

Flaubert

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L'Afrique sous les murs de Carthage : la raciologie moderne à l'épreuve du roman antique dans *Salammbô* de Flaubert

Dans le chapitre XII de *Salammbô* (1862), Flaubert montre toutes les « races » africaines se pressant sous les murs de Carthage, des plus évoluées aux plus primitives, depuis le « peuple des Numides ... jusqu'au bas des races ». Ce « panorama des races » dont on retrouve l'ordonnement dans de nombreux ouvrages du XIX^{ème} siècle est l'occasion de s'interroger sur la question raciale telle qu'elle se définit et se met en place à l'époque de Flaubert. L'auteur de *Salammbô* avait accès, par son ami Georges Pouchet (*Sur la pluralité des races humaines*, 1858) mais aussi par Alfred Maury, qui avait collaboré à *Indigenous races of the world* de George Gliddon (1857), aux théories les plus récentes sur le sujet. Il s'agira ici de montrer, au cours d'une étude génétique qui pourra inclure les notes de lectures et les brouillons de Flaubert, comment le romancier, en recourant aux sources traditionnelles sur l'Afrique d'une part (Pline et Saint Augustin), aux discours contemporains d'autre part, articule le propos raciologique moderne sur les textes antiques et entreprend leur refonte dans l'écriture romanesque. Au cœur de la question est le problème de la continuité ou de la discontinuité des espèces, qui affecte à la fois la conception religieuse et scientifique de l'homme au XIX^{ème} siècle. S'engage alors une réflexion sur les limites de l'humain que Flaubert explore systématiquement dans son roman « africain », à ce moment très précis de l'histoire des idées qui voit se développer conjointement le processus colonial et la littérature « exotique ».

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In the Land of Egypt...: Flaubert's *Tentation* and visions of the politics of science

Although Flaubert's 'orientalism' is a well-worked topic, very little critical attention has been paid to the significance of Egypt (ancient and nineteenth-century) in the *Tentation de saint Antoine*, despite the life and times of Saint Anthony of Egypt being the model for Flaubert's Antoine in all three versions of his *Tentation*. This paper will argue that Egypt (ancient and modern) plays strategic and critical roles in the 1874 version, for the political, religious and scientific dimensions of the text. By briefly outlining the parallels drawn in the 1874 *Tentation* between early fourth- and nineteenth-century Egypt, the main part of the paper can then focus on various 'Egypt' debates in the final tableau which have hitherto not been understood as such.

To map the pivotal importance of the land of Egypt as a commentary on nineteenth-century France and its politics of science as one of these debates, two of the most famous passages of the text, the Sphinx and the Chimera and the 'être la matière' finale, will be reappraised. I want to do this by drawing on the visionary, the necessity of Antoine as eyepiece of his time(s) and Flaubert's. So the main part of the paper will also be illustrated by some IT visualisation of the final tableau 'as if through Antoine's eyes'. I welcome the opportunity of

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discussing how an IT project I am working on enables me to take my research on the *Tentation* as an exemplarily ‘impossible’ nineteenth-century French text into the classroom, via Egypt.

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Flaubert’s Medieval Sweats

In all of *Madame Bovary*, Flaubert mentions the Middle Ages only once by name; and the designation is more rightly attributed to Homais who dubs it monstrous. For the pharmacist, the medieval is a disease (leprosy, scrofula) that needs to be isolated, cauterised, incarcerated, just as the Blind Man finally is. And just as the Blind Man is an outsider, the medieval contagion, according to Homais, is an Oriental import, brought home from the Crusades. This, at least, is the way he puts it in an article in *Le Flanel de Rouen* that Flaubert diminishes with his characteristic, damning italics. For an instant, however, in the well-worn conflation of contagion and Crusade, Flaubert betrays a rare affinity with his despised progeny. In a letter to Louise Colet, written a few months after starting work on his novel, Flaubert conjures up a similarly infectious, densely material Middle Ages: ‘Ça sent le brouillard, la peste rapportée d’Orient, et ça tombe de côté avec ses ciselures, ses vitraux et ses pignons de plomb, comme les vieilles maisons de bois de Rouen’. What radically distinguishes Flaubert from the pharmacist, however, is that he collapses any kind of neat binary and positions the medieval (infected, Oriental, invasive) not against himself but as himself: this, he tells Louise, with characteristic wit, is the bedbug-infested niche in which she lives: ‘grattez vous’! Focusing on *Madame Bovary* and the *Correspondance*, this paper explores Flaubert’s appropriation of the medieval as a site of creative energy; it emphasizes its affiliation with the contemporary vogue for the Oriental; and it seeks to position both medieval and Orient not as neatly delineated ‘Others’, but as slippery sites for a very modern, very Norman self. When Flaubert claims, in another letter to Louise Colet, ‘J’ai au cœur quelque chose du suintement vert des cathédrales normandes’, he challenges us to understand modernity, which we so often date to his innovations, as a distinctly medieval excrescence – a kind of medieval sweats.