

## Sample P1

Passage: “Rodolphe had moved...their fingers intertwined” (Flaubert 128–30)

As Rodolphe is professing his love for Emma during the agricultural fair, the Prefect’s representative is delivering a speech to the people of Yonville about the State’s appreciation for the people’s farm work. The narrator contrasts these speeches for sarcastic emphasis, portraying both speeches as empty rhetoric used to convince their listeners of something other than the truth.

The reader is already aware that the Rodolphe is not well intentioned in his wooing of Emma. He seduces her for his own amusement, fully prepared to dump her when he gets bored. His carefully chosen phrases appeal to Emma’s preferred language of sentimental abstraction, talking to her “about dreams, presentiments,” and “magnetism,” gradually moving on to their mutual “affinities,” namely, their shared ennui and resentment towards life’s banality (129). Without reference to fact, or the complexity and confusion of real life, Rodolphe appeals to Emma’s grand emotions in order to feign emotional intimacy.

Concurrently, the Councilor delivers a flowery speech, exalting the history of labor and agriculture. This, too, is frothy rhetoric. Nevertheless, as the aristocratic representative insists, “the State, henceforth, has its eyes fixed upon you,” the people of Yonville are transfixed (129). The narrator weaves the Councilor’s words with Rodolphe’s, both working together to highlight one another’s insincerity. Just as Rodolphe’s avowal reaches its climax, as he declares, “A hundred times I’ve tried to leave you, and yet I’ve followed you, I’ve stayed with you,” the Councilor is heard saying “manure” in the background (130). The narrator, in this not-so-subtle

moment, emphasizes the absurdity of Rodolphe's grand gesture. While Rodolphe's intentions are obvious to the reader, Emma is slowly won over, ignoring the evidence surrounding her. This passage is an example of Emma's inability to adjust the abstractions she has taken from her novels to her complicated reality. Ignoring everything that does not fit within the rules of romance novels, including the Councilor's speech, she succumbs to Rodolphe's artificiality, intertwining her fingers with his.

In this passage, Flaubert pointedly uses dialogue to express that human speech does not often convey anything true, and is therefore often a conduit for hypocrisy.