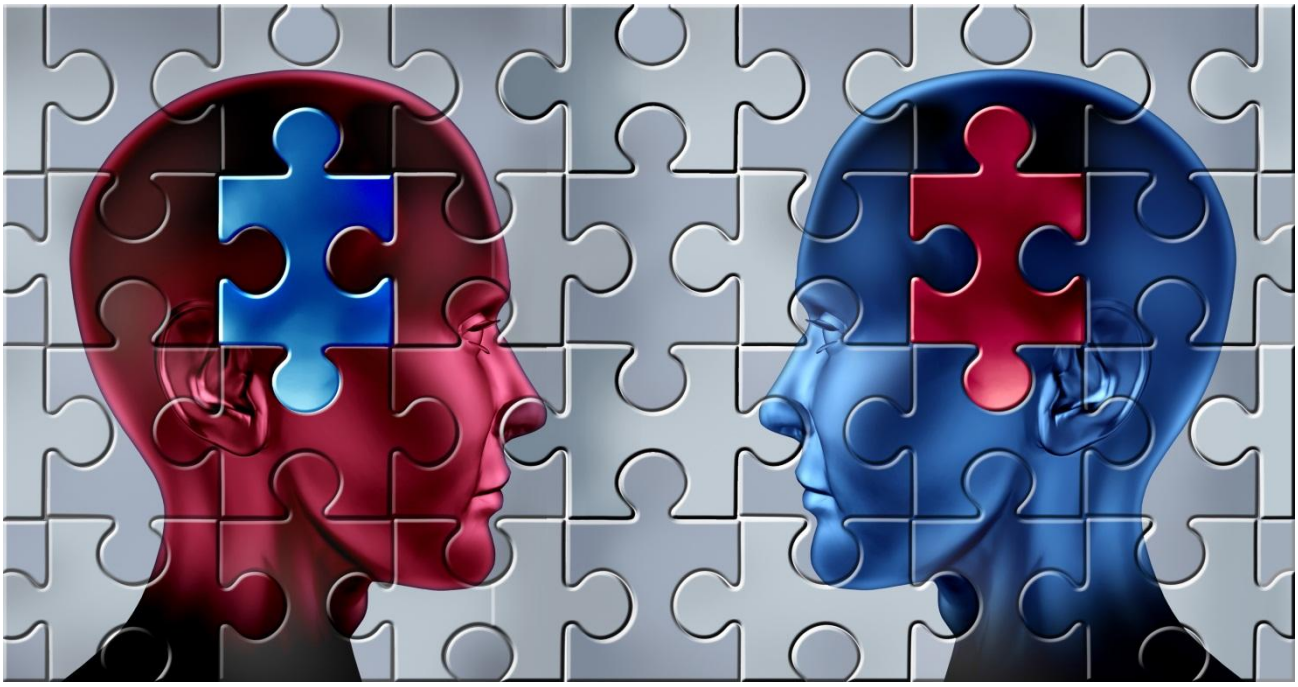

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Fiction as a Medium of Social Communication in 19th Century France

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Abstract

This article will present the extent to which literature could be viewed as means of social communication – i.e. informing and influencing society – in 19th century France, by analysing the appearance of three authors at different points: the beginning, the middle and the end of the century. The first is the case of Balzac at the beginning of the 19th Century who becomes the most successful novelist of the century in France and who, in his prolific expression and rich vocabulary, portrays society from various angles in a huge opus of almost 100 works, 93 of them making his Comédie humaine. The second is the case of Gustave Flaubert whose famous novel Madame Bovary, which depicts a female character in a realist but also in a psychologically conscious manner, around the mid-19th century reaches French courts together with Les Fleurs du Mal by Charles Baudelaire and is exposed as being socially judged for its alleged immorality. The last is the political affair of Dreyfus and its defender Emile Zola, the father of naturalism. This case confirms the establishment of more intense relations between writer and politics and builds a solid way for a more conscious and everyday political engagement in the literary world from the end of the 19th century onwards. These three are the most important cases which illustrate how fiction functioned in relation to society, state and readership in 19th century France.

Keywords: social communication; textual communication; books on trials; censorship; 19th century France; Dreyfus affair; the novel; interactions between literary world and society

Introduction[1]

The need to communicate in society has existed ever since the emergence of humanity. It is often claimed that for communication to be successful, it must be informative. Therefore, communication must indicate an intended direction of thought or action. The readership of 18th and 19th century shows sensibility for informative reading, but also for improving, entertaining and easy reading and this is why readers of the time searched for the new and most appropriate fictional form to respond to their needs.

Communication can also be subtle, which means that it can more or less conceal its intentions and its instrumental goals. Written or textual communication – which is in the focus of this analysis – is posterior to oral, which is from time-to-time transformed into written communication, a process encouraged by the noticeable emergence of literacy in the general public. Oral communication was also more straightforward than written communication, but with the development of print, the process of communicating became more complex as exposure to written communication increased.

Several definitions refer to social communication as a language used in social situations with the aim of establishing mutual understanding, informing or influencing society as a whole.[2] Here we will analyse one particular literary genre, the novel, as a powerful tool of social communication in 19th century France. This article will briefly mention (i) what were the other most popular genres and why, (ii) what kind of language the authors used to represent their fictional worlds, (iii) what was the social surrounding and the atmosphere in which this reception by the public happened, (iv) what problems the authors experienced with the state authorities and (v) how they developed their communicative relationship with the readers.

[1] Many thanks to members of my family and colleagues at previous and present working places and universities for their support; to professor Dr. Stephen Lovell, for help finding suitable Bibliography, whilst supervising the first version of this article, written as a longer text for the course Communications in Modern Europe; and to the Philosophy Department of Warwick University for a warm welcome at the Literary Conference held in March, 2014, Theories of literature: Essence, Fiction and Value and for sharing with us the relevant information about the Exchanges: Warwick Research Journal and other literary - research publishers.

[2] See Klaus Fiedler's *Social Communication* for examples of such definitions of 'social communication'.

19th Century France

The social and intellectual life of nineteenth-century France was marked by abrupt social, historical and political changes that gave social communication an increasing importance. In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte was proclaimed emperor with unlimited power. After 1815, the reign of the Bourbons was re-established and Louis XVIII became King. The country was struck by two revolutions in the first half of the century: one in July 1830, and the other in February 1848. With the Second Republic, new demands were made for both liberal and democratic reforms. The organised working-class emerged. The dictatorship regime of the Second Empire followed, and its power gradually weakened in the 1860s. In 1871, after proclaiming of the Third Republic, France returned to the values and objectives of the famous French Revolution from 1789, which created a new political rhetoric and developed new symbolic forms of political practice (Hunt 1986).

Exposition Universelle, the most important cultural event in 19th century France took place in Paris exactly one hundred years after The Revolution. In front of the *Tour Eiffel*, villages from all over the country were presented, in order to illustrate the international character of *la capitale*. Visitors came from the whole world. Paris was `*un lieu national*`, a meaningless cosmopolitan mix `*faite de toutes les races et de tous les pays*` [made of all the races and all the countries][3]. Fiction was widely influenced by this monumental commemoration, which glorified technological progress, capitalist expansion[4], and provoked, in a way, the imperial reign. *Le Tour Eiffel* was a symbol of the `concord of nations` (Prendergrast 1992: 8) and `prophetic vision of a future European nation-state of which Paris… would be the crowning glory` (*ibid.:* 15).

[3] This translation into English contained in the square brackets (and all other similar translations) in this article were made by myself, whereas I left the more commonly used French terms which reappear in use in the English language and whose meaning remains known or easy to guess for a reader in italics and without translation. The titles of works originally published in French and French institutions are also given in italics and in French.

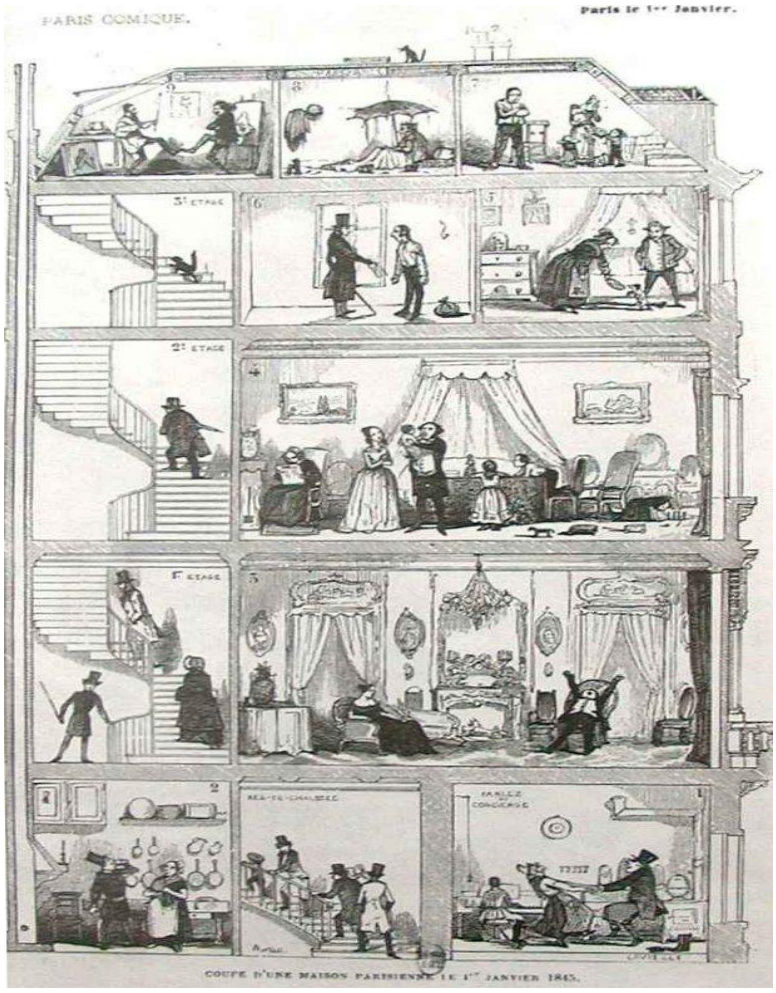
[4] The colonialist expansion contributed to another characteristic of France during this period. Consequently, both culture and language made their impact in the new territories, establishing a kind of two-way colonisation-discourse (i.e. both the colonised territories and the colonisers influenced one another) which extended throughout the 19th and 20th century.

Universal Exposition of 1889.

In literature of the 19th century, we can notice two different kinds of images of the city that were dominant. On one side, there was the Republican image, with its shared sense of belonging and purpose, and on the other side, the Imperial. This division in the image of the city was followed by political divisions, such as, for example, the one created between republicans and royalists by the Dreyfus affair. This helped to establish the term '*intellectual'*, which denotes the conscious citizen who criticizes the actual happenings on the political scene, eventually shares his opinions more or less knowledgably with his fellow citizens, and pronounces or at least holds political or social views about various actualities. The republican ideal was widespread and authors like Victor Hugo, who went into exile and had a personal hatred for Napoleon III, portrayed the `city as the focus of a unifying political culture consisting of free and equal citizens` (Prendergast 1992: 7).

However, in these times of political unrest, the city became more divided and started to reflect, perhaps more directly, the social status and the accompanying political affiliation of its citizens. There was the obvious gap between eastern rich quarters of Paris and its western poor areas inhabited by working and lower classes. Revolution gave more importance to the marginal citizens who had tendency to act differently, if compared to

those at or near the centre. This marginal and peripheral outsider created psychological consequences for society and emerged as a new character in fiction after the French Revolution.[5]



Parisian house 1845

Whereas the republican city was the `expression of a high degree of homogeneity`, parks and markets were the places of divisions, social hierarchy and class conflict (Prendergast 1992: 8). Parts of the new infrastructure were the typical French *apartment houses.* They `undressed the bourgeois family and exposed its dirty laundry to view` (Sharon 1999:

[5] Paris gained its political significance because of the fact that the Revolution brought back the seat of government from Versailles. It was the time of mercantilism, capitalism and mobility of wealth. Napoleon III and Baron Haussmann, completely transformed the French capital into a physically more coherent and true Western metropolis. Paul Verlaine, who often wrote about urban boredom, said about the architecture of Haussman that it was *bric-à-brac confus*. New architecture demolished the slums, made boulevards, refurbished facades and expanded parks, as the spaces where people could meet and talk.

165) and consequently `life threatened to become public` (*ibid*. : 139). Generally, in such houses and mansions private reading was difficult; there was little privacy and housing was overcrowded. Candles were considered a luxury, which meant scarcity of light for reading. Still, the novel primarily portrayed this private and domestic life.

Balzac and the Rise of the Novel

The greatest change of the period was the rise of the novel, and it happened `after the French Revolution placed the middle-class in a position of social and literary power which their English counterparts had achieved, exactly a century before` (Watt 1957: 301). Its emergence was related to certain social phenomena: the development of the printing press and journalism; the increase of the reading public — especially in terms of female readers ; and the laws of censorship imposed by either state or church in order to keep stable political and religious order. The works of Honore de Balzac, the most important writer of the beginning of the 19th century, can demonstrate the impact of this literary genre on society and its function in social communication.

The works of Balzac illustrate French society from all angles and are capable of dealing with the totality of life, presenting stories which captured some of the moral values of the century. Balzac's works demonstrate the strong connection between distinctive literary qualities of the novel and those of society in which it began to flourish. The rise of the novel meant the break with the tradition of old-fashioned romances, taking inspiration instead from real-world characters and events. Therefore, Balzac`s opus of approximately one hundred books could be considered one of the most truthful portrayals of the society in the first half of the 19th century. Balzac's characters represented a great variety of human experience, including all kinds of nomads, thieves, *vagabonds,* fornicators and prostitutes, working or unemployed, beggars or sometimes criminals who inhabited Paris. We could draw an interesting parallel between the particular choice of characters in Balzac's with those in Charles Dickens' novels in England. Sharon (1999) quotes figures of bachelors like Rastignac in Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* and the omniscient *portière,* who sometimes becomes identified with the

narrator. The setting of his novels in prisons, hospitals, slums, brothels, all make or reflect the social and psychic identity at the time as uncertain and problematic[6]

Newly conquered worlds are often mentioned in books published during the 19th century. Either the characters travel, like Nana to Egypt, or the authors themselves, like Flaubert in his *Sentimental Journey*. Opening towards new worlds and cultures is characteristic for many states since the 18th century, the era of Enlightenment, not just for France or England, and confirmed by the fact that foreign fiction was being translated in French and English, and by the reverse process, or the fact that the authors wrote in foreign languages during and after their travels. In addition, English and French texts were being translated into other foreign languages.

During this period, advertisements, dedications or prefaces, giving additional explanations and sometimes warnings were included in the publication of such novels. The opening of a text is a critical moment both for the author and for the reader who share social and moral experience through the text. The foreword or preface sometimes provided information about the destinies of real people or revealed the true story behind the work. The last attempt of the author to monitor the reading of his work or to give his own views about the text can be contained in the postscript or postface, which also became a common addition for some books of the period. For example, in the preface to *Comédie Humaine*, Balzac speaks of `sens-caché` [hidden meaning] of the modern world. Author and reader could be considered as two strangers communicating through a printed book and in this way, a book becomes a medium of social communication, which also involves the transition between oral world of daily life and the written world of the book.

In terms of style and language, like other French realists, Balzac insisted on an almost scientific scrutiny of life, true correspondence and imitation of the `real`. History was present in his text, syntax and vocabulary. With active engagement in the text, pages were transformed into *paysages*. The diversity of social speech, later crowned in Zola`s dialogues of the working-class, was contributing to verity of the fictional discourse. The

[6] *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*` makes up part of Balzac's *Comedié Humaine* and it is preoccupied with the underworld. Zola's *Nana* shows `uneasy interaction between high society, theatre and prostitution` (Moretti 1998: 90).

authors tended to believe that: `He who masters the languages of the city rules the city` (Prendergast 1992: 4 and 23).

Page from one of Balzac`s works with handwritten corrections

Intellectual claims in philosophy of this period included the view that an individual can discover the truth only through his senses (e.g. Locke and Reid), which had great influence on the novel. In addition, the novel is `distinguished from other genres by the amount of attention it habitually accords both to the individualisation of its characters and to the detailed presentation of their environment' (Watt 1957: 18). The plot of the 19th century novel in France was the complete opposite of the classical and renaissance epic, based on history, myth or fable. In order to be authentic the realist writer used poor formal conventions of description in detail and `the function of language was much more referential than in other literary forms` (*ibid.*: 230). For example, Balzac's *Père Goriot* contains pages of *descriptions minutieuses* [detailed descriptions] of furniture, clothes, houses and city's sites. Its blurred contours, together with the social preference for festivity and fashion were presented in the paintings of Édouard Manet and other impressionists. The role of language was the social constitution of reality, and the

preoccupation of Balzac was the ephemeral and contemporary `outside'. Balzac's linguistics was characterized by the `ornate`. Figurative language became much rarer and linguistic 'ornate' became very common. In France, critics recognized the elegance and concision in writers' expression. The novel was regarded as most translatable because it was the most referential and it required less historical and literary commentary. The formal realism of Balzac can be regarded as a recognizable realist narrative method *par excellence.*

The novel was a fresh genre in character and style, and there was the complete subordination of the text to the patterns perceived immediately. Sometimes the characters were named exactly in the same way as particular individuals in ordinary life and they were verbal expressions of identity both in society and in the novel. In contrast, classical renaissance literature favoured historical or type names and Molière`s theatre favoured social representatives with characteristic names and surnames like *Tartuffe, Le Bourgeois Gentil homme* or *Malade Immaginaire*. Rablais started the practice of giving his characters names that denoted particular qualities and some later fictional characters could have also been related with one particular and the most prominent trait of character, *Moll Flanders* thief, *Pamela* hypocrite, *Tom Jones* fornicator (Watt 1957). This change of character can be traced as replacement of the knight-errant hero by a fine gentleman (Day 1987). Particularisation and naming of the character constitute verbal expressions of a particular identity in social life and in the novel.

Character also acts as the bearer of social communication between the reader and the author. There is no such wealth of detail accumulated in text or such abundance of minor references as in Balzac's work. His sketchy portraits and the way he handles the text give full portrayal of the characters of his society. 'The novel is distinguished from other genres by the amount of attention it habitually accords both to the individualisation of its characters and to the detailed presentation of their environment' (Watt 1957: 18). In his typical characterisation, Balzac was famous for melancholy attributed to his fictional characters and by physiognomy or the aptitude of recognising people by their physical appearance. He owed as much to observation as to imagination. In several novels there are *personnages reparaissants* [reappearing characters], sometimes a bit altered and the editions with illustrations were often suggestive about the outer looks of these 'society-representatives' and with the illustrations they could be better comprehended. These

illustrations functioned in the same way as *frontispieces* accompanying numerous editions of books in 19th century, and particularly some collections of fairy-tales. They were often there with the primary intention to influence the imagination of the reader. It was sometimes the author's pleasure to make and write the additional *eulogium*, therefore further influencing the reader. Fictional plot of the novel had some of the features of detective story, one of the most typical urban genre. However, the virtues of citizenship were not really exercised by the characters in novels of the early nineteenth century. Their inner world as well as their revelations stay mainly metaphysical in nature.

Whereas in Renaissance literature, shaping of man's individual history was the expression of the collective history, and timeless stories were used to mirror unchanging moral verities, in the novel, the temporal dimension of human life was denied and the `space of a day` replaced by the `space of a lifetime`. Balzac, together with Stendhal was the first great efflorescence of the novelistic genre. For example, in the beginning of *Le Père Goriot*, Paris presents for a hero an opaque city with no readability or possibility of interpretation. `*Paris est un océan. Jetez-y la sonde, vous n`en connaîtrez jamais la profondeur*` [Paris is an ocean. Even if you throw the anchor, you will never find out the depth] (Prendergast 1992: 110). In his essay `*Paris en 1831*`, Balzac called it `*la capitale du monde, sans égal dans l`univérs*` [the capital of the world without equal in the universe]. The revelation of nature of the city as complex, intractable and impossible to master comes in the decisive moment of the funeral of *Le Père Goriot*, when the main character grasps and conquers for a moment the seditious and secret world of the city. Eugène Rastignac conflates his sexual success with urban when he cries 'A nous deux' [For the two of us] to the one he was in love with. Heroes in many novels tend to use a woman to gain a foothold of the city (Sharon 1999: 171).

Mid-19th Century and the Trial of Madame Bovary

`In 1812, the first cylinder press was invented: it was considerably improved in the following years and could print 4000 to 5000 copies an hour by 1827` (Couturier 1991: 147). Paper became a great deal cheaper and censorship legislation was developed. Authors lived close to, or even with their publishers, but quarrels were not rare. In

1830s, *Société des gens de lettres* was founded and aimed to secure better terms for the profession. A printer and bookseller needed the protection from those who tried to reissue a book or make fraudulent copies of it. The known fact is that the book-trade started to be run in a businesslike manner only in the 19th century, not before. 'The novel was widely regarded as a typical example of the debased kind of writing by which the booksellers pandered to the reading public. The booksellers brought literature to the control by market place and they could as well encourage the author' (Watt 1957: 54).

Complicity between the Crown and the Church was much greater in France than in England. The novel therefore developed in England with ease compared with France because of this absence of the legal instruments and allegedly more spirit of tolerance. On the eve of revolution, following *Code Michaux,* there were 178 censors and `Bastille often hosted the authors, the booksellers, or simply the carriers of banned books` (Lough 1978: 297). Another function invented for better control was the surveyor, and this regime had 'appalling effects on printing profession and reduced the number of printers at work in London from sixty to twenty' (Couturier: 26). The Catholic Church censored and listed novels with `bad influence` in its *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. One of the novels listed, for example, in the 18th century was *Pamela,* a novel by Samuel Richardson, which was thought to be a bad influence on the 'weaker' sex. Although the other books like Michel Millot's *L'école des filles*, Nicholas Chorier's *L'Académie des dames* and Jean Barrin's *Venus dans le cloître*[7] ran into difficulties, they continued to circulate and to reach their readership.

In France, the law was less tolerant and religious struggles were bitter. However, and although it seems contradictory, some critics claim that French writers had greater freedom of expression than their English counterparts. In England, permission to allow a written work of art was needed from the Chancellor, but for a long time nothing was done to define literary property. Only one century earlier, those who wrote religious literature could be sentenced to death. Law was not only meant `to prevent the publication of seditious books … but also that of obscene literature in general'(Couturier 1991: 26). It required that books should contain nothing 'contrary to good life or good manners', a phrase which seems to echo the French description of obscene literature as

contraire aux bonnes moeurs [contrary to the good manners] (*ibid.*). According to some critics, this genre contributed to what could be called the degeneration of the century by questioning the established morals of society. For instance, Couturier mentions the novel as also subversive. Censorship developed on a grand scale since the 17th century. The above mentioned *Code Michaux* of 1629 made it compulsory to submit all manuscripts to censors appointed by the Chancellors. The problem with *Code Michaux* was that the printer or the bookseller usually did not bother to ask the author's permission to publish a book, once he had the permission from the Chancellor.

The 18th century was characterised by the difficult relationship between the law and the book trade and the French language was subjected to very strict regulations and censorships. Author's rights were recognised much earlier in England which explains why the novel bloomed half a century earlier in England than in France. However, French authors `had more power and influence socially than the authors on the other side of the Channel` (Couturier 1991).

After the Revolution, freedom of expression was officially recognized in article 11 of the *Déclaration des droits de l`homme* [Declaration of human rights], but printing wasn`t run in a businesslike manner until the very middle of the 19th century. Du Camp, who bought *Madame Bovary* for 2000 francs to publish it in his *Revue de Paris* in 1856, asked Flaubert to remove some passages because they were perceived as immoral or dangerous. Flaubert refused and sold the rights to Michel Lévy, who decided to publish the book complete. The case finally reached *Tribunal Correctionnel*, where Flaubert appeared in court alongside Baudelaire on the same charge of immorality for his *Fleurs du Mal:* `Flaubert was acquitted, though the court offered some criticism of the morality of *Madame Bovary*, but Baudelaire was found guilty, fined 300 francs with costs, and ordered to remove six poems from subsequent editions of *Les Fleurs du Mal'* (Lough 1978: 285). Baudelaire`s aggressive stance contained all kinds of provocative images and it conveyed emphasis on *modernité*, both social and artistic.

A couple of controversial erotic scenes that were skilfully painted and made lascivious by deliberate use of expressive language in *Madame Bovary* were discussed in the trial. It stated that what the author exhibited was the very poetry of adultery (Couturier 1991). `The frivolous pages of Madame Bovary could fall into the more frivolous hands of girls, and even of married women sometimes and they could be induced to follow

Emma`s example. It was a matter of public health and safety to ban the book. The attorney of the defence insisted that although the reader might have felt that Flaubert was on Emma`s side, the book also showed how she suffered for her sins and instructed young girls to be good and pure. The novel of the time was expected to have the `double mission of amusing and teaching' (Iknayan 1961: 85). Flaubert scored immediate success with *Madame Bovary,* `partly because of the publicity given to the book by prosecution ... none of his later novels had the same sales` (Lough 1978: 359).

Writers couldn`t control the flow of the information generated, once the book was published. Ever since, the difficulties with publishing sexually explicit fiction appeared, many books, although they were banned, continued to circulate. Perhaps this book by Flaubert looks didactic, when compared to the obscenity of *The Crimes of Love*, written by Marquis de Sade and published in 1800. His erotic ten-volume books like *La Nouvelle Justine* or *Histoire Secrète d'Isabelle* had additional political connotations. Although Flaubert only just escaped the death penalty and spent most of his life exiled in mental hospitals and prisons, he continued to look for assistance, in order to have his works published. `La littérature est l`expression de la société` [Literature is the expression of society] writes Bonald, about the fiction of this period (Iknayan 1961: 35). *Madame Bovary* was *peinture des moeurs* [painting of the customs] of the time and though the trial may seem absurd to some contemporaries, it stays exemplary in many respects (Iknayan 1961: 20).

Gradually, as writers started to earn more, patronage became another great source of income. The popular interest in reading increased and several factors affected the composition of the book or newspaper-buying public. ` The Education Act of 1870 in England and the Lois Jules Ferry of 1880-1 in France did not immediately change the structure of the book market, but they substantially increased the potential audience of all books, and of novels in particular` (Couturier 1991: 147). `Being able to read was a necessary accomplishment … for those destined to the middle-class occupations` (Watt 1957: 39-40), whereas in Shakespearean England one needed a penny to stand in the Globe, `the price of a novel… would feed a family for a week or two` *(ibid.:*42). There were still literary forms available for small amounts of money: ballads, new stories of criminals, accounts of extraordinary events and pamphlets. Newspapers stayed quite cheap until taxation was imposed.

Women, especially from the upper and the middle class, presented a large portion of the reading public. The main character of Flaubert`s masterpiece was reading Balzac so enthusiastically that ‘she even brings the novels to the dining table` (Prendergast 1992: 1). However, as their virtue could suffer from overexposure to books that can excite the passions, they had to read in secret. Borrowing a book from a library was safer and more practical than buying it. Consequently, circular libraries sprang up all over Europe. The first circulating library in London was established after 1740, and it contributed to an increase in number of readers. Still, much cheaper and more popular than novels were innumerable entertainments such as plays, operas and masquerades. While the cheap books and poetry were read in *veillées* [social evenings by the fire], novels required silence, comfort and isolation. The *veillées* also secured symmetrical positions of author and reader in silent communication. According to Barthes, the pleasure of the text largely derives from this magic distance between the author and the reader imposed by the medium of the printed book or a distance which guarantees their respective privacy. For this purpose, new kinds of furniture were invented. Heroines of the novels are often shown reading in a *boudoir, that is* a private space in a Georgian house, adjoining the bedroom, and consisting of *a* writing desk. Virginia Woolf called it `a prime requisite of woman`s emancipation`.

As the confidence of the middle class was rising, authors came from all kinds of backgrounds. Emma Bovary herself, had *prix de lecture*, which she shows to Charles when they meet. Sometimes, they wrote very explicitly and tautologically, so that the less educated readers could understand. With the development of print, author and reader began to find themselves in symmetrical positions, ‘silently communicating with each other through the printed text, often over many centuries` (Couturier 1991:-46).

The difference in authors’ education and ability explains some of the technical weaknesses of the written production. But this was not the case with Balzac, Flaubert and Zola. The middle class proved to be the most self confident at this time, and new standards of form and content appealed to large audiences and corresponded to the new public indigence. In 18th century England annual production of novels increased from seven at the beginning to 80 at the end of the century. In 19th century England and France, the new taste for sentimentalism and gothic horror, both provoking easy indulgence, began to correspond to public requirements.

In France, the relation between the literature and life in fiction remained more distant than in England. Mme de Staël in her famous essay *De la littérature* in 1800 writes about the literary rapport with social institutions. There is the close connection between the French realists who wrote in the beginning of the century and romanticists who wrote later, and both demonstrate emphasis on individualism and originality.

Zola and the End of the Century

Rhetoric, persuasion, and competition of ideas enter fiction that becomes more politically active. *L`Education Sentimentale* by Flaubert, repeated inherited slogans of 1789, and in the context of the nineteenth century, we have the example of `*un roman qui aura pour cadre le monde ouvrier*` [the novel that gives the context of the world of the working class] like *Gérminal*, a claustrophobic novel about the mine-workers` strike. Objectivity and truth of representation in Zola's work were more striking than in the realist novels of the time. Zola was writing as part of the literary movement of Naturalism, where the aim of the novel was to record fact. Naturalist writers refuse sentimentality and sensationalism.

In the 1877 preface to *L`Assommoir*, `Zola defends himself against criticism of the vulgarity of much of the language` (Flower 1983: 20 and 9). Dialogue was charged with exclamations, dropping *syllables,* popular expressions and slang. Themes were rape, ugliness, alcoholism and murder, while backgrounds were markets and factories. Although the descriptions had moral, social and political weight, the narrator remains detached. For instance, at the end of *Gérminal*, Etienne leaves Montsou and the surrounding region, and whatever hope there may be that the social revolution will one day come about, the mine has been reopened. He finds out, in a kind of self-exploration that he missed the intellectual capacity and resolution in order to be the leader, and he decides to go to university. Re-establishment of bourgeoisie control takes place and there is no alternative for the workers.

`The new faculties of arts and science set up by Napoleon in 1808 had for decades virtually no students in the modern sense of the term but they were, in fact, strengthened in 1880s' (Lough 1978: 281). In his writings, Zola analysed the collective consciousness of the working-class. He drew attention to their miseries and suffering and portrayed

*l`odeur du people*. Unlike bourgeoisie literature, 'the language of political revolution is in principle directed towards turning the sphere of public discourse into a democratic forum, and the issues and forms of contestation become the most important` (Prendergast 1992: 25). Although the working-class press existed earlier in 1830s and 1840s with newspapers like *L`Atélier*, the industrious worker was a new figure on literary scene, and Zola`s argument was that workers were victims and powerless to struggle for a better life.

The Court of Appeal during the Zola affair

Working-class female characters of naturalist novels often found comfort in religion (Flower 1983: 13). Fear of law was generally present and characters were often totally degraded, depraved of intelligence and the chance to rise above mediocrity. There is the strong criticism of bourgeoisie, who `for their part, distanced themselves rigorously from the people` (Habermas 1989: 72). Zola worked as a journalist and for *Hachette* publisher, where he became increasingly aware of the problems in society. His transition

from journalism to the literary world was certainly favourable because 'there would always be more respect for authors of books than for the mere journalist' (Zeldin 1977: 506).

Commercialisation of the press imposed and encouraged a uniform and standard French. The spread of literacy inside the country was improved by better roads and the development of the national railway. The technological revolution helped expansion of books, periodicals and newspapers, and stimulated the growth of reading public. In the course of Dreyfus Affair,[8] Zola published '*J`accuse',* a vehement open letter in a Paris Newspaper in 1898 and defended Dreyfus, who was accused of spying for Germany, which led to the case being reopened. At the time, Jews were generally considered people without fatherland and insufficiently loyal to the countries where they lived. Dreyfus was sentenced to life imprisonment and a crowd emerged with anti-Semitic press, shouts and slogans. Nevertheless, in politics, bureaucracy and industry, favouritism and personal recommendation remained of great importance.

The conviction was a miscarriage of justice based upon espionage and anti-Semitism, particularly in a social context conducive to hatred of the German Empire following its annexation of Alsace and part of Lorraine in 1871. The implications of this case were numerous and affected all aspects of French public life: politics (the affair established the triumph of the Third Republic and became its founding myth), the renewal of nationalism, both military and religious (it slowed the reform of French Catholicism and republican integration of Catholics), social and legal domain, press, diplomacy and culture. However, the opposition served the republican order according to most historians and there was indeed, remarkable strengthening of parliamentary democracy and a failure of monarchist and reactionary forces. The affair engendered numerous anti-Semitic demonstrations, which in turn affected the emotions within the Jewish communities of Central and Western Europe. After France was split in two by this affair, with the conservative government, church and army on one side, and progressive critical forces on the other, Zola in fact managed to save Dreyfus who was declared innocent of the charges decade later. In 1896, Theodor Hertzl, a Jewish journalist from Vienna, who

[8] The Dreyfus affair was a political scandal that divided France for about 12 years, from the affair's inception in 1894 until its resolution in 1906. The affair is often seen as a modern and universal symbol of injustice for reasons of state and remains one of the most striking examples of a complex miscarriage of justice.

covered the trial, published a book *The Jewish State*, where he expressed the opinion that Jews would remain strangers in their countries of residence and that they needed the country of their own. It marked the beginning of Zionism.

Conclusion

Maurice Couturier described the rise of the novel as a 'textual communication' and he points out Lacan's theory which insists on the role of the author and Foucault's analysis of discourse. He calls it the 'most subversive product of the typographic age' (Couturier: 32) whilst referring to the omnipresent necessity of the time to create written language that was appealing to learning and recognition. Additionally, the development of journalism increased the role of textual communication in social communication. The rise of the novel and journalism both caused the changes in the organisation and the nature of the reading public and the general interest in reading increased, but still far from the nowadays phenomena of the mass reading public and mass communication. According to analysis by Watt, the newspaper buying public in nearby England tripled by the middle of the 19th century from less than one newspaper buyer in 100 persons per week.

The social and political environment in which the novel appeared and in which literature experienced the break with the old-fashioned romances, involving traditional plots of classical, renaissance epic, myth, legend or history, matters for the communication-oriented approach to fiction:

The novel attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience, and not merely those suited to one particular literary perspective. Its realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents but in the way it presents it. French Realists drew attention to an issue which the novel raises more sharply than any other literary form and the main problem of the correspondence was the one between the literary work and the reality which it imitates. (Watt 1957:11)

Realists built on the philosophical ideas of Locke and Reid in order to attain the fidelity of human experience, and the idea was that the truth can be discovered by individual through his senses.

Lynn Hunt analysed the political culture of the French Revolution and its consequences, as well as the accompanying adequate system of representation in institutions and symbols used in this new political discourse. Speaking about fiction, she argues that textual communication prevails because the novelist remains more engaged with the text and less with the audience. However, the author can transform the oral communication into written by weaving it into his fictional story and once the book is available to the reader, this fiction becomes a powerful tool of social communication.

The cases of Balzac's opus, Flaubert's trial and Zola's defence of Dreyfus remain illustrative of the novel as a medium of social communication in 19th century France, by showing how the language used in novels reflected the language of the society, the customs, interior and exterior decors, architecture, even political movements and opponents. 'The novel's conventions make much smaller demands on the audience than most literary conventions, and this surely explains why the majority of readers in the last two hundred years have found in the novel the literary form which most closely satisfies their wishes for a close correspondence between life and art' (Watt 1957:32-33).

Politics connects with fiction more intensely through political happenings like the Dreyfus affair, which causes refashioning of the society, and makes stronger social references to the customs of the past and regenerating nation or nations, in this particular case, French and Jewish. Alternatively, this gives rise to self-conscious political principles that we can trace back to the writings of the Enlightenment thinkers that were common to many educated people like Zola. Writers of this period became like brokers of culture, people whose profession is of prominent social standing and therefore more capable of directly playing a role in social communication, through their writings or their intellectual position. This entire process of interaction among writer and reader, society, reality, imagination, as well as language, constitutes what we call social communication.

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