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A Study of the Self
in
The Red and the Black
and
The Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man

by
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Honors Thesis
in
Department of English
University of Richmond
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Although there are many reasons for reading and writing literature, perhaps the most compelling one is to gain knowledge of and access to the self. One of the most interesting aspects in the literary study of the self involves the individual's perception of his public and private self. This differentiation between the public and private persona is developed in depth in Stendhal's The Red and the Black and Thomas Mann's The Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man. The protagonists of these two works lead lives of duplicity and hypocrisy, each submerging his private personality in order to get ahead in the world. Julien Sorel and Felix Krull finely tune and polish their public identities in their attempts to rise to the top of their respective societies. There is, however, an unusual twist in the stories of these two protagonists determined to use their natural abilities to advance their positions in life. Neither Julien nor Felix maintains the two separate personae of his private and public selves. Julien is constantly tormented by his division of self, and although he alternately tries to live according to the dictates of his private and public selves, he fails in this attempt and is never able to reconcile these two aspects of himself. Felix, on the other hand, does not even try to distinguish between his public and private identities. Rather, he so assimilates the values and ideas of his public

identity that his private self disappears.

The background and origins of Julien Sorel and Felix Krull are essentially the same. Both men are able to rise above their disreputable origins and the scorn associated with this, to achieve a much higher place in this same society. Julien and Felix each possess a much greater than average amount of willpower and ambition which drives them to succeed and to continually be looking for bigger and better things in this world. Both are initially successful and become revered and admired by long-standing members of upper-class society. Yet at some point their paths greatly diverge leading to drastically different outcomes for each character. Julien Sorel, at the pinnacle of his career, forfeits it all and eventually loses his head on the scaffold, while Felix Krull triumphantly proceeds through life, allowing not even a prison sentence to subdue his essential optimism and enthusiasm concerning life.

There are perhaps two causes for the widely varying conclusions to the lives of these two characters who are initially placed in similar circumstances and imbued with many of the same basic personality traits. One such cause is the different societies that the two characters inhabit, that of 19th century France compared to 20th century Europe. While environment undoubtedly is important, I will focus on the

importance of each character's inner psychological make-up in guiding his destiny. The true key to the understanding of the lives of these two men lies in their innermost thoughts and feelings; their personalities determine their futures much more than any external forces or powers. The main reason for the drastic difference in outcome of these two novels lies in each character's concept of his own self-identity. The manner in which each protagonist perceives himself is the key to understanding his motivation, actions, and ultimately his life. Julien Sorel is constantly tormented by his inability to reconcile his private and public selves; because he is unable to differentiate these separate aspects of himself to his satisfaction he causes his own doom. On the other hand, there is no such distinction in the case of Felix Krull. In fact, the public self that Felix presents to the world and to his audience is ultimately all there is of Felix. The reader may scratch away all he likes at Felix's glossy surface, yet there is nothing deeper. Felix is not bothered as Julien is by the distinction of the public and private selves, because for Felix they are one and the same. He has so completely blended his inner personality into the persona that he presents to the world that these two selves have completely merged. Herein lies the difference between these two remarkably similar men. Stendhal's work is the

study of a tormented soul, unable to reconcile his public and private identities, while Felix does away with this difference entirely by vanquishing his private self.

The beginnings of Julien's and Felix's stories are very similar. Both are born into families that are scorned by the other inhabitants of their respective towns. Julien's father is an illiterate carpenter while Felix's father owns a winery known more for its decorative bottles than for the quality of its champagne. As boys, Julien and Felix are looked down upon by other citizens of their towns, children and adults alike. Julien's father and brothers despise and hate him and he is always overcome in any competition with the other townspeople: "An object of contempt to the rest of the household, he hated his brothers and father; in the games on Sundays, on the public square, he was invariably beaten" (29). Felix is also looked down on, not because of his physical weakness but because of his family's disreputable firm, which eventually goes bankrupt, and his father's resultant suicide. He was on many occasions rejected and ridiculed by his fellow schoolboys and peers, and this rejection does bother him. After an unsuccessful attempt to make friends with some neighborhood children, he admits that these boys, the sons of winegrowers and government employees, had been warned by their parents to stay

away from me. Indeed, when I experimentally invited one of them to our house, he told me to my face that he couldn't come because our family was not respectable. This pained me and made me covet an association that otherwise I should not have cared for. (12)

Thus, both characters are from an early age despised and scorned by either their own family or their immediate society. Julien and Felix recognize this and become determined to refute the labeling of society and to rise above their disreputable origins.

Julien and Felix each feel that they are better than their family and their surroundings. Although they may be scorned by society, they inherently know that they possess superior powers, powers which are not recognized by the inferior townspeople. Felix directly states,

I could not conceal from myself that I was made of superior stuff, or as people say, of finer clay, and I do not shrink from the charge of self-complacency in saying so. If someone accuses me of self-complacency, it is a matter of complete indifference to me, for I should have to be a fool or a hypocrite to pretend that I am of common stuff, and it is therefore in obedience to truth that I repeat that I am of the finest clay. (9)

Julien, who is extremely literate and well-read, looks down upon his illiterate family and those members of society who may possess material advantages but do not possess the personal merits deserving of a high position in society. These characters realize their personal resources at an early age and diligently work to develop their superior qualities, for they know that in this manner they can get ahead.

Felix and Julien both possess natural good looks, an attribute that Felix especially exploits in his efforts to get ahead. Julien, although somewhat weak and delicate looking, nevertheless is extremely attractive to women. Whereas everyone else in Verrieres despises and scorns him, "during the last year . . . his good looks had begun to win him a few supporters among the girls" (29). This is also seen in Madame de Renal's initial reaction to Julien. She "was completely taken in by the beauty of Julien's complexion, his great dark eyes and his becoming hair which was curling more than usual. . . . Never in her life had a purely agreeable sensation so profoundly stirred Madame de Renal" (41). For his part, Felix readily acknowledges his own physical appeal and claims that he is far more attractive than any of his peers. He describes the boys in his neighborhood as

common fellows, to be sure, with coarse hair and red hands, and they would have had trouble persuading

themselves that they were princes--and very foolish they would have looked, too. Whereas my hair was silken soft, as it seldom is in the male sex, and it was fair; like my blue-grey eyes, it provided a fascinating contrast to the golden brown of my skin.

(8-9)

This rather arrogant assessment of himself is borne out in his subsequent relations and interactions with both men and women alike.

Yet good looks are certainly not the only superior qualities that these two protagonists possess. Julien is extremely well read and is also an extremely quick learner in the academic field, as evidenced during his time at the seminary. Yet even before this, Julien proves his prowess at learning and recitation during his first evenings at the de Renals' house. He astonishes the entire household, family members, guests, and servants alike, by reciting from memory entire pages from the Bible: "This scene earned for Julien the title 'Sir'; the servants themselves dared not withhold it from him" (47). Julien is able to use the little schooling that he has had and his extensive reading (exclusively dealing with holy matters or Napoleon) to astonish the entire town and force its admiration of him. Felix Krull receives very little formal education, for in his childhood he is overly

concerned with inventing ways to skip class. Yet he possesses an amazing verbal talent and has the ability to convince anyone of anything. Felix sees the world as a stage upon which he is the main actor, an early indication of this attitude being his successful imitation of a violin player at the age of eight. After this amazing performance, which really involves no more than dressing up and noiselessly stroking a bow across a cheap violin, Felix explains how he "was overwhelmed with praises and caresses. The most aristocratic ladies and gentlemen stroked my hair, patted my cheeks and hands, called me an angel child and an amazing little devil" (16). Thus from an early age Julien and Felix realize that they possess the power to command admiration and respect from others. Although these early feats are essentially not great achievements, Julien merely repeating verbatim memorized passages from the Bible and Felix impersonating a violin player, they are a foreshadowing of the later impersonations and verbal acrobatics that these two characters will engage in during their later careers.

Julien and Felix both realize that because of their disreputable origins they will have to disassociate themselves from their roots. Julien, however, will never be able to overcome his early feelings of inferiority and shame. Although he later appears polished and sophisticated to his society, he is

never able to forget his past and believes that other people are also able to see beneath the surface. Throughout the book he is haunted by his past and although he struggles against this sense of inferiority, he is never able to overcome it. On the other hand, Felix merges his private self so totally with his public self that the two become one and he can no longer distinguish between them, nor does he think it important to. Thus each character is aware of his unique gifts and talents and determines to use them in order to advance his position in society. However Julien never reconciles himself to his public persona whereas Felix literally becomes whoever his public self happens to be at the time. Although each goes on to lead a life of hypocrisy, Julien continually struggles with this question of his dual identity while Felix is perfectly at ease with the loss of his private self.

As is evident by their early actions, both characters begin at a very young age their drive to succeed. Both Julien and Felix have tremendous ambition and are driven by a fierce willpower. The extremely strong wills of both men often enable them to forego current pleasures and to abstain from tempting bypaths. In this manner, Julien and Felix are almost as supermen, able to subvert and channel all their personal impulses and desires into the one strong drive to get ahead, this drive

being fueled by their wills. Felix makes an almost scientific investigation of this process: "I took it into my head to study the human will and to practise on myself its mysterious, sometimes supernatural effects. . . . My persistent efforts, let me assure you, were, in fact, crowned with success" (10). His ability to control his own involuntary muscle reactions as well as other emotions and thoughts remains with Felix throughout his life and contributes in great part to his success. When Felix is drafted by the German army he employs this learned willpower to avoid service. He describes the almost mystical trance he goes into during the mandatory physical in order to demonstrate that he is unfit for service:

My face became contorted--but that tells very little. In my opinion, it was contorted in an entirely new and terrifying fashion, such as no human passion could produce, but only a satanic influence and impulse. . . . I was not conscious during this most difficult and consequently lengthy period, at least I was not aware of my surroundings and audience, for to keep them in mind was rendered wholly impossible by the rigours of my condition. (96-97)

Besides these mystical and supernatural aspects, Felix's willpower also contains practical elements. Felix demonstrates

his self-control and ability to stick to his inner resolutions when he is working as a waiter at the Hotel Saint James and Albany in Paris. Felix, a personable and appealing young man, attracts many people at the hotel, including the wealthy Scottish Lord Strathbogie and the English heiress Eleanor Twentyman. His encounters with these two are extremely important to Felix:

These simultaneous incidents represented in their different ways temptations to depart prematurely from my chosen career, temptations, in fact, to hasten down one of those bypaths of which my godfather had spoken, and which one cannot too carefully examine in respect to their direction and length. (201)

Both of these characters offer Felix the chance to get away from his life as a mere waiter. They offer him a life of wealth and luxury, yet he refuses these opportunities. Felix instinctively knows that these two options are not the right choices for him. Although he wishes to better his station in life, he realizes that this is not the manner in which to go about it. For the moment, Felix is enjoying his double-life as both a waiter and a wealthy man of leisure (a role he occasionally adopts), and he will only give that up when he feels the time and opportunity are right. He comments, "the main thing was that a confident instinct within me rebelled against a form of reality that was

simply handed to me and was in addition sloppy--rebelled in favour of free play and dreams, self-created and self-sufficient, dependent, that is, only on imagination" (215).

Although Felix looks to the future and to his plan of getting ahead, he does not let it stop him from gaining enjoyment from the present. Julien, also driven by a strong will, does just the opposite. He very rarely derives pleasure from any of his actions and is so obsessed with the drive to get ahead that he cannot enjoy any of his triumphs. Evidence of this obsessional drive is seen shortly after he has entered the household of the de Renals. He becomes consumed with the idea of holding Mme. de Renal's hand, deciding "that it was his duty to secure that the hand should not be withdrawn when he touched it. The idea of a duty to be performed, and of making himself ridiculous, or rather being left with a sense of inferiority if he did not succeed in performing it, at once took all the pleasure from his heart" (71). Although it causes Julien much effort and anguish to gain the courage to grasp Mme. de Renal's hand, he feels that he will be unable to live with himself if he does otherwise. Once he has gotten the idea in his head that he must hold her hand, he will not be content until he has accomplished his objective. When he does succeed, "his heart was flooded with joy, not because he loved Madame de Renal, but

because a fearful torment was now at an end" (74). Thus, Julien is also driven by a fierce will, yet his personality does not allow him to enjoy his triumphs. Obsessed with the concept of the right thing to do and the idea of duty, Julien continually torments himself about achieving his desired goals while gaining only a brief moment of pleasure from these so-called accomplishments.

Julien and Felix reveal much about their own self-perceptions through their interactions and relationships with other people. Each in some manner judges himself and sees himself through the eyes of others. This, however, is accomplished in drastically different manners. Felix, although he continually manipulates and controls other people, also wishes to please them. Julien, on the other hand, does not really care about the feelings of others; he merely wishes to advance his own cause. This distinction can be seen in the protagonists' attitudes towards serving others. Felix, in his position as both liftboy and waiter at the Parisian hotel, genuinely enjoys serving others. He takes great pride and satisfaction in making other people happy. He realizes that he has a unique talent for pleasing people, and he develops this ability not only while at the hotel, but also in all aspects of his various relationships with people. He truly desires to make all the people he comes in

contact with, his lovers, friends, employers, and clients happy. As Robert Heilman explains, "Felix does not merely use others; he gratifies them. From beginning to end he never loses the intent to give pleasure or the pleasure of giving it. . . . The art of pleasing is at once narcissistic and altruistic" (148).

Felix does not see his job as waiter and liftboy as in any way demeaning, but rather sees himself as possessing a superior skill in being able to please the hotel's wealthy clientele. Julien, on the other hand, is horrified at the thought of being treated as a mere servant. When faced with the possibility of taking his meals with the servants of the de Renals, he would rather refuse his profitable job offer: "'I must give up all that,' he said to himself, 'rather than let myself be brought down to feeding with their servants'" (31). Julien is obsessed with the thought of his low position in society, and even when he is treated with respect by members of the upper class, he feels that they may be secretly mocking and scorning him. Thus he never wishes to serve or even to please other people (with a few exceptions), but rather wishes others to bend to his will and do his bidding. While both Julien and Felix are competent manipulators of people, Felix is the one who both gives as well as takes satisfaction out of these encounters. Julien, who himself cannot derive pleasure from any contact with other

people, certainly is not concerned with bringing any pleasure to the other party. In this sense, they both judge themselves through the eyes of others, Julien believing that if he makes an attempt to serve or please others he will be despised and looked down upon, Felix wishing to gain the goodwill of others by making them happy.

Besides studying the protagonists' interactions with other people in general, it is necessary to also explore their relationships with women. Julien and Felix reveal much about their self-perceptions as well as motivations through their views on women. Julien is very intense in his pursuit of both Madame de Renal and Mathilde, and yet he is driven more by the desire of conquest than through any genuine love for these two women. He certainly is not motivated by any strong sexual longings and, in fact, his first night spent with Mathilde is rather cold and unenjoyable: "To tell the truth, their transports were somewhat deliberate. Passionate love was far more a model which they were imitating than a reality with them" (428). Francis Merrill believes that "in his confrontations with others Julien was, therefore, tremendously self-conscious. Even in his amorous transports he is aware that he is playing a role" (451). Julien is only happy about these relationships in that they involve him with highly placed, well-respected women. He does not really

care for them, but only for the fact that he is conducting affairs with women who are much higher on the social scale than he is. He feels a sense of power in bringing these noblewomen to their knees for him. Although he may at times believe that he really cares for them, he is only confusing love with ambition and vanity. He often speaks of being in the throes of undying love, yet one suspects that if Madame de Renal or Mathilde were merely kitchen maids, Julien would not give them a moment's thought. Since these high-ranking women think highly of him, he feels that he must be deserving of their praise and love. After learning of Madame de Renal's attraction to him, Julien convinces himself that he should be her lover. "This woman cannot despise me any longer: in that case," he said to himself, "I ought to be stirred by her beauty; I owe it to myself to be her lover!" (104). It is this feeling, which usually does not last for too long, which makes him value these women. Generally, he merely uses Madame de Renal and Mathilde for what they can give him, not just in material advantages but in what they contribute to his mental image of himself. He only becomes interested in these women when he feels that they are sending out some sort of signal to him. On his own, he may never have pursued either Madame de Renal or Mathilde. However, once he has the idea in his head that they are interested, it becomes a burning obsession with him

to possess these women, not for the sake of love but for the sake of his pride. Speaking of Mathilde, he insists "I will have her, I shall then depart and woe to him that impedes me in my flight!" . . . This plan became Julien's sole occupation; he could no longer give a thought to anything else" (385). As previously mentioned, once Julien had an idea in his head he felt it was his duty to pursue it and follow it through until its completion. He could not be content until this happened, and his exploits with women fit into this general pattern.

Felix, in his pursuit of women, is almost the opposite of Julien. Although he also does not have an overwhelming sex drive, he nevertheless takes great pleasure in sexual encounters, as shown in his early experiences with Genovefa and Rozsa. It is not until almost the end of the novel that Felix even actively pursues a woman. In fact, he generally adopts the passive role, as exemplified by his night with Diane Houpfle. This extremely wealthy and powerful woman virtually seduces him and even rewards him with money and jewels. Yet Felix does not deliberately use Diane as Julien uses his two mistresses; he merely desires a night of pleasure and unexpectedly receives a monetary reward. His only actual pursuit of a woman occurs near the conclusion of the book when he attempts to seduce ZouZou Kuckuck. He prolongs his stay in Portugal in order to continue his flirtation with

this young lady, yet his pursuit of her is more of a game than a serious search for love. He enjoys making long poetic speeches to her about love and plotting her seduction, yet he knows that nothing serious can ever come of it. In his current guise as the world-traveling Marquis, Felix realizes that it would be impossible for him to get seriously involved with anyone or anything. However, his flirtation with her is a pleasant way to pass the time and he knows that she enjoys it as much as he:

Poetry, moreover, came easily to me in my
foundationless existence. It was simple enough for me
to say that love has no ulterior object and does not
think beyond a kiss at most, because in my unreal state
I could not permit myself to come to grips with reality
and, for example, to woo Zouzou. At best I could set
myself the goal of seducing her. (349)

Thus, while Julien uses the women he is involved with to bolster his own self-esteem and to gain material advantages, Felix has much less serious motives. He enjoys the company of women and takes satisfaction out of pleasing them, yet he does not use them purely as a path to advancement. While Julien needs his women to validate his own existence, Felix does not find such a prop necessary.

Just as Julien and Felix often view other people as a means

to an end, they share similar views of physical objects. Both men appreciate the so-called finer things in life, and greatly admire jewels, fine books, good clothes, and other status symbols. They wish to possess these things in order to present the proper appearance to the world. As Felix explains, money and wealth are necessary:

"Poverty," it is said, "is no sin," but that is just talk. To its possessor it is highly sinister--half defect, half undefined reproach; it is in every way extremely repulsive, and any association with it may lead to unpleasant consequences. (119-120)

They really have no intrinsic desire for many of these things, Felix desiring merely the possession of these things because he feels he should have them, while Julien wants them to make himself appear more acceptable in the eyes of the aristocratic society which he lives in. Yet here, as always, there is one crucial difference. Julien can extract no sense of pleasure out of any objects that he possesses, just as he is unable to enjoy any of his actions or relationships. Rather than being able to enjoy the moment, Julien is constantly looking to the future and thus can never be completely happy or satisfied. Felix, always alert to his public image, does not really enjoy his possessions for their value in themselves. Yet he does enjoy the act of

acquiring objects and the appearance he presents with them. "The critical appreciation of luxurious objects," Donald Nelson writes, "is an index of refined taste and consistent with Krull's own elegant standards and ideally envisioned style of life" (45). In his work on Felix Krull, T. E. Apter also discusses this peculiarity of Felix's, saying that "Krull does not actually desire wealth--he desires to produce the illusion of wealth. His attention is naturally drawn to jewels, for jewels are symbols of wealth but worthless in themselves and capture people's hearts through loveliness alone" (123). Felix is also able to gain great joy and satisfaction out of his many experiences, as well as his many material possessions. He enjoys not only the outcome of his various enterprises, but also the procedures used in the obtaining of them. Julien only looks at objects and people in the perspective of what they can provide him while at the same time gaining no pleasure or satisfaction from them. Felix also recognizes the value of what other people and things have for him, yet he nonetheless derives a certain pleasure from them.

Once their attitudes toward other people and physical objects are examined, their attitude toward time becomes easy to understand. Both Felix and Julien have a particular conception of time, viewing the present as a bridge to the future. In some ways, they identify their concept of the self with time, each

always keeping an eye to the future and making his plans accordingly. This explains Julien's inability to ever enjoy the moment, for whenever he lets his guard slip and derives some small pleasure, he is immediately jerked back into his conceptual view of time. He refuses to allow himself to get caught up in the pleasures that the present has to offer him and is instead continually thinking ahead. In her in-depth study of Stendhal and Julien, Elizabeth Tenenbaum states,

A fear of passivity is central to Julien's character. He is convinced that happiness can be found only through continual striving. . . . Working toward a goal is more important to Julien than actually attaining it. . . . Constantly striving toward a distant goal, Julien experiences the present only as a bridge to something that lies ahead . . . [and] he tends to be oblivious to present pleasures. (52-53)

He always feels that he has not yet reached his goal, and he believes that only when he becomes fully accepted in the upper class society that he aspires to will he deserve any happiness.

Felix, while also looking to the future, nevertheless derives much pleasure from the present. He knows that great things lie in store for him in the future, yet he does not subdue his enjoyment of the present in anticipation of what the future

holds in store for him. Although Felix never loses sight of his master plan, he possesses an immense capacity to enjoy the present. While Julien's private self feels guilty for the actions and excesses he commits in his struggle to advance, Felix merely enjoys the moment while still keeping one eye on the future. Each character's conception of himself and how he lives his life is intimately linked with his perception of time. These protagonists never allow themselves to lose sight of the future, and although Julien and Felix cannot clearly articulate exactly what it is that they expect, they nevertheless know that they are destined for great things.

Each character's ability to cope with his public and private selves is related to his attitude concerning his place in his history and society. Julien blames much of his misfortune on the fact that he is living in the post-Napoleonic era in France. He repeatedly asserts that things would be different if he had just been born twenty years earlier; then he perhaps could have been as great a genius as Napoleon. He feels that he has as much to offer the world as his idol Napoleon: "for many years now, perhaps not an hour of Julien's life had passed without his reminding himself that Bonaparte, an obscure subaltern with no fortune, had made himself master of the world with his sword" (36). However, Julien realizes that times have changed and the

France of his time has repudiated Napoleon and all he stood for. Although the great Emperor is one of Julien's heroes, Julien must hide this fact and keep his admiration concealed. He recognizes that the time for great military prowess has passed, and that the new heroes and leaders of the world come from a much different manner of life. Ultimately he realizes that

When Bonaparte made a name for himself, France was in fear of being invaded; military distinction was necessary and fashionable. To-day we see priests at forty drawing stipends of a hundred thousand francs, that is to say three times as much as the famous divisional commanders under Napoleon. They must have people to support them. Look at the Justice here, so wise a man, always so honest until now, sacrificing his honour, at his age, from fear of offending a young vicar of thirty. I must become a priest. (37)

Although Julien may have preferred a glorious military career, he sees the tremendous power and prestige that members of the clergy possess, and although this may not be his true vocation, he nevertheless determines to enter into its ranks. He continually dwells on the time frame that he lives in, and the concept of history and his place in it has great significance for him; Julien frames many of his ideas and actions to fit into the

historical background of his time. Julien never really feels at home, whether he is in his native village of Verrieres with his family or the de Renals, in the seminary at Besancon, or in the Hotel de La Mole in Paris, and he repeatedly thinks how different things would be if it were only a generation earlier: "'Alas, twenty years ago, I should have worn a uniform like them! In those days a man of my sort was either killed, or a General at six and thirty'" (405).

Felix, on the other hand, does not seem particularly concerned with where he fits into the historical scheme of his time. Although he does describe in great detail the various places where he has lived and traveled to, including the Rhine Valley where he was born and the Portuguese court where he meets and entertains the King, he seldom if ever makes specific references to the time that these events occur. Dates and years have no great meaning for Felix Krull, who fits easily into any social stratum and time frame. He is at ease in any culture, be it German, French, or Portuguese, and would be equally comfortable in any time frame. He has the ability to speak virtually any language with no prior studying and to fit into any surroundings. Felix adapts to every environment and adroitly plays every role, whether it is that of the efficient French waiter or the nobleman from Luxemburg making a tour of the world.

It is here that the difference between Julien and Felix is dramatically highlighted. Julien, instead of accepting the world as it is and doing his best to adapt to it, continually rebels against it and blames history for his misfortunes. He excuses his inability to fit in by saying that in another time he would live a much greater life. Felix, however, sees no such problem with his place in society. From an early age he has "believed myself favoured of fortune and of Heaven," (7) and Felix knows that he will always succeed, no matter what his circumstances and environment, because he is perfectly adaptable.

Closely related to this emphasis on history is the actual society that Felix and Julien participate in. Julien, born a member of the lower class French peasantry, aspires to the higher ranks of society. At first he believes that he will accomplish his rise in society through becoming a priest, but after his dalliance with the noble Mathilde, he realizes that he actually can become a member of the French aristocracy. Yet all the while, he secretly scorns the attitudes and actions of the highbred society to which he wants to belong. In fact, Julien is torn throughout the novel between his desire to be a part of the upper rungs of society and his contempt for its members. He thinks himself above the trivial and worthless thoughts and actions that occupy the members of high society, yet he also

judges himself through these same people's perceptions of him. Comments Tenenbaum, "From the vantage point of a perpetual outsider, he clearly perceives the meanness, hypocrisy, and corruption that pervade every level of society. But like his creator he finds it impossible to preserve his integrity by totally repudiating the social world" (37). Julien clearsightedly recognizes and condemns all of the evils and corruptions that exist in the world, yet he chooses to become a part of this world and the society that forms it. Although he scorns them, he nevertheless lives by the standards that this society sets and judges himself according to them. One such example occurs when he challenges a young nobleman to a duel because of a supposed slight. Julien, to whom the idea of fighting is inherently abhorrent, challenges a coachman, masquerading as his master the Chevalier de Beauvoisis, to a duel because he was insolently staring at him. Julien does this because he thinks it is the proper thing to do: in order not to lose face in society's eyes, he must uphold his honor. Tenenbaum explains that "Julien concludes that courageous action does not require an intrinsically fearless nature, but only a commitment to a sense of honor that is rooted in the eye of others" (45). This insult offends him so that "Julien found himself bathed in sweat. 'So it lies within the power of the lowest of mankind to

work me up like this!' he said angrily to himself. 'How am I to destroy this humiliating sensibility?'" (336) Thus Julien participates in a silly duel, which he really has no grounds for, purely in order to avenge an imagined slight to his honor. This is merely one example of Julien's extremely contradictory view toward his society. Because he refuses to accept a life as a peasant with all his hardships and discomforts and strives for the best in physical and material advantages, he is forced to participate in a lifestyle he abhors. Yet he is never able to reconcile his inner desires and attitudes with those that are thrust on him in his quest to succeed in life. There is always an internal war raging inside Julien's breast between the dictates of his conscience and the dictates of the society that he has chosen to live in. As usual, Felix sees no such contradictions in his life. As previously mentioned, Felix is at ease in any culture and any society. He does not despise all of the corruption and vices that are found in society; he rather embraces his society and all that it has to offer. Frederic Morton captures the fullness and richness of life that Felix experiences. He describes Felix as

a gourmet of society. His expertise interests itself much less in the rewards of make-believe than in choreography. He roams the rungs of the social ladder

as Rubinstein does over the piano keys, recognizing, like Rubinstein, differences in tone, not in intrinsic value. Life's an everlasting opera to him, in which every class plays counterpoint to the other; low gains its piquancy from high, high its loftiness from low.

(78)

Felix derives a great deal of satisfaction out of the pure pleasure of living life to the fullest and experiencing all that the world has to offer. He has no quarrels with his society and no hatred against it. Although Felix, like Julien, was not born to the upper classes, he does not feel the contradictory emotions that Julien experiences about his movement up the social ladder. Felix is secure in his own sense of self-identity, and he always is able to gain the good opinion of society to reinforce his perception of himself. He knows that he can successfully play any role that is required and assimilate himself triumphantly into any society. Rather than battling against society, he is manipulating it for his own advantage. Whereas Julien claims to repudiate society and not to care for its opinion of him (although he actually does), Felix acknowledges that society's good opinion is important. For although he acknowledges that one's true worth is measured internally rather than externally, after being granted a medal by the Portuguese King, he reveals

his thinking on the matter:

I know very well that one's true worth is not worn in enamel on one's shirt front, but deeper in the breast. But people . . . like to see the outward show, the symbol, the decoration worn in full view. I do not criticize them for this, I am full of kindly understanding of their needs. And it is my sympathy and love for my fellow men that make me rejoice at being able to gratify their childish love of show in the future by wearing the Red Lion, second class. (333)

The society that he lives in is very important to Felix and he wishes to live in its good graces. Yet he is confident in his ability to continue to do so; he knows that he will always be able to win its approval.

These contradictory attitudes toward their societies are also reflected in their perceptions of how they fit into their chosen environments. Although both Felix and Julien are accepted without question in the societies that they inhabit, Julien can never quite believe this while Felix remains supremely confident as always. Julien, aware that he will have to submerge his true thoughts and feelings in order to advance in life, determines to live a life of hypocrisy. Yet although he acknowledges this, he cannot quite come to terms with it, and he believes that others

are unable to accept him either. Stendhal's protagonist is always on the lookout for scorn or mockery, and although this high society may accept him with no qualms or questions, he never allows himself to believe this. An early example of this doubt is seen shortly after Julien and Madame de Renal consummate their passion for each other and Julien almost reveals his true admiration concerning Napoleon to her. After making a short speech, Julien misconstrues Madame de Renal's reaction and thinks that she is looking down on him because he is low-born and not a member of the upper classes like herself. In actuality, Madame de Renal is thinking of her immense love for Julien, yet the object of her love and desire refuses to believe in her:

He saw Madame de Renal frown suddenly; she assumed a cold, disdainful air; this line of thought seemed to her worthy of a servant. Brought up in the idea that she was extremely rich, it seemed to her a thing to be taken for granted that Julien was also. She loved him a thousand times more than life itself, she would have loved him even had he been ungrateful and faithless, and money to her meant nothing. Julien was far from guessing what was in her mind. This frown brought him back to earth. . . . This frown, or rather his remorse for his imprudence, was the first check administered to

the illusion that was bearing Julien away. . . . (123)

The narrator goes on to explain that Julien's inability to trust Madame de Renal and to believe that she accepted and understood him for the person that he really was kept Julien from true love and happiness: "Julien's happiness was, that day, on the point of becoming permanent. What our hero lacked was the courage to be sincere" (123). Sands sees this as being an extreme flaw in Julien's character: "His habit of keeping himself concealed even from those who are close to him is a strong trait in his personality . . . there is something missing in the feeling of relatedness" (352).

Later, at the Hotel de La Mole, Julien is constantly imagining that the other members of the household and their guests are making fun of him and viewing with derision him and his background. In reality these people are thinking nothing of the sort, yet Julien is too wrapped up in himself and his imagined sorrows and humiliations to realize this. Although he is undoubtedly a cause of attention and wonderment upon his first arrival in Paris, after he has proved himself worthy of the Marquis de La Mole's confidence, the snide comments and mockery vanish. Explains Sands,

society plays its part, with its snobberies and class system. But Julien is able to outwit obstacles of that

kind when he wants to. What he never does overcome is his position as an outsider, and his position as an outsider is marked by the Stendhalian habit--a habit of his personality rather than his class--of examining his feelings. His alienation, as Turnell points out, is a psychological as well as a social distinction. He is cut off not only from other classes, but from the rest of humanity. (338)

The great Marquis even begins to treat Julien as almost an equal, buying him a blue coat, as opposed to his everyday black workcoat, and addressing him not as a servant or employee but as a friend. When he visited M. de La Mole in his blue coat, "the Marquis treated him as an equal. Julien had a heart capable of appreciating true politeness, but he had no idea of the finer shades. . . . Julien was obsessed by this strange idea: 'can he be laughing at me?' he wondered" (344). The roots of this conviction go far into Julien's past. Tenenbaum believes that many of his early experiences lead to his lack of faith in himself: "Although the possession of a phenomenal memory that brings him public acclaim helps convince him he is a man of superior worth, he nevertheless continues to believe that others despise him" (55). Thus, although Julien professes to live by the creed of hypocrisy, he cannot achieve this. He is not

comfortable with his role in high society, and his perception of how others view him, although generally not accurate, nevertheless increases his agitation and unease.

Of course, Felix has complete confidence in his ability to fit in and be accepted by his chosen societies. Because he has this faith, he never questions how others see him, taking it for granted that everyone believes he is who he claims to be. Felix can play any role in any environment, for he is not only a master mimic verbally, but he also possesses powers of counterfeiting. Felix delights in his incredible acting talents, whether he is trying to escape compulsory military duty or impersonating the wealthy Marquis de Venosta. Felix totally immerses himself in the part he is playing and since he really has no identity apart from the role he is playing at the time, it is really not difficult to see him as successfully carrying out any impersonation that he attempts. While Julien is continually torn by the conflict between the self that he feels he really is and the self that he presents to society, Felix's private and public selves are essentially one so there is no conflict. At one point in his career, Felix literally played two roles simultaneously, being an efficient waiter by day and a wealthy man of leisure at night. The question of which role reflects his true self is immaterial because Felix does not have a "real" self. Felix

explains that he lives

a kind of dual existence, whose charm lay in the ambiguity as to which figure was the real I and which the masquerade: was I the liveried commis-de-salle who waited on and flattered the guests in the Saint James and Albany, or was I the unknown man of distinction who looked as though he must keep a riding-horse and who would certainly, once he had finished dinner, call in at various exclusive salons but was meanwhile graciously permitting himself to be served by waiters among whom I found none equal to me in my other role? Thus I masqueraded in both capacities, and the undisguised reality behind the two appearances, the real I, could not be identified because it actually did not exist. (124)

This is the key to understanding Felix's tremendous success in adapting to any society and being accepted by even the most well-bred and high ranking members of European society, including the King of Portugal. He never doubts his supreme ability to act his way through life and play any role which fate offers him. In fact, Morton argues that Felix really has no inherent personality traits whatsoever: "For Krull is an archswindler who, just because he himself is nothing, is superb in assuming somebody

else's costumes. He has no central trait except a wonderfully self-complacent self-confidence in playing whatever trait he really doesn't have" (76). When presented the opportunity to travel around the world in the guise of the Marquis de Venosta, he does not hesitate for an instant and even formulates the plan. He has no qualms in this somewhat dangerous and risky enterprise for he knows that he is more than up to the challenge:

Reason insisted I would be setting forth on a dangerous road, a road that would require cautious treading.

Reason repeated this with emphasis and only succeeded in enhancing the charm of the adventure in my eyes, an adventure that would call upon all my talents. It is useless to warn the courageous against some action on the ground that it requires courage. I do not hesitate to admit that long before my companion returned I had decided to embark on the adventure, had indeed so decided at the moment when I told him that no one could release him from his promise. (240)

Felix does not have any struggle with society or its members, for all those that he encounters on his various travels take him at face value, as Felix is confident that they will. Felix enthusiastically embraces society, not wanting merely to take advantage of it but also to bring happiness to all those he

meets. Although he has little formal education and comes from a disreputable background, he never is worried that people will discover this fact. He has such strong verbal and persuasive powers and is able to assimilate himself so strongly into the role that he is playing that he knows he will always be successful. Whereas Julien stands somewhat apart from society, continually battling against it, Felix works from within society's ranks to achieve his desires. Julien thinks that society is always against him, preventing him from achieving his desired goals in life, while Felix knows that he is favored by fortune and will be able to accomplish all that he wants.

In their attempt to move up in the world, Julien and Felix both realize that they must occasionally take advantage of and use other people. In order for his public self to succeed, Julien must subdue any sympathy or empathy for those people whom he has harmed while climbing the social ladder. After lightly taking away a job from a man truly needy and deserving of it, he realizes that in this world these things inevitably happen and that he must play by his society's rules in order to succeed:

Julien was astonished at the effect of what he had done. 'This family of the dead man, what are they living on now?' The thought of this wrung his heart. 'It is nothing,' he told himself; 'I must be prepared

for many other acts of injustice, if I am to succeed, and what it more, must know how to conceal them, under a cloak of fine sentimental words.' (352)

Julien realizes that he must use and manipulate people to his own advantage in order to advance his position. Felix also recognizes this basic fact and has no scruples in doing so. However, once again there is the difference in each character's ability to carry out his intentions. In his maneuvers, Felix never harms those he comes in contact with and actually helps them in some manner. Edward Kaufman demonstrates how society is actually in collusion with Felix:

Society is its own accomplice to the 'artistry' of Krull. Far from being unprincipled and unscrupulous as he may at first appear, Krull merely accomplishes and fulfils [sic] what others would have him do. . . . His talent rests on an ability to provide the world with what it asks of him; [sic] his secret knowledge, on the insight that society itself has created for him a role which he is constitutionally prepared to assume.

(120-121)

Julien generally can give no thought to anyone besides himself while Felix, although always placing himself first, nonetheless brings much good to others. This is related to his

idea of serving others because Felix likes to see other people happy, and he is very good at providing joy for others. His various roles in life are analogous to that of an actor, except his stage is on a much larger scale, comprising the entire world. He develops his philosophy of life at a young age, when he attends a performance by the actor Muller-Rose, a fascinating, attractive character on stage but in reality an ugly, pimpled, repulsive man. Felix realizes here that every individual needs some type of diversion or escape from the trials and tribulations of everyday life, that the type of illusion that Muller-Rose performs is necessary and people must occasionally be deceived in this manner:

Here quite clearly there is in operation a general human need, implanted by God Himself in human nature, which Muller-Rose's abilities are created to satisfy. This beyond doubt is an indispensable device in life's economy, which this man is kept and paid to serve . . . to move before his audience with such assurance as to make them see in him their hearts' ideal and thereby to enliven and edify them infinitely. (28)

Felix takes this ideal and incorporates it into his own life, devoting himself to a life of illusion and impersonations, a life which ultimately is satisfying to him as well as to all those

whom he encounters. For herein lies the secret of Felix's concept of his own identity. Accustomed to a life of deceptions and illusions, Felix believes that knowing one's "true self" is not really an issue. He does not believe it important to distinguish between the actor's personality and that of the role that he is currently playing. In his estimation the true actor, as personified by him, becomes one with his role. He explains his theory in the scene with Muller-Rose: "For when you come to think of it, which is the real shape of the glowworm: the insignificant little creature crawling about on the palm of your hand, or the poetic spark that swims through the summer night? Who would presume to say?" (28) In his essay on humor and morality in Mann's writing, Anthony Riley explores the stage metaphor in Felix Krull: "The artist needs a public, and the public needs an artist: this simple and naive formula, the truth of which Felix Krull realizes very early in life in the artist Muller-Rose's dressing room, is the foundation upon which Krull later builds a more positive philosophy" (248). Felix lives by this credo throughout the remainder of his life. He never considers it important to examine his life or his inner self and never has any kind of internal conflict over who he really is. He adapts his behavior to the role of the character he is playing at the time, whether it be a wealthy Luxembourg Marquis, a draft-

dodger, or a waiter.

An essential difference between Julien and Felix is demonstrated in this issue, concerning the level of confidence and assuredness that each character displays. Julien, although he knows that he is very bright and well-read, can never quite summon up enough confidence in his own abilities. When he is asked a question that he does not know the answer to or makes a mistake, he is not able to laugh this off as Felix would be, but instead is mortified at his failure and tries to make excuses. When Monsieur de Renal asks him to recite a few lines of Horace, a poet that Julien is totally unfamiliar with, Julien answers "with a frown: 'The sacred ministry to which I intend to devote myself has forbidden me to read so profane a poet'" (47). Julien is ill at ease here and is unable to laugh off the incident as Felix would be able to, for he takes things personally to heart. Instead of responding in an easygoing manner, he stiffly answers his employer and briefly causes an uncomfortable moment. He does, however, learn from this that there is still much that he does not know and realizes that he must devote much more time to studying. He makes it a point to learn more about Horace and is later able to use this knowledge successfully to impress the household of the Marquis de la Mole.

Felix, not very well educated or schooled in literature or

the arts, is nevertheless able to convince everyone that he is. He can extemporaneously verbalize for hours on subjects that he really knows nothing about and manage to seem an expert. When being interviewed for a job at the Saint James and Albany, he bursts into French poetry to impress the interviewer, although he has never studied French or poetry. He is also able, like Julien, to pick up on little bits of knowledge and later take advantage of them in conversation, as is the case with the figure of Hermes. He first learns of this mythological figure during his romantic interlude with Diane Houpfle and later incorporates it into Professor Kuckuck's explanation of time and the universe. Thus, Felix is always able to appear as the figure that he wishes to portray, regardless of whether he has the qualifications for it. He is never at a loss for words and his supreme acting talents never fail him. Contrary to Felix is Julien, who is often in unfamiliar territory and instead of forging ahead, falters. He is troubled by that which he does not know and cannot bluff or act his way out of potentially dangerous situations. Julien is too tormented by the thought of his true identity and inner personality to totally immerse himself in the outer persona which he presents to the world. He does not have the self-confidence necessary to successfully carry out his plan of a life of hypocrisy. He is too conscious of his self-induced

hypocrisy, and although he acknowledges that this is the only way to achieve the lifestyle that he wants, he does not allow himself to fully accomplish this. He is talented enough to achieve higher positions and repeatedly proves that he is worthy of acclaim and advancement. He is even able to gain the hand of Mathilde, a member of the high French aristocracy, in marriage, yet he refuses to reconcile his two lives and thus is doomed. Because he cannot free himself from the bondage of his roots, he condemns himself. Felix, on the other hand, has all but abandoned any personality which he may have been born with. In the various roles and occupations that he takes on during the course of the book, he totally merges his character traits with those of the role that he is playing. Because he always has the utmost faith and confidence in himself, he inspires faith and belief in others and thus is always successful. He has no internal battles to fight between his two selves because in actuality there is only one Felix Krull, the one who is presented to the public. Thus there is no discrepancy in what he knows and what he does not know, in what he has studied and what he has not studied, and in what he has done and has not done. Felix is not actually living a life of hypocrisy because he is not one man pretending to be something that he is not. He is instead whoever he claims to be at the time. This supreme self-confidence is a

manifestation of Felix's ability to immerse himself in the role that he is playing. Julien, on the other hand, cannot merge his private and public identities nor kill off the self that he cannot live with, so he is uncomfortable in any situation.

Although both characters perceive themselves through the opinions and viewpoints of others, Julien does this in a negative way while Felix is positive in this endeavor. Julien, by leading his double life, is torn and does not know whether to follow what his heart tells him that he really wants to do or what his head tells him that he should do. This struggle in some sense takes away his ability to perceive accurately what others feel about him. He derives his sense of his own self-worth from what others think of him since he cannot look to himself for answers or judgments. However, he claims to despise those very people whom he is allowing to validate his life. Merrill explains that "he constantly measures himself in the eyes of these intermediate others, and his self-attitudes waver between pride of [sic] his superior intellect and (later) his mastery over Mathilde, on the one hand, and a miserable self-deprecation, on the other" (451):
Julien must look outside of himself and take his perceptions of what others think of him as fact.

Since Julien calculates all his moves and actions according to what he thinks his hypocritical life calls for, he also

believes it necessary to base his actions on what other people expect and advise him to do. Julien cannot be content with the simple pleasures of a country life, the advantages offered him in a life in the clergy, or even in marriage to the fabulously wealthy Mathilde. He must always be striving for more, although he is not sure what it is he is wishing for. He is always on the alert for some slur to his person or his honor, and it is this which causes his downfall. After the receipt of the derogatory letter by Madame de Renal, which Julien takes as a direct insult to his honor, he seals his own fate by attempting to kill her. He is irrational in this attempt and does not stop to think about what he is doing. He has finally achieved his much longed for position in high society; yet he throws it all away. He does this because he thinks it is his duty to avenge his honor, not because he really wishes to kill his former mistress. This is the most drastic example of how Julien determines his thoughts and actions through what he perceives is the proper thing to do. Similar actions, though on a lesser scale, make up the book.

Felix also bases many actions on what others think of him and what he should do, yet he is always deliberate in his judgments. He is very accurate in reading other people and always knows the proper things to do. He never misjudges others' reactions and thus, although he plans his actions around them,

his perceptions and the following procedures are always correct. Kaufmann talks of Felix's infallible power to make the right move and to never fail in any endeavor that he undertakes: "Always quick to determination and action, he suffers no ambivalences, vacillations [sic], unfulfilments, or frustrations. Any gain and accomplishment he enjoys--and with him there are an extraordinarily large number--entails [sic] no corresponding loss or sacrifice" (118). While it seems that Felix is always aware of the right and proper thing to do, Julien can never come to grips with this essential element in leading a life of hypocrisy, and even when he does do the socially correct thing, he inwardly struggles with it.

In the conclusions of The Red and the Black and the Confessions of Felix Krull: Confidence Man lie the final pieces to the true understanding of Felix Krull and Julien Sorel. Each man ultimately determines his own fate based on his actions and beliefs in the preceding episodes of his life and thus each conclusion, while perhaps a slight surprise, is nevertheless deftly prepared by the author. After the shooting of Madame de Renal, Julien's story is nonetheless far from over. He readily admits to his crime, saying he deliberately meant to murder his former mistress, although after learning that she was not fatally wounded he is glad. He spends many weeks in a prison cell where

he is left to deliberate on his crime and his former life. He is allowed visitors, and among those who come to call are his father, his best friend Fouque, and both his mistresses. From these visits and from his solitary reflections, Julien comes to a new realization. It is while he is in prison that Julien is finally able to begin to come to terms with himself. Since he no longer needs to live a double life, Julien can for the first time in his life come to grips with the person that he truly is. There is no more need of pretense and duplicity; Julien can now show his true thoughts and feelings, for there is no possibility for either rewards or repercussions. He is finally truly the master of his own fate in the isolated and artificial environment of the prison cell. It seems that Julien has finally realized that he is unable to live the life of hypocrisy necessary in order to obtain what he desires out of life, yet he also cannot live life on his own inner terms. He recognizes that there is no place in his society for the person he truly wants to be. Thus in the process of self-discovery, he virtually destroys himself. He has ample opportunities to procure his release from prison, yet he refuses every one of them. He knows that he is only able to be truly happy in this seclusion from the world, as artificial as it is, and once he would return to society he would revert to his former self. He is able to rediscover his passion for Madame

de Renal while in prison, and this time it is a true and genuine love:

As for Julien, except during the moments usurped by the presence of Mathilde, he was living upon love and with hardly a thought of the future. . . . "In the past," Julien said to her [Madame de Renal], "when I might have been so happy during our walks in the woods of Vergy, a burning ambition led my soul into imaginary tracts. . . . The thought of my future tore me away from you. . . . No, I should have died without knowing what happiness meant, had you not come to visit me in this prison." (626)

All of his former phony sentiments vanish and Julien's true emotions finally emerge. Yet Julien is clear-sighted enough to recognize that this new conception of himself would not last outside of this environment; thus he defeats every attempt to save himself. When on trial, he condemns himself, and the jury, which was formerly rather sympathetic to his cause, have no recourse but to convict him and sentence him to execution. Julien dies a happy man, secure in his knowledge of the love that he shares with Madame de Renal and knowing that there is no other possibility for a happy ending for him.

The conclusion to the story of Felix Krull's life is

diametrically opposed to that of Julien Sorel. Felix never changes his fundamental outlook on life. He continues to meet the world with exuberance and vitality and this is nowhere better exemplified than the final scene in the novel. Felix spends the last portion of the novel in his attempt to seduce the charming young Zouzou and in the last few pages is finally successfully in winning her over. After he has spent endless hours inventing beautiful speeches of love and teasing and cajoling the young girl, she finally ardently responds to Felix. Shortly before he is to leave Portugal, Zouzou secretly meets Felix and proceeds to melt under his embrace. However, after only a few short kisses, this romantic interlude is interrupted by Zouzou's fierce but beautiful mother. Felix, however, is not unduly concerned by her discovery. "I ask you to believe that I was less cast down by this maternal apparition than one might have thought. However unexpected her appearance, it seemed fitting and necessary, as though she had been summoned, and in my natural confusion there was an element of joy" (376). Zouzou runs away in shame while Felix attempts to explain his conduct to Maria Kuckuck. During this explanation, however, matters take a much different turn and there is a scene of mutual seduction between Felix and Maria. It seems rather contradictory that Felix, who should spend weeks and weeks and even extend his stay in Portugal in order to court

Zouzou, should so easily embrace the young girl's mother; however, this is perfectly in accord with Felix's character. Felix lives for the moment, not just the future, and is always ready to seize any advantageous opportunity. He has always admired Madame Kuckuck and so it is no surprise that Felix, a lover of beautiful and generally older women, should eagerly welcome the opportunity of this affair. Since he never genuinely loved Zouzou it is comparatively easy for him to transfer his affection and desire from her to her mother. Felix always is eager, and willing to please others and he knows that Madame Kuckuck wants him and that he can greatly please her. Throughout the book, Felix is not hesitant in seizing the chances that come his way and he has an uncanny sense for doing what the situation calls for. Therefore he takes a situation which could be threatening to him and his reputation and turns it into one which is not only pleasurable to himself but also to Madame Kuckuck. No thought is given to poor Zouzou; however, Felix knows that she is destined to marry her father's assistant and she is definitely much better off with him than with a man impersonating another man. Her mother, on the other hand, is old enough to know what she wants and thus both she and Felix enter into their dalliance with their eyes open. This concluding episode demonstrates that no matter what Felix does, he will manage to come out ahead. In

any situation in which he gets involved, Felix will be successful. He is able to change roles within a split second, as evidenced in changing from the lover of Zouzou to that of her mother. Since there is no inner self contained within Felix, but merely the persona of the role that he is playing at the moment, there is never a conflict or struggle in his life. Like a chameleon he is able to change and adapt to any circumstance and his personality is always suited to whoever he may be at the time. Unlike Julien, who cannot reconcile his private self with the persona that he presents to the world and thus creates his own demise, Felix will always be successful because his true self is the public self which always knows the right thing to do and succeeds in doing it.

As the vastly different conclusions of these two novels prove, each character ultimately reconciles his dual identity by destroying one-half of his self. In the case of Felix, this process is very gradual and eventually his private self just withers away as his public self, adaptable to any situation, takes over his life. Felix realizes early in life that in order to get ahead he must control any private impulses which may lead him in the wrong direction and follow only those paths that will lead him to the top. Thus he is able to readily divert his attentions from Zouzou to her mother. He recognizes the

advantages of a relationship with Maria, who is obviously infatuated with him, and so seizes the opportunity. Whether or not he would prefer Zouzou to her mother is really not an issue; his private impulses, if they even exist, are ignored as the public persona dominates. Julien has tried throughout The Red and the Black to concurrently live two lives, one that is faithful to his inner beliefs and convictions and one that is according to what he believes is the right thing to do to get ahead. When he is condemned to death, Julien can finally abandon his pretenses and accept his private self as representing the identity that he ultimately wishes to adopt. Whereas Felix is content to live a rather shallow, superficial life, changing constantly as the demands of society dictate, Julien decides to be true to his inner self and recognizes that the only way in which this is accomplished is through his own death.

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