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The Cambridge Companion to Flaubert

This volume brings together a series of essays by acknowledged experts on Flaubert. It offers a coherent overview of the writer's work and critical legacy, and provides insights into the very latest scholarly thinking. While a central place is given to Flaubert's most widely read texts, attention is also paid to key areas of the corpus that have tended to be overlooked. Close textual analyses are accompanied by discussion of broader theoretical issues, and by a consideration of Flaubert's place in the wider traditions that he both inherited and influenced. These essays provide not only a robust critical framework for readers of Flaubert, but also a fuller understanding of why he continues to exert such a powerful influence on literature and literary studies today. A concluding essay by the prize-winning author Mario Vargas Llosa examines Flaubert's legacy from the point of view of the modern novelist. The *Companion* includes an invaluable chronology and bibliography.

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THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
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University of Bristol



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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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TIMOTHY UNWIN is Professor of French at the University of Bristol. His publications on Flaubert include *Art et infini: l'œuvre de jeunesse de Gustave Flaubert* (1991) an edition of three early stories (*Trois Contes de jeunesse*, 1981), and an edition and translation of *Mémoires d'un fou* (2001). He also

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edited *Le Cœur à droite* by Louis Bouilhet (1993). His other publications include *The Cambridge Companion to the French Novel: 1800 to the Present* (1997), and *Textes réfléchissants: réalisme et réflexivité au dix-neuvième siècle* (2000). He is currently completing a study of Jules Verne.

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA, the acclaimed Peruvian writer, is the author of many prize-winning novels and critical essays. He wrote extensively on Flaubert in *The Perpetual Orgy* (1975). Recently he published *The Way to Paradise* (2003), an account of the lives of Flora Tristan and her grandson Paul Gauguin. In 2004 he gave a series of lectures in Oxford on Victor Hugo, to be published as *The Temptation of the Impossible: Victor Hugo's 'Les Misérables'*.

TONY WILLIAMS is Professor of French at the University of Hull. His publications on Flaubert include *'The Hidden Life at its Source': A Study of Flaubert's 'L'Education sentimentale'* (1987) and a genetic edition of the scenarios of *L'Education sentimentale* (1992). He was co-editor (with Mary Orr) of *New Approaches in Flaubert Studies* (1999).

PREFACE

Flaubert represents many things to many readers. He has been approached in vastly differing ways, and the body of critical and scholarly material devoted to him can seem confusing or daunting. The present volume, bringing together a series of essays by acknowledged experts, seeks to provide a coherent overview of the novelist's work and to offer various possible pathways through it, while at the same time offering the reader insights into the latest scholarly thinking. Close textual analyses are accompanied by discussion of broader theoretical issues, and by consideration of Flaubert's place in the literary and artistic traditions that he both inherited and influenced.

Rather than follow the chronological development of Flaubert's writing, chapters here have been organised thematically and arranged in clusters. Following an introductory account of the man and writer, a discussion of Flaubert's place in literary history describes in broad terms how his work responds to nineteenth-century artistic preoccupations, and how this response is taken forward by subsequent writers. Essays on specific aspects of the corpus (the early work, the travel writings, the correspondence) are then followed by a series of chapters which, from different perspectives, home in on the best-known texts in the Flaubertian canon (*La Tentation de saint Antoine*, *Madame Bovary*, *Salammbô*, *L'Education sentimentale*, *Trois Contes*, *Bouvard et Pécuchet*). These are examined not only in terms of major themes and aspects (history, death) but also in terms of techniques and approaches (modes of characterisation, stylistic innovations, compositional practices, uses of the visual). In the final stages, an evaluation of the importance of the theatre in Flaubert's work is followed by a chapter on the question of failure which runs throughout his writing and constitutes such an important part of his originality. The volume concludes with an essay by the contemporary novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, who examines Flaubert's legacy from a practising writer's point of view and stresses his fundamental impact on the techniques of modern fiction.

PREFACE

The chosen arrangement here not only allows significant texts and themes to be revisited at successive stages in the light of different critical or theoretical concerns, it also enables attention to be brought to key areas of the Flaubertian corpus (juvenilia, drafts and scenarios, letters, travel notes, theatrical writings) that can sometimes be overlooked. The essays stand both individually as interpretations of Flaubert, and collectively in their contribution to the overall picture that emerges. Each author has addressed from their own perspective the issues that commonly arise in discussion of Flaubert. The reader of this volume will find a variety of responses – sometimes contrasting, sometimes similar – which will, it is hoped, provide a robust critical framework and yield insights into why Flaubert’s writing continues to fascinate and to exert such a powerful influence. The range of recurring topics here includes questions of genre, tradition and legacy; the Balzacian model; realism and positivism; pessimism; love, marriage and adultery; history and the past; humour and the grotesque; bourgeois society and the fascination with *bêtise* (stupidity); language and *idées reçues* (i.e., received ideas or platitudes); art and artists; gender, sexuality and death; saintliness, sin and the history of religion; text and intertext; self-consciousness and experiment; free indirect discourse and point of view; irony and ambivalence; and, of course, the question of writing itself. While the approaches adopted are intentionally diverse, they have the common goal of offering companionable ways into Flaubert’s writing and through it to the broader issues it raises. Of course these essays do not propose definitive answers, nor do they close off further investigation. Rather, they provide a means by which Flaubert’s work can be opened up, seen in context, and appreciated in its richness and diversity. As is the case with other volumes in the *Companion* series, there is an accompanying Chronology, and a selective Bibliography at the end of the volume. This includes a list of available translations of Flaubert’s work. While the list of critical material is slanted towards works produced in or translated into English, it includes significant and major work on Flaubert in French.

I should like to thank all my contributors for their enthusiastic collaboration in bringing this project to completion, and for their helpful and prompt responses to my own editorial suggestions and queries. This is a collective enterprise, and as volume editor I have benefited greatly from the wisdom and insights that have been offered throughout by friends and colleagues. Special thanks are due to Tony Williams, who made perceptive comments on my own chapters; to Kay Chadwick, who provided much-needed guidance on presentational matters; to Mario Vargas Llosa, who kept his commitment

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PREFACE

to me despite an overwhelming number of other obligations; to John King, who provided a translation of Mario Vargas Llosa's essay at very short notice; and to Linda Bree at Cambridge University Press whose encouragement and advice at all stages of the project have been invaluable.

TIMOTHY UNWIN

CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 12 December 1821 | Birth in Rouen of Gustave Flaubert, second surviving son of Achille-Cléophas and Anne-Justine Flaubert. The first son Achille was born on 9 February 1813 |
| 15 July 1824 | Birth of Flaubert's sister Caroline |
| February 1832 | Flaubert enrolls as a pupil at the Collège Royal |
| Summer 1836 | First meeting with Elisa Schlésinger in Trouville |
| 1838 | <i>Mémoires d'un fou</i> . Begins writing <i>Smar</i> which is completed early the following year |
| August 1840 | Flaubert passes his baccalaureate as a private pupil, after being sent down from the Collège Royal. He travels to the Pyrenees and Corsica in the company of Dr Jules Cloquet |
| 1842 | Completes <i>Novembre</i> |
| 1842–3 | Law studies in Paris |
| January 1844 | First nervous attack. Flaubert abandons his law studies and returns to the family home in Rouen |
| June 1844 | The Flaubert family move to Croisset |
| 1845 | Completes the first <i>Education sentimentale</i> . In March, Flaubert's sister Caroline marries Emile Hamard. The family travel to Italy |
| 15 January 1846 | Death of Flaubert's father, Achille-Cléophas |
| 23 March 1846 | Death of Flaubert's sister Caroline, two months after giving birth to a daughter |
| July 1846 | Flaubert meets Louise Colet who, with a gap from 1849–51, will be his mistress until 1855 |
| May–August 1847 | Flaubert and Du Camp travel through Brittany, then write <i>Par les champs et par les grèves</i> |
| February 1848 | Flaubert and Bouilhet arrive in Paris and witness the uprising in the city |

CHRONOLOGY

- 1849 Flaubert completes the first version of *La Tentation de saint Antoine* in September, then sets out on an eighteen-month journey to the Middle East with Maxime Du Camp
- 1851–6 Writes *Madame Bovary*, which will be published in the *Revue de Paris* from October 1856
- 1856 Rewrites *La Tentation de saint Antoine*
- 1857 Flaubert is put on trial for publishing *Madame Bovary*, and is acquitted. Begins working on *Salammbô*
- April–June 1858 Flaubert travels to the site of Carthage for his research on *Salammbô*
- 1862 Completes *Salammbô*, which is published in the autumn
- 23 February 1863 Attends Sainte-Beuve's Magny dinners for the first time, and meets Tourgueniev
- 6 April 1864 Flaubert's niece Caroline marries Ernest Commanville
- September 1864 Begins work on *L'Education sentimentale*
- 15 August 1866 Flaubert is named Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur
- November 1868 Tourgueniev pays a visit to Croisset
- 18 July 1869 Death of Louis Bouilhet
- 13 October 1869 Death of Sainte-Beuve
- 17 November 1869 Publication of *L'Education sentimentale*
- 1870–1 During the Franco-Prussian War, Croisset is home to a group of occupying soldiers. Flaubert stays in his niece's flat in Rouen, returning to Croisset in April the following year after the armistice
- 8 November 1871 Elisa Schlésinger visits Flaubert at Croisset
- 6 April 1872 Death of Flaubert's mother. He completes the final version of *La Tentation de saint Antoine* in June, and begins work on *Bouvard et Pécuchet* in the autumn
- 1873 In April, Flaubert and Tourgueniev stay with George Sand in Nohant. Completes his play *Le Candidat* in November
- 1874 In March, Flaubert withdraws *Le Candidat* after a run of only four nights. The final version of *La Tentation de saint Antoine* is published and sells well

CHRONOLOGY

- 1875 During the autumn, Flaubert spends six weeks in Concarneau where he begins *La Légende de saint Julien l'Hospitalier*
- 1876 Death of Louise Colet on 8 March. Death of George Sand on 7 June. Flaubert completes *Un cœur simple* on 16 August
- 1877 Completes *Hérodiades* in February. *Trois Contes* published in April. Flaubert resumes work on *Bouvard et Pécuchet*
- 8 May 1880 Death of Gustave Flaubert, before *Bouvard et Pécuchet* is completed

ABBREVIATIONS, REFERENCES AND TRANSLATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in this volume to refer to works by Flaubert:

- OC *Œuvres complètes*, 2 vols. (Paris: Seuil, 1964)
 CHH *Œuvres complètes*, 16 vols. (Club de l'Honnête Homme, 1971–6)
 OJ *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 1: *Œuvres de jeunesse* (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 2001)
 Cor. *Correspondance*, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1973–98)

References to these works will be given in the form (OC I 75), (OC II 140), (Cor. I 122), (OJ 525), (CHH xv 352), etc. The basic reference text will be the two-volume Seuil *Œuvres complètes*. However, texts up to 1845 will be referenced to the recently published first volume of the Pléiade *Œuvres complètes*. References to the correspondence up to 1875 will be to the Pléiade edition, and to the Club de l'Honnête Homme edition for 1876 onwards. References to other bibliographical items will be provided in full in a footnote on first mention, and in abbreviated form thereafter.

All quotations are accompanied by a translation into English. The translation usually precedes the original, but the order is from time to time reversed for the sake of clarity or precision. In chapter 9 ('The stylistic achievements of Flaubert's fiction'), extracts from the French normally precede their translations. Translations are those of the individual contributors unless otherwise specified. The main Bibliography lists published translations of individual works by Flaubert.