

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant,
Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Imagination and Language

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - *Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant, Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert*

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Imagination and Language

*Collected essays on Constant,
Baudelaire, Nerval and
Flaubert*

ALISON FAIRLIE

Fellow of Girton College and Professor of French in the University of Cambridge

EDITED BY MALCOLM BOWIE

Professor of French, Queen Mary College, London

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

LONDON NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE

MELBOURNE SYDNEY

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant,
Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert
Alison Fairlie
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521269216

© Cambridge University Press 1981

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1981

Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2010

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-23291-3 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-26921-6 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant, Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Editor's note</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Introduction</i>	xiii

Part One: Constant

1 The art of Constant's <i>Adolphe</i> : I. The stylization of experience (1967)*	3
2 The art of Constant's <i>Adolphe</i> : II. Creation of character (1966)	28
3 The art of Constant's <i>Adolphe</i> : III. Structure and style (1966)	43
4 Constant romancier: le problème de l'expression (1968)	61
5 L'Individu et l'ordre social dans <i>Adolphe</i> (1968)	71
6 Constant's <i>Adolphe</i> read by Balzac and Nerval (1972)	80
7 Framework as a suggestive art in Constant's <i>Adolphe</i> (with remarks on its relation to Chateaubriand's <i>René</i>) (1979)	96
8 The shaping of <i>Adolphe</i> : some remarks on variants (1979)	108

Part Two: Baudelaire

9 Some remarks on Baudelaire's <i>Poème du Haschisch</i> (1952)	129
10 Observations sur les <i>Petits poèmes en prose</i> (1967)	150
11 Quelques remarques sur les <i>Petits poèmes en prose</i> (1968)	164
12 Aspects of expression in Baudelaire's art criticism (1972)	176

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant, Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	vi
13 Reflections on the successive versions of 'Une Gravure fantastique' (1973)	216
14 'Mène-t-on la foule dans les ateliers?' – some remarks on Baudelaire's variants (1973)	228
15 Baudelaire's correspondence (1974)	250
16 The new Pléiade edition of Baudelaire's complete works (1977)	262
 <i>Part Three: Nerval</i>	
17 An approach to Nerval (1961)	271
18 Aspects of suggestion in Nerval (1965)	288
19 Nerval et Richelet (1958)	304
20 Le Mythe d'Orphée dans l'œuvre de Gérard de Nerval (1970)	308
 <i>Part Four: Flaubert</i>	
21 Flaubert et la conscience du réel (1967)	325
22 Flaubert and the authors of the French Renaissance (1968)	338
23 Flaubert and some painters of his time (1974)	355
24 Some patterns of suggestion in <i>L'Éducation sentimentale</i> (1969)	379
25 Pellerin et le thème de l'art dans <i>L'Éducation sentimentale</i> (1969)	408
26 Sentiments et sensations chez Flaubert (1974)	422
27 La Contradiction créatrice: quelques remarques sur la genèse d' <i>Un Cœur simple</i> (1979)	437
 <i>Select Bibliography</i>	 461
<i>Index</i>	471

* *Note:* Dates in parentheses are those of first publication. In the case of essays which were originally delivered as conference papers, date and place of delivery will be found in the first endnote. Full publishing details for each essay are to be found in the bibliography.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant, Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Editor's note

For years it has seemed to a number of Alison Fairlie's friends and colleagues that her essays on nineteenth-century French literature should be made available in book form. It seemed especially unfortunate that criticism of this high order should remain dispersed in journals and collective volumes – and thus largely inaccessible to students and general readers of the period – at a time when supposed 'market forces' were filling library shelves with potboiling introductory manuals and near-duplicate 'critical' studies. Besides, the first three essays on Constant's *Adolphe* were conceived as a single, unified study and should clearly have been a book long ago; the essays on Nerval, Baudelaire and Flaubert, though produced in response to a variety of isolated academic occasions and given titles which often promised no more than a series of 'remarks', 'observations', 'reflections' or 'aspects', fell into sharply characterized groups, each centred upon a set of recurrent critical problems; and the entire sequence of essays, to those who knew all or most of them, formed an *univers imaginaire* of exceptional depth and coherence. But these good reasons for the publication of the present book repeatedly met with resistance when placed before its author, and an extended campaign of argument and subterfuge was necessary before this resistance could be overcome. Alison Fairlie shrank with characteristic modesty and self-doubt from the idea that a large book on four major authors could reasonably bear her name, and found difficulty in believing what to the campaigners had been obvious from the start – that such a book would offer immediate practical help and intellectual stimulus to a wide international readership of students, fellow researchers and enthusiasts for French literature.

The qualities of her critical writing are well known and will quickly become apparent to those who are introduced to her work

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant, Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Editor's Note*

viii

by the following pages. If I now recall certain of those qualities, I do so in order to express, on behalf of her colleagues and former pupils, the gratitude they all feel for the complex sense of intellectual and imaginative aliveness which her writing and her teaching impart.

Her manner is often one of questioning and speculation. But the questions she asks and the hypotheses she ventures invariably take their cue from the words on the author's page and, far from clothing the literary text in interpretative fantasies, seek to bring the reader back with clearer sight and a renewed power of enjoyment to its central riches. She writes with precision about ambiguity in literature, and especially about those ambiguities which have a main, informing role in the works of art chosen for discussion. During a period when criticism has suffered from severe factional narrowness and ill-temper – factions defining themselves all too often by their promotion of this or that single aspect of literature – Alison Fairlie is one of the saving few who have remained generously plural in their interests and approach. While attending closely to the formal and expressive properties of the individual literary work she is scrupulously aware that many things lying beyond that work – manuscripts, variant readings or 'sources', the author's personal relationships or his letters – may prompt the literary scholar to valuable new kinds of critical perception. And perhaps most important of all, the language she herself uses is, in its attunement to the subjects discussed, its economy and its discreet inventiveness, a lesson to all those critics who, by their luxuriant verbal displays, seek to outwit and outwrite their writers.

The present volume, together with her extended study of Leconte de Lisle and her monographs on *Les Fleurs du Mal* and *Madame Bovary*, constitute an outstanding corpus of critical writing. There could be no better *Festschrift* for Alison Fairlie than this collection of her own work.

M.M.B.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant, Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to express, however incompletely, a deep sense of gratitude for the stimulus and the kindness, both intellectual and practical, so generously given by colleagues, friends and students over the long years represented by these studies.

To enjoy, as an undergraduate at St Hugh's College, Oxford, lectures or tutorials by such scholars as Gustave Rudler, Will G. Moore, Enid Starkie, E. A. Francis, Cécile Hugon (especially on French painting), Rhoda Sutherland (then Miss Clarke), L. A. Bisson and H. J. Hunt provided multiple opportunities for discussion and discovery. To Gustave Rudler's constant initiating of new critical approaches, as to the intellectual and practical care he devoted to all research students, I owe more than can adequately be expressed.

Debts to still earlier influences are many: to grandparents and parents who delighted in reading and discussion, in experiments in writing, and in contrasts between countries and their languages; to the Scottish school system which in the 1920s taught children from age eight to enjoy reading and writing inventive if simple tales in French; to Penrhos College, Colwyn Bay, not only for scholarships but especially for the enjoyment of a wide range of teaching where examination pressures never protruded; to the redoubtable Isabelle H. Clarke both for seeing Oxford as a goal and for suggesting not set-text selection but the widest personal reading across the centuries of French literature.

As a naive newcomer to a College post in Cambridge (after wartime research in Paris and Oxford, and war-work of various kinds – to colleagues at Bletchley I owe many insights into essential problems in the handling of language), I learned from K. T. Butler, then Mistress of Girton, and from Henriette Bibas, Director of

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant, Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgements*

x

Studies in Modern Languages, both how personal research and discussion with undergraduates may vitally and essentially combine, and the pleasure of free experimentation with many methods of teaching. Later, a University post fell vacant; I recall with gratitude F. C. Green and L. C. Harmer as Heads of Department concerned to further that same combination of interests in newly-appointed lecturers. To another colleague from early years, May Graham Wallas of Newnham College, I am grateful for many quietly penetrating remarks on intellectual or aesthetic issues.

Space makes it impossible to acknowledge here by name all those contemporaries who have given very valuable time to organizing conferences, colloquia and presentation volumes, and to editing the results; to all (individually remembered) I express my gratitude for the discipline of deadlines – often benevolently interpreted – for incitement to concision, and especially for opportunities to engage in interim discussion which others may refute or revise. My debts to the skill and help of expert librarians (in Cambridge, London, Oxford, Paris, Rouen, Geneva, Lausanne, Brussels, Mariemont) must similarly be generally acknowledged; I recall with warm thanks many instances of professional advice and personal kindness. For financial help with research, apart from generosity acknowledged in earlier works, I am indebted to grants from the University of Cambridge.

Two senior colleagues, over recent years, have provided the inspiration not only of their outstanding writings but of a friendship which encourages new enterprises: Jean Hytier and Jean Seznec. To lifelong discussion with friends of my own generation, with research students initiating discoveries and with undergraduates posing and renewing fundamental questions, I owe debts individually recalled if not rehearsed in detail here.

To two Cambridge contemporaries I express especial thanks: Odette de Mourgues, with her exceptional originality in analysis and evaluation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poets, dramatists and *moralistes*; and Lloyd J. Austin, with his breadth of scholarship and judgement, his clarity and sensibility in studies and editions of Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valéry and the writers of their period. Both have given much precious time to reading and discussing articles included in the present volume. To Lloyd Austin as Drapers Professor of French, I, like many members of his Department, owe particularly generous encouragement to research, and many opportunities for wide international contacts.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant, Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

xi

Not least among my debts of gratitude is that to those who have devoted precious time to reading the proofs of articles originally published in periodicals with varying printers' conventions; to Malcolm Bowie as the most patient and efficient of editors, and to two colleagues as expert in proof-reading as they are generous in friendship: L.J. Austin and I.D. McFarlane.

For permission to reprint the articles collected in this volume I am grateful to the editors and publishers of *Modern Language Review*, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, *French Studies*, *Europe*, *Australian Journal of French Studies*, *Revue des sciences humaines*, *Annales de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Nice*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Études françaises*, *Essays in French Literature*, and to the following publishers: Éditions Droz, Leicester University Press, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, Manchester University Press, Éditions de la Baconnière, Basil Blackwell, Methuen, Éditions Nizet. Warm thanks are also due to James Austin who supplied the photographs for plates 23 to 26 and gave much other valuable help with illustrations.

A.A.B.F.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant, Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Introduction

The studies here collected date from many different moments over the last twenty-five years. They stem from personal reactions to particular works. With the exception of the opening three articles on Constant they arose as contributions requested on specific occasions – to special issues of journals, to colloquia, or to presentation volumes – occasions where, within a chosen focus, wide and welcome freedom was left to contributors.

Each study was envisaged, not as establishing a particular theoretical view, but as contributing to a continuing debate. Each owes to the published works of predecessors debts which will be obvious to all readers as well as less immediately definable reasons for gratitude: ranging from those early university teachers who posed quietly persistent questions and rejoiced in the command of words, to the challenge of discussion with colleagues within and across disciplines, or, especially, with generations of undergraduates creatively querying unexamined assumptions.

Over these twenty-five years, for the four authors here discussed, criticism has increasingly queried all such assumptions; scholarship has provided a wealth of new material. Important manuscripts have been brought to light; widely scattered writings have been collected; above all, faulty editions have been brilliantly revised, or are in course of revision. The main hope of the present collection of articles would be to serve in suggesting how much remains to be done. Constant is no longer artificially divided between author of *Adolphe*, politician and diarist (or hastily forced into an uneasy amalgam of the three); his art as novelist, political orator and dissector of personality will need to be more sharply analysed as ideas, feelings and expression are more fully integrated with reactions to eighteenth-century background and to the immense influence of the

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-26921-6 - Imagination and Language: Collected Essays on Constant, Baudelaire, Nerval and Flaubert

Alison Fairlie

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Introduction*

xiv

Groupe de Coppet. In Baudelaire, the understanding of the *Fleurs du Mal* may be enriched by examining how they interpenetrate with the prose poems, the *Paradis artificiels*, the unfinished projects in many *genres*, and especially the writings on the visual arts; in all of these, the means of expression are coming to be more closely analysed. That same interpenetration of multiple parallel themes and projects is being increasingly traced in Nerval, as is the degree of his lucid self-questioning, his awareness of readers' expectations, and his creative command of structure and expression. Flaubert above all has recently provoked fundamental reinvestigation both of the nature of the novel and of the relation of literature to the reader's preconceptions (on the latter point all three of the other authors had highly penetrating and disquieting insights); the gradual publication of his complex and revealing rough drafts has still to be fully drawn on to illuminate his individual control of construction and style.

An invigorating interest in the theory of criticism is typical of today. Debates between the 'naively biographical' and the 'obdurately immanent' have outlived their time, and literature rightly claims its *nil a me alienum* . . . Broadening of fields and recourse to technical terminology have not always made it easy to think of criticism as still an art – until one re-reads those contemporaries for whom, as for the great authors, the way of saying a thing may be essential to what is said. One basic wish links the present short studies: the desire to hand on the joy of reading, interpreting and arguing, all inextricably linked with the love of using language.

To those who suggested the present volume and have given precious time and care to collecting its contents I express my deep gratitude. Their courtesy in consultation precludes any falling back on the delightful distant fiction of the pirated work published without its author's knowledge. Their generosity of mind and skill in argument overcame authorial recalcitrance. In agreement between author and editor, it was decided (apart from correction of misprints and the cutting of an occasional sentence) to produce articles and references exactly as they stood on publication at the dates concerned.