an enigma wrapped around an essence, that may or may not be known but that supplies the key to being.
--Christopher Prendergast
(Spectacles of Realism 7)

At first glance, one might say that these two novels display a glorified and romanticized depiction of the female body, particularly as Frédéric and Bardamu, searching for some sort of meaning in their own empty lives, turn to women for their answers. Women in part become for
these two characters a means of satisfaction, offering a seemingly self-affirming and self-aggrandizing experience. However, and as this chapter will attempt to illustrate, the sense of meaning that women give to the lives of Frédéric and Bardamu is only temporary and superficial. Equally present in these two works is a strong tendency toward base and sordid descriptions of women, descriptions that challenge those that are overly idyllic, and descriptions that present women as mere material effect. Thus, it is possible to see a shift in the female body's rhetorical signification. While momentarily reaching metaphoric heights, the female body is ultimately metonymically debased. But let us first turn to those brief instances of romantic bodily description.

In Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale*, the first detailed description of the female body is made in reference to Mme Arnoux, the first woman encountered in the novel. Mme Arnoux, as the following analysis will demonstrate, starts off occupying a privileged position, the point of convergence and metaphorical fusion for Frédéric, who thinks he has acquired, if only for a moment, a unified and totalized imaged of his desired object: "L'univers venait tout à coup de s'élargir. Elle était le point lumineux où l'ensemble des choses convergeait" (55). Under the effects of light, Mme Arnoux emerges from the background of the text in this first scene to assume an angelic and celestial status. For Frédéric, the one who is looking in on this opening scene and thereby orienting the reader's vision, she has a mystical and transcendent presence. This is especially apparent in how Mme Arnoux originally comes into view in the novel; she enters as a
vision, an aberration, something otherworldly: "Ce fut comme une apparition" (50). Presented in an expression of metaphoricity, Mme Arnoux is initially posited as something else: as a light and as a vision. She does not appear in her tangible corporeality, but as something almost unreal, likened to a chimera or hallucination, situating her far above the physicality of the traveling passengers on the Ville-de-Montereau. At the outset, Mme Arnoux is presented as a saintly and ethereal image. As Cortland explains of this scene, "As it were created by his own imagination, he sees Her before him radiant as a saint" (25).

While Mme Arnoux's initial appearance in the novel can be characterized as predominately otherworldly, metonymy, which privileges the detail, starts to enter descriptions so as to highlight, in contrast, Mme Arnoux's body parts. Here, for example, Mme Arnoux's religious emergence of the opening scene is developed as she is further described as possessing translucent qualities: "Jamais il n'avait vu cette splendeur de sa peau brune, la séduction de sa taille, ni cette finesse des doigts que la lumière traversait" (51). Yet at the same time we notice that metonymies have already begun, drawing attention to Mme Arnoux's skin and fingers. Indeed, the metaphoric expression that first presents Mme Arnoux as an ethereal apparition is succeeded by metonyms that highlight not only her body parts, but items that are contiguous to her: "Elle avait un large chapeau de paille, avec des rubans . . . Ses bandeaux noirs . . . ses grands sourcils . . . " (51). This point--that metonymies pervade instances of metaphoricity--will be
developed in a later section; for now, however, it suffices to notice their emerging presence. For the most part, Mme Arnoux's initial portrait is divine; she is an illuminating vision for Frédéric, a radiant being who mysteriously appears before him and engulfs him in metaphoric light—"il ne distinguait personne, dans l'éblouissement que lui envoyèrent ses yeux" (50-51)—which shines, tellingly, from her metonymic eyes. But here, metonymy is overwhelmed by the metaphoric promise of salvation, eternal happiness, and infinite joy: "il s'abandonnait à une joie rêveuse et infinie" (55), an experience that, for Frédéric, is metaphorically transcendent. Providing a certain order and harmony to the universe, Mme Arnoux's appearance offers instantaneous meaning to his banal and purposeless existence. Williams confirms this reading: "Frédéric's world has undergone a decisive change. . . . From now on his existence will have a purpose and direction as a result of the opening up of the possibility of moving from the plane of everyday reality to a higher plane of 'sacred' love" (155).

Central to the way in which Mme Arnoux first appears is the fact that Frédéric is ripe for something to happen to him, for someone extraordinary to enter his life who may bring him a sense of wholeness, profundity, and definition. In fact, it is the narrator, with his ironic tone, who encourages the reader to see how Frédéric is ready to interpret anything that comes his way as significant: "Frédéric pensait à la chambre qu'il occuperait là-bas, au plan d'un drame, à des sujets de tableaux, à des passions futures. Il trouvait que le bonheur mérité
par l'excellence de son âme tardait à venir" (48). As Cortland observes, "he tries to see his experiences as suitably Romantic and appears to be ready to interpret any incident as a great, passionate encounter" (25). In this sense, before Mme Arnoux truly appears, Frédéric is already cultivating in his mind an idealized portrait of her, the prospects of love growing furtively in his imagination. It follows that when Mme Arnoux makes an entrance, she fits in nicely to the exotic milieu Frédéric imagines for himself during his journey to Nogent-sur-Seine, and, more importantly, to the romantic vision of life and women that he yearns for: "Elle ressemblait aux femmes des livres romantiques" (55). Corresponding to a certain image of women that can be found in books and that young men, like Frédéric, fantasize about someday meeting, Mme Arnoux is part of a constructed myth about feminine beauty and, as such, possesses an enigmatic aura. Such a presence is reinforced by the text's impersonal presentation of Mme Arnoux. In the very beginning she is "elle": "Elle était assise. . . . Elle avait un large chapeau de paille. . . . Elle était en train de broder quelque chose" (50-51), a mysterious vision of women that matches the one that Frédéric has long made for himself in his dreams.

Thus, what we see in this opening scene of the novel is an attempt on the part of Frédéric to fix and arrest the image of Mme Arnoux in grandiose proportions. He assigns her to a universal reference—"femmes des livres romantiques"—and, in so doing, gives her an essence. It is a metaphoric idealization of Mme Arnoux that reaches full bloom a few pages later, when Mme Arnoux is transformed into a capitalized "Elle":

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"il attendait qu'Elle parût" (68). We see, therefore, that Frédéric constructs around Mme Arnoux's body an infinite and transcendent dimension, as if she were not susceptible to the destructive constraints of time and place. The aura surrounding her first appearance is, in this way, metaphoric. She emerges as a unified and totalizing image, magnified by her complete resemblance to Frédéric's idealizing categories.

In Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, women are also described according to a certain idealistic image that has been conjured up in the mind of the protagonist, Bardamu. As Pascal Ifri explains of Bardamu's vision of women,

> la femme, de Lola . . . en passant par Sophie . . . symbolise à travers son corps ce que Bardamu/Ferdinand recherche . . . la beauté, l'harmonie, la pureté et la perfection. Dans ces conditions, il paraît logique que l'image de la femme . . . soit déformée et ne corresponde guère à la réalité. (111-12)

More specifically, and particularly with regard to American women, Bardamu has fallen prey to a certain myth of female beauty. This is apparent during his relationship with Lola, an American volunteer who has come to France and commences an intimate relationship with Bardamu. Initially, Bardamu describes Lola's body as being capable of producing infinite possibilities and correspondences: "Son corps était pour moi une joie qui n'en finissait pas" (58). Yet, the idealization of Lola is already degraded (a point to be thoroughly explored in a later section), by Bardamu himself, who admits immediately thereafter that he is a "cochon": "J'étais à vrai dire un sacré cochon. Je le demeurai" (58).
Nonetheless, Bardamu momentarily universalizes Lola and associates her with a certain type of American beauty—"ce corps américain" (58).

Bardamu accordingly believes that, because Lola's body is so perfectly enticing, it must be representative of other American female bodies. He additionally concludes that, since a country like America could produce so many beautiful bodies, it must have other attractions and temptations:

Je me formai même à cette conviction bien agréable et renforçatrice qu'un pays apte à produire des corps aussi audacieux dans leur grâce et d'une envolée spirituelle aussi tentante devait offrir bien d'autres révélations capitales au sens biologique il s'entend. (58)

Thus, Bardamu constructs for himself an image of what American women should resemble, and it is an image of women that he universally applies to all of America. This point is brought out by Fortier, who, in Voyage au bout de la nuit: étude du fonctionnement des structures thématiques, examines Bardamu's choice of words and expressions so as to demonstrate his belief in a certain type of feminine beauty: "Le protagoniste semble s'inventer un mythe de l'Amérique patrie de la beauté féminine. Certaines expressions soulignent l'importance de ce mythe pour lui" (115-16). More specifically, Fortier examines the passage previously cited (where Bardamu describes his fascination with Lola's American body) and concludes that certain words suggest a mythical and idyllic conception of American beauty: "Conviction," "grâce," "spirituelle," "révélations," "pèlerinage" (Fortier 115). However, as the following analysis will demonstrate, while Bardamu does, at times, idealize women, it is an idealization that is short-lived. Although momentarily
reaching abstract dimensions in Bardamu's mind, women are quickly debased, mere bodies to feed his desire. For Bardamu, more so than for Frédéric, the ideal female is determined by the body.

Thus, by elevating Lola's body to a position of idyllic proportions, Bardamu formulates for himself an illusory portrait of American women. It is a vision that, while based on the physical, is sustained and prolonged in the imaginary, as Bardamu extends the myth of the female body to the entire country of America. Not only, therefore, does Lola's body represent an idyllic place of beauty, but also an idyllic place of promise. For Bardamu, Lola's body is a pilgrimage and a new start, a voyage that is highly erotic: "Je reçus ainsi tout près du derrière de Lola le message d'un nouveau monde" (59). As Carson explains, "Lola brings him a new vision" (44), hope, in other words, for a brighter future as well as endless sensual pleasure.

We see, therefore, that for Bardamu, like Frédéric, there is a certain drive to find in the other an integrated and unified image. Just as Frédéric is in search of being and identity, a vision of the female other that favors resemblance and coherence over difference and discontinuity, Bardamu desires an all-encompassing experience with Lola. Yet, for Bardamu, it is in Lola's body (paradise for a "cochon") that he glimpses infinite joy and the promise of a new and better world: "le message d'un nouveau monde" (59). Lola's body represents the possibility of a metaphoric experience, where wholeness, togetherness, and the sensual can be found.
In many ways, then, the feminine ideals created in these two novels correspond to the desires and drives of the protagonists, both of whom seek a totalizing image of the other, an image in which they themselves could find an integrated experience of the self. Ginsburg recognizes this process, in particular, with regard to Flaubert's Emma, who pursues a coherent image of her self in a world of difference and diversity: "She tries to encompass the multiplicity in one gaze, transform it into one image that will give her back her own reflection as a unified, idealized figure" (98). Thus, when women in Voyage and L'Éducation are endowed with metaphoric potential, they become a sort of mirror into which the protagonists can project their desire for a more complete self. As Michie explains in The Flesh Made Word: Female Figures and Women's Bodies, "transformed . . . into a system of signs" (in this case metaphors), woman "becomes a reflection of other people's desires, a blank page on which a series of men can write their narratives of her significance" (61). Lacanian thought would support this interpretation; Mellard, in Using Lacan, elucidates:

We may say that the subject finds itself in the other, the mother who signifies for the child a totality introjected by the child, who before this moment was a congeries of parts . . . . Both symbolization and fantasy satisfaction, Lacan insists, are built on a loss, a lack, a want of "being." (13-14)

So while the women Frédéric and Bardamu encounter are physical, breathing, and tangible beings, they are not always perceived as such by the two protagonists. At times, their fantasy-like drive finds in the female other an idyllic place, beholding her as a mythic being who is capable of offering a metaphoric experience. For Frédéric, this
involves situating the female far above his own mortal plane; for Bardamu, this involves turning the female into a place of sensual pleasure. But for both characters, it is a poetic construction of women that takes place in their own imagination and responds, in many ways, to their own sense of incompleteness, for a coherent and unified other inspires hope for a well-integrated and complete self.

This certainly appears to be the case upon a closer examination of Bardamu, who, by constructing an idealized feminine figure, strives to attain a new personal experience, to mend the disintegrating and fragmenting reverberations of the war on his self: "Et moi qui précisément me découvrais tant de goût pour toutes les choses qui m'éloignaient de la guerre!" (59). It follows that upon first seeing Lola, he appears to have finally found his needed direction: "C'est même à cette occasion, qu'au foyer de l'Opéra-Comique j'ai rencontré la petite Lola d'Amérique et c'est à cause d'elle que je me suis tout à fait dessalé" (54), a means by which he can restore a sense of oneness and personal integrity. Thus, like Mme Arnoux's arrival into Frédéric's life, Lola's arrival into Bardamu's life is described as monumental, a pivotal moment in an existence that has hitherto been monotonous and meaningless: "Il existe comme ça certaines dates qui comptent parmi tant de mois où on aurait très bien pu se passer de vivre. Ce jour de la médaille à l'Opéra-Comique fut dans la mienne, décisif" (54). Amid his own instability and inertia, and the overwhelming sense of decomposition in the world around him, Lola seems to give Bardamu's life a meaningful design, one that seems to promise him erotic fulfillment.
Yet Bardamu does not restrict these moments of promise to Lola, but turns to other women as well. As a passive wanderer who never really finds complete gratification with one woman, Bardamu is continually vulnerable to the physical transports of all others he encounters. Thus, when in America, Bardamu describes the numerous women he sees as inspired harmonies and promises:

"Les beautés que je découvais, incessantes, m'eussent avec un peu de confiance et de confort ravi à ma condition trivialement humaine. . . . Quelles gracieuses souplesse cependant! Quelles délicatesse incroyables! Quelles trouvailles d'harmonie! Périlleuses nuances! Réussites de tous les dangers! De toutes les promesses possibles de la figure et du corps parmi tant de blondes! Ces brunes! Et ces Titienne! Et qu'il y en avait plus qu'il en venait encore! (195)

Women, as this passage indicates, reach divine proportions for Bardamu. They are visions and apparitions: "Elles me parurent d'autant mieux divines ces apparitions" (196), capable of repairing the void in the very depths of his being. When Bardamu meets Musyne, he believes that she will give him the strength and virtue of character that he himself lacks: "D'être amoureux de Musyne si mignonne je pensais que ça allait me douer de toutes les puissances, et d'abord et surtout du courage qui me manquait" (82). And with Molly, a prostitute for whom Bardamu develops a certain tenderness, he also finds the possibility of being transported to a better place: "Un coeur infini vraiment, avec du vrai sublime . . . pas en chiqué comme le mien" (232). Kristeva, in an insightful study on female representation in Céline, accentuates this sublimeness of Molly, "Céline's Molly benefits from angelic idealization" ("Those Females who can Wreck the Infinite" 160). Thus,
women, as Carson highlights, provide Bardamu with a sense of completion: "Throughout Voyage, Bardamu looks to women for directions through the labyrinth" (44), giving him reason to believe that his life is indeed worth living: "La femme qui sait tenir compte de notre miserable nature devient aisement notre cherie, notre indispensable et supreme esperance. Nous attendons aupres d'elle, qu'elle nous conserve notre menteuse raison d'etre" (84). Women are a means by which his own physically disintegrating self can achieve a certain numbness and sense of relief, as love for Bardamu is like alcohol: "L'amour c'est comme l'alcool, plus on est impuissant et saoul et plus on se croit fort et malin, et sûr de ses droits" (82). It is through a complete and idealized image of women that Bardamu can maintain this belief.

For Frédéric, a unified feminine ideal also has the promise of bringing him a totalized self, a conjoining experience of body and soul. We previously observed this in the opening scene, which, guided by Frédéric's roaming gaze, affords us a glimpse of Mme Arnoux through his subjective reality, and it is a tendency that only continues to develop as the novel progresses. Next to the monotony and humdrum of his own existence that follows his first encounter with this ideal woman ("Ainsi les jours s'ecoulaient, dans la repetition des memes ennuis et des habitudes," 73), is the hope of Mme Arnoux ("L'idee de Mme Arnoux fortifiait ces convoitises"), and the idea that someday his life will join hers: "Il la trouverait peut-etre sur son chemin" (73). Mme Arnoux is therefore the purpose of Frédéric's life, yet not only when he is away from her, but even when he is in her presence. That is, her
grandiosity has reached such proportions for Frédéric that, in contrast, he feels insignificant, unworthy, and undeserving: "Il se sentait, à côté d'elle, moins important sur la terre que les brindilles de soie s'échappant de ses ciseaux" (230), particularly since he has transformed her into something sacred and religious: "Il était empêché, d'ailleurs, par une sorte de crainte religieuse" (261). Mme Arnoux is the fuel that feeds Frédéric's daily thoughts; she is his hope of a more meaningful life at the outset of the novel and throughout the novel's progression. As the woman of Frédéric's adolescent dreams, Mme Arnoux constitutes the very substance and essence of his life: "Est-ce qu'elle ne faisait pas comme la substance de son coeur, le fond même de sa vie?" (484)

A closer look at passages that describe Mme Arnoux testifies to her godly status in the eyes of this young man. As in the opening passage, she is often described as something otherworldly, something far above that which is common and ordinary: "Votre personne, vos moindres mouvements me semblaient avoir dans le monde une importante extrahumaine" (503). This is because Frédéric has transformed her into someone incomparable and unrivaled with regard to the rest of the human race: "Par la force des ses rêves, il l'avait posée en dehors des conditions humaines" (230). He has endowed her with a superior status, which is reinforced by the frequency of such words as "infinite," situating this woman outside the degrading conditions of the material world: "Cette robe, se confondant avec les ténèbres, lui paraissait démesurée, infinie. . . . Une suavité infinie s'épanchait de ses beaux yeux" (261, 327). And, since she exists beyond the realm of human
standards, she is often presented hypothetically with verbs such as "to seem" and clauses such as "as if": "ses deux yeux fixes semblaient dilatés par une vision intérieure, et sa bouche demeurait entre-close comme pour donner son âme" (227), emphasizing to the reader how much she is a construction of Frédéric's imagination. But for Frédéric, the one doing the conjecturing, she represents a universe of boundless and limitless possibilities, a means by which his base and abject self can escape this world and enter romantic reverie. Mme Arnoux is the substance of Frédéric's creations and postulations, material indeed for his poetic imagination.

Just as Mme Arnoux reaches infinite poetic proportions for Frédéric, certain women Bardamu desires also approach the eternal, and are thus described according to their similarities with the mystical world beyond. This is particularly apparent in the portrayal of the female character, Sophie, a Slovak who, toward the end of the novel, comes to work with Bardamu at the asylum. For Bardamu, Sophie possesses otherworldly and ethereal qualities, qualities that contrast with the degeneration and insanity of life as he has known it, both inside and outside of the asylum:

Elle possédait Sophie cette démarche ailée, souple et précise qu'on trouve, si fréquente, presque habituelle chez les femmes d'Amérique, la démarche des grands êtres d'avenir que la vie porte ambitieuse et légère encore vers de nouvelles façons d'aventures . . . Trois-mâts d'allégresse tendre, en route pour l'Infini. (468)

Sophie, in this example, is presented as an ideal and transcendent being, as the capital I of "l'Infini" clearly denotes.
More specifically, Sophie's otherworldly status in this passage—placed on a plane with "grands êtres"—is first achieved by such elevating words as, "démarche ailée, souple," which lift her above the concrete physical earth and endow her with immaterial qualities, qualities superior to those shared by commoners. As Bardamu explains, "Le rythme de sa vie jaillissait d'autres sources que les nôtres" (468). Such a status is additionally achieved by the description of her beauty, which, not presented in terms of her particular and individual features, is conveyed by how much she resembles the beauty uniformly held by American women: "cette démarche . . . si fréquente, presque habituelle chez les femmes d'Amérique" (468). This description recognizes in Sophie an abstract and universally-shared conception of beauty, for she easily fits, like Lola, into the old American myth.

It is therefore not surprising that this description culminates in a veritable metaphor: "Trois-mâts d'allégresse tendre, en route pour l'Infini" (468), suggesting a similarity—a resemblance, which is the very structure of metaphor—between Sophie and a sailing ship. Rather than being depicted according to her own existence, Sophie is described according to how she is like something else, transforming her, as Damour points out, into an idyllic construction: "La femme devient donc un mythe idéaliste, puisqu'elle signifie autre chose que son existence propre" (67). De-humanized, Sophie poetically reaches mystical and transcendent heights; the metaphor equates her with a sailing ship, bound for the infinite.
Thiher, in Céline: The Novel as Delirium, brings out this otherworldly potential with regard to the character Sophie: "Sophie, the last woman encountered in Voyage, has a muscle tone whose resiliency suggests a possible transcendence for the down and out picaro" (28). As a sailing ship, Sophie represents a certain transcendental salvation for Bardamu, her body becoming "a symbol of something that might pull Bardamu from the 'cave of existence' and transport him to the 'Infinite'" (Thiher 28). Ifri similarly finds this description of Sophie significant. Among the metaphors he identifies in this novel--many of which are "maritimes"--this one of Sophie is particularly positive in nature (35). Sophie, as a ship, carries the promise of rescue: it will save Bardamu from the degeneration of the modern world by transporting him to a place of the eternal and the ideal.

Thus, women for Frédéric and Bardamu are in many ways promises of a better life and eventually of a better self. They seem to offer meaning, love, and a hoped-for salvation. Amid the disintegration and decay of the world around them, and amid their own failures and disappointments, women are a means by which Frédéric and Bardamu can, if only for a moment, glimpse an infinite and boundless world. It is a desired experience of the other--and ultimately of the self--that is essentially metaphoric.
The Fragmented and Dispersed Female Body: Contiguous to the World of Things

And the whole is no less mythic a construction, an imaginary defense against the fragmentary nature of corporeal existence.
--David Hillman and Carla Mazzio
(The Body in Parts xxiv)

While there is the potential in both L'Éducation sentimentale and Voyage au bout de la nuit for the female body to reach otherworldly and transcendent heights, it is a portrayal of the female body not without its challenges, threatened as it is by a fragmented and dispersed perception of the body that lowers it to everyday, tangible reality and presents it for its brute materiality. This is partly because, having constructed for themselves an idea of what woman is, Frédéric and Bardamu soon discover that life cannot deliver such a desired and glamorized portrait. A gap is therefore created between what these two protagonists yearn for in their imagination and what reality can actually offer. Hence, in lieu of an idealized woman—one that corresponds to myths or romantic novels—Frédéric and Bardamu are left with mere substitutes and approximations, remnants of their female fantasy that they settle for out of hopeless desperation.

Although in L'Éducation sentimentale this change in the female body's representation is developed more intensely as the novel progresses, it is suggested nonetheless, and as previously mentioned, at the novel's outset. That is, while Mme Arnoux is initially metaphorically described, she quickly becomes, as the narrator readily points out, a locus of substitution and dissemination. This is because
Frédéric, who wants to prolong the original encounter with Mme Arnoux that momentarily fulfilled his vision of the ideal female, invests everything near and around him with her presence. Thus, soon after Frédéric sees Mme Arnoux for the first time, he longs to know everything that is related to her: "Il souhaitait connaître les meubles de sa chambre, toutes les robes qu'elle avait portées, les gens qu'elle fréquentait" (51).

By disseminating Mme Arnoux into the material world around her, Frédéric extends the parameters of his desire. No longer limited to Mme Arnoux the person, Frédéric's desire roams to Mme Arnoux's objects, to everything, in other words, that touches and borders her:

Cependant, un long châle à bandes violette était placé derrière son dos, sur le bordage de cuivre. Elle avait dû, bien des fois, au milieu de la mer, durant les soirs humides, en envelopper sa taille, s'en couvrir les pieds, dormir dedans! (51-52)

Thus, the Mme Arnoux that momentarily reached transcendent heights at the beginning of the novel is lowered in this instance, where metonymy presents her in relation to the world of things. As Jameson explains in a persuasive discussion of how objects help Frédéric secure a metonymic relationship with Mme Arnoux, one based on contiguity and proximity, "Frédéric manifeste un attachement vigoureux aux objets qui appartiennent à Madame Arnoux" (569). Described according to objects that are contiguous to her, Mme Arnoux is no longer exclusively a mysterious and abstract being.

This process, whereby Frédéric's desire shifts to everything contiguous to Mme Arnoux, is introduced at the very beginning of the
novel and will only develop further. Whenever Frédéric has contact with Mme Arnoux (unavailable as a married and virtuous woman), his only option is to love the material world in which she moves, the furniture she sits in and the objects she touches: "dans son cabinet, il contempla le fauteuil où elle s'était assise et tous les objets qu'elle avait touchés. . . . La caresse de sa présence durait encore" (248-49). As a result, objects and items from Mme Arnoux's private life--things that are in close proximity to her--become participants of Frédéric's love: "aimant tout ce qui dépendait de Mme Arnoux, ses meubles, ses domestiques, sa maison, sa rue" (106). Objects thereby become a means for Frédéric to approach and indirectly love this unavailable woman. As Duquette says of objects' role in this novel, "Flaubert donne des choses à voir et à rêver, qui sont des prolongements de ses personnages" (20). Frédéric desires Mme Arnoux's objects, and yet at times even desires to become these objects, for they would ensure some sort of connection with Mme Arnoux: "Quelquefois, elle appuyait dessus fortement son mouchoir; il aurait voulu être ce petit morceau de batiste tout trempé de larmes" (227).

We see, therefore, that Mme Arnoux does not remain a purely abstract and idyllic projection of Frédéric's imagination, for her presence can be felt in the material and concrete world, where it proliferates and disseminates in objects adjacent to her. Metonymic structures are at work in this dispersion: it brings Mme Arnoux's ethereal presence down to the level of concrete and tangible reality, so that Frédéric can maintain his contact with Mme Arnoux by substituting

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things that relate to her when she is absent. As Lakoff says of metonymy: "Metonymic concepts allow us to conceptualize one thing by means of its relation to something else" (Metaphors 39). So while Frédéric may, at times, endow Mme Arnoux with a certain metaphoricity, his actual, everyday relationship with her is metonymic. Frédéric desires the world of Mme Arnoux's objects, because his real object of desire--Mme Arnoux--will forever be out of his reach: "Mme Arnoux, afin de l'éviter, prit sur une console des boulettes de pâte, provenant des rajustages manqués, les aplatit en une galette, et imprima dessus sa main. 'Puis-je emporter cela?' dit Frédéric" (258).

Thus, objects, as intermediaries, help to secure presence in an absence: "L'objet tient lieu de présence" (Duquette 29). This is particularly revealing during the sale of Mme Arnoux's possessions, when Frédéric, via her auctioned objects, mentally reconstructs her being. That is, he slowly but surely evokes her body's presence in fragmented parts, connected as it is to household objects that had once touched her:

Ainsi disparurent, les uns après les autres, le grand tapis bleu semé de camélias que ses pieds mignons frôlaient en venant vers lui, la petite bergère de tapisserie où il s'asseyait toujours en face d'elle quand ils étaient seuls; les deux écrans de la cheminée, dont l'ivoire était rendu plus doux par le contact de ses mains; une pelote de velours, encore hérissee d'épingles. (494)

The presence of these metonymic substitutes becomes so intense for Frédéric that, while they continue to circulate before potential buyers, Frédéric imagines that her body parts are being offered and passed among strangers:
les jupons, les fichus, les mouchoirs et jusqu'aux chemises étaient passés de main en main . . . --et le partage de ces reliques, où il retrouvait confusément les formes de ses membres, lui semblait une atrocité, comme s'il avait vu des corbeaux déchiquetant son cadavre. (494)’

It follows that when Mme Dambreuse buys the jewel box, "'Tiens! je vais l'acheter'" (495), which, for Frédéric, contains poignant memories of Mme Arnoux, Frédéric breaks up with this rival: "Il était fier d'avoir vengé Mme Arnoux" (497). Contiguously related to Mme Arnoux, this object allows Frédéric to construct indirectly her presence, seeking vengeance for her in her absence. As Bacry observes of this scene:

On voit que le rapport qui unit le coffret à Madame Arnoux n'a rien à voir, par exemple, avec la métaphore: l'objet ne ressemble pas à la femme aimée; mais, lui ayant appartenu, il présente avec elle ce rapport de contiguïté qui caractérise toute métonymie. (97)

Mme Arnoux, mysterious, idyllic, and otherworldly in Frédéric's imagination, can only be metonymically possessed.

Further examination reveals that the metonymic representation of Mme Arnoux contains strong fetishistic overtones. As Bacry points out, "Dans l'esprit de Frédéric, cette série de représentations métonymiques tourne au fétichisme (lequel est, à la lettre, une perversion métonymique)" (97). In other words, the objects toward which Frédéric displays extravagant devotion are fetishes, "substitutes for the beloved" and "reflections of Frédéric's desire" (Curry 138). Bernheimer explains, "The metonymic structure of reference to presence is used by the fetishist to mask his discovery of absence" ("Fetishism and Allegory" 161). That Mme Arnoux is evoked through the power of the fetish is a tendency noted by many critics, for instance, by Curry, who
writes, "The description of Madame Arnoux's environment reflects an apparent metonymic and fetishistic relationship between the character and the objects that surround her" (139). Frédéric's attachment to Mme Arnoux's surroundings is obsessive and fetishistic, his fantasy about his woman including her material objects.

And yet, it is precisely because Mme Arnoux is evoked via an object that Frédéric can prolong his desire and manipulate its manifestation. As Griffin says, "The power of the fetish resides in its ambiguity and capacity to localize both the attraction and fearsomeness of divinity. It can be manipulated equally to summon the image of presence yet to forestall actual contact and contamination" (237). Reducing Mme Arnoux to a jewel box, Frédéric eliminates all danger of consummating his love for her and, likewise, of killing his desire. By continuously fixating on her objects, Frédéric is able to prolong indefinitely his personal fantasy.

However, Frédéric's use of intermediaries is not limited to the world of objects. He additionally relies on people from Mme Arnoux's world to bring him some sort of provisional contact with her. Jameson brings out this point, saying, "Si les affaires de Madame Arnoux sont 'presque animées comme des personnes,' les personnes peuvent en revanche servir d'intermédiaires entre elle et Frédéric" (571). For instance, Frédéric's affection for Mme Arnoux's child is actually a vicarious love for Mme Arnoux herself. With the child seated between himself and Mme Arnoux, Frédéric can be affectionate with the child without inappropriately touching Mme Arnoux: "Il lui semblait communiquer avec
toute sa personne par ce corps d'enfant étendu entre eux. Il se pencha
vers la petite fille, et, écartant ses jolis cheveux bruns, la baisa au
front, doucement" (138). And Arnoux, although Frédéric sees him as
somewhat of a rival in their shared pursuits, is a means by which he can
obtain news of Mme Arnoux: "Ce partage blessait Frédéric; et les
politures de son rival lui semblaient une gauillerie trop prolongée.
Mais, en se fâchant, il se fût ôté toute chance d'un retour vers
l'autre, et puis c'était le seul moyen d'en entendre parler" (386).

In this way, while Arnoux and the child are reminders of how
unavailable Mme Arnoux is, they simultaneously serve as intermediaries
in Frédéric's desperate attempts. In addition, therefore, to using
objects from Mme Arnoux's universe as go-betweens, Frédéric uses people
as a medium of communication and contact with this woman. Metonymically
appearing via these intermediaries, Mme Arnoux's metaphoric status that
was initially introduced in the beginning of the novel is found
threatened, dissolving her presence into people and things.

Similarly, in Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, metonymy is at
work dispersing women in landscapes, objects, and in other individuals
adjacent to them. This reshuffling is seen, for instance, in the
transfer that takes place between Lola's body, America, and other
American female bodies. While Lola starts off suggesting infinite
possibilities and correspondences, she eventually suffers a metonymic
displacement. This is because, Bardamu, when looking at Lola's body,
journeys from one site (sight) to the other, from Lola's body to America
and from America to other bodies: "Je n'en avais jamais assez de le
parcourir ce corps américain . . . un pays apte à produire des corps" (58). In this regard, Lola's body possesses a certain exchange value. As Solomon accurately demonstrates with respect to the above quotation, Lola's body is displaced, depicted as it is in a "series of metonymic exchanges" with the exterior world--"Lola's body for that of the American woman, for America itself" ("The View" 6). In this case, metonymy challenges Lola's initial metaphorical representation--it undermines the stability and uniqueness of her character by exposing the proximity and relational contact between herself, other people, places, and things.

This dispersion, in Voyage, of certain female characters allows Bardamu, like Frédéric, easier access to them. By lowering female bodies to a level of materiality, Bardamu finds them well within his human range. Such a process is particularly evident in his description of Sophie's body, which, on the one hand, as a sailing ship, is metaphorically elevated, but soon thereafter, on the other hand, is metonymically debased. That is, Sophie, while sleeping, is visually groped by Bardamu; she is uncovered and vulnerable to his desirous and voyeuristic eyes. His gaze therefore fragments her and, in so doing, attempts to humanize her, bringing her body down to a more horizontal plane:

Question de la surprendre, de lui faire perdre un peu de cette superbe, de cette espèce de pouvoir et de prestige qu'elle avait pris sur moi, Sophie, de la diminuer, en somme, de l'humaniser un peu à notre mesquine mesure, j'entrais dans sa chambre pendant qu'elle dormait. . . . Sans parade, presque pas de couvertures, à travers du lit, cuisses en bataille, chairs moites et dépliées, elle s'expliquait avec la fatigue. (468)
As legs and skin, Sophie's body is metonymically perceived, brought down from her lofty and otherworldly position to a level of material disintegration. As Cresciucci explains, "Il s'agit de ramener l'insupportable transcendance de Sophie au plan de la désintégration, à la seule horizontalité" (Céline 44). So while Bardamu may have noble feelings for Sophie's admirable character, he nonetheless desires her for her physical female body: "Le seul fait de la contempler vous faisait du bien à l'âme. Surtout à la mienne pour être juste qui demeurait rien désireuse" (468). Bardamu accordingly is unable to maintain an abstract perception of Sophie, but instead, like Frédéric, must humanize and materialize her, especially if he is to possess her. Bardamu's metonymic perception of Sophie ensures him that she is on his level and well within his reach: "C'était le seul moment où je la trouvais bien à ma portée" (468).

As we have seen, the metaphoric description of Sophie, which initially turned her body into a sailing ship, is subverted by the metonymic description that shortly follows. Described according to her actual body parts, rather than in terms of how she is like something else, Sophie is lowered to a position of her physical and finite body. No longer a wonder of enchantment, mysterious, esoteric, and otherworldly: "Plus de sorcelleries. Plus de rigolade." Sophie has become a living and breathing specimen like Bardamu himself: "Rien que du sérieux. Elle besognait comme à l'envers de l'existence" (468). As Ferry explains, "Sophie est réduite à la matière de son corps devenu inanimé. . . . Sophie dont le corps incarne la beauté, en redevenant
matière dans le sommeil, redevient la femme ordinaire" (56-57).

Metonymic descriptions, as this scene demonstrates, serve to demystify and deflate the exalted and idealized body.

Metonymy as Desire

Not only does metonymy serve to demystify the idealized body, it also serves to sustain and prolong desire. This is because, according to Lacanian theory, metonymy is the trope of lack (Écrits 628), and as such can be likened to displaced desire. In other words, there is a parallel movement between the trope's structure and the structure of unconscious desire: just as desire is ignited after the loss of an object, so metonymy forever enacts the repetition of signifiers in hopes of reaching the original. Accordingly, the metonymic axis of desire manifests itself in an unending search from one object to another and from one signifier to another. It is precisely this unending movement of metonymic desire that fills the repetitive pages of both L'Éducation sentimentale and Voyage au bout de la nuit.

More specifically, and according to Mellard's Using Lacan, Reading Fiction, which gives practical applications of Lacanian thought to literary texts, it is possible to see how Frédéric, unable to recuperate the original moment with his desired object, yearns nonetheless for a totalizing image (Mellard 19). Frédéric therefore projects his desire onto other objects, or as Berg says, "from one object to another" (95). Indeed, what we see in the novel after Mme Arnoux's appearance and disappearance is a series of substitutions--Frédéric's desire displaced
metonymically on various women he sees. In addition to desiring anonymous women that he passes on the streets of Paris, Frédéric desires Rosanette, Louise, and Mme Dambreuse. Yet all the while, Frédéric is in search of his original object of desire: "si Mme Arnoux venait à l'effleurer du doigt seulement, l'image de l'autre, tout de suite, se présentait à son désir . . . et, dans la compagnie de Rosanette . . . il se rappelait immédiatement son grand amour" (202).

Thus, according to Lacanian analysis, women would appear in these texts as metonymically contiguous, an endless chain of signifiers. Consistent with this, women not only appear in proximate relationships to the external world, but they also appear adjacent in the mind of Frédéric:

*Ils [Frédéric and Rosanette] allaient côte à côte, elle appuyée sur son bras, et les volants de sa robe lui battaient contre les jambes. Alors, il se rappela un crépuscule d'hiver, où, sur le même trottoir, Mme Arnoux marchait ainsi à son côté; et ce souvenir l'absorba tellement, qu'il ne s'apercevait plus de Rosanette et n'y songeait pas. (210)*

One woman evokes another, and then another, and so on. Desire finds itself in an interminable pursuit of its object of affection and thereby forever in a state of want. As Ginsburg explains, "The ever-present possibility of substitution in fact makes it impossible for Frédéric to 'arrive' at the object of desire. This means that his desire is never fulfilled" (151).

Likewise, Bardamu goes from one woman to the next, in his life experiences and in his mind, where the mere thought of one woman can provoke the thought of a second. This becomes apparent when, in New
York, Bardamu sees a swarm of American women and immediately journeys mentally to Lola: "une brusque avalanche de femmes absolument belles. Quelle découverte! Quelle Amérique! Quel ravissement! Souvenir de Lola!" (195). Bardamu imagines, as Frédéric does, women right next to each other; they are neighboring, adjoining, forming a chain of signifiers. According to Bardamu, it is like an instantaneous contagion, one women recalling and evoking the next:

Désarroi d'autant plus sensible que Lola, surprise dans son milieu, me faisait éprouver justement un nouveau dégoût, j'avais tout envie de vomir sur la vulgarité de son succès, de son orgueil, uniquement trivial et repoussant mais avec quoi? Par l'effet d'une contagion instantanée, le souvenir de Musyne me devint au même instant tout aussi hostile et répugnant. (214)

So while the various women that Bardamu encounters in this novel are essentially different, they are connected by Bardamu's nomadic lifestyle and insatiable desire: "j'aimais encore mieux mon vice, cette envie de m'enfuir de partout, à la recherche de je ne sais quoi" (231).

Mellard's statement would seem to support this idea: "What is repeated in the text is desire; what is varied are the images in which the desire is located, though one must realize that the images are all linked together in metonymic signifying chains" (125). Women, for both Frédéric and Bardamu, are metonymically connected, appearing one after another in the mind of these two protagonists, as desire, forever mobile, is vainly in search of satisfaction.

And yet, it is precisely by turning women into a series of substitutions that Bardamu, like Frédéric, can have any sort of contact with them. Consider the former's experience in America. Having dreamed
of what American women are like and having witnessed from a distance their mysterious and enigmatic beauty, Bardamu is ready to meet one. However, no woman will take serious interest in him. But since Bardamu has been imagining American women and then looking at them in the streets of New York, his level of desire is high. To feed this desire, he ends up seeking female substitutes in the world of cinema, where women, on the screen, are readily available for any on-loeker: "Moi aussi j'ai été me traîner vers les lumières. . . . J'en ai choisi un moi de cinéma où il y avait des femmes sur les photos en combinaison et quelles cuisses!" (202-03). So it is there, at the movie house, that Bardamu obtains provisional contact with a woman. Moreover, by filling his head with beautiful images, Bardamu equips himself to survive the lonely streets of New York, for he will carry with him in his mind reflections of these fantasy women:

Alors les rêves montent dans la nuit pour aller s’embraser au mirage de la lumière qui bouge. Ce n’est pas tout à fait vivant ce qui se passe sur les écrans il reste dedans une grande place trouble, pour les pauvres, pour les rêves et pour les morts. Il faut se dépêcher de s’en gaver de rêves pour traverser la vie qui vous attend dehors, sorti du cinéma, durer quelques jours de plus à travers cette atrocité des choses et des hommes. On choisit parmi les rêves ceux qui vous réchauffent le mieux l’âme. Pour moi, c’était je l’avoue, les cochons. Faut pas être fier, on emporte d’un miracle ce qu’on peut en retenir. Une blonde qui possédait des nichons et une nuque inoubliables a cru bon de venir rompre le silence de l’écran par une chanson où il était question de sa solitude. On en aurait pleuré avec elle. (203)

Thus, women from the movie screen serve as metonymic substitutes for the American women Bardamu cannot have, gratifying momentarily his unfulfilled desire. It is a process that occurs not only within the
walls of the movie house, but back in Bardamu's hotel room as well. At the Laugh Calvin, in the privacy of his own room, Bardamu is able to continue the cinematic fantasy by, as Solomon notes, "Exchanging the 'sweet' and 'warm' space of the movie theatre for the intimate confines of his room at the Laugh Calvin hotel, the movie projector for his mind's flow of images, Bardamu masturbates himself to sleep" ("The View" 14). Evoking in his mind the blond from the cinema, Bardamu alleviates his loneliness with the company, albeit in the form of reverie, of a woman:

Dans ma chambre, à peine avais-je fermé les yeux que la blonde du cinéma venait me rechanter encore et tout de suite pour moi seul alors toute sa mélodie de sa détresse. Je l'aidais pour ainsi dire à m'endormir et j'y parvins assez bien . . . Je n'étais plus tout à fait seul . . . Il est impossible de dormir seul . . . (204).

Women from the movies, belonging to everyone's imagination, are substitutes for the desired, though failed, intimacy Bardamu had hoped for with a real American woman. 

While in Céline the use of metonymic substitutes is due to Bardamu's lack of success with all women, in Flaubert it is the result of a failure with one woman, Mme Arnoux. Yet, just as Bardamu turns to other women, so too does Frédéric, who finds traces of Mme Arnoux in numerous Parisian women. That is, walking around the streets of Paris, with his desire ignited by his very first encounter with Mme Arnoux, Frédéric is ready to find reflections of her in other women he sees: "Ses yeux erraient sur les têtes féminines; et de vagues ressemblances amenaient à sa mémoire Mme Arnoux" (71). Anonymous women thus serve as intermediaries between Frédéric and Mme Arnoux, spurring and further
displacing his desire for the one woman who is absent: "toutes les femmes lui rappelaient celle-là" (119). Raimond underscores this point: "tous les corps sont interchangeables, puisque le corps aimé est inaccessible . . . relégué dans l'espace de la dispersion" (27).

While much of Frédéric's dispersed and displaced desire takes place in his own mind, it culminates in an actual and physical substitution of Mme Arnoux. Planning to consummate his love for her, Frédéric prepares a hotel room where they can meet. However, and much to his dismay, Mme Arnoux never arrives, which prompts Frédéric to settle for second best, Rosanette: "Alors, par un raffinement de haine, pour mieux outrager en son âme Mme Arnoux, il l'emmena [Rosanette] jusqu'à l'hôtel de la rue Tronchet, dans le logement préparé pour l'autre" (353). Rosanette is therefore a substitute not only for the unrealized love between Frédéric and Mme Arnoux, but also for the unsatisfactory marriage between Jacques and Mme Arnoux. Rosanette, like the women from the movie house in Céline's novel, serves as a stand-in for unfulfilled desire. Moreover, she is the necessary agent that allows Frédéric access into the world of the Arnoux's, an essential link in the chain of desire: "En se liant à la Maréchale, Frédéric s'inscrit dans une chaîne métonymique dont Madame Arnoux est l'animatrice. De Frédéric à Rosanette, de Rosanette à Arnoux, d'Arnoux à sa femme" (Jameson 571). We see, therefore, that instead of existing as separate and distinct individuals, women in this novel are contiguously related to each other, and as such can be each other's metonymic substitutes, prolonging and displacing endlessly Frédéric's desire. As Ginsburg
explains, "characters are not simply opposed to each other; at any moment, they can replace one another, become the other . . . characters are constituted by their relations to the others, that is, by the position they take within a given configuration" (144).

**Loss of Identity and Being**

It follows that women, connected by "metonymic signifying chains," do not possess their own identity, but are attached and linked (Mellard, *Using Lacan* 125). Indeed, for Bardamu, the women he has known lack any sort of singularity that would mark them as unique. Rather, they dissolve and fuse into one another, losing altogether individuality and autonomy. This can be seen when Bardamu talks about his past, which, void of a special relationship with one particular woman, is full of several trivial and insignificant encounters with many. Here, Bardamu enumerates in succession the names of these women, one instantaneously evoking the next:

> En remuant les souvenirs on se demandait ce qui pouvait bien exister encore de tout ça. . . . On se demandait ce qu'elle avait pu devenir Molly, notre gentille Molly . . . Lola, elle, je voulais bien l'oublier, mais après tout j'aurais bien aimé avoir des nouvelles de toutes quand même, de la petite Musyne aussi tant qu'à faire. . . . (327)

Women thus seem to belong to the same mundane category, metonymically replacing one another as Bardamu journeys through life, representing an accumulation of short-term and dead-end affairs: "Récapitulons: les aviateurs m'avaient ravi Lola, les Argentins pris Musyne et cet harmonieux inverti, enfin, venait de me souffler ma superbe comédienne"
They are mere parts in a series, pieces of Bardamu's ever-growing collection.

In *L'Éducation sentimentale* women also start to merge, not only for the main character, Frédéric, but also for the reader who is no longer able to distinguish their separateness. We lose track of their whereabouts and encounters, as they are given the same gifts and declarations of love from their shared suitor: "Bientôt ces mensonges le divertirent; il répétait à l'une le serment qu'il venait de faire à l'autre, leur envoyait deux bouquets semblables, leur écrivait en même temps" (467). All this because Frédéric, unable to have Mme Arnoux, must settle for either Rosanette, Louise, or Mme Dambreuse. As a result, these latter three lose their distinctness, signifying for Frédéric a means by which he can evoke the memory of Mme Arnoux; they have become mere agents to his desire. Frédéric neither desires nor loves Mme Dambreuse in the same way he loves Mme Arnoux—"Il n'éprouvait pas à ses côtés ce ravissement de tout son être qui l'emportait vers Mme Arnoux," (441)—but must use his love for Mme Arnoux to fuel a feigned sort of love for Mme Dambreuse: "il lui fallait évoquer l'image de ... Mme Arnoux" (451). Mme Dambreuse, like Louise and Rosanette, does not emerge as a totalized female being, but instead needs to be completed by the image of another.

We see, therefore, that in both Céline and Flaubert, women do not appear as separate and distinct. As Ginsburg observes, "Since characters can change places with one another, can become one another, no one has any intrinsic qualities of his or her own" (144).
substituted women are forever connected to Mme Arnoux: "il y en avait une troisième toujours présente à sa pensée" (467). Mme Arnoux is connected to these women, used as she is to incite and sustain Frédéric’s desire: "Il se servit du vieil amour" (441). Merging and joining in Frédéric’s mind, women are robbed of their uniqueness. Yet, it is by using pieces and parts of each and every one that Frédéric attempts to regain the completed ensemble of his ideal woman that he glimpsed at the beginning of his journey.

The Fragmented Body

But a unified experience with Frédéric’s object of desire never recurs definitively. While there are moments when Frédéric is able to endow Mme Arnoux with a whole and unique aura (as we saw in this chapter’s introduction), this oneness is continually threatened by her imminent materiality—her fragmented body parts. Likewise, Bardamu never really possesses a woman in a complete or undivided sort of way. Unsuccessful in a full relationship with a woman—whereby he would know both her mind and her body—Bardamu contents himself rather with the body, and yet not even the total body, but individualized body parts: "En fait de jambes j’ai rarement vu mieux . . . une beauté de chair en éclosion" (192). Thus, when walking around the streets of New York, instead of focusing on entire women, Bardamu observes them in parts, in particular, for their magnificently impressive legs: "Beaucoup de jeunes femmes . . . des jambes croisées à de magnifiques hauteurs de soie" (198). Indeed, women in this novel often appear as pure flesh, as a
collection of fragmented regions and components that Bardamu looks at, desires, and visually enjoys. He accordingly details his visual possession of Sophie, proceeding with his eyes by anatomical groups, dismembering and partitioning her body:

Pour mon compte et pour tout dire, je n'en finissais plus de l'admirer. De muscles en muscles, par groupes anatomiques, je procédais. . . . Par versants musculaires, par régions. . . . Cette vigueur concertée mais déliée en même temps, répartie en faisceaux fuyants et consentants tour à tour, au palper, je ne pouvais me lasser de la poursuivre. . . . Sous la peau veloutée, tendue, détendue, miraculeuse. . . . (467)

So although women momentarily reach a metaphoric status in this novel, they are metonymically debased and subjected to a fragmented portrayal. Described according to their body parts and pieces, women become legs, internal organs, and skin. For instance, explaining the effect of war on women, Bardamu refers to them anatomically: "La guerre, sans conteste, porte aux ovaires" (94), reducing women, as he often does, to a categorical nomination: "vagins impatients" (120). Thus, metaphoric descriptions that present women in terms of their resemblance to something else do not dominate in this novel, but are frequently subverted by metonymy, which, when used in bodily descriptions, presents women in their physicality.

Similarly, in L'Éducation sentimentale, Frédéric fragments women with his penetrating gaze, in order to possess, if not all of a woman in her entirety and for eternity, then a portion of her for a single moment in time. In terms of Mme Arnoux, for example, Frédéric is either in the process of catching a glimpse of her arm, or concentrating on her foot, despite the fact that her whole body is before him: "comme elle
descendait les marches, il aperçut son pied" (133). This has been noted by many, for example, Raimond, who says, "Il n'y a pas dans L'Éducation de portrait en pied donné une fois pour toutes" (24). Whether as an arm, foot, or eyes, Mme Arnoux is metonymically portrayed: "Dans la pénombre du crépuscule, il n'apercevait que ses yeux sous la voilette de dentelle noire qui masquait sa figure" (500).

Yet this metonymical presence of women does not apply exclusively to Mme Arnoux. We glimpse, for example, a quick look at the back of Mme Dambreuse: "Il n'apercevait que son dos, couvert d'une mante violette . . . . Il regrettait de n'avoir pu distinguer Mme Dambreuse" (68), and later on, through Frédéric's eyes, we witness the corporeal parts of dancing women (completely objectified by the definite article): "dans l'hallucination du premier sommeil, il voyait passer et repasser continuellement les épaules de la Poissarde, les reins de la Débardeuse, les mollets de la Polonaise, la chevelure de la Sauvagesse" (183). It is possible, therefore, to say that Mme Arnoux is really part of a larger exhibition of female bodies in this Parisian society, a metonymic exhibition of the feminine for which Frédéric is the privileged spectator.

Indeed, it is by gazing at women that Frédéric and Bardamu manage to possess them partially, for the gaze functions as a substitute for the relationship these two protagonists cannot have with the women they desire. Thus, for Frédéric, fragmenting women into multiple parts allows him to have them temporarily: "Ses jolis yeux tendres pétillaient, sa bouche humide souriait, ses deux bras ronds sortaient de
sa chemise qui n'avait pas de manches" (205-06). It is a scopic possession that replaces the denied physical possession. By looking at Mme Arnoux and Rosanette, Frédéric can partially appease his appetite for them. Similarly, Bardamu satisfies his longings in the movie house, where he is free to possess visually the women on the screen.

Not only are women fragmented into visible body parts, but into invisible parts as well. That is to say, Frédéric doesn't need to see Mme Arnoux to be able to reconstruct parts of her in his imagination, since her voice is for him an extension of her being: "et sa voix, un peu sourde naturellement, avait des intonations caressantes et comme des légèretés de brise" (202). In fact, it is not so unusual that a female presence is heard in this novel; in one place Frédéric enjoys Mme Arnoux by way of her passing dress: "il se délectait à écouter le sifflement de sa robe de soie quand elle passait auprès des portes" (106). So while women are visually available to Frédéric, they are also audibly present. And to add yet another dimension, it is even possible to find moments in the text when the scent of women can be detected: "et humant les molles senteurs de femmes, qui circulaient comme un immense baiser épandu" (172). As Duquette remarks, "Dans L'Éducation sentimentale on trouve des odeurs vagues, et toutes féminines. . . . Ces parfums, Frédéric s'en grise . . . par eux il réinvente la femme" (41). Women, as we see, are not entirely within Frédéric's reach, but are like a distant and far away vapor that he can only partially grasp. So while Mme Arnoux is metaphorically conjured up in Frédéric's imagination as a woman of romantic ideals and exotic dreams, she can only be metonymically
possessed--as visible body parts, as a sound, and as a scent. Metonymy in this way represents the human and concrete approximation for an unattainable metaphoric love.

Yet, even when Frédéric is given the opportunity to stop his metonymic relationship with Mme Arnoux, he does not seize the occasion. At the novel’s conclusion, Frédéric, suspecting that Mme Arnoux has come to offer herself to him, decides to reject her: “Frédéric soupçonna Mme Arnoux d’être venue pour s’offrir; . . .--et tout à la fois par prudence et pour ne pas dégrader son idéal, il tourna sur ses talons et se mit à faire une cigarette” (504). This is because, as this quotation demonstrates, consummating his love for Mme Arnoux would be a destruction of Frédéric’s desire, an end to his personal fantasy about a woman he has so long desired and dreamed of possessing. Instead of a complete and total possession of her, which, since she is old, would probably prove disappointing, Frédéric hopes to sustain her as a perpetually displaced, and thus desirable, metonym. However, before parting, Mme Arnoux cuts off a lock of her hair for Frédéric to keep as a trace of her existence: “Elle s’en coupa, brutalement, à la racine, une longue mèche. 'Gardez-les! Adieu!’” (505). On the one hand, this act guarantees that part of Mme Arnoux will be forever metonymically present. Yet, on the other hand, the metonym that Mme Arnoux becomes in this final scene—a lock of gray hair—is disappointing, undesirable, and threatens the metonyms that previously defined her. That is, the physical reality of this metonym-thing endangers the continuation of the figural metonymic chain reaction that has sustained Frédéric’s desire.
Thus, while starting off as an idea, as a metaphoric and unified being that gave meaning to Frédéric's life, Mme Arnoux is metonymically pursued as an object of Frédéric's desire, only to finish as a dismembered clump of body tissue that is, in Frédéric's eyes, terrifyingly de trop.

Consumption of the Part: Bodies Fusing with the Decor

While not granted a stable position in the foreground of these texts as whole complete beings, women conversely occupy a dispersed position in the texts' background. Parsed and partitioned, women begin to merge and fuse with the texts' decor, an integral part of landscapes, city spaces, and private dwellings. In Flaubert, for instance, during the famous Fontainebleau episode, Rosanette is seen as part of the surrounding landscape: "la fraîcheur de peau se mêlait au grand parfum des bois" (399), one element of the entire scenery that Frédéric finds so charming. Her dispersion into the backdrop of certain settings is equally apparent when Frédéric observes her eating, as the food blends and combines with the colors and contours of her mouth: "la rougeur du fruit se confondait avec la pourpre de ses lèvres" (275). As seen in the case of Rosanette, women are not accorded an autonomous status that would position them in the text's foreground, but, metonymically described, are conflated with the text's descriptive background.

Similarly, in Céline's novel, the female body becomes part of the text's decor. As Solomon observes, "woman herself is not described but rather the environment in which she works . . . and whose material
qualities she shares" ("The View" 12). This can be seen in Bardamu’s
description of America, when, on the streets of New York, he describes
the movement of the crowd as fragmented and discontinuous: "cette foule
en route, discontinue" (195), with female body parts detached from the
owners to whom they belong: "jambes croisées . . . quelles cuisses"
(198, 203). Bardamu is therefore witness to a parade of American flesh:
"d’autres ravissantes énigmes aux jambes si tentantes, aux figures
délicates et sévères" (202), which, rather than being unified, is
scattered, part of the general and discontinuous atmosphere of New York
City. The American female body, as we see, has ostensibly lost its
totality. However, a closer examination of Céline’s novel reveals that
the body’s dispersed parts are not far from sight, displaced as they are
on the various buildings of New York, its architecture carrying explicit
overtones of the body: "Figurez-vous qu’elle était debout leur ville,
absolument droite. New York c’est une ville debout . . . celle-là
l’Américaine, elle ne se pâmait pas, non, elle se tenait bien raide, là,
pas baisante du tout, raide à faire peur" (186). Thus, the body that
dwells in the urban space of New York is neither viewed in its entirety
nor in connection with a person; fragmented, its parts are relocated to
the city’s buildings and objects, "des orgues comme des cuisses" (203).
Desire, in this way, is not limited to the human body, but circulates
generously in this consumer-based society where pleasure and passion are
overtly for sale.

This notion—that detached body parts have a consumption value—is
manifest in both novels, where feminine beauty circulates freely in
urban spaces and offers itself to desirous onlookers. In Flaubert’s novel, such a consumption of the female can be seen in the image of the prostitute, which, according to Brombert, is a central theme of the novel: "The bordello motif, or in a more general sense the image of the Prostitute . . . is at the core of L’Éducation sentimentale" (Novels of Flaubert 128). Indeed, throughout this novel we are witness to an exhibition of women. And while not all of these women are prostitutes, they are nonetheless available to passersby: "Des femmes, nonchalamment assises dans des calèches, et dont les voiles flottaient au vent, défilaient près de lui" (71). Women are part of the spectacle in Paris, its decor, ambiance, and very milieu.

In particular, it is Rosanette who, as a kept woman, personifies this sale and purchase of women, "Quoi qu’il en soit, Rosanette--comme Nana--est fille de la Ville" (Douchin 140), a commodity that is passed from one man to the next. This was previously seen in the fact that she serves as a substitute in the lives of both Frédéric and Arnoux. It is a body, therefore, that is pretty well known: "Que devient-elle, cette brave Rose? . . . a-t-elle toujours d’aussi jolies jambes?" (285). As Lucette Czyba comments, "le corps de la lorette est donc un corps connu" (204). Yet her market value, if you will, can also be seen in the fact that she agrees to be painted, to become an aesthetic object that is purchased and looked at. The words inscribed on her portrait illustrate this role: "'Mlle Rose-Annette Bron, appartenant à M. Frédéric Moreau, de Nogent'" (299), "appartenant" suggesting she is an object to be consumed.
Descriptions of Rosanette's body additionally reinforce her status as an object of pleasure, available for consumption. Displayed in revealing clothing, her body provokes desire on the part of her admirers: "elle s’habillait devant lui, tirait avec lenteur ses bas de soie, puis se lavait à grande eau le visage, en se renversant la taille comme une naïade qui frissonne; et le rire de ses dents blanches, les étincelles de ses yeux . . ." (202). Her body is often presented in a way that reveals its individual parts: "Puis une languer la saisit; et elle restait immobile sur le divan, un coussin sous l’aisselle, le corps un peu tordu, un genou plié, l’autre jambe toute droite" (325). In her boudoir, where Rosanette dresses and undresses openly--"et, ayant fait passer Frédéric par la cuisine, elle l’introduisit dans son cabinet de toilette" (188)--Rosanette offers her body to Frédéric’s burgeoning desire. Like the women on the streets of New York in Céline’s novel, Rosanette’s body is up for sale.

Thus, a certain commodity value haunts the fragmented body, particularly in urban space, where it is exhibited seductively for consumption. Czyba gives particular attention to this role of women in L’Éducation sentimentale, where she finds that they are objects to be bought and sold: "objet à vendre et à consommer" (208). In modern society, where sexuality can be used to promote consumption, women and the spectacle of their bodies become desired merchandise: "L’exhibition de la prostituée participe de l’exhibition générale. La femme vénale fait partie intégrante du spectacle. . . . Elle est objet parmi les objets à vendre, objets-signes du plaisir érotique" (Czyba 209).
In Céline, this function is especially noticeable, since women's body parts become a means by which they can earn money and support themselves. Recognizing this value in the fragmented female body, Bardamu says of Mme Herote: "Fortune elle se mit à faire en quelques mois, grâce aux alliés et à son ventre surtout. On l'avait débarrassée de ses ovaires, il faut le dire, opérée de salpingite l'année précédente. Cette castration libératrice fit sa fortune" (77). In a consumer-based society, women's bodies have a brute market value, providing a medium by which they can participate in the economic circuit: "Depuis l'ascension de Musyne et de Madame Herote, je savais que le cul est la petite mine d'or du pauvre" (213). Thus, women do not remain sacred and mysterious, but are lowered and demeaned, possessing, as Céline's novel demonstrates, value that can be exchanged: "on trouvait moyen de faire facilement l'amour et pour pas cher dans l'arrière-boutique de certaines librairies-lingeries" (77).

We see, therefore, that the metonymic body, where emphasis is on fragmented parts at the expense of a unified whole, is a body that can be replaced, substituted, and exchanged. It is a body pursued by the consumer, who seeks, not a total experience of the other, but a partial one--pure physical pleasure easily obtained in detached body parts. Thus, the metonymic body is at the core of modern society's commerce of corporeality. It is a body that is easily purchased and a body that can stand for something else, a body of this world, where material, economic, and sensual worth are the criteria by which value is bestowed upon an individual.
Disillusionment with Love and the Body

"Il y a l’amour, Bardamu!"
"Arthur, l’amour c’est l’infini mis à la portée des caniches et j’ai ma dignité moi!"

(Voyage au bout de la nuit 14)

A closer look at passages where the female body is fragmented in these two novels reveals that they are often accompanied by a critique of ideals and illusions. In Céline, for instance, the focus on the body—on the physical and material body—is part of a mistrust expressed in the novel for overly idyllic abstraction created by the mind, such as love, sentiment, and infinite resolutions: "titubants dans un idéal d’absurdités, gardés par les poncifs belliqueux et insanes . . ." (69). Indeed, characters critique and even reject these ideals, for example, Robinson who, in the final analysis, refuses Madelon and the love that a continued commitment with her would represent: "c’est tout, qui me répugne et qui me dégoûte à présent! . . . L’amour surtout! . . . Les trucs aux sentiments" (487).

This criticism of idyllic constructions is frequently expressed by Bardamu, who finds in man a cowardly need to decorate the female body with symbols and abstractions, that is, with a higher frame of reference: "C’est barbouillé d’une crasse épaisse de symboles, et capitonné jusqu’au trognon d’excréments artistiques que l’homme distingué va tirer son coup" (467). As a result, the finite and physical body is often transformed into something sublime:

Cette corolle de chair bouffie, la bouche, qui se convulse à siffler, aspire et se démène, pousse toutes espèces de sons visqueux à travers le barrage puant de la carie dentaire, quelle punition! Voilà pourtant ce qu’on nous adjure de transposer en idéal. (334-35)
It is this idyllic perception of the body that Bardamu so violently condemns.

One way in which Bardamu belittles love and sentimentality is by continuously emphasizing finitude and material truth. The body, says Bardamu, our measurable and earthly body, is a certainty, a surety, an unpleasant but indisputable truth:

*L'esprit est content avec des phrases, le corps c'est pas pareil, il est plus difficile lui, il lui faut des muscles. C'est quelque chose de toujours vrai un corps, c'est pour cela que c'est presque toujours triste et dégoûtant à regarder.* (271)

And it is through this body that our base human condition makes itself known, for death has left its imprint on each and every one of our body parts:

*C'est la manie des jeunes de mettre toute l'humanité dans un derrière, un seul, le sacré rêve, la rage d'amour. Elles apprendraient plus tard peut-être où tout ça finissait . . . . Elle les tenait déjà d'ailleurs la misère au cou, au corps, les mignonnes, elles n'y couperaient pas elles. Au ventre, au souffle, qu'elle les tenait déjà la misère par toutes les cordes de leurs voix minces et fausses aussi. (360)

So while there are moments when love appears sacred and the female body endowed with a certain metaphoricity, they are consistently challenged by a material and immanent encodement. As Carson explains, "Bardamu rejects the idea that there is anything sacred in the act of love" (46-47). For Bardamu, women are predominantly finite and corporeal beings: *"Je croyais à son corps, je ne croyais pas à son esprit"* (60).
That there is a certain contradiction in this novel between transcendent and secular bodily depictions cannot be denied. At times, the body seems to represent for Bardamu a place of harmonies and correspondences, seen here where he equates the body with a certain divinity: "Le corps, une divinité tripotée par mes mains honteuses" (467). But, as we saw earlier, it is a moment that is short-lived, for the body eventually is lowered to its brute physicality. Kristeva finds that Célinian women indeed occupy a dichotomous position: "The conjunction of opposites (courtliness-sadism) is again encountered in all of Céline’s feminine characters" (160), as does Verdaguer: "La femme occupe une place ambivalente puisqu’elle est susceptible d’évoquer à la fois le rêve de l’imputrescible et la puissance perverse du ventre" (212). So while Bardamu may see transcendental potential in the body, a way, in other words, to escape his degrading existence, all the while he seems to realize that this is illusory and deceptive. Looking existence straight in the eye means for Bardamu viewing ourselves and others as concrete and material, nothing, that is, but a body: "les élans du coeur m’étaient devenus tout à fait désagréables. Je préférerais ceux du corps, tout simplement" (54).

Why, we may ask, is Bardamu so intent on living in the realm of physicality? According to Bardamu, the soul is our attempt to escape what is inevitable, the gradual decay and decomposition of the body: "L’âme, c’est la vanité et le plaisir du corps tant qu’il est bien portant, mais c’est aussi l’envie d’en sortir du corps dès qu’il est malade ou que les choses tournent mal" (57). But for him, the
inescapable truth of our condition has already been sealed, for indeed, the body is proof of it: "Mais moi, je ne pouvais plus choisir, mon jeu était fait! J'étais dans la vérité jusqu'au trognon" (57). In many ways, then, the body testifies to a delayed and deferred, but imminent, death: "Cette espèce d'agonie différée" (57). Displayed metonymically on our fragmented body--"Puisque nous sommes que des enclos de tripes tièdes et mal pourries" (335)--death is our unavoidable fate.

Thus, while one may try to mask this fate with platitudes, falsehoods, and illusions, bestowing upon the body metaphoric qualities, it is ultimately the fragmented and metonymic realm that wins out and proves more powerful in Céline's vision of the universe: "On avait à peine le temps de les voir disparaître les hommes, les jours et les choses . . . Tout y passait, c'était dégoûtant, par bouts, par phrases, par membres, par regrets, par globules" (150). The female body and the world it inhabits, everything, in short, that falls within Bardamu's purview, finishes in fragments, particles, and pieces.

Similarly, in Flaubert there is a tension between idealism and reality, between a construed and imagined sort of love and the kind of love that humans actually experience. So while women may be dreamed of as an idea, they are observed, desired, and possessed for their body. This was previously analyzed with numerous examples, but perhaps it is Pellerin who expresses this idea most succinctly, when, during a conversation with his male companions over women, he suggests that it is precisely a woman's body, and its various parts, that ultimately serves to degrade her as something abstract, as an idea: "Ce qui vous séduit
est particulièrement ce qui la dégrade comme idée; je veux dire les seins, les cheveux" (108). The body, therefore, with all its distinct and separate parts, keeps overly idealized notions of woman on the ground, challenging her as an idea, so as to present her in her actuality: a mass of corporeal regions and components.

Not only is there a tension between woman as an idea and woman as a tangible presence, but between a desired love union with another human being and the impossibility that this union will be complete. Just as Céline disparages the idea of true spiritual love, Flaubert seems to share this same critique. It is the narrator, who, with a critical eye, often brings out this perspective. For instance, with regard to Frédéric and Rosanette, he points out that their communication is not authentic, but rather based on a false self. He therefore concludes that a full expression of oneself is difficult and rare, causing relationships to be lacking, diminished, and forever incomplete:

On découvre chez l'autre ou dans soi-même des précipices ou des fanges qui empêchent de poursuivre; on sent, d'ailleurs, que l'on ne serait pas compris; il est difficile d'exprimer exactement quoi que ce soit; aussi les unions complètes sont rares. (404-05)

It follows that, because a spiritual and authentic love seems unattainable, we are left with partial experiences, a love, in other words, sought after in substitutes, replacements, and approximations.

The Flaubertian body therefore devolves into a materialistic entity. Developed throughout L'Éducation sentimentale, this material emphasis on the body is especially reinforced by its ending. Just like the plot, ideals, and human relationships, the body finishes in complete
disintegration. First transformed into a jewel box, Mme Arnoux finishes as a lock of hair, yet not even as her once beautiful hair, but as hair that is old and gray: "Mme Arnoux ôta son chapeau. La lampe, posée sur une console, éclaira ses cheveux blancs" (503). Mme Arnoux’s previously sublime body ends up in a state of material decline.

Rosanette similarly experiences this bodily disintegration. Once graced with an elegant and slim figure, she becomes, as Deslauriers explains to Frédéric, hugely overweight:

A propos, l’autre jour, dans une boutique, j’ai rencontré cette bonne Maréchale, tenant par la main un petit garçon qu’elle a adopté. Elle est veuve d’un certain M. Oudry, et très grosse maintenant, énorme. Quelle décadence! Elle qui avait autrefois la taille si mince. (507)

Everything that once was beautiful and ideal in the female body finishes in destruction and degradation. This is underscored by Danger, who says more generally of the Flaubertian body, "Ainsi, de même que l’objet, le corps humain est à la fois forme et matière" (158). We are witness to a world of decomposition, where amid massive disintegration we find the female body.

Thus, metonymy, when used in bodily depictions, foreshadows and anticipates our eventual death. We saw this in Céline’s novel and it is equally present in Flaubert’s. Rather than presenting a body that is complete and undivided, able to withstand earthly destruction, metonymy presents the body in isolated and detached parts, making it all the more vulnerable to potential loss and decay. In Body in Pieces, Harter brings out this effect of the fragment, and recognizes it at work in the body of Flaubert’s Emma. Emma, at the end of Madame Bovary, has a body
that cannot resist fragmentation, and as such alludes to its dissolution: "In Madame Bovary . . . the body is not just interesting for the spectacular way in which it is taken apart. In its fragmented form it is also often a site of death" (119). The metonymic body, in this sense, reminds us of our finitude, of our material fate and doom. In no way does it look to or inspire hope about a possible world beyond, but focuses rather on the measurable here and now. The metonymic body reduces our human experience to our physicality, and offers no escape from our inevitable death.

Incompatibility of the Metaphoric and the Real

We have seen that, in these two works, the body remains on the level of signifier. Although there are spotted attempts to bring the body to metaphorical meaning and signification, that is, to give the body identity and unity, the metonymic structures in the two texts consistently fragment, tear apart, and multiply the body, so that closure and satisfaction are never attained. Both authors, in this regard, seem to be expressing the impossibility of knowing an other as a complete, totalized entity, for in the real world one only acquires an incomplete, metonymic knowledge. It is thus the insatiable desire of both anti-heros that effects a partialization and metonymical displacement of the body. The movement of both texts is comprised of unending encounters of body parts and pieces, with desire perpetually in flight.

Metonymic structures in both L'Éducation sentimentale and Voyage au bout de la nuit reveal the metaphoric body to be one of false
promises and unrealistic dreams. Frédéric, unable to make reality mirror the ideals he has set for himself about love and women, is forced to settle for metonymic experiences, turning the body into a place of exchange, replacement, and dispersal. Bardamu’s journey is likewise filled with dissatisfaction, fostering his metonymic perception of the body as finite, disintegrated, and categorical. Both novels are an attempt to unmask what is illusory about ideals, dreams, and myths, including the metaphoric body and the homogeneity and transcendence we attach to it.
Many critics have recognized in Flaubert this interplay between metaphor and metonymy. See, for instance, Maureen Jameson in "Métonymie et trahison dans l'Éducation sentimentale," Nineteenth-Century French Studies 19.4 (1991) 566-82: "on découvre une prépondérance analogue de la contiguïté, à cette différence près, que le métonymique se substitue au métaphorique" (566), and Michal Ginsburg in Flaubert Writing: (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986) "in L'Éducation sentimentale every metaphorical repetition, every structure based on memory, is shown to be illusory and is undermined by a metonymical substitution" (135). 

Michel Raimond agrees that, in this opening scene, Mme Arnoux is seen in her ensemble: "Voyez Mme Arnoux dès la première vision que Frédéric a d'elle . . . le tout sur fond de ciel bleu" (23). See "Le corps féminin dans L'Éducation sentimentale," Flaubert, la femme, la ville (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983) 23-31.

Solomon, in Understanding Céline, sees a tension in Céline between a fragmented self and a unified one: "one should first note that he perceives human existence in general as a tension between the desire to maintain the order of an individual identity and a countervailing desire to abandon that identity for the disorder of a psychic and physical dissolution" (South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1992) 24-25.

Lorene M. Birden touches on this point—-that it is Frédéric who has made Mme Arnoux into such an ideal, rather than any inherent qualities she may have: "Thus Frédéric represents her as a saintly ideal of woman . . . . It is not clear to the reader if Marie is truly an ideal mother, or if Frédéric simply colors her so; thus, the idealization has as much possibility to be inspired by a pre-existing tendency on Frédéric's part than by any real characteristic of Marie's" (400-01). See "Power and Discourse in Nineteenth-Century Sexuality as Presented in L'Éducation sentimentale," Nineteenth-Century French Studies 24.3-4 (1996) 398-405.

This point is underscored by H. Meili Steele in Realism and the Drama of Reference: Strategies of Representation in Balzac, Flaubert, and James: "Frédéric's contemplation of Mme Arnoux is represented in the language of perception, but this contemplation solicits the desire for knowledge of all that surrounds her, a metonymic displacement of the original experience" (London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988) 57.

Of this scene, Jean-Pierre Duquette observes, "Cette émanation qui circule encore vaguement imprègne les choses que Marie a touchées, leur conférant une sorte de caractère divin, de pouvoir magique: celui d'assurer--dans l'imagination--la possession de l'être aimé." See Flaubert ou l'architecture du vide: une lecture de l'Éducation sentimentale (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1972) 36.

It is equally possible to find in this scene a metaphoric idealization of Mme Arnoux. Not only does Frédéric see the auctioned objects being transformed into Mme Arnoux, but he considers them to be sacred relics.

For additional discussion of the role of the fetish in Flaubert's works, see Charles Bernheimer's Flaubert and Kafka: Studies in Psychopoetic Structure (New York: Yale University Press, 1982).
While this example is more precisely a synecdoche, it is referred to as a metonymy, given the fact that the present study's introductory chapter grouped the two tropes together.

Allen Thiher provides an excellent discussion of this scene: "Bardamu can find some comfort in seeing that her firmness is only an affair of the moment. Her troubling 'force allègre' is no longer to be envied." See *Céline: The Novel as Delirium* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1972) 29.

As Solomon explains, "The cinema with its splendid actresses and love stories provides a cheap and readily obtainable source of masturbatory fantasies that permit him to penetrate, if only in his mind, the otherwise forbidding and exclusionary body of America" (Understanding *Céline* 29).

For further discussion, see Pierre Danger's *Sensations et objets dans le roman de Flaubert*: "il n'y a pas alors un seul portrait exhaustif, mais plusieurs portraits successifs" (Paris: Libraire Armand, 1973) 135.

Of this scene, Danger explains: "Il y a une telle association entre la femme et la nature que les parfums de l'une et de l'autre se confondent" (Sensations et objets 268).


Czyba provides a thorough definition of "la lorette" in *Mythes et idéologie de la femme dans les romans de Flaubert*: "La lorette vend (cher) au bourgeois un plaisir qu'on juge incompatible avec les vertus exigées de l'épouse mère de famille. . . . La fonction de la lorette est de compenser les frustrations d'une sexualité que le mariage réduit à la procréation." (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1983) 199.

Victor Brombert's comments in *The Novels of Flaubert: A Study of Themes and Techniques* reinforce Rosanette's status as a commodity: "key characters . . . in one form or another, are for sale. The most important of these is Rosanette Bron" (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) 131.


This point is reiterated by Pascal Ifri in Céline et Proust: *correspondances proustiennes dans l'oeuvre de L.-F. Céline*: "L'amour dans le *Voyage* se réduit donc à l'amour physique" (Birmingham: Summa, 1996) 118.

For further discussion of the feminine in other novels by Céline, see Kristeva's entire discussion in *Powers of Horror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) 157-73.

Dennis Porter reiterates this point in "The Perverse Traveler: Flaubert's *Voyage en Orient*": "One is reminded that in his fiction he is an especially acute observer of decay. His narrators typically find satisfaction in recording scenarios of loss and even dismemberment" (30). *L'Esprit Créateur* 29.1 (1989) 24-36.
In the previous chapter we examined metonymy’s ability to fragment one’s perception of the other, in particular, one’s perception of the female body. In this chapter, however, we will see how metonymy is equally capable of fragmenting the self, of presenting an experience of one’s own body as dislocated, displaced, and intolerably in excess. Such an experience of a dismembered self is found in both Flaubert’s L’Éducation sentimentale and in Sartre’s La Nausée, where Frédéric and Roquentin respectively undergo a corporeal and physical breakdown.

While the biographic relationship between these two authors has already been exhaustively researched, due to Sartre’s massive work, L’Idiot de la Famille, scant attention has been given to stylistic
similarities in their works of fiction. Accordingly, this chapter will attempt to show how metonymy is a primary stylistic presence in both Flaubert and Sartre, particularly when used in descriptions of the body. The body, rather than being depicted metaphorically—in the mode of being, identity, and otherworldly transcendence—is depicted metonymically, as a material, tangible, and concrete presence. It is through such a body that an experience of the self is felt; for, as we shall see, these two works emphasize bodily existence, underscoring, to be more specific, a detotalized, fragmented body.

Fragmentation of the self is already apparent in many of Flaubert’s early works, where the mere act of writing creates a sense of loss of the totalized self: "ces pages . . . renferment une âme tout entière. Est-ce la mienne? est-ce celle d’un autre?" (Mémoires d’un fou 257). And throughout the rest of Flaubert’s literary career, this ontological weakness of being undergoes continued development. When presented, for example, through the use of free indirect discourse, characters appear isolated from a language that talks about them, but that is rarely possessed by them. As Steele points out regarding Flaubert’s narrative techniques, language is often disembodied from the speaker: "Language is not the tool of the individual subject who manipulates it to his wishes. . . . The subject is not an organizing intention but a logical space traversed by linguistic matter that is already formulated" (30).

Not only, however, are characters disembodied from language in Flaubert’s novels, they are further disembodied from themselves.
Instead of perceiving themselves metaphorically as a signifying whole, characters perceive themselves as an ensemble of various body parts: "le sang . . . mes artères . . . ma poitrine" (Novembre 396). Curran Curry comments on this effect of Flaubert's bodily descriptions: "In the classical realist novel a portrait should gather all the parts of the body in order to convey an illusion of totality. . . . Instead, . . . the fragmentation of the body does not lead to totality" (49-50).

Presented metonymically, as an arm, foot, or head, Flaubert's characters often suffer from an unstable self, a sense of incompleteness and loss that is corporeally reflected in the body. Thus, despite all attempts to achieve a certain totality, characters are bound by the fragmentary materiality of their anatomy. As Bernheimer explains of Emma,

Emma looks to metaphor to give her the Erotic pleasure of totality. But she finds that she cannot sustain its expansive movement of imaginary ascription and that her return to the phenomenal world involves a kind of bodily mutilation. (Flaubert and Kafka 62)

Sartre's Roquentin, like many Flaubertian characters before him, experiences a similar sense of contingency and isolation in a disintegrating world where words are dislocated from the speaking subject--"he loses hold of his 'I.' The narrator is dismembered and disseminated in the text" (Lacapra 105)--and where body parts take on a life of their own. That is, not only does Roquentin question his own existence through the process of writing a journal ("Ce qui s'est passé en moi n'a pas laissé de traces claires. . . . Ce qu'il y a de curieux, c'est que je ne suis pas du tout disposé à me croire fou. . . . Au moins c'est ce dont je voudrais être sûr" 14), but through the experience of
an increasingly alienating body. In many ways, therefore, Roquentin’s experience of metaphysical nothingness echoes the experience of the typical Flaubertian character. Such a relationship between Frédéric and Roquentin is noted by Danger: "Les paroles de Roquentin ne sont-elles pas comme un écho des angoisses de Frédéric dans les rues de Paris" (349). It is additionally underscored by Grainville: "Il se trouve que Flaubert est moderne car il introduit le thème de l’ennui. Il est des dimanches de Frédéric Moreau qui ressemblent fort à ceux du Roquentin de la Nausée" (22). Isolated from their own bodies, Frédéric and Roquentin suffer in a similar fashion from a disintegrating and dissolving self. Both characters, while desiring unity, undergo a process of bodily dissemination.

Desire for Totality

Analogous to Frédéric’s and Bardamu’s desire to find in the female other a totalized and complete image, which we saw in the previous chapter, is Frédéric’s and Roquentin’s desire to restore a whole and integrated self. Although these moments are ultimately overturned by metonymy’s subversive presence, which rends the unified body asunder, they allow for a fascinating alternation between the discourse of being and the discourse of physical, corporeal existence. While longing for a stable and transparent being, for a metaphorical self, Frédéric and Roquentin are trapped by their bodies: by the part, the fragment, the metonym. There is a tension, in this regard, between wholeness and partialization, between being and existence, and between transcendental
This paradox is highlighted in the novel by alternations between "happenings" and "adventures", between the viscous superfluity of existence and the clean hard outlines of being . . . the tension between amorphous existence and the purity of being to which Roquentin aspires; and it points to the creation of Roquentin's novel. (242)

Similarly, in L'Éducation sentimentale, characters are caught between a pure state of being, which is abstract and otherworldly, and a desecrated one, which is physical and earthly. Thus, Frédéric is, as Ginsburg points out, a character "who constantly oscillates between self-assertion and renunciation" (138). He fluctuates between a unified self and a compartmentalized one. Therefore, before we examine what is destructively threatening about the metonymic body in these two novels, let us first turn to those rare passages of a totalized and whole self.

In addition to dreaming of idealized and fictitious women, Frédéric dreams of acquiring an exceptionally romantic self. He conjures up in his mind images of self-importance, yearning as he does for an identity that will distinguish himself as unique: "Il se demanda, sérieusement, s'il serait un grand peintre ou un grand poète" (100). What Frédéric earnestly longs for is a unified and integrated self, seen in the way he imaginatively construes a self-portrait that is significant and complete. In one instance, Frédéric is painted in analogical terms, for, like an architect, he plans in his mind a prosperous and successful future: "Comme un architecte qui fait le plan d'un palais, il arrangea, d'avance, sa vie. Il l'emplit de délicatesses et de splendeurs; elle montait jusqu'au ciel; une prodigalité de choses
y apparaissait" (155). In another, he transports himself to a faraway land, where he endows himself with exotic surroundings, imagining he has attained an extraordinary existence:

Frédéric se meublait un palais à la moresque, pour vivre couché sur des divans de cachemire, au murmure d’un jet d’eau, servi par des pages nègres; --et ces choses rêvées devenaient à la fin tellement précises, qu’elles le désolaient comme s’il les avait perdues. (104)

It is by daydreaming, therefore, that Frédéric is able to create for himself a self that he desires: "Il se voyait dans une cour d’assises, par un soir d’hiver, à la fin des plaidoiries . . . noyant ses adversaires sous ses prosopopées, les écrasant d’une riposte. . . . Ces images fulguraient, comme des phares, à l’horizon de sa vie" (139). At times, his reverie carries him beyond ordinary human experience to a lofty, sublime, and elevated position: "Alors, il fut saisi par un de ces frissons de l’âme où il vous semble qu’on est transporté dans un monde supérieur. Une faculté extraordinaire, dont il ne savait pas l’objet, lui était venu" (100). At other times, his reverie is so poignant that it makes his imagined life more real and powerful than the one he actually leads: "et cette contemplation était si profonde, que les objets extérieurs avaient disparu" (155). Indeed, it is a reverie that often borders on hallucination and is ironically presented as such by the narrator: "Et sa rêverie devint tellement profonde, qu’il eut une sorte d’hallucination" (436). Longing for a self that is stable and distinguished, Frédéric is not content with the identity he has, but imagines and yearns for one that is already made--one found in myths, in legends, and in romantic love stories: "Il se mit à écrire un roman
intitulé, *Sylvio, le fils du pêcheur*. La chose se passait à Venise. Le héros, c'était lui-même" (72). Frédéric, as we see, is in search of a more idealized, romantic self-image, what Brombert terms his "ceaseless nostalgia for the impossible" (8).

Thus, if only in his imagination, Frédéric creates a unified and whole self. By escaping his real self ("En plongeant dans la personnalité des autres, il oublia la sienne, ce qui est la seule manière peut-être de n'en pas souffrir," 246), Frédéric can more easily assume the identity constructed in his dreams. More often than not, this person takes the form of an idea, a portrait, or a romanticized abstraction, as Frédéric imagines, for instance, that he will become Mme Arnoux's lover: "Mais il la retrouverait bientôt, et finirait par être son amant" (140). The self that Frédéric constructs is a self described in fictitious terms, a self that stands for something else, and a self that is at times metaphorical: "il tournait dans son désir comme un prisonnier dans son cachot" (121)."  

Presented as someone else or dreaming to become another person, Frédéric momentarily solidifies a coherent self-image. Influenced by the ideals of his time, Frédéric, like Emma, does a romantic reading of himself. But, as the narrator points out, it is a desired state of being that can be found only in the most vivid of imaginations. For, as we shall soon see, what Frédéric glimpses is only an illusion of totality, fueled by his own desire and reverie. As the following analysis will argue, Frédéric is ultimately subjected to his very own body, which divides and disperses his unified self: "The character Frédéric is lost in a labyrinthine city where
stable representation is subverted . . . he becomes dispersed" (Curry 126). The desired, romantic Frédéric finishes defeated by the fragmented, metonymic one.

Like Frédéric, who tries to find a reflection of himself that is stable and beyond earthly measures, Roquentin desires a self-portrait that is solid and unquestionably certain. We notice this desire when Roquentin looks at himself in the mirror, hoping to find something hard and strong, finding instead softness and flaccidity:

Toute une moitié de mon visage cède, la moitié gauche de la bouche se tord et s’enfle, en découvrant une dent, l’orbite s’ouvre sur un globe blanc, sur une chair rose et saignante. Ce n’est pas ce que je cherchais: rien de fort, rien de neuf; du doux, du flou, du déjà vu! Je m’endors les yeux ouverts, déjà le visage grandit, grandit dans la glace, c’est un immense halo pâle qui glisse dans la lumière. (35)

Roquentin indeed is threatened by a soft and malleable body: "La tête est toute molle, élastique, on dirait qu’elle est juste posée sur mon cou; si je la tourne, je vais la laisser tomber" (37), by a self, in other words, that he finds repulsive--"je m’englue au miroir, je me regarde, je me dégoûte: encore une éternité," (54)--hollow, and terrifyingly empty: "A présent, quand je dis 'je', ça me semble creux. Je n’arrive plus très bien à me sentir. . . . Et qu’est-ce que c’est que ça, Antoine Roquentin?" (239). It is therefore not surprising that Roquentin imagines a sweeping, unifying gesture, the ability to gather his body’s variously fragmented pieces so as to ensure its totality, impermeability, and consolidation: "Je voudrais me ressaisir" (35).

This desire for bodily cohesion and solidarity is additionally seen in the way Roquentin appreciates his plentiful red hair, for it is
the one part of his body that appears definite and consistent above his
soft and shapeless face. As the following quotation illustrates,
Roquentin's red hair, rather than being like the rest of his body--limp and flaccid--is clean, clear in color, and cohesive:

Il y a quand même une chose qui fait plaisir à voir, au-dessus des molles régions des joues, au-dessus du front: c'est cette belle flamme rouge qui dore mon crâne, ce sont mes cheveux. Ça, c'est agréable à regarder. C'est une couleur nette au moins: je suis content d'être roux. C'est là, dans la glace, ça se fait voir, ça rayonne. J'ai encore de la chance: si mon front portait une de ces chevelures ternes qui n'arrivent pas à se décider entre le châtain et le blond, ma figure se perdrait dans le vague, elle me donnerait le vertige. (34)

Metaphorically perceived as a "belle flamme rouge," his hair is endowed with an integrated identity. It is not described for its physical diversities or its material parts, but as a unified entity that resembles something else. Thus, unlike Roquentin’s face, which is soft, flaccid, and stale, his hair is totalized, firm, and poetically perceived above the body’s menacing materiality, allowing for one bodily experience that is reaffirming and reassuring.

Like Frédéric, Roquentin also dreams of other identities, identities which, far from being so threatening, are stable and secure:

Il existait, comme les autres gens, dans le monde des jardins publics, des bistrots, des villes commerçantes et il voulait se persuader qu'il vivait ailleurs, derrière la toile des tableaux, avec les doges du Tintoret, avec les graves Florentins de Gozzoli, derrière les pages des livres, avec Fabrice del Dongo et Julien Sorel, derrière les disques de photo, avec les longues plaintes sèches de jazz. (246)

Referring to himself in the third person il, Roquentin longs for an identity that is already constructed and situated elsewhere—in paintings, in books, and in the long laments of jazz. Perhaps this is
because with someone else's identity (in this case the man behind the saxophone melody), Roquentin will be a happier and more visible individual: "je serais heureux, si j'étais à sa place; je l'envie" (248). Or, perhaps it is because Roquentin is threatened by a death that will leave him nameless, and so imagines how writing a book would make him legendary, ensuring him a posthumous and recognizable identity:

Un livre. Un roman. Et il y aurait des gens qui liraient ce roman et qui diraient: "C'est Antoine Roquentin qui l'a écrit, c'était un type roux qui traînait dans les cafés," et ils penseraient à ma vie comme je pense à celle de cette Négresse: comme à quelque chose de précieux et d'à moitié légendaire. (250)

Thus, it is through his fantasy that Roquentin momentarily escapes the looming presence of his body; he imagines himself in idealistic terms and with a ready-made essence. In this way, he shares Frédéric's desire for a romantic, idealized self-image, a hope to escape his present state of existence, which is neither defined nor socially acknowledged by others: "J'étais au centre de la pièce, point de mire de tous ces yeux graves. Je n'étais pas un grand-père, ni un père, ni même un mari . . . . Mon existence commençait à m'étonner sérieusement. N'étais-je pas une simple apparence?" (127)

Threatened by a body that is disintegrating and decomposing, Roquentin yearns for a self that is intact and, more importantly, that possesses a sort of corporeal solidity and firmness. As we shall soon see, Roquentin is bound by his physical and material existence, but would like to be able to discard it for a cleaner, more purified, and harder state of being. He clearly makes this avowal toward the end of the novel:
Et moi aussi j'ai voulu être. Je n'ai même voulu que cela; voilà le fin mot de l'histoire. Je vois clair dans l'apparent désordre de ma vie: au fond de toutes ces tentatives qui semblaient sans liens, je retrouve le même désir: chasser l'existence hors de moi, vider les instants de leur graisse, les tordre, les assécher, me purifier, me durcir, pour rendre enfin le son net et précis d'une note de saxophone. (246)

Roquentin desperately wants to find a way out of his gratuitous existence, access from the corporeal to pure being. Manser highlights this aspect of Roquentin's crisis: "what he really wanted was being, not existence" (16), as does Catharine Brosman: "he stares at himself and grimaces in the mirror, trying to catch a meaning, an essence, to grasp himself as both object and subject" (40).

One could say, in accordance with Sartrean philosophy, that Roquentin's desire for an identity is driven by "la réflexion impure" of his pour-soi, which, rather than accepting itself as an incomplete and forever creating entity, treats consciousness as an en-soi, the in-itself, the fixed, and the secure. Rhiannon Goldthorpe, in Sartre: Literature and Theory, makes this very connection between La Nausée and L'Être et le Néant with regard to Roquentin's attempt at oneness:

Thus the pour-soi, instead of trying to grasp itself in its constant movement towards its own possibilities, posits the reflected consciousness as an en-soi, a transcendent object... For Sartre, this process constitutes an example of mauvaise foi; reflective consciousness "objectifies" reflected consciousness in order to make an affirmation of identity. (13)

Indeed, Roquentin's pour-soi tries on numerous occasions to obtain for itself a stable and assured identity, one that contains the opaqueness, the completeness, and the fixity of the en-soi. However, like Frédéric, who also attempts, but fails, to grasp a definite and essential self.
Roquentin is unable to secure for himself an assured and stable identity. So while both characters desire a complete and fixed self, they can only achieve a self that is an imaginary, fictitious construct, a self that is sought after in bad faith. Yet, the immanent presence of the body challenges their fictitious constructs, for, as we shall soon see, Roquentin and Frédéric are continually threatened by their bodies' menacing physicality, with their contingency, their facticity, concretely and openly revealed.

**Body as Menace**

And so this desired state of being on the part of Frédéric and Roquentin does not last for long, for the body enters the scene to disrupt their longed-for state of totality (totality for Sartre being that which is "finished and can only exist in the imaginary" versus totalization which "is always in the making, an act rather than the product of an act," Howells, *Necessity of Freedom* 111). The Frédéric who, for instance, revels in romantic idealism about himself, is threatened by the Frédéric who is bound by a body, reminded of an anatomy that is fragmented and that is moreover beyond the scope of his influence. His face, in the following example, seems detached from the rest of his body, presenting itself to Frédéric, as if it had a mind of its own: "Son visage s’offrait à lui dans la glace" (100). Despite Frédéric's aspirations for uniqueness, oneness, and a higher state of being, he is constrained by a body which partializes his presence, leaving it scattered and dispersed across the pages of this text.
Indeed, Frédéric appears, more often than not, without uniformity or firmness. Lacking control over his own consciousness in a narration that frequently employs free indirect style and thus creates a sense of a "subject split in two" (Bernheimer, Flaubert and Kafka 127), Frédéric is further detached from his own body, which appears at times to act on its own accord. In the following instance, the independence of Frédéric’s body is reinforced by the passive voice of the verb, evoking the image that Frédéric is taken over by his very own body: "Il fut pris d’un paroxysme de bravoure, d’une soif carnassière. Un bataillon ne l’eût pas fait reculer" (290). Not completely in charge of his own body, Frédéric is more like a witness to the autonomous existence of its parts: "Ses yeux délaissant à gauche le pont de pierre de Notre-Dame et trois ponts suspendus, se dirigeaient toujours vers le quai aux Ormes, sur un massif de vieux arbres, pareils aux tilleuls du port de Montereau" (116). Here, his eyes are presented as being detached from the rest of his body, wandering here and there, and occasionally resting their gaze on various people or objects, just as, in another context, "Ses yeux s’attachaient involontairement sur le bas de la robe étalée devant lui" (125). Thus, Frédéric’s eyes, rather than being controlled by Frédéric himself, act as autonomous and self-ruling entities: "Frédéric allait rejeter tout cela quand ses yeux rencontrèrent un article intitulé: Une poulette entre trois cocos" (299).

The rest of Frédéric’s body seems similarly independent, and he is often described as being transported by his body around the streets of Paris. It is as if his body proceeds, yet without its owner’s willful
consent. In one instance, we observe Frédéric walking around without aim, and then allowing himself to be pushed into a carriage, the use of the passive construction, "se laissa", underscoring his passivity:

Il marchait cependant, mais sans rien voir, au hasard; il se heurtait contre les pierres; il se trompa de chemin. Un bruit de sabots retentit près de son oreille. . . . À l'horizon les lanternes du chemin de fer traçaient une ligne de feux. Il arriva comme un convoi partait, se laissa pousser dans un wagon, et s'endormit. (262)

Similarly, we watch as Frédéric ends up on the second floor of Mme Arnoux's place: "Il se fixait des jours pour aller chez elle; arrivé au second étage, devant sa porte, il hésitait à sonner" (105), and then suddenly finds himself in the doorway of a boudoir:

Sous l'abat-jour vert des bougies, des rangées de cartes et de pièces d'or couvraient la table. Frédéric s'arrêta devant une d'elles, perdit les quinze napoléons qu'il avait dans sa poche . . . et se trouva au seuil du boudoir où était Mme Dambreuse. (218)

The pronominal construction, "se trouva", once again highlights Frédéric's lack of control, suggesting how powerless he indeed is next to his body's autonomous activity. Frédéric's passivity is particularly apparent in the following phrase, where he is explicitly the object --le--overcome by a body that is beyond his voluntary control, a body without direction, and a body that is clumsy and awkward as well: "Il se cogna dans l'antichambre contre les meubles entassés. Mais un bruit de voix et de musique le guidait" (436). Thus, instead of acting upon his own body, Frédéric is acted upon by it, finding himself, as he does, in streets and in buildings: "Il se trouva bientôt à un second étage, devant une porte" (162). Passive before the historical events of his time, Frédéric is additionally passive before his very own anatomy.

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After further examination, we notice that the independence of Frédéric's body parts is reinforced by their grammatical position as subject of a sentence, for instance, in this phrase where his eyes willfully carry themselves so as to view various objects: "Puis ses yeux, abandonnant son ouvrage, se portaient sur les écaillures de la muraille, parmi les bibelots de l'étagère, le long des torses où la poussière amassée" (105), stripping Frédéric, to whom these eyes are attached, of any supremacy or control. Body parts are therefore endowed with a certain authoritative presence. Subject of a sentence, they are presented as initiators of action, distancing Frédéric from the scene as conscious participant in his own life's events: "Puis ses yeux retombaient sur son fils" (466). So while body parts, self-reliant and self-governing, take center stage, Frédéric slides into a subordinate position as mere spectator of his own body.

Thus, despite Frédéric's yearnings, his portrait does not remain integrated, but is susceptible to bodily dispersion and fragmentation. Metonymy, in this sense, which favors the part at the expense of a unifying whole, does not lend itself to a stable or coherent portrait of the self. Rather, with his body parts acting of their own volition, Frédéric is segmented and disintegrated. As Ginsburg explains of images of the self in L'Éducation sentimentale, "the self is always represented as both itself and other, as always different from itself, exploded and dispersed in such a way that makes totalization impossible" (136). Such an "exploded, dispersed," and ontologically weak self is fostered by the presence of a metonymically described body.
Although the focus of this chapter is on the representation of the self, it is nonetheless interesting to observe a few representations of the other, because Frédéric's own bodily dispersion includes a fragmenting gaze which partializes the bodies of those around him. Here, for instance, Frédéric's irritation at Arnoux is directed at his hands, hands that he finds big and flabby with flat nails: "Frédéric se sentait de plus en plus irrité par son air de méditation, et surtout par ses mains qui se promenaient sur les affiches, --de grosses mains, un peu molles, à ongles plats" (92). And in another instance, Frédéric's disgust for Senecal can be seen in the way he visually dissects his head: "Ce garçon déplut à Frédéric. Son front était rehaussé par la coupe de ses cheveux taillés en brossee. Quelque chose de dur et de froid perçait dans ses yeux gris" (101). As chapter two attempted to show with regard to women, Frédéric is unable to maintain a unifying and totalizing outlook. Thus, not only does he himself undergo bodily disintegration, but those who encounter his dissecting and roaming eyes experience a similar disfiguration. The body in L'Éducation sentimentale—whether belonging to Frédéric, to the women he desires, or to his male companions—is one that momentarily attains unified and romantic dimensions, only to finish in fragments and parts: "il se sentait tout écoeuré par la bassesse des figures, la niaiserie des propos, la satisfaction imbécile transpirant sur les fronts en sueur!" (117).

We have seen, therefore, that metonymy emphasizes the physical and material aspects of the human body. When used to describe Frédéric, the
trope challenges his mystifying reverie, bringing the protagonist back down to earth and lowering his body to its brute corporeality, as in the following scene where Frédéric, in desperation over Mme Arnoux, wanders around the streets of Paris: "ses dents claquaient... Le poids de son front l'entraînait, il voyait son cadavre flottant" (129). So while Frédéric may long for and imagine a unified and metaphoric self, creating briefly an otherworldly identity, he is continually reduced to and reminded of his anatomy. Metonymy, in this way, subverts metaphor's essentializing claims, and renders images of the body dispersed and unstable.

Metonymy serves a similar function in Sartre's novel, La Nausée: it challenges attempts to present the body as a singular, complete, and well-ordered entity. However, while metonymy's presence in Flaubert is readily accepted by critics--Ginsburg, Riffaterre, and others convincingly examine its active role in Flaubert's destabilization of nineteenth-century realist discourse--its presence in Sartre seems less recognized. Many critics attribute metaphorical meaning to La Nausée, notably Neal Oxenhandler who, in his article "The Metaphor of Metaphor in La Nausée," claims Sartre puts forth a metaphorical vision in this work of fiction: "Sartre, the novelist, uses a specific technique to infect us with Roquentin's amazement. This technique is the metaphor" (47). This is because, as noted by many, Roquentin often uses metaphors to describe the unusual events that take place in and around him: "Thus Roquentin must attempt to describe it, in retrospect, in metaphorical terms" (Thiéry, "Céline and Sartre" 301).
In addition to metaphor's indisputable presence in the novel, there are differing opinions on whether or not the preponderance of body parts abolishes an image of the whole body. Sartre himself in L'Être et le néant seems to allude to a totalized depiction of the subject, despite the threatening presence of its multiple parts:

Je ne perçois jamais un bras qui se lève le long d'un corps immobile: je perçois Pierre-qui-lève-la main. Et il ne faut pas entendre par là que je rapporte par jugement le mouvement de la main à une "conscience" qui le provoquerait; mais je ne puis saisir le mouvement de la main ou du bras que comme une structure temporelle du corps entier. C'est le tout ici qui détermine l'ordre et les mouvements des partis. (412)

Paul Reed additionally puts forth this Sartrean perspective:

Although, then, our look suppresses the other's subjectivity, we nevertheless see him as a complete person involved in a meaningful situation; as a "totalité synthétique," to use Sartre's terminology. Thus, we do not see an arm shoot out, but a person reaching for his drink. (28)

In this regard, there seems to be an attempt at totality, wholeness, and metaphorical signification in La Nausée.

However, and as we examined above in L'Éducation sentimentale, metaphor's effort in La Nausée does not remain inviolate. On the contrary, it is threatened by metonymy, which unmasks its false totality and deceitful attempt to present the world--including one's perception of the self--as coherent and unified. Challenging the possibility of otherworldly and transcendental signification, metonymy focuses on the material and corporeal. At the same time, therefore, that metonymy threatens a stable notion of a metaphysical beyond in La Nausée, it grounds human existence in the here and now. Metonymy helps to
illustrate Roquentin's experience of being imprisoned in his body, of being confined to its sheer materiality and to its, at times, absurd and bizarre parts: "Jamais je n'ai eu si fort qu'aujourd'hui le sentiment d'être sans dimensions secrètes, limité à mon corps" (56). So while metaphor is an active trope in this novel, painting in rich imagery the sensational changes that Roquentin experiences, it is not the only one. Metonymy is an equally present figurative force, surfacing at times to overturn metaphor, and to ground Roquentin's experiences in his flesh.

La Nausée as Metonymy

Ainsi la Nausée n'a pas existé sous cette forme chez moi, j'ai dû la mettre sous une forme romanesque . . . quelque chose d'assez vague mais qui me tenait très fort à la peau. --Sartre (Sartre: Un film 57-58)

Metonymy's active presence in the novel can already be seen in its title. While some may consider the title to be a metaphor, it may also be seen as a metonymy: nausea is a physical symptom of Roquentin's metaphysical illness, that of existing. Patrick Finnegan seems to support such an interpretation, for he explains of the title:

Si le titre de son autobiographie révèle un remplaçant métonymique pour l'auteur, celui de son premier roman, La Nausée, présente un autre emploi de la métonymie. En choisissant un symptôme pour désigner une maladie, celle d'exister, Sartre s'est rendu compte de l'importance du drame principal, celui de dépister les causes de base de son malaise provoqué par le fait d'exister et par la nécessité de mener une existence contingente. (139-40)

Roquentin himself offers a similar explanation: "Quelque chose m'est arrivé, je ne peux plus en douter. C'est venu à la façon d'une maladie"
(17), as does Sartre who, in *L'Être et le néant*, gives the following definition of nausea:

> Loin que nous devions comprendre ce terme de *nausée* comme une métaphore tirée de nos écoeurements physiologiques, c'est, au contraire, sur son fondement que se produisent toutes les nausées concrètes et empiriques (*nausées devant la viande pourrie, le sang frais, les excréments, etc.* ) qui nous conduisent au vomissement. (404)

Here it is possible to see nausea as "the effect for cause metonymy" (Lakoff, *More than Cool* 102). In other words, Roquentin's concrete and empirical nauseas are the product of the more fundamental nausea caused by the disease of gratuitous existence.

To shed further light on the question of whether or not nausea is more metaphoric or metonymic is Frederic Jameson's analysis in *Sartre: The Origin of a Style*. While not calling nausea a metonymy, he rejects nonetheless the interpretation that it is univocally a metaphor.

Referring to the above quotation from Sartre, Jameson comments,

> The nausea is therefore a false metaphor: the physical disgust does not symbolize the discovery of existence but is itself based on the continuous feeling of existence, and the process whereby the awareness of existing became an event inside that existing life is repeated all over again in the image that seemed to "stand for" it. (34)

Thus, Roquentin's illness is not symbolic of the fact that he encounters existence; it does not stand for it, but instead is based on it.

Jameson comes back to this point later on in his study:

> This unpleasant but rarely tangible fact of the continuing existence of our own bodies Sartre has named a nausea, and has shown, in a passage already examined, how the secondary, more obvious kind of nausea or physical illness is merely an intensification of this dizziness, rather than the concrete term of a metaphor which tries to embody it in a striking way; so that in a sense the literary problem of the presentation of the first, the basic, nausea is likewise the
problem of a state without content—the apparent content, the physical malaise, is only a kind of gross amplification of the first condition . . . . (129-30)

So which nausea is the title alluding to? To both, in a sense, since the metaphoric nausea that the title may suggest needs a metonymic nausea for its full expansion and development, as it is ultimately in the material and physical world that Roquentin's experience of metaphysical nothingness is depicted and experienced. As we will soon see in the analysis that follows, Roquentin's metaphysical nausea is a nausea with physical symptoms, symptoms that reveal themselves in connection with the body. As Roquentin himself says, "Oui, c'est cela, c'est bien cela: une sorte de nausée dans les mains" (26).

Roquentin's Metonymic Body

Perpetual totalization appears as a defense against our permanent detotalization.

--Sartre (L'Idiot I: 653)

A cursory glance at the passages in which Roquentin describes his body reveals that his nausea is connected to an inability to form a unified identity of himself. While he desires to find a solid essence or a certain meaning in his body, when he examines it in the mirror, he perceives it as something incoherent, fragmented, and blurred. Instead of seeing in his reflection, for example, a totalized face, or a face that resembles something more abstract, Roquentin sees various components, unable to recognize himself in the chaotic and scrambled assortment:

C'est le reflect de mon visage. Souvent, dans ces journées perdues, je reste à le contempler. Je n'y comprends rien, à
Roquentin thus beholds a face that is completely compartmentalized.

Such a fragmented self-perception contrasts with how others have been viewing Roquentin. While Roquentin finds in his own reflection an empty, senseless, and dismembered face, those around him find him well: "Pourtant Anny et Vélines me trouvaient l'air vivant" (34). Perhaps this is, as Debra Bergoffen suggests, due to Roquentin's withdrawal from a social setting. Instead of being transformed into a unified object by others, Roquentin's isolation leaves him with his own self-perception, which finds pure nakedness and meaningless flesh: "Les gens qui vivent en société ont appris à se voir, dans les glaces, tels qu'ils apparaissent à leurs amis. Je n'ai pas d'amis: est-ce pour cela que ma chair est si nue?" (36). Bergoffen comments on this difference in perception:

Roquentin discovers that absenting himself from the social fabric of Bouville makes it impossible for him to recognize his face in the mirror. It is transformed from a stable object into a fluid succession of images. Here the mirror offers the possibility of a different sort of perception--an unmediated experience of the body. The suggestion that the body as perceived in the everyday world is other than the experienced body is pursued throughout Nausea. (237)

Indeed, Roquentin's discovery of his body is immediate and direct. As we shall see, Roquentin's gradual awareness of his body is not of a body that is unified by others, nor is it of a body that is unified by the self's desires, but of a body that is experienced for its inescapable
corporeality, for the immanence and impending closeness of its limbs, members, and parts.

Roquentin's experience of the self, is, in this way, metonymic. He views himself part by part, as pure flesh and matter, as something that has even lost its human characteristics. As he restates further on about the absence of a mental or spiritual unity beyond the body: "Les yeux, le nez et la bouche disparaissent: il ne reste plus rien d'humain" (34). His partialized body, in a state of dispersion and dissolution, is unrecognizable. Seen in parts and pieces, his body has lost its human dimension: "the body part, cut off from the totalized body, works to challenge the very structure upon which meaning is based" (Hillman, Mazzio xvii). Thus, Roquentin, like Frédéric, experiences a breakdown and weakness of being.®

Part of this breakdown includes a terrifying experience of bodily decomposition: "Tout ce qu'on y plonge s'amollit et s'étire" (40). In other words, Roquentin feels his body's multiplicity, the fact that it, rather than being an intact whole, is subject to disintegration. We notice this disintegration when Roquentin's body starts to tremble and shake, emphasizing its distinct parts while disrupting its unity: "mes mains tremblaient, le sang est monté à mon visage et, pour finir, mes lèvres aussi se sont mises à trembler" (165). So while Roquentin's body is still alive and vital, he experiences its eventual decay and decline; it is the sensation of being reduced to decomposed flesh, to blood, and to bones, the sensation of being de trop--superfluous, in the way, and gratuitous:
De trop, mon cadavre, mon sang sur ces cailloux, entre ces plantes, au fond de ce jardin souriant. Et la chair rongée eût été de trop dans la terre qui l'eût reçue et mes os, enfin, nettoyés, écorcés, propres et nets comme des dents eussent encore été de trop: j'étais de trop pour l'éternité.

Thus, Roquentin is far from feeling his body as a well-integrated, harmonious organism, capable of productive activity. He instead feels its final meltdown; it is a premature bodily dissemination.

In many ways, we are not only reminded of a Flaubertian universe, but of a Célinian one as well, particularly for this primacy of imagery on bodily decomposition. It is therefore no surprise to learn that Sartre used a line from Céline for La Nausée's epigraph ("C'est un garçon sans importance collective, c'est tout juste un individu" L.-F. Céline, L'Église), which suggests an influence of the former on the latter, a connection that is maintained by Thiher: "In light of this acknowledgment, then, it seems appropriate to examine how Céline might have influenced Sartre in his creation of La Nausée" ("Céline and Sartre" 292). Such a link certainly seems plausible if one considers their shared outlook on the body, which, materialistically based, presents it as pure flesh and bones, and lacking any durable totality. Like many passages on the body in Voyage au bout de la nuit, La Nausée depicts the body as a mass of melting substance, which is shapeless, formless, and, as a result, highly revolting. Roquentin's comments demonstrate this view:

J'ai dû me regarder encore plus longtemps: ce que je vois est bien au-dessus du singe, à la lisière du monde végétal, au niveau des polypes ... je vois de légers tressaillements, je vois une chair fade qui s'épanouit et palpite avec abandon. Les yeux surtout, de si près, sont horribles. C'est vitreux, mou, aveugle .... (34)
Thus, for Roquentin, like Bardamu, the body’s lack of solidity, its amorphous shape, and the fact that it appears jelly-like and soft, is a source of disgust and horror. Thirer calls attention to this commonality: "Flesh is grotesque in its indecisiveness. . . . Both Bardamu’s and Roquentin’s realization that the nature of being is obscene amorphousness begins with their discovery of flesh" (300). So while occasionally longing for some sort of bodily meaning and essence, Roquentin is surrounded by a world of flesh, by his body’s bestial, vegetal, and carnal qualities, which deny him a higher state of being. The body that Roquentin inhabits is clearly a body of the earth, a body revealing its scatological and biological features, and a body that is immanent: "Concern with . . . scatology may thus represent a rejection of transcendence in favor of immanence" (Charmé 25). Metonymy, in this way, focusing as it does on the fragment and on the part, helps to show Roquentin’s disgust for his body.

This fragmentary and fleshy experience of the body is observed in his own and in the bodies of those around him: "La cassière est à son comptoir. Je la connais bien: elle est rousse comme moi; elle a une maladie dans le ventre. Elle pourrit doucement sous ses jupes avec un sourire mélancolique . . . les corps en décomposition" (86). As Finnegan explains of metonymy’s role in the partialization of others, "La métonymie et la synecdoque renvoient aussi à l’incapacité du regard d’autrui de saisir le tout d’un être" (132). Indeed, like Frédéric, whose view of others is unable to preserve the body’s entirety, Roquentin perceives the world in scattered fragments. We see this at
work when Roquentin comments on Doctor Rouge's body: "Son grand corps se
tasse et ses paupières tombent . . . Ses joues ont une affreuse couleur
rose . . . cet homme va bientôt mourir . . . il ressemble chaque jour un
peu plus au cadavre qu’il sera . . . un corps qui se défait" (105). We
further observe Roquentin's partializing vision when he visits the
Bouville museum where, incapable of viewing the portraits before him as
complete and unified subjects--"Des yeux aveugles, la bouche mince . . .
des joues" (131)--he fragments those he sees: "Je regardai son beau
front calme et sans rides, son petit ventre, sa main posée à plat sur
son genou" (130). Whether belonging to Roquentin or to others that
encounter his look, the body is dissected, dissipated, and viewed part
by part: "Son visage m’apparut docilement, son nez pointu, ses joues
bleues, son sourire" (141). Thus, the body that we encounter in La
Nausée is not a body that maintains a symbolic significance; it is not a
body that has abstract or spiritual meaning, and it is not a body that
stays long in metaphorical representation. Roquentin sees before him--
in the mirror and in others--a body that is purely anatomical, limited
to its physical properties and quantifiable components: "Il
[L'Autodidacte] a écarté les bras et me présente ses paumes, les doigts
tournés vers le sol . . . Ses yeux sont vitreux . . . dans sa bouche,
une masse sombre et rose" (166). As Reed explains of bodily depictions
in this novel, "the body is rarely perceived by Roquentin as a
signifying whole but as a collection of disparate parts" (29).
A Corporeal Discovery of Existence

As we have seen, the body in L'Éducation sentimentale and La Nausée is concretely and materially depicted. We sense its presence, its weight, and its activity through its variously described parts. We do not sense its upward ascension toward mystical realms, nor do we sense that it has an absolute essence. Instead, we are presented with its brute characteristics, revolting, nauseating, and threatening as they may be. It is impossible, therefore, to ignore the idea that the body exists in these two novels. While a metaphysical state of being may at times be denied, a corporeal one is indisputably guaranteed.

Frédéric and Roquentin have a bodily existence.

Although Frédéric may dream of a more abstract and more noble state of being, his daily existence is certainly grounded in the body. Consider, for example, the following passage, in which Frédéric, invited to the Arnoux’s place, experiences a nervous bodily reaction. Rather than describing his interior state of mind, the narrator describes Frédéric according to his physical condition: "Arnoux entra. . . . 'Hier, on m’a envoyé de Genève une belle truite; nous comptons sur vous, tantôt, à sept heures juste. . . . N’oubliez pas!’ Frédéric fut obligé de s’asseoir. Ses genoux chancelaient" (93). It is through his body--through Frédéric’s shaking and trembling knees--that we sense in this scene the intensity of his emotions.

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In a like manner, we are aware of Frédéric’s body and its disparate parts when it responds to moments of overwhelming adoration for Mme Arnoux. For example, Mme Arnoux’s handshake is felt in every particle of Frédéric’s skin:

Mme Arnoux s’était avancée dans l’antichambre: Dittmer et Hussonnet la saluaient, elle leur tendit la main; elle la tendit également à Frédéric; et il éprouva comme une pénétration à tous les atomes de sa peau. . . . Son cœur débordait. (99)

And later on in the novel, when Mme Arnoux’s possessions are auctioned, "C’était comme des parties de son coeur [Frédéric’s] qui s’en allaient avec ces choses" (494). During this scene he undergoes an experience of bodily disintegration. As the narrator points out, "la monotonie des mêmes voix, des mêmes gestes l’engourdissait de fatigue, lui causait une torpeur funèbre, une dissolution" (494-95). In many ways, we are reminded of Emma Bovary who, upon leaving Rodolpe, undergoes a similar physical disintegration, a sort of anatomical breakdown:

Elle resta perdue de stupeur, et n’ayant plus conscience d’elle-même que par le battement de ses artères. . . . Elle ne souffrait que de son amour, et sentait son âme l’abandonner par ce souvenir, comme les blessés, en agonisant, sentent l’existence qui s’en va par leur plaie qui saigne. (Madame Bovary 372)

So while both Frédéric and Emma may at times imagine themselves metaphorically and transcendentally, they are equally presented for what is tangible of their existence—an experience of the body. Whether desired or not, Frédéric, like Emma, remains a corporeal, mortal being: "Frédéric . . . sentit bondir son sang gaulois . . . il frissonnait sous les effluves" (363). Thus, despite his hunger for an otherworldly
state--one touching legendary and romantic proportions--Frédéric is, after all, bound by his body.

Roquentin’s existence is similarly experienced in the body. He does not experience it as something abstract and felt from afar, but rather as something intimately close and physical: "Quand je suis sorti de la brasserie Vézelise, il était près de trois heures; je sentais l’après-midi dans tout mon corps alourdi" (79). Such a bodily experience of existence already takes shape at the beginning of the novel, when Roquentin begins to undergo a change, or an awareness of his body. While starting off in the form of an abstraction--"Donc il s’est produit un changement, pendant ces dernières semaines. Mais où? C’est un changement abstrait qui ne se pose sur rien" (18), and in the form of an idea, "devant moi, posée avec une sorte d’indolence, il y avait une idée volumineuse et fade" (19), Roquentin’s change gradually becomes recognizably corporeal. That is, he becomes highly sensitive of acute bodily sensations, noticing, for instance, something new in the feeling of his hands:

Dans mes mains, par exemple, il y a quelque chose de neuf, une certain façon de prendre ma pipe ou ma fourchette. Ou bien c’est la fourchette qui a, maintenant, une certain façon de se faire prendre, je ne sais pas. Tout à l’heure, comme j’allais entrer dans ma chambre, je me suis arrêté net, parce que je sentais dans ma main un objet froid qui retenait mon attention par une sorte de personnalité. (17)

Here, the sensation is new and rather strange. Instead of Roquentin touching the fork, the fork is doing the touching, endowed with, as he says, a certain personality. In normal circumstances, however, this would not be the case: "Les objects, cela ne devrait pas toucher,
puisque cela ne vit pas" (26). Yet, what is happening in this sort of hallucinatory sensation is that Roquentin is becoming aware of his body, of the fact that it exists in its interaction with the world of objects. As Paul Reed explains, "It is this physical contact which makes Roquentin hypersensitive to the existence of his hands and which subsequently gives him the impression that objects actively touch him" (25). Thus, by touching and handling objects, Roquentin discovers his hands, which in turn reveal to him their existence.

This point is developed nicely by Karen Gusto in "'Making it Strange': The Image of Hands in La Nausée", where she examines the central role given to hands in this novel. In addition to creating an "atmosphere of absurdity" (36), hands, says Gusto, help to unveil existence:

Roquentin uses his hands here to discover the existence of objects. Normally the act of touching makes a person less conscious of his hand than of the feel of the object. This does not seem to be the case with Roquentin. The very existence of objects, which provokes the narrator's bouts of nausea, reveals to him his hands. Roquentin illustrates this fact when he touches a pebble and notices it causes "une sorte de nausée dans les mains" (16). The feeling of existing, the reason for the nausea, is transferred from the pebble to Roquentin's hands. (38)

Coming into contact with objects they encounter, hands announce to Roquentin his brute and unjustifiable existence: "J'appuie ma main sur la banquette, mais je la retire précipitamment: ça existe" (178); they are a primary means by which he can feel his own presence. In the following passage, Roquentin's hands make him conscious of his physical mediacy, equating the vitality of his hands with his own self: "Je vois
Hands are proof to Roquentin that his body and therefore he truly exist.

In addition to proving Roquentin's existence, hands produce the feeling of being disintegrated, scattered, and dispersed—subjected to the independent existence of extremities and limbs: "Je vois ma main, qui s'épanouit sur la table. Elle vit--c'est moi. Elle s'ouvre, les doigts se déploient et pointent. Elle est sur le dos" (143). As we saw in connection with Frédéric's body, reflexive verbs point to self-contained bodily movements, suggesting, in this case, that his hands are autonomous.

Indeed, whether belonging to Roquentin or to others around him, hands seem to function by themselves, free from the person who owns them: "Puis des mains aux doigts bagués viennent les ramasser, grattant le tapis de leurs ongles. Les mains font des taches blanches sur le tapis, elles ont l'air soufflé et poussiéreux . . . les mains vont et viennent" (39). Disconnected from the rest of the body, hands appear unbridled and self-directing: "Elle tire un peu, à peine, mollement, moelleusement, elle existe. Je n'insiste pas . . . elle continuera d'exister et je continuerai de sentir qu'elle existe; je ne peux pas la supprimer" (144). Possessing their own free will, Roquentin's hands will continue to exist, and he will continue to feel their autonomous existence. Like the rest of his body, his hands cannot be stilled, moving and acting of their own volition and reminding Roquentin of his bodily existence.
Not only, however, do hands allow for the discovery of existence, but other body parts do so as well. In one scene, Roquentin is reminded of his own existence by the presence of his thigh, whose heat reveals to him its life: "Mais je sens tout de suite, à travers l'étoffe, la chaleur de ma cuisse" (144). And in another scene, Roquentin's existence is felt through the rhythm of his beating heart: "Je m'arrête un instant, j'attends, je sens mon coeur battre" (85). Localized and focused, existence is metonymically felt, presenting itself in each and every part, limb, and member of the body: "Mais je ne peux pas, je suffoque: l'existence me pénètre de partout, par les yeux, par le nez, par la bouche" (180). Roquentin's crisis is thus given a corporeal manifestation; it is felt at the top of his body all the way down to its very bottom: "Une belle crise: ça me secoue du haut en bas" (175). We watch it as it penetrates the interior of his mouth ("Ce goût de fromage dans ma bouche"), as it seeps into the inside of his ears ("L'Autodidacte babille et sa voix bourdonne doucement à mes oreilles"), and as it covers the surface of his hands ("Ma main est crispée sur le manche du couteau à dessert. Je sens ce manche de bois noir" 175). As the novel progresses, Roquentin gradually discovers his amorphous existence, self-perception in this way achieved by an awareness of his existing body:

Mon corps de chair qui vit, la chair qui grouille et tourne doucement. . . . Il court, le coeur, le coeur qui bat c'est une fête. Le coeur existe, les jambes existent, le souffle existe . . . Antoine Roquentin n'est pas mort . . . au secours donc j'existe. . . . Moi qui écoute, j'existe. Tout est plein, l'existence partout, dense et lourde et douce. (148-49)
By referring to himself in the third person, Roquentin further 
objectifies himself, literally conceiving himself as an object, a thing. 

So while Roquentin, like Frédéric, may at times yearn for a more 
abstract encounter with existence ("Et qu'est-ce que c'est que ça, 
Antoine Roquentin? C'est de l'abstrait" 239), it is a discovery that 
takes place in the very recesses of his body. And perhaps it must be 
so--this corporeal discovery of existence--for can we solely feel 
ourselves through weightless, transcendent ideas? For Roquentin, this 
is not the case, particularly given the following passage, where his 
existence starts off in the form of a pleasant abstraction, only to 
become purely corporeal, and more and more so as the description 
progresses:

J'existe. C'est doux, si doux, si lent. Et léger: on 
dirait que ça tient en l'air tout seul. Ça remue. Ce sont 
des effleurements partout qui fondent et s'évanouissent. 
Tout doux, tout doux. Il y a de l'eau moussue dans ma 
bouche. Je l'avale, elle glisse dans ma gorge, elle me 
caresse--et la voilà qui renaît dans ma bouche, j'ai dans la 
bouche à perpétuité une petite mare d'eau blanchâtre-- 
discrète--qui frôle ma langue. Et cette mare, c'est encore 
moi. Et la langue. Et la gorge, c'est moi. (143)

We see, therefore, that the statement "j'existe" made at the beginning 
of the passage is initially equated with such ideas as softness, 
lightness, and airiness, yet quickly condenses into a brackish liquid, 
which itself congeals, through metonymic contiguity, into the palpable 
flesh of tongue and throat. Wolfgang Holdheim's interpretation of this 
passage emphasizes the increasing materiality of the transformation:

Existence is sweet (the word doux occurs four times), floats 
lightly in the air, stirs ("ça remue") in gently melting and 
evaporating touches. . . . Yet there are indications that he 
cannot maintain himself in that precarious airiness. 
Insensibly, more material aspects of himself come to the
fore . . . a progression toward the heavier solidity of bodily organs, until Roquentin must recognize with some surprise that "this pool is still me. And this tongue. And the throat is me." (185)

The body, in this case, cannot be suppressed; it is an indisputable indicator of the sheer weight of Roquentin's existence. The bubbling water in his mouth, which slides around and caresses his throat, is proof that he is his body and that his body positively exists: "he physically feels, and even tastes, his bodily existence" (Reed 24).

So while not offering Roquentin a metaphysical experience, his body does offer him one that is material, immediate, and concrete. His hands, his face, and his legs--his metonymic body--literally incarnate the physical existence to which he is condemned. Although at times threatening and seemingly absurd, the body is an undeniable truth. It is a discovery of naked and brute existence coming by way of that which is corporeal. As Roquentin himself comments, "Je voyais les épaules et la gorge de la femme. De l'existence nue" (190).

**Alienation from the Body**

As the bodies nap, the hands become the grammatical subject of the game. . . . Hands pass, but one doesn't know to whom they belong. --Denis Hollier

(The Politics of Prose 123)

We have seen how metonymy, when employed in representations of Roquentin, reveal his discovery of corporeal existence. It is precisely this closeness afforded by Roquentin's metonymic perception that creates strong feelings of estrangement, feelings that are similar to Frédéric's alienation from his own body in *L'Éducation sentimentale*. Just as
Frédéric is not in possession of his body parts, Roquentin passively watches his own limbs and extremities, which have a life of their own. As Patricia Johnson underscores about body parts in Sartre’s novel, "parts of the body have escaped the control of their owner . . . they are acting autonomously" ("Empty Gesture" 422).

Not only, however, is Roquentin unable to master his body parts, he is additionally unable to master the movement of his entire body. Roquentin admits such an inability, carried and pushed, as he says, by a freewheeling body: "je me suis senti poussé en avant. Je flottais . . ." (36). Like Frédéric, who is passively carried by a body that seems self-governing, Roquentin often appears subordinate to a body that has its own will: "Mon corps, tout doucement, se tourne vers l’est, oscille un peu et se met en marche" (226). Roquentin repeatedly draws attention to this curious phenomenon: "Le corps, ça vit tout seul, une fois que ça a commencé" (145). People are thus not engineers of their body’s action, removed as they are from the scene’s description: "the perpetrator of the action is absent from the description" (Johnson, "Empty Gesture" 422).

The effect of such a body, described part by part and independently of its owner, is that it is experienced as something foreign. Johnson underscores this effect: "Sartre clearly uses this device to provoke a feeling of strangeness" ("Empty Gesture" 422). In other words, a reversal takes place in which the corporeal is made active and human intention is made passive, as consciousness is effectively defeated and suppressed. Or, using Sartre’s own dualistic
ontology, one might view this reversal as the following: the en-soi--the
fixed and the definite--changes places with the pour-soi--human
consciousness. This is particularly apparent during passages where
Roquentin does not admit ownership of his body’s activity: "Ma main est
crispée sur le manche du couteau à dessert. . . . C’est ma main qui le
tient. Ma main" (175). Gusto, commenting on this passage, points out
that, "By saying, 'it is my hand that holds it' and not 'I hold it,'
Roquentin is describing his hand as something that is acting on its own,
without any intervention on his part" (37). Thus, Roquentin, as a
thinking and willing human subject, is divorced from the scene as active
participant. Gusto explains, "By accentuating the parts of the body
that are performing the action, Roquentin separates these parts from the
body as a whole, thereby diminishing the intrinsic unity of the man and
rendering the person described less human" (37-38). Metonymy, in this
way, when used to accentuate the part, serves to dehumanize the subject,
reducing one’s role as willful orchestrator of the body. Debray-Genette
calls attention to this effect of the trope, which achieves "a
depersonalization of beings" (683). And although Reed does not use the
term metonymy, he does see a tendency to favor the part, which in turn,
he says, downplays the self’s involvement:

Another device used by Sartre to highlight the materiality
of the body is to focus attention on its parts. If we catch
sight of an arm or a leg when the rest of the body is
hidden, the limb is likely to lose its human character,
because we may not transcend its materiality towards the
meaning of the activity in which its owner is engaged. (28)

The atmosphere, as a result, is strange and absurd. Body parts
come and go, but we have lost sight of their proprietor. Not only,
therefore, is Roquentin not in control of his own body, but he is additionally not at home in it. His body, instead of being a place of comfort and familiarity, is experienced as an alien entity, as something estranged and cut off from his own self. It is an experience of his body from the position of pure spectator. Or, as Stuart Charmé explains, Roquentin experiences his body as other: "Such loss of control over one's own body also means a frightening chasm of otherness has opened between it and oneself" (32).

Thus, as we have seen, metonymy can cause extreme feelings of alienation, for disparate body parts take on a greater role than the one accorded the total subject. As Johnson explains of Sartre's use of close-ups in "Art against Art: The Cinema and Sartre's La Nausée": "The proximity . . . provokes an immediate crise de nausée in Roquentin" (73). Metonymy dissects and examines the body to such a degree that the overall portrait is lost. However, as distance is gained and the body is viewed from afar, from, as Johnson explains, "long-shots," it is possible to capture a "panoramic viewpoint," a view of the body in its entirety, a view that maintains the illusion of wholeness (73). While Johnson does not associate close-ups and long-shots with respectively metonymic and metaphoric perceptions of the body, it is certainly possible to do so. The effect of a close-up or a metonymic perception is to make strange and unfamiliar that which is common, while the effect of a long-shot or a metaphoric perception "is no longer to emphasize contingence" (73-74), but to create order, cohesion, and unity. A body that is looked at from too close up loses the possibility of symbolic
meaning, evoking, on the contrary, viscous superfluity. And thus while Roquentin, like Frédéric, may desire a long-shot of his body, so as to give his physical existence the purity of being, to exist via abstractions and clear, definite notions, he is trapped and confined to his body, to an experience of corporeal existence. As Roquentin says, existence is felt close up; it is material, immanent, and pejorative, the "ça" of our brute human condition: "L'existence n'est pas quelque chose qui se laisse penser de loin: il faut que ça vous envahisse brusquement, que ça s'arrête sur vous, que ça pèse lourd sur votre coeur" (188).

**Body in Excess**

existence is always something literally extra.
--Arthur Danto (Jean-Paul Sartre 10)

In addition to being experienced as something detached from its owner, the metonymized body is also experienced as de trop, as a body in the way. That is, it is a body described for its multiple parts, a body that does not reach a one-to-one correspondence with another term, a body that is not given a fixed identity, and a body that is far from being metaphoric. It is this very body that we have been observing in Flaubert’s and Sartre’s novels—a metonymic body—partitioned, endlessly described, overflowing, and superfluous.

Frédéric’s body is certainly such a body, at times appearing too much for his own limitations. We observe this bodily phenomenon, for example, when Frédéric approaches the Arnoux’s place and experiences the
effects of an abounding body: "Frédéric s’arrêta plusieurs fois dans l’escalier, tant son coeur battait fort. Un de ses gants trop juste éclata" (94). With a beating heart and hands too big for his gloves, Frédéric’s body appears materially exorbitant. Rather than having a body that is neatly intact and described in absolute statements, Frédéric’s body is presented in material surplus. Like the bodies on the streets of Paris that are parcelled and, as such, without a fixed and contained identity—"des regards indifférents tombaient sur la foule; des yeux pleins d’envie brillaient au fond des fiacres; des sourires de dénigrement répondaient aux ports de tête orgueilleux; des bouches grandes ouvertes . . ." (271),—Frédéric inhabits a body that is excessive and partitioned.

This sensation of a body in excess is particularly revealing with the portrayal of Roquentin, unable as he is to contain his body, which is overflowing in profusion: "je suis de trop . . . avec trop de chair et la peau trop large à la fois" (245). Alienated from his own body, Roquentin is additionally encumbered by it, not knowing what to do with its excessive presence, its large parts, and saturated components. He would therefore like to flee from his body, which, lacking set boundaries and stability, has trapped him in a feeling of senseless proliferation: "J’ai envie de partir, de m’en aller quelque part où je serais vraiment à ma place, où je m’emboîterais. . . . Mais ma place n’est nulle part; je suis de trop" (174). Like the material world in which Roquentin moves, which is too markedly present, "De trop, le
marronnier. . . . De trop, la Velléda," his own individual existence is
experienced in massive excess:

Et moi--veule, alangui, obscène, digérant, ballottant de
mornes pensées--moi aussi j'étais de trop. . . . Je rêvais
vaguement de me supprimer, pour anéantir au moins une de ces
existences superflues. Mais ma mort même eût été de trop.
De trop . . . j'étais de trop pour l'éternité. (183)

As Stoekl comments, there is a certain ambiance of exorbitance in La
Nausée: "objects, colors, and words in the Nausea always seem to be in
excess, always seem to be 'overflowing' themselves . . . in a kind of
repetitious action of purgation" (3-4), a sense of exorbitance and
accumulation that extends to and includes Roquentin's body.

With such a body that is just materially there, Roquentin feels
his existence to be arbitrary and gratuitous. There is no reason or
justification for his presence; it simply is there in the form of a
body. Perhaps this is why he desperately stabs his hand, in an attempt
to change this feeling of pure physicality and metaphysical nothingness:
"Mon canif est sur la table. Je l'ouvre. Pourquoi pas? De toute
façon, ça changerait un peu. Je pose ma main gauche sur le bloc-notes
et je m'envoie un bon coup de couteau dans la paume" (145). But little
happens as a result of this act. Roquentin remains in a state of
physical excess and superfluity and, in fact, becomes even more
embroiled in this state. Seeping incessantly from his hand, his blood
first becomes a tiny pool, then a spot, and finally a trickle: "Ca
saigne . . . cette petite mare de sang qui a cessé enfin d'être moi.
Quatre lignes sur une feuille blanche, une tache de sang. . . . Je
regarde la petite coulée monotone du sang" (145-46). Copiously

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spreading and leaking from his hand, Roquentin’s blood is yet another reminder of his materiality. Through the metonymic repetition of expressions involving blood, all contiguously related—"Cette technique métonymique de répéter des mots ou des parties de mots ... par moyen de la contiguïté" (Finnegan 152)—Roquentin’s body becomes a site of contagion. While it may be, as Finnegan claims, a poetic contagion, creating an effect of echoes—"Sartre thématise et montre poétiquement les effets contaminants de la proximité" (151)—it is certainly a corporeal contagion. Roquentin experiences his body in a state of material proliferation, one part engendering the discovery of another, and so on, and so forth. It is an agglomeration of parts and pieces, a profusion of flesh and blood, all equally gratuitous, superfluous, and excessive.

Thus, instead of possessing a body with metaphysical dimensions, Roquentin’s bodily experience is one of unjustifiable strangeness and accidental presence: "Tout existant naît sans raison, se prolonge par faiblesse et meurt par rencontre" (190). Metonymy actively contributes to such an experience. Favoring the accidental, the serial, and the unpredictable, metonymy does not lend itself to a justified or explained bodily depiction. It rather exposes what is random and contingent in the body: its materially diverse properties, which are fragmented, corroding, and void of metaphysical meaning. This is precisely the experience that dominates Roquentin’s interaction with his body. Unable to feel it in a profoundly meaningful way, he feels it as something that is just there—and excessively so.
Metonymy overcomes Metaphor

Metonymy, as we have seen, has a subversive and disruptive presence. It grounds the body on earth by denying it an abstract representation and by presenting it as something inescapably immanent: "metonymy articulates a world in which things happen without any touchstones of transcendental meaning" (Schleifer 9). Indeed, it is the metonymic body that proves stronger in these two novels, undermining attempts to bestow upon the body a higher, otherworldly status.

Such an ability on the part of metonymy becomes further apparent under the microscope of certain critics, such as Barbara Johnson, who asserts that "through the mechanical proliferation of its likeness" something can be "rhetorically emptied" out (Critical Difference 32). In La Nausée the empty trope is metaphor (as well as other expressions of metaphoricity), as seen in the following example, where the essentializing "this is that" discourse is found overturned by a syntax that adds almost at random things that Roquentin is compared to: "j'exista comme une pierre, une plante, un microbe" (125). In such instances, there is, in the place of unity, convergence, and correspondence, a certain plurality and arbitrariness. This feeling of haphazardness—that Roquentin exists like a stone, a plant, a microbe, or whatever—is further reinforced by the preceding phrase: "J'étais apparu par hasard" (125). Roquentin lacks a reliable and sturdy identity, seen in his fragmented and partialized body and in the arbitrary proliferation of his likeness to many things. Thus, rather
than being willfully chosen, Roquentin's identity seems randomly and accidentally given. This is supported by Brooke-Rose's assessment of the contiguity axis, which is the axis of metonymy: "Randomness of course belongs to the contiguity axis: out of a potential series you allow chance to select this segment rather than that... In that sense there is a substitution (of chance for will)" (359). Metaphor, in this case, succumbs to enumeration and proliferation, clearing the way for metonymy to take over as the primary trope of the text.

Upon further examination, one even finds moments in La Nausée when Roquentin seems to allude to an inability to establish metaphoric relationships. Like the above quotation, where Roquentin's existence is compared to multiple items, here it is the same, but with the notion of absurdity. That is, he comments on "absurdity," not by giving it a one-to-one correspondence with another term, but instead by equating it with many: "L'absurdité, ce n'était pas une idée dans ma tête, ni un souffle de voix, mais ce long serpent mort à mes pieds, ce serpent de bois. Serpent ou griffe ou racine ou serre de vautour, peu importe" (184). The effect is that the accumulation of terms--"serpent ou griffe ou racine ou serre de vautour"--undermines any attempt at stabilizing the first term--"absurdity"--with another. As a result, the first term is overshadowed by those that randomly follow and a comparison or metaphoric statement is now out of reach. As Reed explains of this process: "what appears to be a comparison is sometimes no more than a substitution: the initial term of the comparison, even when verbally present, may become lost" (67). Like the previous example, it is an
aimless and fortuitous proliferation of terms, making any stable identification impossible.

In Flaubert, we find the same undermining of metaphor, though not through a succession that mechanically proliferates, but through an overwhelming amount of comparative statements that, moreover, are additionally weak and unoriginal. As Steele observes,

Although L’Éducation has almost no metaphors, it is full of comparisons; however, these comparisons are primarily clichés that are limited to a phrase or a sentence. . . . Their frequency, however, shows that language contains endless similarities, though the banality and frequency of these comparisons lead the reader to question their referential force and their signification. (43)

Among Steele’s many examples are the following two: "Comme un architecte qui fait le plan d’un palais, il arrangea, d’avance, sa vie" and "Comme un feuillage emporté par un ouragan, son amour disparu" (quoted in Steele 44). Admittedly, these similes are figuratively mundane, nothing but mere clichés. Furthermore, their regularity in this novel—the fact that there is such a high quantity of similes—leads to their lack of meaningful signification. Void of representational value, these threadbare similes turn into an accumulation of ineffectual words. Thus, when Frédéric uses metaphoric language himself—"Mon coeur, comme de la poussière, se soulevait derrière vos pas" (503)—it is difficult to take him seriously. His speech has no originality or uniqueness, and only reflects the banal expressions of his time.

Roquentin’s metaphoric speech is similarly threatened, as his invasive metonymic outlook weakens his ability to view things in terms of identity and resemblance. Reed’s analysis would seem to support this
claim, for he shows how, during the famous tree root episode, "Roquentin no longer sees the root in terms of its identity, in terms of its relation to and distinctness from other objects, but in terms of its qualities" (42-43). Although Reed does not align "identity" with metaphor and "qualities" with metonymy, one may justifiably do so. As we saw in this study's introductory chapter, metaphor is the trope that creates being and identity, a comparative relationship between two different domains. Metonymy, on the other hand, is the trope of proximity, exploring within one domain certain continuous relationships: "Metonymy involves only one conceptual domain, in that the mapping or connection between two things is within the same domain" (Gibbs 322).

More specifically, the relationship between a thing and its properties or qualities is one type of metonymic relationship: "Metonymy . . . substitutes the token for the type, or a particular instance, property, or characteristic for the general principle or function" (Gibbs 323). That being the case, it is possible to see a certain weariness on the part of Roquentin to impart on the tree root a metaphoric dimension, for he is unable to compare it definitively with something else:

Cette racine, il n'y avait rien par rapport à quoi elle ne fût absurde. Oh! Comment pourrai-je fixer ça avec des mots? Absurde: par rapport aux cailloux, aux touffes d'herbe jaune, à la boue sèche, à l'arbres, au ciel, aux bancs verts. Absurde, irréductible; rien--pas même un délire profond et secret de la nature--ne pouvait l'expliquer. (184)

Roquentin instead enumerates several of the tree's properties--"Cette racine, avec sa couleur, sa forme, son mouvement figé" (185),--describing the tree for its own attributes and thereby denying it a
metaphoric resemblance with something else. Thus, as with the previously examined passages in *La Nausée*, there seems to be an indirect criticism of metaphors, particularly since metonymy often enters the scene replacing identity, unity, and convergence with proximity, contiguity, and fragmentation.

How then do we account for the large number of metaphors in this novel? As many have observed, *La Nausée* is, in many ways, highly metaphoric, which would seem to contradict some of its own assertions. For a novel that grounds human experience in the concrete world verses the transcendent beyond, there are nonetheless many metaphorical expressions. This contradiction is cogently unveiled by Christopher Prendergast in his article "Of stones and stories: Sartre's *La Nausée*:

> For a text whose presuppositions would seem to demand the systematic elimination of metaphor, it is perhaps surprising that *La Nausée* is absolutely saturated in it. What, for example, are we to make of bits of newspaper described as "sedate as swans", or Adolphe's braces possessing a "sheep-like stubbornness"? Is this simply Sartre, as Robbe-Grillet would have it, being unreflectingly guilty of the very anthropomorphism that his own argument would require him to refuse? (57)

Is it possible, as we observed previously, that metaphors do not remain pure metaphors? We saw this using Barbara Johnson’s theory, which argues that a trope can be emptied out by its redundancy and recurrence. It is a perspective that seems supported by Frederic Jameson’s analysis of metaphor in *Sartre: The Origin of a Style*, where he argues that metaphor in Sartre is really a "false" metaphor. By this he means that metaphor is broken apart by its accumulation and
Christopher Prendergast succinctly explains Jameson’s interpretation of Sartrean metaphors:

One rather sophisticated account of Sartre’s metaphors (Frederic Jameson’s) advances the view that Sartrian metaphor is really "false metaphor." By this is meant a process of exaggeration whereby the traditional claims and implications of metaphorical representation are undermined; through the use of hyperbole, willfully exaggerated or excessive metaphorical development, Sartre decomposes metaphor. (67)

Indeed, if we apply this idea to the formerly examined quotation--
"L’absurdité, ce n’était pas une idée dans ma tête, ni un souffle de voix, mais ce long serpent mort à mes pieds, ce serpent de bois. Serpent ou griffe ou racine ou serre de vautour, peu importe" (184)--we see this very decomposition. The passage has an almost auto-destructive quality, where one metaphor replaces another, and so on, and so on, in a movement of successive destruction and endless demolition. This is revealed by Jameson himself in reference to the same passage:

The figures circle around the central reality, each abolishing its predecessor but not more complete than it had been. The succession of autonomous metaphors creates an empty space where the reality they glance off perseveres, unexpressed but outlined. There is no attempt to fix the thing durably in language; language is not supposed to be a total substitute for things, and its whole structure begins to break apart. (105)

Thus, the "traditional claims" of metaphor, which through language assert a resemblance and, as a result, a fixed identity, are overturned in this novel, where a syntax of accumulation is endowed with a subversively deconstructive presence.

With metaphor threatened, metonymy is better positioned to stress an atmosphere of physicality, for what is simultaneously undermined is
metaphor's ability to situate a world beyond, "to speak of what remains absent, toward what transcends language" (Harries 82). In other words, metaphoric surplus leads, ironically, not to the strengthening of the trope, but to its very undoing. We are left with excess on the side of words, excess on the side of syntax, and excess on the side of the material. As Prendergast explains,

metaphorical excess in La Nausé . . . creates the possibility of passing through that excess into direct contact with reality itself; metaphor, undone, gives the occasion for transforming absence into presence . . . we . . . sense the reality of the root as pure physical substance. (68)

Metaphor destroyed leaves us with the physical and the concrete.

However, metaphor is decentered, not only by its uncontrollable proliferation, but also by Roquentin's critique of its deceitful presentation of things. Creating an image of solidarity and otherworldly importance, metaphor often masks the disintegrated and absurd. It likewise presents the contingent as necessary and turns the heterogeneous into the homogenous. Such artistry on the part of metaphoric representation can be seen during Roquentin's visit of the Bouville museum, where he comments on the portraits of elites (to whom Roquentin refers less eloquently as "salauds"). For Roquentin, these portraits have the power of illusion, capable of presenting man in a more favorable light. This distortion can be seen in the portrait of Olivier Blévigne: "le portrait d'Olivier Blévigne me frappa. Défaut de proportions? De perspective?" (121), and similarly in the portrait of Pacôme: "je ne voyais rien en lui de médiocre. . . . Il pouvait avoir cinquante ans: il était jeune et frais comme à trente" (124). Thus,
like metaphors, these portraits take ordinary men and present them as something else: "metaphor presents something as something else. . . . One subject, it might be said, is presented as the second subject, or the ascribing or framing, metaphorically functioning meaning" (Hausman 70). They do not present the human subject for what it actually is, but rather for what one wants it to stand for. As Roquentin explains, "Ce que ces toiles sombres offraient à mes regards, c'était l'homme repensé par l'homme, avec, pour unique parure, la plus belle conquête de l'homme: le bouquet des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen" (132). In this regard, both metaphors and portraits are prefabricated acts, creations realized by man: "metaphors are performative . . . they have the force of acts of generating or bringing something into being" (Hausman 111).

As such, the elites possess a justified and explained existence. They have the right to exist, unlike Roquentin who, by contrast, feels his contingency and superfluity: "Je compris alors tout ce qui nous séparait . . . son jugement me transperçait . . . et mettait en question jusqu'à mon droit d'exister. . . . Ma vie poussait au petit bonheur et dans tous les sens" (124-25). So while a portrait is capable of producing a symbolically grandiose representation of man, one that is fixed and elevated off the ground, Roquentin's existence is unexplained, material, and going in all different directions. But as Roquentin's comments suggest, it is the portraits themselves that command such an authority, metaphorically standing for respect and dignity. Stoekl brings out this view, also finding in the portraits a metaphoric dimension:
It is important to grasp that the power of the jerks, their conversion of contingency into necessity and the "subreption" that allows them to misread contingency as necessity, is dependent on mendacious representation. Their subjectivity and its authority are constituted for them and for others through metaphors or objects that "stand for" their lofty position--such as the portraits themselves. The jerks are nothing but the creation of their portraits; it is the technique of representation that is capable of "creating" the authority and rights of the jerks by dishonestly eliminating all heterogeneous elements. (5-6)

Thus, the portraits, as metaphors, dissimulate all non-homogenous qualities of the elites, concealing what would reveal their human existence: "On les avait peints très exactement; et pourtant, sous le pinceau, leurs visages avaient dépouillé la mystérieuse faiblesse des visages d'hommes. Leurs faces, même les plus veules, étaient nettes comme des faïences" (131-32). To use Sartrean terminology, portraits and metaphors are created in bad faith. As Stoekl's analysis suggests, "Metaphor above all enables us, when we are in bad faith, to lie to ourselves and interpret the incoherent elements of the world as useful and dependable" (10). Perhaps this is why Roquentin criticizes the Autodidacte for elevating man to abstract heights, for perceiving him via symbolic creations: "'Vous voyez bien que vous ne les aimez pas, ces deux-là. . . . Ce ne sont que des symboles, pour vous . . . vous vous attendriez sur la Jeunesse de l'Homme, sur l'Amour de l'Homme et de la Femme, sur la Voix humaine'" (172). In bad faith we invent a justified and abstract existence, and mendaciously escape our more threatening contingent one: "ils ont essayé de surmonter cette contingence en inventant un être nécessaire et cause de soi" (187). Or, by fabricating
in bad faith a metaphoric existence, we escape the menace of our metonymic one.

In Flaubert’s *L’Éducation sentimentale*, we find the same suspicion of metaphoric representation, of overly idealized abstractions made about human beings. As revealed and quoted by Bernheimer,

> inspired moods in which the writer appears to be most creatively original and metaphorically inventive are precisely those he should most rigorously mistrust. They are, Flaubert warned Louise Colet, “masked balls of the imagination from which one returns dead-beat having seen only falsity and uttered stupidities.”

(quoted in Bernheimer, "Flaubert and Kafka" 66-67)

Perhaps this is why characters never remain indefinitely in the realm of fictitious reverie and eventually return to the world of materialization. This certainly seems to be the case if one examines how quickly abstract, metaphoric representation in Flaubert is destabilized by the metonymic. One example of this is during the famous ball scene, where women, on the one hand, are given a sort of metaphorical portrayal, yet on the other hand, are denied this type of representation on a long-term basis. We notice, for instance, that the dancing women are initially described in the form of an abstraction, for what their costumes stand for and represent: "La Polonaise . . . la Suisse . . . la Bacchante . . . La Poissarde . . . " (175).^{10}

Disguised in costumes, these women are metaphorically portrayed, like the portraits at the Bouville museum. Their metaphorical status is particularly revealing for their ability to direct Frédéric’s reverie to other images, to pictures of far-away places:

> ce mouvement giratoire de plus en plus vif et régulier, vertigineux, communiquant à sa pensée une sorte d’ivresse, y...
faisait surgir d'autres images... La Polonaise... lui inspirait l'envie de la tenir contre son coeur, en filant tous les deux dans un traîneau sur une plaine couverte de neige. Des horizons de volupté tranquille, au bord d'un lac, dans un chalet, se déroulaient sous les pas de la Suissesse... la Bacchante... le faisait rêver à des caresses dévoratrices, dans des bois de lauriers-roses, par un temps d'orage, au bruit confus des tambourins. (175)

But this otherworldly representation of the dancing women is not left intact. Already in this same passage, metonymy enters as a threatening presence by presenting the women in fragments: "les pas de la Suissesse... le torse droit et les paupières baissées... la Bacchante... sa tête brune..." (175). The undermining of the metaphorical is in full action only a few pages later when Frédéric recalls these women back into his mind, body part by body part: "il voyait passer et repasser continuellement les épaules de la Poissarde, les reins de la Débardeuse, les mollets de la Polonaise, la chevelure de la Sauvagesse" (183). So while characters can achieve a higher symbolic status in this novel for a short time, they cannot be maintained in that realm. Characters eventually come back down to earth through a process of metonymization. Metonymy thus finishes as the stronger of the two tropes, describing the experience of ourselves and of others as more fragmented than whole.

We have seen that metaphoric representation does indeed appear in both L'Éducation sentimentale and La Nausée; however, its abilities are far from being left untouched. Undermined in instances of mechanical proliferation, metaphor is equally discredited for its deceptively creative powers. It is furthermore not the only nor the most dominating
trope, for it is through metonymy that corporeal existence is described.
Not explained in terms of correspondences, ideals, or abstractions--
"l’existence s’était soudain dévoilée. Elle avait perdu son allure
inoffensive de catégorie abstraite" (La Nausée 182)—existence is
located on the body, and for that matter, on specific anatomic areas.
As we saw in the preceding analysis, Roquentin’s existence is physical,
palpable, and terrifyingly close, to the point of being repulsive and
even obscene: "Je compris qu’il n’y avait pas de milieu entre
l’inexistence et cette abondance pâmée. Si l’on existait, il fallait
exister jusque-là moisissure, à la boursouflure, à l’obscénité" (182).
For that reason, his is not a body that has transcended its materiality,
as something that resembles or is like something else. It is not a body
that experiences upward movement to ideal and symbolic heights. It is a
body, rather, that is completely of this world, a body that, instead of
moving upward, turns regressively inward, discovering and experiencing
the primordial instinct of physical man.

Frédéric likewise is bound by the physical earthiness of the body.
Although he longs for a complete and stable portrait of himself that
will give his presence meaning, purpose, and intention, he is repeatedly
threatened by the menacing fragmentation of his body. At the same time,
therefore, that a metonymic body questions transcendence, absolutes, and
lofty ideals, it asserts one thing as a certainty. Roquentin sums up
this one guarantee: "Je ne possède que mon corps" (99).
Jeanne Bern suggests that the connection between Sartre and Flaubert is substantial. In fact, she believes that La Nausée sheds light on our understanding of L'Éducation sentimentale. See: Clefs pour l'Éducation sentimentale (Chapter One "La Nausée de Flaubert," 9-40).

Bemheimer, in Flaubert and Kafka, seems to recognize a struggle between metaphor and metonymy, which he explains in the context of psychopoetic studies: "Psychopoetic studies, as I conceive them, have as their goal to demonstrate how the structures of Eros and Thanatos, metonymy and metaphor, implicate each other in life as in the text. . . they are actually never observable in what one might call a pure, independent state. The mode of their mutual implication always involves a struggle" (41).

This example is technically a simile; however, as explained in the introductory chapter, similes can be considered a particular form of metaphor and will be considered as such for this study.

Not only is Frédéric's body dispersed and unstable, but the entire atmosphere in the novel is as well. As A. W. Raitt suggests in "The Art of Decharacterization in L'Éducation sentimentale," "the world of L'Éducation sentimentale is essentially elusive, and Flaubert strove to blur, one might even say vaporize, anything that could make it too solid, too tangible" (138). Raitt's discussion, however, is primarily based on the lack of solid characterization in this novel.

Berg also finds a certain clumsiness in Frédéric, an inability to control his own body: "Flaubert paints Frédéric as consistently overwhelmed. . . " See Gustave Flaubert (92)

Many have found La Nausée to be metaphorical. For instance, John Fletcher in "Sartre's Nausea: A Modern Classic Revisited": "Although Nausea points in this direction, it is far from being a collage novel itself. It operates by more traditional methods: by symbolism . . . and by metaphor" (180).

In La Transcendance de l'Ego Sartre discusses the fact that "the ego is not transcendental, it is simply transcendent, an imaginary construct rather than an origin" (Christina Howells, "Flaubert's Blind Spot. The Fetishization of Subjectivity: Some Notes on the Constitution of Gustave in Sartre's L'Idiot de la famille" 29). For Sartre's full discussion see: La Transcendance de L'Ego (26-37).

W. Wolfgang Holdheim, in "The Cogito in Sartre's La Nausée," provides an interesting discussion on whether or not Roquentin truly becomes a disintegrating hero. For Holdheim, this appears debatable: "I think that even in his purely philosophical writings, he cannot rid the transcendental field of a self-generating ego" (192), particularly as Holdheim concludes, "The informed analysis of a sophisticated text like La Nausée, with its unsuccessfully disintegrating hero . . . " (194).

Allan Stoekl, in "The Performance of Nausea," gives an excellent analysis of the Bouville museum scene and the fragmentary power of Roquentin's gaze. He shows, for example, how Roquentin, looking at the portraits, "sees not the mastery of the subject or the symbols of that mastery, but only formless microobjects: 'blind eyes, the thin mouth of a dead snake, and cheeks'; 'vaguely obscene flesh'; 'bones, dead flesh, Pure Right.' Indeed the ultimate idealized sign of the authority of the
subject ('Pure Right') has itself now been materialized, and it is just another contingency, no different, really, from the revolting tree root" (5).

Although not recognizing a metaphoric status in the costumes of the dancing women, A. W. Raitt seems to find, nonetheless, a symbolic representation: "the guests, costumed, made up and masked, do not appear under their own names, but rather under the names of what they represent--the Sphinx, the Fishwife, the Altar Boy, the Medieval Baron, the Angel, the Bacchant, and so forth" ("The Art of Decharacterization in L'Éducation sentimentale" 131)
As we saw in the previous chapter, metonymy can potentially dissolve the human subject into mere bodily material, leaving it scattered, dispersed, and shredded—irreparable to the metaphoric eye that seeks unity and identity. It is a partialization that, when taken to extremes, reifies the body by turning it into a material and concrete thing. This chapter attempts to explore what happens when metonymy turns the human subject into a thing, a thing that, while not exactly human, leaves traces nonetheless of a body, as it pulsates, breathes, and moves across the pages of a text. Such a process is similarly observed in both Flaubert and Ponge.

While metonymy’s active presence in Flaubert’s novels is acknowledged by critics (as demonstrated in the preceding chapters), in Ponge’s work, the trope’s activity receives less attention. Many critics find metaphor to be the dominant rhetorical device, fueled, to
be sure, by the overwhelming quantity of them in his poetry. Sorrel explains this effect: "Critics, particularly Sartre, Higgins, Oxenhandler, and Wider, agree that metaphor is a cornerstone of Ponge’s poetic method" (106). A survey of Ponge’s work confirms this commonly held view. Metaphor is pervasive. Among its many appearances, the trope is employed to create a resemblance between meat and factories--"Chaque morceau de viande est une sorte d’usine"--("Le Morceau de viande" PPC 64), and between a frog and an amphibious dwarf--"Lorsque la pluie en courtes aiguillettes rebondit . . . une naine amphibie, une Ophélie . . . jaillit parfois sous les pas du poète" ("La Grenouille" P 54).1 Thus, by finding a similarity between two disparate objects (meat and factories, frogs and dwarfs), metaphor creates a correspondence. At least this is what these two metaphors appear to do when taken out of context, illustrative, it would seem, of the traditional definition of metaphor outlined in this study’s introductory chapter.

However, as we shall soon see, metaphor in Ponge is not always used to create similarities or to fix identities. It is often employed in an original way, proliferating and overflowing to such an extent that not only does it disrupt the ways we traditionally perceive objects, but also the ways we traditionally view metaphor. So while metaphor is a pervasive poetic device in Ponge, this chapter will argue that its totalizing and essentializing traits are often undone by the poet himself, who opens up the playing field of his texts, and in the process exposes metaphor to metonymy’s subversive activity.
This view is supported by passages in Ponge's work in which the poet expresses a dislike for singular, all-encompassing modes of expression, which, according to the definitions outlined in this study's introduction, would be the realm of metaphor. For instance, at the expense of totality and identity, Ponge, in "Réflexions en lisant 'L'essai sur l'absurde,'" expresses a certain partiality for the diverse and different: "'Nostalgie de l'Unité,' dites-vous... Non: de la variété" (Pr 199). Several critics, moreover, recognize this disdain. Farasse, in "La Métaphore traversée," says, "A vrai dire, il y a une répugnance de Ponge pour la métaphore. Ses textes sont des textes de la différence et non textes du semblable" (72). In addition to Farasse, (who, as we shall later see, makes an excellent case for the argument that Ponge is critical of metaphoric language), Higgins notices a hesitation to use absolute expressions and finds in their place "repetition" and "variants" ("Francis Ponge" 55). Leclair likewise acknowledges "une esthétique du discontinu" (84), as does Gleize, who finds an opposition to analogy: "c'est lui qui anime sa recherche de la 'qualité différentielle,' c'est-à-dire la recherche de la situation et de la définition relatives de chaque chose, à l'opposé d'un analogisme tendant à l'unification" (51). Sorrel's comments also support the notion that Ponge is skeptical about totalizing language: "Ponge tends to refuse, in theory at least, analogical language" (53). And in his introduction to The Power of Language, Gavronsky finds that Ponge's use of metaphor is done with utmost caution: "Ponge exercises great prudence
when he uses analogies or metaphors since such rhetorical figures tend
to define by restriction" (18).

As we see, therefore, many critics agree that Ponge is suspicious
of metaphoric representation. While critics such as these do not state
explicitly that metonymy is often lurking behind instances of anti-
metaphorical, repetitive, varied, and discontinuous poetry in Ponge,
this chapter will attempt to reveal that it is. It will argue that, by
undermining metaphor (through proliferation and unconventional use),
Ponge's poetry conversely elevates metonymy, frequently allowing this
trope to finish as the stronger. It will likewise show metonymy's
active role in presenting the Pongean body, which, not described in its
totality and never finding a permanent resting place, is poetically
investigated by the poet, who uncovers its rich divergency and boundless
interactions with the world of things and intimates to his readers, in
the final analysis, that the body is also a thing.

Since, in many ways, a body is already a thing, it would be
helpful to first define what is meant by a thing in the context of this
chapter. Among the many definitions under "thing" in Webster's Ninth
New Collegiate Dictionary is the following: "an inanimate object
distinguished from a living being" (1226). Accordingly, when the body
is presented as a thing in Ponge's works, it is presented for its
physicality, as inert and nonliving matter. So while the human body can
be viewed both as a material, inanimate thing and as a breathing, vital
entity, it becomes more the former than the latter when depicted
metonymically. As seen in previous chapters, metonymy emphasizes the
concrete and the palpable, disregarding in the process metaphysical and transcendent possibilities. Thus, when used to present the body, and if taken to playful extremes, metonymy can transform a body, with otherwise nonmaterial and abstract potential, into a thing: a thing that is inanimate, material, and reified.

There are many ways in which metonymy can turn the body into a thing. One of these is the result of a text’s infinite descriptive game, which finds countless ways of describing the body, thereby depriving it of any recognizable detail. Such a process consequently undermines the possibility of higher, metaphoric signification: "the level of material detail . . . challenges the notion that literary writing ought to strive for metaphoric resonance" (Warhol 84). This was seen in the preceding chapter, where the proliferation of the body’s likeness to things reduced the validity of the comparison, giving the body a certain "nonunified, heterogeneous plurality" (Johnson, Critical Difference 32). Such proliferation, prohibiting as it does the emergence of a unifying structure of the human being, relegates body parts to the status of things—to the status of the concrete and material world. This transformation of the body to the status of things is implicit in Sartre’s famous 1944 article on Ponge, in which he asserts that the poet not only "petrifies" human beings, but turns them into des choses. As he first says in reference to the two poems, "Le gymnaste" et "La jeune mère," "Voilà donc une mère de famille et un trapéziste pétrifiés. Ce sont des choses," and later on in a more general manner, "il prend les hommes délibérément pour des choses . . .

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il y a déshumanisation, poussée jusqu’aux sentiments, de l’homme" (Situations I: 255-56, 269). While Sartre appears very confident in his reading of Ponge, others, such as Robert Greene, believe that Sartre has a "blind spot" and misreads Ponge: "What is so astonishing about Sartre’s 'nécrologique' reading of Ponge is that it runs exactly counter to what is perhaps the central image in Ponge’s œuvre, that of birth" (69). Ponge’s *choisisme* is "methodological" says Greene; his proclivity to write about the material world is ultimately a way to explore language and its relationship to objects--an activity that has nothing to do with petrifaction or with "repose", but with animation and creation.

Sartre indeed finds in Ponge a tendency to dehumanize his human subjects when he chooses to write about them at all. The present chapter, on the other hand, attempts to explore this fragmentation of the human being in Ponge’s poetry as part of the poet’s larger project to abandon absolutes (Sorrell 103), metaphoric and totalized portraits of the body being one of those absolutes. Ponge, like Flaubert, encourages his reader to experience the body’s relative, concrete, and plural aspects, as opposed to its universal, abstract, and unified elements. This notion is supported by Higgins’ interpretation of Ponge’s sparse treatment of humans, arguing in his article, "Against Petrifaction: Ponge’s 'Baptême Funèbre,'" that the poet is merely avoiding the trap of essentialism:

Direct description of human emotion or activity of any kind runs the risk of essentialism. Because any human phenomenon is so complicated and full of implications, one risks taking the easy way out and picking one of the absurdly limited number of words which denote emotions, motives, character,
and so on, which are quite inadequate to convey the precise individuality of oneself or of anyone else. Hence what Ponge calls le parti pris des choses, the determination to write about things rather than people. (818)

Thus, it is possible to consider Ponge’s metonymization of the body not as a way of obliterating the human subject altogether, but as a way of presenting the human subject in physical and concrete terms. The human subject, turned into a thing, encourages reflection about the general human experience here on earth, including the rich intricacies of the body and the body’s relationship to the world of things. Instead of making metaphysical statements about the human subject’s place in the realm of the beyond, Ponge, like Flaubert, employs metonymy to make statements about the human subject’s place in the here-and-now. By describing the human subject metonymically--according to the relative concepts of time, space, and the world of things--both authors, Flaubert and Ponge, attempt a different articulation of the human subject: one that, rather than being universal and all-encompassing, is dependent on the relational, the contiguous, and the present.

From Mustaches to Feet

Tout me semble fragment de masque, fragment d’habitude, fragment du commun. --Ponge
("Fragments du masque" Pr 150)

More often than not, critical debate on Ponge seems to center around his treatment of objects, which is certainly provoked by the title of his acclaimed work, Le Parti pris des choses. However, and irregardless of the title (which declares that the poet takes the side
of things), this does not mean that the human subject is completely absent from Ponge’s work. A large number of critics acknowledge human presence. Minahen envisions how the poet speaking in the poem, "takes the side of a thing by lending it his own subjectivity" (237). Higgins, in Francis Ponge, recognizes that, despite the absence of "je", man is present insofar as he relates to "the presentation of things" (34). And Virginia La Charité’s article, "Exchange of Voices," sees a "humanization of the material world of things," particularly in the poem, "La Fabrique du pré" (23). A study of objects, therefore, does not preclude a study of the human; in fact, one can be a way of illuminating the other. This is implied by Lavorel’s comments, "si Francis Ponge prend le parti des choses, pourquoi consacrer plusieurs pages à l’homme? Et parler des choses, n’est-ce pas aussi évoquer l’homme?" (46).

So while the human subject is manifest in the purported objectivity of Ponge’s work, it is important to explore how it is so: with the assistance of the trope metonymy. We rarely perceive the human subject as a complete and unified entity, with transcendent potential, but as something physical—a collection of body parts: "malgré nos pieds un peu froids ... nos muscles un peu gourds, mais la peau, les poumons, le foie et le cerveau nettoyés" ("Une demi-journée" P 53-54). As we shall see, Ponge’s poetic conceptualization of the human subject is by way of its multifaceted and heterogeneous parts. Thus, despite the looming presence of objects in Ponge’s work, and despite the poet’s assertion in "Notes Premières de 'l’homme'" that he is not interested in
describing the human body--"L'homme n'a aucune curiosité, ni aucun amour de son corps, de ses parties. Au contraire il montre une assez étrange indifférence à leur égard" (Pr 209-11)--it is an undeniable and unquestionable presence, albeit in dispersed fragments and parts.

If asked about the poet's mention of the human subject, readers familiar with Ponge's poetry would most likely name the poem "Le gymnaste." They might also mention the fact that the human subject in this poem does not remain such for long, but is progressively segmented, departing from its initial portrait. Indeed, metonymy's activity is particularly apparent in this poem, where the body is left bereft of its metaphoric potential to become pure matter, passing from a state of totality to a state of partitions. Thus, instead of viewing the gymnast as an intact unity, we view him for specific body parts, with metonymy aggressively at work reducing our vision: "metonymy . . . allows us to focus more specifically on certain aspects of what is being referred to" (Lakoff, Metaphors We Live By 37).

At the outset of the poem, one envisions a gymnast in his entirety, the definite article in the poem's title, which gives it a generic referent, alluding to an abstract and universal conception of the gymnast: "Le gymnaste." As Minahen explains of titles in Ponge, "Signifying in the title a common object with the definite article is so typical as to be almost conventional in Ponge . . . the emphasis is ultimately upon its universality" (235). However, this image is soon thwarted once the poem commences, dismembering the athlete and strewing his body parts from one line to the next:
Among the many body parts we encounter are the gymnast's goatee, his mustache, his fat spit curl on his low brow, his crotch, and his feet.

In addition to such explicit partialization of the gymnast, his body is further segmented by the letters that comprise his title. "G" comes to represent the face of the gymnast, while "Y" comes to represent his body, each letter a metonym--a part--of the entire word "gymnast." In this way, we catch glimpses of the body as it is visually and graphically written on the page. So although we are not given a portrait of the body in its totality, we are nonetheless able phonetically and visually to sense its fragmented presence: "the gymnast, is anatomically similar to the letters of his name . . . the distinctive features . . . rendered in the graphic image rather than the aural image" (Preckshot 326). Metonymy, in this regard, is an active rhetorical device, scattering the gymnast, body part by body part and letter by letter. As Virginia La Charité points out about Ponge’s poetic process, "Ponge suppresses the whole in order to show the parts" ("Exchange of Voices" 19).

In the poem, "La danseuse," we find the same corporeal partialization, which undoes any attempt at unity created momentarily by the title. This is particularly apparent in the second paragraph of the poem, where one finds a metonymization process, evoking the dancer via objects that are related to her and via body components that are a part
of her. For example, the dancer is presented not only by way of her dress, "D'âme égoïste en un corps éperdu, les choses à son avis tournent bien quand sa robe tourne en tulipe et tout le reste en désordre," but also by way of her skeleton and skin: "Elle s’arrête alors: au squelette immobile la jeune chair se rajuste aussitôt." The dancer is additionally referred to by her mouth full of hair and lips: "Elle a pleine la bouche de cheveux qui s’en tireront doucement par la commissure des lèvres." Finally, she is alluded to via her eyes, which are further personified as the subject of the sentence: "Mais les yeux ne retinteront qu’après s’être vingt fois jetés aux bords adverses" (P 52). Thus, like the athlete in "Le gymnaste," the athlete in "La danseuse" is stripped of the initial totality she was given in the title. Metonymized, the dancer becomes an assembly of objects and body parts.

Metonymy has a similar function in the poem "La jeune mère," where it presents the body not according to its metaphysical qualities, but according to its many components, which are visible, concrete, and plentiful. Leclair, while not explicitly talking about the human subject, brings out this aspect of Ponge’s poetic process: "En plaçant l’objet au centre . . . Ponge prend le parti du petit, du concret, du visible, contre les grandes idées, les systèmes philosophiques et métaphysiques" (123). A penchant for the tangible and the material aptly describes Ponge’s depiction of the human subject. For instance, although the poem "La jeune mère" starts out suggesting an entire woman, by its title and by its first mention of the subject, "la femme," the
poem quickly transforms the woman ("Quelques jours après les couches la 
beauté de la femme se transforme") into an array of regions and limbs:

Le visage souvent penché sur la poitrine s’allonge un peu. 
Les yeux attentivement baissés sur un objet proche, s’ils se 
relèvent parfois paraissent un peu égarés. Ils montrent un 
regard empli de confiance, mais en sollicitant la 
continuité. Les bras et les mains s’incurvent et se 
renforcent. Les jambes qui ont beaucoup maigri et se sont 
affaiblies sont volontiers assises, les genoux très 
remontés. Le ventre ballonné, livide, encore très sensible; 
le bas-ventre s’accommode du repos, de la nuit des draps. 

We are thus encouraged to consider the body of a young mother, not in 
terms of what she symbolically represents, nor in terms of her 
resemblance to other things, but in terms of her body’s physical 
properties. There are no correspondences with other worlds (which one 
finds in metaphor), only one, unique domain--the body--which Ponge takes 
upon himself to explore. We are accordingly afforded a view of this 
woman from the perspective of her body’s parts, which, distinct and 
particular, are worthy of Ponge’s playful poetic investigation. As 
Evrard explains of the metonymic: "cette fonction métonymique par 
laquelle l’objet singulier devient un lieu d’ouverture sur le monde, une 
brèche donnant sur le cosmos" (33). Metonymy’s excessive presence in 
the young mother’s bodily description alludes less to something outside, 
i.e., the whole person, but is self-referential, referring merely to the 
part. As a result, one becomes less conscious of the whole person--the 
mother--and more aware of her variously described body parts, each 
endowed with their own personality.

Such attention directed to the part is likewise observable in the 
poem, "Fabri ou le jeune ouvrier," where the subject is first identified
by his name, "Fabri porte une chemise lilas," only to become dismembered by the metonymic description that follows: "dont le col échancré, le torse et les manches collantes l’enserrent sans trop de rigueur. Le front nu, sur ses tempes très fraîches et très polies s’applique une ondulation de cheveux rejetés en arrière" (P 47). So while we are initially cognizant of the owner of these body parts, we quickly lose sight of him and focus on the detailing of his anatomy, which is still growing: "Il grandit encore beaucoup." Thus, what becomes important in this poem is the corporeal dimension of this young man, achieved by the reduced view of him and of what he is carrying: "Il porte à la main droite un petit galet gris et un éclat de brique rose, à la gauche un cabochon d’anthracite, serti de la façon la plus soigneuse dans un anneau de bois blanc". It is a focused view of Fabri, our eyes steered to body parts, "à la main droite . . . à la gauche," emphasizing, in turn, his social role as a physical worker. Once again, the identification of the human subject achieved at the outset of the poem is subverted by metonymic dissection. Lost is the possibility of oneness and uniqueness of being, with nameless body parts at work instead. Fabri is transformed into an anonymous worker: "il se mêle à la foule, et se transforme bientôt en l’un quelconque des travailleurs" (P 48).

These examples further demonstrate that, rather than presenting the body through the use of a "this-is-that" metaphoric discourse, constructing an image of the body that is fixed and absolute, certain Pongean poems construct an image of the body that is dynamic, ever-
changing, and capable of endless exploration. Metonymy, in this regard, allows Ponge to play with language and the presentation of his subject. As Marc Bonhomme explains of the trope, "plutôt que d'être un produit fini, la métonymie fonctionne comme un processus en train de se réaliser" ("Rhétorique ludique et métonymie chez Queneau" 48). Rightly so, the body in Ponge is rarely a finished product, but presented little by little and part by part, an elaborate entity worthy of poetic penetration. Starting off whole by its first mention in the title, the body is progressively dismantled. Furthermore, the body is presented in contiguous and proximate terms, terms that, while referring to the absent referent (the body), are substituted for it, indefinitely forestalling identity and deferring descriptive closure.

In Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale*, we find this same excessive reference to parts, which challenges any stabilization of the human subject and undermines attempts to complete its portrayal. Numerous examples of this were examined in previous chapters on Céline and Sartre, and here we find similarities with Ponge. For example, the following description of Monsieur Dambreuse first presents him as an intact and whole subject, yet metonymically dismembers him quickly thereafter. In other words, the illusion afforded by the distance from which Monsieur Dambreuse is first viewed--"De loin"--serves to grant him, at the outset of the passage, an abstract characteristic: "il pouvait sembler jeune." More importantly, from a distance Mme Dambreuse is viewed according to his "taille," and as such is conceived as a whole image. For a brief instant, under the distorting effects of distance,
Monsieur Dambreuse is cohesively described. However, this completeness is a mirage, as the narrator points out with the forewarning "mais." What follows is a description of Monsieur Dambreuse from close-up, revealing disfavorably his body's dilapidating features:

De loin, à cause de sa taille mince, il pouvait sembler jeune encore. Mais ses rares cheveux blancs, ses membres débiles et surtout la pâleur extraordinaire de son visage, accusaient un tempérament délabré. Une énergie impitoyable reposait dans ses yeux glauques, plus froids que des yeux de verre. Il avait les pommettes saillantes, et des mains à articulations noueuses. (67)

And although the comparative statement identifies his eyes as colder than eyes of glass, the comparison is a weak one, involving only one semantic domain. In this sense, Monsieur Dambreuse does not transcend the immanent presence of his body, but is bound to its aging and disintegrating parts. Metonymy overturns the unifying illusion created by distance and presents the body close-up, in detail, and in fragments.

Thus, as the rest of this chapter will demonstrate, metonymy assists both Flaubert and Ponge in their presentation of the human body, not as a homogeneous entity, but as something heterogeneous and variegated. Furthermore, instead of suggesting that the human body is an intact, mysterious whole, these authors open the body up to textual investigation. With metonymy, Flaubert and Ponge challenge the idea that the human body is an impenetrable totality, but rather compartmentalized and displaced--and endlessly so. Both authors throw into question absolute and overly idyllic portrayals of the human subject and offer descriptions instead that are concrete and of this world.
**Metonymy and Metaphor Side by Side**

J'étais, dans la variété de mon être, comme une immense forêt de l'Inde, où la vie palpite dans chaque atome.  
--Flaubert (Novembre 396)

La variété des choses est en réalité ce qui me construit. 
--Ponge (Méthodes 12)

While metonymy may assist Flaubert and Ponge in the presentation of the human subject, it is not the only trope at work in this process. In Ponge's poetry, for example, one notices how often metonymy co-exists with metaphoric expressions, as in "Le gymnaste" where, immediately following a metonymic enumeration of the athlete's body parts, there is a simile that compares him to a worm: "Puis du chef de son corps pris dans la corde à noeuds il interroge l'air comme un ver de sa motte," and another that compares him to a caterpillar: "Pour finir il choit parfois des cintres comme une chenille" (PPC 65). Metonymy, it seems, is accompanied by other rhetorical devices.

Similarly, in "La danseuse," we find instances of metaphoric representation. There is an initial comparison between the dancer and ostrich: "Inaptitude au vol, gigots courts emplumés: tout ce qui rend une autruche gênée la danseuse toujours en pleine visibilité s'en fait gloire," and another that asserts a resemblance between her eyes and bells on hats: "Mais les yeux ne retinteront qu'après s'être vingt fois jetés aux bords adverses comme les grelots du capuchon des folies"
Thus, metonymy in these two cases is not alone in its portrayal of the human subject, but is assisted by metaphor, long-considered its counterpart.

Indeed, just as with certain passages from Flaubert, Céline, and Sartre, certain prose poems by Ponge exhibit a struggle between the metaphoric and the metonymic. As we saw, "Le gymnaste" presents us with a unified image of the athlete, with something stable that he can be compared to and which serves to give him an identity (although not the most flattering)--"comme un ver de sa motte . . . comme une chenille." Yet at the same time, the poem gives way to a back-and-forth movement between totalization and partialization, the latter often undermining the former. In other words, immediately after the simile, "comme une chenille," which provides us with a fixed image of the gymnast, the fragmented body resurfaces to destabilize this semblance and to reduce the gymnast back down to his body parts: "mais rebondit sur pieds." So while there are attempts at establishing metaphoric resemblance between the gymnast and other worlds (the world of animals), metonymy weakens this likeness and reminds us that this athlete is a mere mass of body parts.

We find a similar oscillation between the metaphoric and the metonymic in "L'adolescente." In this poem the adolescent is first described for the resemblance of her knees to a car: "Comme une voiture bien attelée tu as les genoux polis"; however, the accumulation of terms that follow prevents a definite stabilization: "tu as les genoux polis, la taille fine; le buste en arrière," and the comparison gives way to
Moreover, the initial comparison that asserts a resemblance between the adolescent's knees and a car finishes in a second one, "Comme une voiture bien attelée tu as les genoux polis, la taille fine; le buste en arrière comme le cocher du cab" (P 11), creating a metaphor-metonymy-metaphor arrangement. Metonymy, in this case, literally interrupts and degrades the initial metaphor ("une voiture bien attelée"), and turns it into an ordinary "cab." Thus, with one comparative statement flowing into another, metaphor's tendency to create a fixed identity out of a posited resemblance is overturned. The playful composition of similes, one engendering another, diminishes their seriousness and rhetorical effectiveness. Ferasse comments on this aspect of Ponge's poetry: "Faire des métaphores, oui, mais aussitôt les détruire en les multipliant ou en les poussant si loin qu'elles en deviennent absurdes, qu'elles grincent" (77). Metaphoric expression in "L'adolescente" finishes in playful enumeration.

In a like manner, if we return to the poem, "La jeune mère," we notice a tension between a unified and partialized portrayal of the young mother. That is, following the metonymization of the young mother's body in the main section of the poem, the final paragraph seems to challenge this fragmentation by attempting bodily integration: "Mais bientôt sur pieds, tout ce grand corps." Indeed, the "tout" (though not a metaphor) gathers the mother's dispersed body parts, and assembles them to form a whole body. Leclair also points out this turn in the poem: "la jeune mère est d'abord observée analytiquement, chaque phrase s'ouvrant sur une nouvelle partie de son corps ('le visage', 'les yeux',

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'les bras et les jambes', 'le ventre'. . .) avant d'être recomposée dans la phrase finale: 'tout ce grand corps'"(116). The body of this young mother thus emerges as something recognizable, admits the corporeal chaos and confusion of the preceding paragraph. We now find before us an intact and complete human subject and can identify this subject as the young mother of the poem's title. Yet, as we saw in "L'adolescente" one cannot be too certain in Ponge of the direction of his poems. Indeed, the totalized portrayal of the young mother does not last for long, her unification threatened by the poem's ending--by a singular hand that juts out to perform movements associated with laundry:

Mais bientôt sur pieds, tout ce grand corps évolue à l'étroit parmi le pavois utile à toutes hauteurs des carrés blancs du linge, que parfois de sa main libre il saisit, froisse, tâte avec sagacité, pour les retendre ou les plier ensuite selon les résultats de cet examen. (PPC 66)

While briefly attempting to achieve a certain body totality, the young mother finishes in pieces and parts, the poem ending, once and for all, in a metonym.

This movement between polarities is also present in Flaubert, the metonymic and the metaphoric often alternating in the very same passage. A description of Mme Dambreuse illustrates this oscillation, as Frédéric's vision of her encompasses both analogous imagery and material partialization:

Frédéric l'observait. La peau mate de son visage paraissait tendue, et d'une fraîcheur sans éclat, comme celle d'un fruit conservé. Mais ses cheveux, tirebouchonnés à l'anglaise, étaient plus fins que de la soie, ses yeux d'un azur brillant, tous ses gestes délicats. Assise au fond, sur la causeuse, elle caressait les floches rouges d'un écran japonais, pour faire valoir ses mains, sans doute, de longues mains étroites, un peu maigres, avec des doigts
We notice how Frédéric starts off concentrating on Mme Dambreuse's matte skin, which, stretched over her face, seems to him like a preserved fruit. Metonymy, in this example, ends in a simile. Frédéric then goes on to detail Mme Dambreuse in more parts—her hair, her eyes, her gestures, her hands, her fingers, and her dress—in a series of metonyms all contiguously related to her. But metonymy in this passage does not appear to have the final say. In the last descriptive statement everything culminates in a simile, asserting a resemblance between Mme Dambreuse and a puritan. However, this ending is somewhat misleading, for a unified portrait of Mme Dambreuse does not dominate descriptions of her in the remainder of the novel. Later in the same chapter, metonymy re-enters in her portrayal to present her according to her body parts: "il la trouvait charmante, malgré sa bouche un peu longue et ses narines trop ouvertes" (219). So while at certain moments the text compares characters to other figures, lending them, in the process, an identity that is whole, it keeps metonymy in the shadows, and never far from sight. Metonymy often reappears in a rotation with metaphoric expressions, rooting character portrayals in the material and concrete world and thereby offering a perspective of them that is immediate and tangible.

It is thus possible to say that, in addition to subverting metaphoric discourse, metonymy serves to test its pretensions. We have explored this possibility in previous chapters, finding between the two tropes an interrelationship. In the example of Mme Dambreuse, metonymy
gives concrete and verifiable examples of the statement comparing her to a puritan. By detailing her black dress and long neck, the author provides a visualization that is material and palpable, giving content and tangible form to the metaphoric abstraction.

This interplay between the two tropes is further detected in a description of Mme Arnoux. Although first presented in an otherworldly and comparative statement—"Maintenant, sans doute, elle reposait, tranquille comme une fleur endormie"—she is immediately afterwards presented in a metonymic one: "avec ses beaux cheveux noirs parmi les dentelles de l'oreiller, les lèvres entre-closes, la tête sur un bras" (128). In other words, the metaphoric expression suggests that the resting Mme Arnoux is like a sleeping flower, but metonymy must enter the description to give this abstract statement a concrete example. Metonymy presents her hair, her lips, her head, and her arm, deflating the idealized, personified pretensions of the flower metaphor, and anchoring it in the corporeal. Here metonymy concretizes the description; it brings the idealizing metaphor back down to earth and resituates it in the real.

Thus, metaphor and metonymy are often intertwining tropes. At times, metonymy keeps in check the hyperbolic and totalizing tendencies of metaphor. At other times, metonymy even proves more powerful, weakening metaphor's rhetorical strength. While in Flaubert and Ponge both scenarios assert their presence, the latter is especially noticeable, putting metonymy many times in the favored position. As the next section will attempt to demonstrate, metonymy's seemingly
privileged position is due, not only to its consistent appearance in the works of these two authors, but also to an original employment of metaphor that, accumulated and qualified, impairs its own totalizing claims.

Metaphor Undone

Concernant l’analogie, je dirai que son rôle est important dans la mesure où une nouvelle image annule l’imagerie ancienne, fait sortir du manège et prendre la tangente.
--Ponge (Méthodes 295)

Je me prive de métaphores, je jeûne de comparaisons et dégueule fort peu de psychologie.
--Flaubert (Correspondance IV, 72)

While both Flaubert and Ponge do use analogical description, (Ponge’s poetry is, in many ways, pervaded by it), their work does not celebrate it or leave it untouched. Rather, one can find a playful attitude toward metaphoricity, to the point that, at times, one finds it effaced and exposed to metonymy’s subversive potential, which fragments and partializes the descriptive world, including the human body.

This is particularly noticeable in Ponge’s use of metaphoric expressions. He does not use the trope to fix identities or create coherence, but instead overuses and dramatizes it to emphasize infinite plurality and difference of being. For instance, when the poet makes a comparative statement, it is not surprising to find it accompanied by an ‘à la fois’ expression. This insinuates to the reader not the unifying qualities of the described object, but its heterogeneous nature--the
fact that it should not be exclusively limited to a one-to-one comparison. This can be seen in the poem "Le feu": "L'on ne peut comparer la marche du feu qu'à celle des animaux: il faut qu'il quitte un endroit pour en occuper un autre; il marche à la fois comme une amibe et comme une girafe, bondit du col, rampe du pied" (PPC 47). Fire is not only an amoeba for Ponge, but a giraffe as well. As Higgins reveals about this poem, and more generally about Ponge's use of analogy,

he apprehends fire by introducing and juxtaposing conflicting qualities. . . . The phrase à la fois is very common in Ponge's work, typifying the dialectical tension, found in all his texts . . .--all different forms of analogy as negation. ("Francis Ponge" 50)

We find a similar use of metaphoric expression in "Première ébauche d'une main," where the poet describes the hand in a series of comparative statements, two of which are qualified by an 'à la fois' expression: "A la fois marionnette et cheval de labour" (P 118). These examples question metaphor's long-supposed ability to create a union between two dissimilar entities ("discussions of metaphor have rightly stressed its power to connect, associate, and gather together . . . a force tending towards unity" Harries 72), and demonstrate how Ponge uses the trope to create plurality and multiplicity. This is supported by Virginia La Charité's more general comments about Ponge's poetry: "Ponge contradicts likenesses and similarities, underlining plurality and multiplicity" ("Exchange of Voices" 19).

Ponge's original use of metaphoric expression to demonstrate the rich variety of being and of things is additionally seen in the poem "La Barque." Minahen points out how the tropes in this poem "turn attention
away from the object," as "the poet points to things that are like it but not it" (236). Indeed, this poem refuses to give to the barque a stable referent, but accumulates items to which it can be likened. Here, the first analogy that compares the barque with a young horse is succeeded by another, which compares it to a hand:

La barque tire sur la longe, hoche le corps d’un pied sur l’autre, inquiète et têtue comme un jeune cheval. Ce n’est pourtant qu’un assez grossier réceptacle, une cuiller de bois sans manche: mais, creusée et cintrée pour permettre une direction du pilote, elle semble avoir son idée, comme une main faisant le signe coucicouca. (P 45)

In this case, metaphoric representation does not lend itself to unification, but to diversification, exposing the multi-dimensional qualities of the barque and its resistance to essentialism and one-word definitions.

In "La crevette dans tous les états" metaphoric expression also brings to light multivariedness by opening the shrimp up to endless and infinite description. The title itself hints at this intention, suggesting to the reader a desire to know shrimp in its plurality. It follows that the shrimp is presented as all possible things, as a little finger, as a flask, as a trinket, and so on:

Arqué comme un petit doigt connaisseur, flacon, bibelot translucide, capricieuse nef qui tient du capricorne, châssis vitreux gréé d’une antenne hypersensible et pleine d’égards, salle des fêtes, des glaces, sanatorium, ascenseur,--arqué, capon, à l’abdomen vitreux, habillée d’une robe à traîne terminée par des palettes ou basques poilues--il procède par bonds. (P 15)

Moreover, the poet addresses the shrimp himself, saying he will compare it “d’abord à la chenille, au ver agile et lustré, puis aux possions”
Not concerned about fixing a reliable identity for the shrimp, the poet exposes its profuseness and innumerable comparative relationships with other creatures, and underscores its varied resemblance to shapes and forms in the world: "La crevette ressemble à certaines hallucinations bénignes de la vue, à forme de bâtonnets, de virgules, d'autres signes aussi simples" (P 19).

Thus, Pongean metaphor, as we see, often involves a seemingly infinite accumulation of terms. As Lavoral comments about the poem "Les hirondelles," "la métaphore peut être enchaînée. . . . C'est ainsi que les hirondelles sont présentées d'abord comme des 'flèches,' puis comme des 'flammes'" (155). Indeed, it is rare in Ponge that a singular metaphor should appear all by itself; his poetry proliferates them, one succeeding, replacing, and out-doing another, in an endless chain of words. Everman further explains this phenomenon in Ponge's poetic technique:

Ponge's infinite text—impossible to complete—is impossible to begin. . . . The text is a chain—an endless chain—of attempts to break in upon itself, to force entry into the seamless text that has neither beginning nor ending, that in fact has no points of entry precisely because there is nothing outside itself. (28)

In this regard, metaphor is one device, among the many employed by Ponge, which exposes the diversity of the universe and subsequent impossibility of fixing it definitively in words. Rather than preserving the traditional role of the trope, which by comparing one domain with another creates a similarity ("Metaphor creates similarity" Gibbs 233), Ponge denies such an exclusive resemblance. Pongean metaphor does not cut off or limit ("The tendency in metaphor is towards
closure, encircling, drawing boundaries" MacCannell 97), but gives way to difference. As Ponge himself says, "Quand j'aurai dit qu'un rosier ressemble à un coq de combat, je n'aurai pourtant pas exprimé ce qui est plus important que cette analogie, la qualité différentielle de l'un et de l'autre" (Méthodes 296). Thus, Ponge, in a way, uses metaphor metonymically. The metaphorical parts that comprise each poem attempt to add up to kind of "meta-metaphor," a metaphor that remains unnamed and forever unnamable. The insinuation is that the single identity of a thing is impossible; only multiple, plural, and partial truths are viable.

In addition to refusing to bestow upon his object of study a one-word correspondence, Ponge sometimes reformulates or reverses well-known metaphors and challenges the process by which viewpoints of things are often shaped by absolute language. Patrick Meadows cleverly finds in "Pages bis" an instance of this latter occurrence, as the poet dismantles a traditional sky metaphor:

In order to reverse the ancient, idealistic metaphor of the sky, which expresses the inferior materiality of earth in relation to the heavens, in his Proèmes, Ponge ironically transforms the expression "ici-bas" into "ici-haut," thereby communicating his opposition to the world-view and ethics that it suggests: "Fraternité et bonheur (ou plutôt joie virile): voilà le seul ciel où j'aspire. Ici-haut." (59)

The discovery of this overturned metaphor allows Meadow to advance the main argument of his article ("Francis Ponge: The Subversive Values of a Poetic Materialism"), namely, that the poet writes against idealism, transcendentalism, and metaphysics:

The passage further reveals Ponge's effort to draw words such as ciel and aspirer away from exclusively idealistic connotations in order to give them fresh significance in the
Having undone the traditional sky metaphor, Ponge is able to celebrate human potential in the here and now, replacing otherworldly and abstract poetry with one that is immanent and of this world.

In this sense, writing against metaphor can simultaneously be a way to write against metaphysics and the unity of absolutes, a rejection, suggests Lavorel, of a poetry of correspondences, and a preference instead for a poetry of the concrete:

Depuis Baudelaire, on a l’habitude de considérer les correspondances comme permettant de mieux découvrir le monde . . . . Or, pour Ponge, tout se fait chose, et c’est donc le concret qui prend la première place. Il n’y a même plus de correspondances entre ce monde et un monde inconnu, caché.

Ferasse comes out in support of this argumentation. In a perceptive article, “La métaphore traversée,” he aligns metaphoricity with metaphysics, and asserts that Ponge refuses both: “Il y a une continuité entre métaphore et métaphysique. Prendre parti contre la métaphore c’est d’un même geste prendre parti contre une métaphysique de l’unité, de l’absolu” (67). Thus, destruction of metaphor is destruction of metaphysical thought, of essentializing and overly authoritative expression.

For Ferasse, “La parole étouffée sous les roses” is one such poem that outwardly criticizes metaphoric discourse, first and foremost by the poem’s very title, “titre qui est à lui seul tout un programme"
This critique can be seen at the outset of the poem, where the poet appears to mock the rose—the ultimate poetic metaphor—for its conventional status. If a girl is called Rose, the name comes loaded with a fixed set of connotations, with emblems that are inescapable:

C’est trop d’appeler une fille Rose car c’est la vouloir toujours nue ou en robe de bal, quand, parfumée par plusieurs danses, radieuse, émue, humide elle rougit, perlante, les joues en feu sous les lustres de cristal; colorée comme une biscotte à jamais dorée par le four. (P 126)

It is an undermining of the traditional notion of a rose that includes a new way of viewing this flower, the poet here playing with its poetic representation by multiplying things it can be associated with: "Une superposition nuancée des soucoupes. . . . Les roses sont enfin comme choses au four" (P 127). In so doing, Ponge not only deconstructs the flower, but endows it with a different signification. Ferasse explains this effect, referring to other writings by Ponge:

Choisir d’écrire autrement la fleur, c’est d’abord, entreprise immense, la désécrire, défaire le noeud d’opinions, de sens dont elle est devenue l’emblème, le substitut; pratiquer la dissociation d'idées. Il faut résister à ce mouvement glissant du langage qui a transformé la fleur en métaphore puis en concept. (69)

Thus, as informed by Ferasse’s analysis, Ponge’s seemingly negative view of the rose is a way to implicitly criticize the trope’s traditional role in creating fixed ideas and illusions: "Le parti pris des choses, position limite, est un parti pris contre les sens figés, les idées toutes faites. . . . La métaphore est masque, falsification, illusion" (Ferasse 69-70).
We see, therefore, that like Flaubert, Céline, and Sartre, who, in certain passages of respectively, *L'Éducation sentimentale*, *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, and *La Nausée*, seem suspicious of metaphoric and essentializing discourse, Ponge seems to cultivate the same suspicion. Metaphor can lead to a deceitful presentation of the world, including the human subject. By concentrating on the material side of things—on objects and on the physical body—Ponge refuses a transcendent poetry and opts for one that is immanent. In this regard, part of his project to deny traditional poetry ("Ponge définit sa production poétique comme une tentative de fuite devant la conception traditionnelle de la poésie qui lui paraît périmée," Hubier 29) includes a rejection and reformulation of metaphoric expression.

It is possible to find the same undoing of metaphor in Flaubert. As in Ponge, certain metaphors in Flaubert are not used to stabilize the identity of a subject, but rather to expose the subject to difference and plurality. Illustrative of this phenomenon is the following excerpt, describing Mr. Roque's young girl (which, if one was not aware of it, could be considered a prose poem in and of itself):

Une petite fille d'environ douze ans, et qui avait les cheveux rouges, se trouvait là, toute seule. Elle s'était fait des boucles d'oreilles avec des baies de sorbier; son corset de toile grise laissait à découvert ses épaules, un peu dorées par le soleil; des taches de confitures maculaient son jupon blanc; --et il y avait comme une grâce de jeune bête sauvage dans toute sa personne, à la fois nerveuse et fluette. La présence d'un inconnu l'étonnait, sans doute, car elle s'était brusquement arrêtée, avec son arrosoir à la main, en dardant sur lui ses prunelles, d'un vert-bleu limpide. (143)
While the passage primarily presents the girl metonymically, via objects that are contiguously related to her, "des boucles d'oreilles," "son corset," "son jupon blanc," and via body parts that comprise her, "les cheveux rouges," "ses épaules," this fragmented presentation culminates in a comparative statement: "et il y avait comme une grâce de jeune bête dans toute sa personne." Thus, in a posited similarity, the girl is likened to the grace of a wild animal. However, and as observed formerly in Ponge, the simile does not secure an absolute statement about the subject. Rather, the 'à la fois' expression at the end, ("à la fois nerveuse et fluette") reduces the simile's ability to anchor identification in a one-word correspondence. Instead, it insinuates plurality and heterogeneousness--the girl is compared to a savage animal that is both tense and slight. In addition, the comparative statement is succeeded by a metonymic one, returning the description of the girl to her body parts: "avec son arrosoir à la main, en dardant sur lui ses prunelles." So while this passage is illustrative of metaphoricity, its statements are rather weak, intimating difference by the 'à la fois' expression and overturned in the end by metonymy.

One finds a similar situation in a description of Mademoiselle Marthe. Rather than using metaphoric expression to provide a stable portrait of the girl, by comparing her with something else so as to create a clear-cut image, it is employed to show her variety of being. The girl is first likened to a ballet-dancer for the puffiness of her skirt--"Sa robe, plus bouffante que le jupon d'une danseuse"--and then to a bouquet of flowers for her fresh scent: "toute sa gentille personne
sentait frais comme un bouquet." And following this description is a comparison between the girl and a cat: "Elle reçut les compliments . . . puis, se coulant parmi les meubles, disparut comme un chat" (95). This series of similes to describe Mademoiselle Marthe includes three different semantic domains—the ballet-dancer, flowers, and a cat. Thus, instead of being portrayed definitively, the young girl is portrayed successively, for her difference and heterogeneous qualities. Metaphoric expression, in this case, does not limit or exclude, but encompasses multiplicity.

So while metaphoric expression can be a way of creating homogeneity, it can also be a way of suggesting variety. Qualified metaphors with an 'à la fois' expression, or metaphors that proliferate endlessly, open up a human subject’s or an object’s likeness to infinite possibilities. Thus, despite the tendency of metaphor to fix essences, Flaubert and Ponge bring out the playful and coquettish qualities of the trope, capable indeed of exhibiting a world in endless and unexpected analogies.

Metonymy and the Comical

Est-ce que beau ou bête de prendre la vie au sérieux? Je n'en sais rien. C'est robuste, en tout cas, et je ne m'en sens pas la force. J'en ai à peine assez pour tenir une plume.
--Flaubert (Correspondance IV, 76-77)

Il est moins niais de risquer le ridicule que de le refuser obstinément par principe.
--Ponge (Méthodes 15)
While we have seen how metaphor is unquestionably present in both Flaubert and Ponge, it is not given a serious or authoritative role. It is played with, accumulated, and contorted to such an extent, that at times it provokes a humorous response. Metaphor, however, is not the only trope that creates amusement in these authors' works. In fact, a closer look at metonymy's role suggests that it serves to mock and mimic much of human activity. Thus, in addition to emphasizing the physical and the concrete, metonymy emphasizes the ridiculous and the absurd.

This is certainly the effect created by the metonyms in Ponge's "Le gymnaste," particularly coupled with the final statement of the poem--"c'est alors le parangon adulé de la bêtise humaine qui vous salue" (PPC 65)--which suggests nothing more than idiocy on the part of this athlete who performs his art. It is insinuated that this athlete amounts to the mere absurdity of his flying and twirling body parts. We chuckle as the poet describes the athlete metonymically: his sideburns, mustache, bangs, and his suit that makes two folds on his groin. But we are particularly amused by the metonymization of his title, how the form of the letters in "gymnaste" are the very form of his body parts.

Metonymy, in this instance, is used for comic purposes. It presents the human subject simply and superficially, as body components, gestures and movements ("Many iconic gestures appear to be based on metonymy" Gibbs 331), all of which are void of a higher, superior representational meaning. In this regard, it is possible that Ponge's tendency to fragment individuals is a way of satirizing them. Higgins comments on the satirical dimension of Ponge's poetry: "Ponge does in a sense
'dehumanize' people for satirical reasons" ("Against Petrification" 816). Metonymy, it would seem, assists Ponge in his comedy.

This interpretation of metonymy is supported by Riffaterre in his article "Trollope's Metonymies," where he uncovers the comic potential of the trope, its ability, in other words, to reduce a character to his or her traits, features, or gestures:

The humorous or comical effect of metonymy is entirely caused by the trope's ability to lower its object by several degrees on the scale of values assigned that object in its normal, usage-regulated representation. If the portrait of a human being, for instance, substitutes a thing or a physical detail for a moral quality or psychological trait, this displacement is unfailingly perceived as reductionist. (274)

While Riffaterre's discussion is based on examples in Trollope's works, it is nonetheless applicable to Ponge. Riffaterre shows how this very reductionist ability of metonymy creates a humorous effect in a text, allowing for, among other things, objective description, satire and mockery:

Without giving too much weight to one aspect of Trollope's art, it seems to me that his choice of metonymy as a favorite tool explains neatly how he can be at one and the same time an objective observer, faithfully depicting reality, and a satirical one, artfully distorting it. This is made possible by the two-faceted nature of the trope. On the one hand, metonymy focuses precisely on the suggestive details. On the other, its reductive function makes the selfsame details (seen as substitutes rather than taken in their own rights) the words of humorous discourse. (291)

It is precisely this aspect of metonymy that appears in Ponge's "Le gymnaste." By reducing the athlete to his body's gestures, the poet caricatures him as a buffoon, mechanically performing acrobats, blind all the while to his own idiocy. Metonymy, in this way, reduces the
human subject to his exterior, to the repetitious and parrot-like comportment of his body.

Metonymy's comic potential surfaces in a similar fashion in the poem "La jeune mère." As we saw in our previous analysis, the complete and unified body of this young mother, "tout ce grand corps," is ultimately reduced by a movement--"parmi le parvois utile à toutes hauteurs des carrés blancs du linge, que parfois de sa main libre il saisit, froisse, tâte avec sagacité, pour les retendre ou les plier ensuite selon les résultats de cet examen" (PPC 66)--by a function that many young mothers share. Here, not only does metonymy render difficult the formation of a complete subject, it presents the young mother via a gestured portrayal, her household chores. Metonymy thus serves to caricature the human subject, creating an exaggerated and parodied portrayal of the activity of a young mother. Physically exhausted by the delivery of her child, this young mother is left with an enfeebled body, which is additionally no longer hers, but bound to the demands of housework, repetitious and redundant as they are. The human subject finishes in fragments, via a movement that insinuates the mechanical and monotone rhythm of her life.

In Flaubert, metonymy also creates satirical and comical caricatures. Among the many examples is a description of the dance-hall, the Alhambra, where Frédéric and his companions go one evening for entertainment:

Les musiciens, juchés sur l’estrade, dans des postures de singe, raclaient et soufflaient, impétueusement. Le chef d’orchestre, debout, battait la mesure d’une façon automatique. On était tassé, on s’amusait; les brides
dénuées des chapeaux effleuraient les cravates, les bottes
s’enfonçaient sous les jupons; tout cela sautait en cadence.

Like Ponge’s "Le gymnaste," where the athlete is first compared to an
animal, here we find the same analogy in that the musicians are
initially described like perched monkeys: "dans des postures de singe."
Yet this comparative statement is soon weakened as the passage
progresses and presents the human subject, "on" (which could stand for
both the musicians and the dancers), by means of hats, ribbons, ties,
and boots--metonyms for the people themselves. It is a material
reduction of the human subject that is reinforced by the statement "touts
cela sautait en cadence" at the end of the passage. The musicians, the
conductor who mechanically keeps time, and the spectacle of the dancing
people, are no more, suggests the narrator, than colliding fragments--
the matter ("tout cela") of their exterior members and gestures. Like
metonymy in Ponge, metonymy in Flaubert lends itself to humorous
portraits. While people may take themselves seriously in the social
role they play, with the help of metonymy’s reductionist potential,
which chops up and distorts the human subject, Flaubert suggests that
onlookers should not.

In L’Éducation sentimentale we find in a passage that describes
one of the people’s riots the same inclination to favor the part, to
reduce the human subject’s activity to an action or to a property. We
likewise find, by way of this deployment of metonymy, a certain mockery
and attempt at humor:

Tout à coup la Marseillaise retentit. Hussonnet et Frédéric
se penchèrent sur la rampe. C'était le peuple. Il se
précipita dans l'escalier, en secouant à flots vertigineux
des têtes nues, des casques, des bonnets rouges, des baïonnettes et des épaules, si impétueusement, que des gens disparaissaient dans cette masse grouillante qui montait toujours, comme un fleuve refoulé par une marée d'équinoxe, avec un long mugissement, sous une impulsion irrésistible. En haut, elle se répandit, et le chant tomba. On n’entendait plus que les piétinements de tous les souliers, avec le clapotement des voix. La foule inoffensive se contentait de regarder. Mais, de temps à autre, un coude trop à l’étroit enfonçait une vitre. . . . Tous les visages étaient rouges, la sueur en coulait. (359)

While the subject is first identified at the beginning of the passage—"C’était le peuple"—this secure identification is rapidly transformed into an agglomeration of metonymic substitutes: "têtes nues, des casques, des bonnets rouges, des baïonnettes et des épaules." In a like manner, this group, later referred to as "la foule," reappears in parts: "les souliers . . . des voix . . . un coude . . . les visages." Thus, the mob, while momentarily soaring to poetic heights in the form of a river ("comme un fleuve refoulé"), is ultimately reduced to its very own properties—shoes, voice, and body parts. In this sense, the passage points out the barbaric and uncivilized attributes of the mob and suggests, perhaps, an emptiness inherent in the group’s activity.

Patricia Johnson would most likely support this interpretation, for in "Empty Gesture: Descriptive Technique in Sartre’s La Nausée," she discusses the consequences of emphasizing parts or gestures in a text. More specifically, she claims that, in Sartre’s work, this underscoring of the part or action serves to ridicule it, and transforms it into something hollow and empty:

By dividing a gesture into component parts, the gesture loses meaning, becomes absurd. This fragmentation deforms even so mundane a movement as a man scratching his head . . . . Bizarre aspects blossom into comic effects. . . . By breaking down the man’s gestures into minute component
attention, Sartre draws attention to their emptiness and underlines their comic possibilities. By describing the action but not its meaning, Roquentin clearly shows us the fundamental emptiness of social gestures. (423-24)

Metonymy can have the same effect in Flaubert. As in the case of the mob, their activity is not backed up by a motivation or a conscience, but is conveyed through the prevalence of moving components. The action thereby becomes mundane and even comic; body parts and material objects come and go, yet without any trace of human intention. There seems to be a suggested mockery to the chaotic movement of the mob, a lack of meaning and purpose in their impassioned endeavors.

Thus, when used in descriptions of the human subject, metonymy is capable of creating a comic atmosphere. Reducing someone or a group of people metonymically is a form of ridicule, for what is disproportionately emphasized is the importance of a body part, a gesture, or a property. While Jakobson claims that metonymy is an attempt at realism and verisimilitude, it can also be, as Ponge's and Flaubert's use of the trope shows, an attempt at humor and social parody. The human subject, fragmented, distorted, and dispersed into pieces, is transformed into an object of comic bemusement, ridicule, or even mockery.
Body as Object and Object as Body

Part of the humor we experience in Flaubert and Ponge is also due to the close metonymic relationship these authors explore between objects and the human subject, a relationship that highlights their contingency and proximity. We have already observed this in Flaubert, and it is equally apparent in Ponge. Lavorel brings to light this aspect of Ponge’s poetry—“Il s’agit moins de définir des correspondances avec un au-delà mystérieux, que de constater des parentés dans ce propre monde” (49)—as does Ponge himself, 

Pour répondre au vœu de plusieurs, qui me pressent curieusement d’abandonner mes espèces favorites (herbes ou cailloux, par exemple) et de montrer enfin un homme, je n’ai pas cru pourtant pouvoir mieux faire encore que de leur offrir une lessiveuse, c’est-à-dire un de ces objets, dont bien qu’ils se rapportent directement à eux, ils ne se rendent habituellement pas le moindre compte. (P 72)

Thus, the body becomes a point of reference, a system of relations in the material and concrete world that these authors undertake to describe. In Ponge, the gymnast’s body is described in relation to the body suit, the rope, and the trapeze, while the young mother’s body is described in relation to laundry. As such, body parts are not seen in terms of one’s being, but in terms of one’s property—things that can
perform a certain function, gesture, or duty—metonyms for the person as a whole.

There are many poems by Ponge that present the body in this way, via a functional task and in relation to an object. Moreover, according to definitions of metonymy, an object can be a metonym for the absent user. This constitutes one of the definitions of metonymy outlined by Lakoff: "Object used for user" (Metaphors We Live By 38). In this sense, all of Ponge's featured objects can be seen as metonyms for their users. It follows that the human subject is far from being absent. As we shall soon see, the human subject emerges from the poem's periphery, reaching and grasping for objects that, at times, can serve as their own substitutes.

For example, in the poem, "La pomme de terre," we glimpse parts of the human body as it comes into contact with potatoes. We see the thumb, the fingers, and the hand, as they handle and try to manipulate this common food item:

Peler une pomme de terre bouillie de bonne qualité est un plaisir de choix. Entre le gras du pouce et la pointe du couteau tenu par les autres doigts de la même main, l'on saisit—après l'avoir incisé—par l'une de ses lèvres ce râche et fin papier que l'on tire à soi pour le détacher de la chair appétissante du tubercule. (P 66)

Although we are not given a complete portrait of the human subject, we are nonetheless made aware of its existence, metonymically introduced in connection to its work with potatoes.

Similarly, in the poem "Les plaisirs de la porte," we sense the human subject, not through its explicit nomination, but implicitly, through traces and hints of its movement. More specifically, we receive
a quick eyeful of the human subject's arms and hands when it touches and holds the door: "tenir dans ses bras une porte. . . . D'une main amicale il la retient encore, avant de la repousser décidément et s'enclore, -- ce dont le délic de ressort puissant mais bien huilé agréablement l'assure" (PPC 44). Thus, despite the fact that the anonymous person in this poem never emerges as a fully-identified subject, nor as one described in its entirety, it remains present through the appearance of its mysterious body parts that reveal themselves in pleasurable and carnal interaction with a door: "le contact quasi sensuel avec les choses, dans ce geste bienveillant de la main, au-delà du choc, qui établit un contact tout de douceur, crée une osmose entre hommes et objets, éveille des joies sensuelles" (Fauvel 312). In this regard, the human body, concretely presented, manifests itself in mundane actions with the exterior world. Objects and the human subject are observed in intimate interaction, as one serves to affirm and confirm the existence of the other. Fauvel explains,

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Choses et hommes sont indispensables l'un à l'autre. . . . Dans ce choc dynamique, l'homme affirme ses différents sens et organes, sa présence: les doigts s'agitent pour percevoir la forme et les contours de l'huître ou de l'orange et exercer un pouvoir sur les choses. . . . L'oeil analyse en détail le monde intérieur de l'huître ou regarde tomber la pluie. Le nez perçoit l'objet dans ses odeurs . . . . La bouche sembe être l'organe favorisé par le contact avec les dents, la langue, les lèvres et permet l'osmose avec l'objet parfois à son tour pourvu d'une bouche. (311)
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The Pongean experience with the objective world is, in this way, incarnated.

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As in Sartre’s La Nausée, hands in Ponge (metonyms for the absent human subject) occupy a primordial place. While in Sartre, hands create a sense of strangeness, coming and going, detached from their owner, in Ponge they create more of an atmosphere of functionality. That is, hands are associated with objects in Ponge’s poems insofar as they are useful, capable of performing an everyday task. Leclair highlights the numerous movements of hands, which interact variably with objects:

En effet, la description de l’objet ne se limite pas à celle de sa forme, mais passe systématiquement par une expérience de “corps à corps” avec l’objet; ce dernier n’est jamais perçu en soi mais associé à un geste privilégié, le plus souvent celui des mains, qui prennent et retournent l’objet (le coquillage, le galet), le palpent (la porte, le savon), le caressent, le pressent (l’orange) ou le cassent (l’huître, le pain). (117)

Taking, squeezing, turning, and breaking, hands are serviceable instruments for the human subject’s encounter with the concrete world of objects.

Premiering their significance, the poem "Première ebauche d’une main" pays tribute to their relationship with objects, a paean to their skilled activity: "Voici la partie du corps la mieux articulée" (P 117). And while the hand is a body part in and of itself, it is endowed in this poem with its own body parts, with a forehead and eyes, creating a metonymization of a metonymy: "Puis, forte, agile, elle revolette alentour. Elle obombre son front, passe devant ses yeux." Personified, hands take center stage in this poem, serviceable tools with multifaceted talents, making possible the relational contact between human beings and the world of objects: "Servant à prendre ou à donner, la main à donner ou à prendre" (118). So while not directly mentioned,
the human subject is indirectly referred to—the ultimate orchestrator behind the scenes of these dexterous instruments.

In Flaubert, the human subject, though not always fully present or identified, is likewise introduced as it makes contact with objects it encounters. In the following example, we detect fragments of people as they move and contort their bodies around a table, where la Maréchale serves champagne:

Alors, elle prit sur le poêle une bouteille de vin de Champagne, et elle le versa de haut, dans les coupes qu’on lui tendait. Comme la table était trop large, les convives, les femmes surtout, se portèrent de son côté, en se dressant sur la pointe des pieds, sur les barreaux des chaises, ce qui forma pendant une minute un groupe pyramidal de coiffures, d’épaules nues, de bras tendus, de corps penchés; --et de longs jets de vin rayonnaient dans tout cela. (181)

Outstretched arms surface in this description, holding their glasses and reaching for champagne, while tiptoes are exposed and bodies lean on the table. Body parts are thus revealed in a movement or an act with objects, allowing for, at the same time, a certain focus on the body. Not viewed all at once, the body is eclipsed part by part, as limbs and extremities interact with the world around them.

Similarly, one senses the presence of the human subject in a scene when Frédéric goes to visit Arnoux’s shop. We sense Frédéric’s immanence, not because he is outwardly described, but because he is implicitly suggested in his contact with the sidewalk, a door, and a door’s handle. In many ways, one is reminded of Ponge’s “Les plaisirs de la porte,” particularly since the door’s handle is described as being smooth to the touch:

Les grandes lettres composant le nom d’Arnoux sur la plaque de marbre, au haut de la boutique, lui semblaient toutes...
Frédéric is therefore indirectly evoked, the pavement and door highlighting his presence. Objects, therefore, serve to illuminate the body, which, although not entirely whole, is glimpsed and imagined in fragments, with outstretched arms and grasping hands.

Yet, what is equally interesting in these two authors is when the object they investigate becomes infused with a body, in other words, when it inhabits a body and becomes animate. This process can be seen in many of Flaubert's works, including *L'Éducation sentimentale*, where one notices that, while Frédéric's presence is fragmented, unstable, and passive, the concrete world in which he moves is activated. Human qualities are discernible in the various landscapes and objects that comprise his universe: "des chênes . . . se convulsaient, s'étiraient du sol, s'étreignaient les uns les autres . . . des torses, se lançaient avec leurs bras nus des appels de désespoir" (398). Moreover, Frédéric often offers a very human response to this material world, imbued with human life and existence, a humanization of the inanimate that is not without sexual undertones. For instance, Frédéric's wandering desire projects itself onto and into things that fall within the parameters of his roaming gaze: "les battements de la machine . . . les cordes vibraient" (52), transforming landscapes, objects, and architecture into passive recipients of his passion. In fact, Frédéric at one point even reminisces about how he used to gaze lovingly at Mme Arnoux's windows:
"Au coin de la rue Montmartre, il se retourna; il regarda les fenêtres du premier étage; et il rit intérieurement de pitié sur lui-même, en se rappelant avec quel amour il les avait si souvent contemplées!" (90). So while Frédéric’s character is deflated, one notices a marked inflation of the objective world. This is why parts of Frédéric are found displaced from one thing to another, onto windows that he gazes at, onto steamboats that pass by, and onto landscapes that surround him. Although never given a coherent representational status, Frédéric remains within our sight, surfacing, it could be argued, as the "râle lent et rythmique" of a ship’s funnel (48). Consciousness, it would seem, has passed into the world of things.

Among the many instances in which Frédéric demonstrates a particular affection for the material world around him, we find him loving, as the narrator points out, the straw-covered doorsteps of wine-shops, the shoe-scrapers, and grocer’s with their respective objects: "il eut un attendrissement en apercevant le premier fiacre. Et il aimait jusqu’au seuil des marchands de vin garni de paille, jusqu’aux décrotteurs avec leurs boîtes, jusqu’aux garçons épiciers secouant leur brûloir à café" (157). Filled with emotion, Frédéric ends up loving the material world in which his love objects circulate: "things, human artifacts, streets, buildings . . . These things metonymically signify something which is absent" (Selden and Widdowson 156). Objects in this novel are thus animated, imbued with human traits, features, and qualities. Duquette comments on this phenomenon, underscoring how
objects in Flaubert are capable of displaying moods, thoughts, and states of mind:

Un vêtement, un bibelot quelconque peuvent ainsi nous révéler un état d’âme, une pensée. Ce procédé s’explique aisément si l’on pense à la vision animiste que Flaubert avait du monde. Pour lui, les objets ont véritablement une âme, ils conservent la trace des sentiments et des émotions de ceux à qui ils ont appartenu. Les choses contiennent une part des êtres, qui leur confère une sorte de vie autonome, mais toute imprégnée de la présence de ces êtres. (19-20)

Particularly illustrative of this process, whereby the objective world becomes animated, is the famous rendez-vous scene, when Frédéric waits for Mme Arnoux and transfers his feelings onto the architecture around him:

Il considérait les fentes des pavés, la gueule des gouttières, les candélabres, les numéros au-dessus des portes. Les objets les plus minimes devenaient pour lui des compagnons, ou plutôt des spectateurs ironiques; et façades régulières des maisons lui semblaient impitoyables. Il souffrait du froid aux pieds. Il se sentait dissoudre d’accablement. La répercussion de ses pas lui secouait la cervelle. (347)

Corranda Curry additionally finds the objects in the scene to hold a special significance: "the description of the shops, while Frédéric is waiting for Madame Arnoux, is an ironic manifestation of his anxiety and anguish projected on the objects and labels on the street" (141). And Danger concurs, saying more generally of Flaubert’s objects,

l’objet possède une ambiguïté essentielle: Tout en ne cessant d’appartenir au monde de la matière auquel il tend toujours à revenir, il est ... une création du regard humain qui fixe sur lui l’image de ses désirs et de ses angoisses et l’investit d’une valeur totalement subjective. (159)
And so we find Frédéric later on in the novel, projecting melancholic sentiments onto the passing steamboats: "Il connut la mélancolie des paquebots" (500).

Examples such as these provide evidence that, just as desire is the "continual renewal or the transformation from one form to another" (Berg 120), metonymy is the continual deferral and prolongation of the human subject. Frédéric's metonymic portrayal as an incoherent and disconnected character furnishes the setting for the humanization of the material world around him. To be more specific, he turns things into fetishes; they are metonymic substitutes for his incomplete being and his inability to connect with others. This is revealed by the narrator at the outset of the novel, where Frédéric becomes immediately fixated with Mme Arnoux's basket: "Il considérait son panier à ouvrage avec ébahissement, comme une chose extraordinaire" (51). Contiguously related to Mme Arnoux, the basket is a prolongation of her being, onto which Frédéric can project his fascination. So while there is a deactivation of being in this novel, it is accompanied by an activation of the physical universe. As Jean-Pierre Richard says, "Fusion signifie diffusion, éparpillement successif dans les choses" (127).

Such an interpretation is supported by other critics, such as Georges Poulet, who says, "Le point de départ chez Flaubert, ce n'est donc pas Flaubert lui-même; c'est le rapport du moi perceiver à l'objet perçu" (309). Poulet recognizes in Flaubert an intimacy with the material world, which he might explain as being similar to great pantheist mystics. While pantheism is not the focus of this chapter,
Poulet's insights nonetheless provide an interesting perspective on this metonymic displacement of the body onto the world of things. More in line with this chapter's argument is that of Harter, who, in *Body in Pieces: Fantastic Narrative and the Poetics of the Fragment*, demonstrates how partialization in a text can often result in "bodies ... and objects" being "irretrievably, blurred" (35). And there is also Flaubert himself, who at times seems to acknowledge such a confusion between the human subject and the objective world: "A force quelquefois de regarder un caillou, un animal, un tableau, je me suis senti y entrer" (Correspondance III, 210).

Whatever explanation one chooses to accept, objects in Flaubert are undeniably imbued with human qualities, recipients as they are of a character's desire. This is precisely what happens with Mme Amoux's possessions, which Frédéric considers to be human beings:

> Il connaissait la forme de chacun de ses ongles, il se délectait à écouter le sifflement de sa robe de soie quand elle passait auprès des portes, il humait en cachette la senteur de son mouchoir; son peigne, ses gants, ses bagues étaient pour lui des choses particulières, importantes comme des œuvres d'art, presque animées comme des personnes.  

(106)

Fingernails, a silkdress, a handkerchief, a comb, gloves, and rings are metonyms imbued with Mme Amoux's bodily presence.

A similar process is at work in many of Ponge's poems. We sense the same pulse and breath of an object that Ponge describes, making us question its inanimate and inorganic status. Evrard perceptively comments about objects in Ponge's work: "Les choses de Ponge, qu'elles soient naturellement vivantes ou non, nous retiennent ainsi par leurs
manières, leurs petits gestes de créature, leurs accès d'émotion" (58).

Not described in its unity, the human subject is there, as we catch sight of its back and neckline, which have been transferred onto an object: "Ma valise m'accompagne. . . . Je l'empaume, je lui flatte le dos, l'encolure et le plat" ("La valise" P 90). Thus, words used to describe human movement are often used to describe the life of objects: "Ainsi donc une masse amorphe en train d'érruter fut glissée pour nous dans le four stellaire . . . crevasses" ("Le pain" PPC 46). The human body, in this regard, is obliquely present, exhaling life into the objective world that Ponge sets out to describe.

We see further evidence of this again in the poem "Les plaisirs de la porte," where the door, in addition to revealing the human body by coming into contact with it, is itself described in bodily terms. That is, the door is described as possessing a belly: "Le bonheur d'empoigner au ventre par son noeud de porcelaine" (PPC 44). We similarly find bodily attributes in the poem "La cigarette," an object that Ponge endows with a human trait—passion: "Sa passion enfin: ce bouton embrasé, desquamant en pellicules argentées, qu'un manchon immédiat formé des plus récentes entoure" (PPC 40). Minahen finds Ponge's "L'allumette" also to have bodily characteristics:

Right away, the typical Pongian transfer of subjectivity to the object is put into play by a triple deployment of the word corps, which very rapidly transforms the inanimate object into something animate ("Un corps vivant, avec ses gestes") with a "tête" and human characteristics ("son exaltation, sa courte histoire"). (238)

Not only, therefore, can a body become a thing in Ponge’s poetry (as we examined in the beginning of the chapter), but a thing can become a
body. In both instances, the body remains fragmented, partialized, and described in terms of the concrete earth rather than in terms of the mysterious and unknown metaphysical beyond.

This is particularly apparent in "La fin de l’automne," where nature, personified, becomes human, taking the form and demonstrating attributes of a human subject: "La Nature déchire ses manuscrits, démolit sa bibliothèque, gaule rageusement ses derniers fruits" (PPC 33). This activation of nature is intensified as metonymy enters the description to present her with body parts: "Puis elle se lève brusquement de sa table de travail. Sa stature aussitôt paraît immense. Décoiffé, elle a la tête dans la brume. Les bras ballants, elle aspire avec délices le vent glacé." With head and arms, nature takes on a corporeal dimension, and even possesses human objects, "chaussures." Thus, nature is humanized, not by way of abstract correspondences with the human realm, but by way of possessing anatomical parts. Nature is similarly humanized in "L’avenir des paroles," where forests possess a stomach and where the West has knees: "les forêts du bas-ventre seront frottées contre la terre, jusqu’à ce qu’au genou de l’Ouest se dégrafe la dernière faveur diurne" (Pr 110). Rather than being endowed with an abstract identity or essence, nature in Ponge is given a heterogeneous characterization, with fragments and metonyms, to display its body.

As in Flaubert, some critics might explain this occurrence in Ponge as a transfer, by which the whole and integrated self is transformed into various independent and self-maintaining elements of the exterior world. Debray-Genette suggests that while there is an
absence of the complete person with metonymy, a "depersonalization of beings," the trope recuperates this loss in a "personalization of objects" (683). Consequently, the human subject as we know it in traditional psychological novels is destroyed, leaving us with a universe of animate objects. A crossing, therefore, takes place between natural and artificial realms. The self experiences a dissolution of its being, while at the same time there is an activation of the material world, infused with pieces of the human subject, which explodes into everything around it.

Such a transferal is further explained by Lacanian thought, which situates metonymy's movement as deferral and displacement. It is the deviation and deflection of signification, the "trope of scapegoating," according to Jill Matus, that acts as "the displacements of the real object or the untranslatable object, or the emotion that looks for an object" (314). In terms of the body, therefore, metonymy will never name it directly but will forever send us off to look for its displaced and deferred pieces.

It is possible, therefore, that when the poetic voice in Ponge investigates the material world around it, it brings with it a body, a body that is transferred and displaced onto the things it examines. This certainly seems to be the case in the poem "La lessiveuse," where the machine is bestowed with very human traits: "Sérieuse--et martelée de telle façon qu'elle a sur tout le corps des paupières mi-closes" (P 74). Moreover, this humanization of the machine culminates in a veritable misidentification near the end of the poem. That is, the
poetic voice that is expressing so much affection toward the machine ends up mistaking the woman's hips for the machine, confusing the machine with the woman and the woman with the machine: "je ne sais comment je me sens tenté--plaçant mes mains sur vos hanches chéries--de les confondre avec la lessiveuse et de transférer à elles toute la tendresse que je lui porte" (P 75). At the same time that body parts have lost their human dimension to become thing-like, the thing has come to inhabit a body.

Thus, despite the fact that both Flaubert and Ponge tend not to form a fully-constituted subject, it is there, albeit in a place where one would not ordinarily look. The human subject can be found in the matter of their texts: in the world of objects that their texts describe and in the world of words that is their texts. In this way, we could say that metonymy's movement is twofold. It subverts a stable representation of the subject, while at the same time allowing for its steady recuperation.

As the trope that focuses on the part, metonymy thus encourages the reader to abandon absolute and idealistic conceptions of the human body, so as to better explore the body's relation to the concrete world around it. By taking a mere piece of the body, metonymy puts the human subject in its place. Metonymy offers us a concrete and relative experience of the body, where the body is explored not for its metaphysical potential, but for its multifaceted properties and intricate qualities. However, contrary to some who think metonymy's presence in Flaubert and Ponge fragments the body to the point of
oblivion, it is possible to see in the trope a transferal process, in which the partialization of the human subject resurfaces in the world of things. Never achieving an absolute, one-word, or complete representational status, the metonymic body is one that is endlessly named and renamed as different. It is an experience of the self as plural, embracing our very rich variety of being.
PPC will henceforth refer to Ponge's *Le parti pris des choses* while *P* will refer to Ponge's *Pièces*. The following abbreviation will also be used: *Pr* will refer to *Proêmes*.

2 In *Proêmes*, for example, Ponge expresses preference for material things over abstract ideas: "Si j'ai choisi de parler de la coccinelle c'est par dégoût des idées" (193).

3 Fauvel further comments on Ponge's use of the definite article to present his object of study: "L'auteur du *Parti pris des choses* utilise, quant à lui, dans un grand nombre de titres de ses poèmes l'article défini ('le cageot', 'la cigarette', 'l'huître'), paraissant ainsi conférer une extraordinaire unicité à un objet banal" ("Le *Parti pris des choses* sous l'objectif" 309).

4 As we saw in this study's introductory chapter, Paul de Man, in *Allegories of Reading*, demonstrates how analogy can give way to enumeration, and how word order, based on an accumulation of terms, can undo the rhetorical strength of the comparative statement (See 17-18).

5 Genette makes this assertion about the interplay of the tropes in Proust: "metaphore et métonymie se soutiennent et s'interpénètrent" ("Métonymie chez Proust" 42). For a full explanation, see Genette or refer to this study's introductory chapter.

6 This point is reiterated by Preckshot: "The role of process in Ponge's writing is cardinal, the text as finished product only an arbitrary resting point in an ongoing process of reproduction which Ponge calls 'une rectification continuelle de mon expression' (TP, 257)" ("A Case of Entrapment: Francis Ponge's *L'Araignée mise au mur*" 337).

7 Of this scene, Berg notes that "the personification and the similes serve to humanize the forest" (Gustave Flaubert 102).

8 *L'Éducation sentimentale* is not the only one of Flaubert's novels where one notices the animate in the inanimate. Benjamin Bart finds in *Madame Bovary* a "weird reversal of roles attributed to animate and inanimate objects" (*Flaubert's Landscape Descriptions* 44). Culler similarly finds an activation of the material world in *Madame Bovary*. For example, of Rodolphe and Emma's first love scene, Culler comments that the "surroundings . . . are imbued with an emotional charge" (See Flaubert: The Uses of Uncertainty 141).

9 Claude Burgelin similarly notices a corporeal dimension to Flaubert's objects: "Comme s'il y avait nécessité à décompartimenter, à dés-isoler l'objet en le réintégrant dans la vie animale, végétale, élémentaire, et lui donner comme un corps" ("Perec lecteur de Flaubert" 148).

10 Bonhomme highlights this effect of the trope. (See *Linguistique de la métonymie* 208).

11 For a more complete explanation of metonymy's movement as deferral and displacement see Lacan's *Écrits* (511).
CONCLUSION

Metonymy, as the preceding chapters sought to demonstrate, expresses an awareness of language's failure at totalizing and essentializing claims. It offers resistance to metaphor, challenging the illusions of metaphysics and personal identity that metaphoric discourse often creates. Disruptive and subversive, metonymy brings down to earth the transcendent and symbolic tendencies of metaphor, stressing relationships in the external, material, and tangible world.

In terms of the body, metonymic description does not convey an ability to "master" the body in an analogical sense, in terms of being and identity which are the result of metaphoric resemblance. Rather, it presents the body as a site of substitution, exchange, and material effect. The metonymic body challenges absolutes and encourages skepticism, not only about our ability to represent a unified world through language, but about our ability to understand our place in the world and among the things that surround us.

Thus, the prevalence of metonymic structures in Flaubert, Céline, Sartre, and Ponge reflects much more than merely a fixation on a material and fragmented human body. Metonymy dominates in these writers because it most aptly allows expression of their worldviews,
which are pervaded by the profound pessimism of late nineteenth-century France and most acutely felt in the writings of Flaubert.

We have seen how this Flaubertian pessimism desecrates the body in L'Éducation sentimentale; yet, it finds even greater depths of despondency in Flaubert's other works, where the body is more intensely ravaged by a mortal, material death. In Un Coeur simple, for example, already meaningless existence is further trivialized by a relentless succession of deaths. And in Hérodias the reader is left with a haunting metonymy--the image of Iaokanann's grotesquely severed head: "La tête entra" (137). In these and other works, the reader is offered no escape from the immanent physicality of human existence, but is engulfed in bleak imagery of a fruitless sojourn on earth.

This cynicism finds varied expression in many twentieth-century authors, such as Céline, Sartre, and Ponge, whose respective worldviews are also informed by a somber and predominantly materialistic sense of desolation. Céline's Voyage au bout de la nuit is replete with this Flaubertian darkness, as exemplified in the female body, which, starting off as a romanticized projection of male idealization, is ultimately lowered into a system of modern-day relationships that are concrete, physical, and easily exchanged. Hence, this degradation of the female body is accompanied by a crude vulgarization, for it is transformed into a spectacle of pieces and parts, an erotic site for male desire. In this regard, the Célinian female body is a violated body. Disfigured rhetorically, it is also disfigured physically, dispersed and violently dismembered across the pages of the text. Thus, despite any moments of hope about a metaphysical union with the
female other, Céline proposes instead substituted and unsatisfied relationships, not unlike the relationships Flaubert portrays—cheapened, perverted, and hopelessly incomplete.

In Sartre’s *La Nausée* the body is equally degraded and, at times, vehemently despised. As a constant reminder of the massive burden of existence, of our creeping and viscous flesh, the body in this work is a site of repulsion and disgust, literally sickening to see, to taste, and to touch. It is this very body—alienating and repugnant—that Flaubert also uses as the embodiment of his worldview, with characters isolated from their own corporeality and horrified when the physical body surfaces to debase romanticized ideals. Thus, immanent, material, and inescapably present, the body is vile and loathsome, causing a nausea that is both literal and figurative. Flaubert, like Sartre’s fictitious Roquentin, experienced this same nausea for human existence, not only vicariously through characters, but personally, first-hand, and as early as a young child: "J’ai eu, tout jeune, un pressentiment complet de la vie. C’était comme une odeur de cuisine nauséabonde qui s’échappe par un soupirail" (Flaubert, *Correspondance I*: 201).

In several prose poems by Ponge, we likewise encounter a degraded human body, which does not necessarily produce feelings of nausea, but a certain discomfort and uneasiness. This is because, in addition to being a de-centered body, it is a de-centered self-conscious entity, crossing over at times to the material world of things. Thus, Ponge perceives his human subjects not as an integrated whole, but rather as a multivariated, heterogeneous aggregation, so inextricably bound to surrounding objects, that it becomes material suitable only for
satirical and humorous caricatures about human existence. Flaubert similarly cautions his readers about the seriousness of human endeavors, fusing bodies and objects, and, in the process, stripping the human subject of its self-imposed sense of importance. Viewed from the outside as twirling legs and outstretched arms, the human subject is viewed by Flaubert and Ponge as a material thing, poetic substance to accumulate, contort, and unravel.

While metonymy has undeniable pessimistic tendencies (focusing as it does on the material and mortal), it nonetheless contributes positively by reminding us of our limitations. Cautioning us that knowledge about ourselves and others can never be comprehensive, but only partial and incomplete, metonymy may help us avoid disillusionment. It sets limits on dreams that are overly idealistic, and grounds us in a reality that is bound by the relative constraints of space and time. Metonymy, in this sense, has a precautionary quality; it brings us down to earth while questioning our compulsion to inflate others and ourselves in grandiose proportions.

It is perhaps Frédéric Moreau who experiences most intensely this disaccord between erroneous metaphoric idealization and metonymy's healthy restrictions. But does this Flaubertian hero learn from his journey? Critics have generally tended to view Frédéric's education as missed or failed, particularly since at the end of the novel characters themselves try to explain why their dreams were unrealized: "ils accusèrent le hasard, les circonstances, l'époque où ils étaient nés" (508). However, shortly prior to the novel's end, there is a subtle indication that Frédéric may indeed have learned something, and
that the lesson may be found in a metonym. The crucial scene occurs
during the final meeting between Frédéric and Mme Arnoux, when the
protagonist is forced to confront the inevitable hand of time, which
has disappointingly aged his all-too-human ideal. This reality is
communicated to Frédéric in a single gesture, the removal of Mme
Arnoux's hat, revealing disfavorably her white hair. It is a lesson
that Frédéric ingests like a shock or blow to his chest: "Ce fut comme
un heurt en pleine poitrine" (503). Jolted to confront the reality
that his ideal has deteriorated with the passage of time, Frédéric
continues to compliment Mme Arnoux, yet his effusions are interestingly
restricted to the past, expressing adoration for the woman Mme Arnoux
once was, which Mme Arnoux herself recognizes and accepts: "'Vous me
faisiez l'effet d'un clair de lune. . . . Je n'imaginais rien au-delà.
C'était Mme Arnoux telle que vous étiez'. . . . Elle acceptait avec
ravissement ces adorations pour la femme qu'elle n'était plus" (503).
Thus, Frédéric, through his empty experiences, is eventually led to
face the ephemerality of ideals, susceptible as they are to the
decaying forces of time. Regardless of whether or not Frédéric has
accepted this reality, he will be forced to contemplate it. His final
interaction with Mme Arnoux involves the exchange of a metonym, a lock
of her white hair, that she bequeaths to Frédéric, in lieu, perhaps, of
their love that was never consummated. This detached and soulless lock
of hair will henceforth serve as a constant reminder to Frédéric that
ideals are doomed to deterioration. His is a destructively sentimental
education.
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