

## A HISTORICAL CYCLE OF GUSTAVE FLAUBERT'S EARLY PROSE

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### Abstract

The article examines the early, unpublished works during Flaubert's lifetime, which are evidence of the formation of creative individuality, an organic part of Flaubert's artistic world and a significant fact of the history of literature. The formation of Flaubert's creative personality unfolds in line with Western European literary, aesthetic and philosophical traditions. Flaubert is interested not only in the feelings of the individual, as it was before, but also in the psychology of the mass. He is interested in the contrasting changes in the mood of the crowd: the stormy joy of the citizens of Rouen greeting the king, the fury with which the same people storm the town hall to save Richard, and again the delight at the news that the heir to the duchy of Normandy is alive. The "Norman Chronicle" became the boundary between "student" essays and works that went beyond school exercises, created at the end of 1836: "The Secret of Philip the Cautious" and "The Plague in Florence". Flaubert himself calls them not transcriptions, but historical short stories.

The basis of his worldview were the works of ancient authors, the ideas of writers and philosophers of the Renaissance, the XVII century, the Enlightenment and Romanticism.

**Keywords:** novel, historical, period, publication, works of prose, genre, work, author, etc.

As early as 1909, twenty-nine years after Flaubert's death, the bibliography of works on him was so extensive that René Descharmes remarked in the preface to his monograph: "Much has been written about Flaubert, and much continues to be written, but the creation of a new book cannot be prevented." Half a century later, in 1962, Jean Bruno began his seminal work with the words: "Every new book about Flaubert needs to be justified. The work of the great writer has so often been the object of numerous studies that the appearance of another one brings to mind the first maxim of La Bruyère's Characters: "Everything has been said long ago." Twenty years later, at the turn of 1980-1981, there was a conviction that "all the mysteries of Flaubert's life and mysteries have been discovered, studied, and interpreted."

In our opinion, it is dictated by the interest of Russian literary criticism in the phenomenon of creative individuality and artistic consciousness of writers, the constant attention of scientists to the phenomenon of Flaubert, the insufficient study of his early works, the need to form a holistic view of Flaubert's creative individuality, a time that constantly requires a new reading of the classics, a new understanding of the text and the author.

To create a holistic view of Flaubert's early works, which embodied the formation of his creative individuality, to reveal the historical, literary and artistic significance of the works created by the writer in the 1830s and 1840s.

"I began to compose as soon as I learned to read and write," Gustave Flaubert recalled in 1840. At the age of nine, he presented his mother with the historical novel Louis XIII. The pages were lined with a pencil, the letters were drawn diligently, with pressure. On the first page of *Œ* there is a dedication: "To my mother on her name day" [2].

Since that time, the young writer has been trying his hand at a variety of literary forms: novels and visions, philosophical fragments and essays, comedies in the spirit of Molière, historical novels and autobiographical novels, physiological essays and mysteries. These works are commonly referred to as "unpublished" or "youthful," although with the appearance of Louis Konard's three-volume publication in 1910, the first definition required clarification: "unpublished during the author's lifetime." The second definition cannot be considered precise either, since the question arises "what should be considered the last 'youthful' work and what date should be limited to this period of creativity: the novella "November" (1842), "The Education of the Senses" (1845), "The Temptation of St. Anthony" (1849)" [3].

It should be noted that the definition of "youthful" implies the contrast of the compositions of the 1830s and 1840s with the works of the 1850s and 1870s according to the principle of "imperfect and perfect", which is not always true. It seems preferable to call them early. This definition does not refer to the age of the author, but to the time of their creation in the two decades preceding the appearance of Madame Bovary.

For a long time, the variety of genre forms of early prose was explained by the writer's "creative greed", "the desire to contain everything", or "to change the style, taking a break from one genre while working on another" [4]. However, Flaubert's turn to one or another literary genre was not accidental. The choice of form was determined by the literary trends of the era, at the same time writing became a way of learning about the world and self-knowledge.

Flaubert's first literary experiments were solved in the genre of the historical novel, which was popular in 1834 and 1837. At that time, in every issue of Parisian and Russian magazines there were always essays on a historical subject. Flaubert was familiar with them, and he was also an avid reader of Hugo, Dumas, and Walter Scott.

Jean Bruno included the following works of 1835 and 1838 in the historical cycle: the historical scenes "The Death of the Duc de Guise", "Two Hands on the Crown" [6], the novels "The Mystery of Philip the Cautious, King of Spain", "The Plague in Florence", "The Norman Chronicle of the Tenth Century", the drama "Louis XI", the unfinished novella "The Noble Lady and the Organ Grinder", the rough drafts "Two Loves and Two Graves" and "Madame Écui". The plots of the sketches are melodramatic: adultery, murder out of jealousy, but the action takes place in the past, both of them are only marked by historical flavor [7].

The list of works of the historical cycle should be supplemented by the novella "Louis XIII" (1831) and "The Last Scene of the Death of Margaret of Burgundy" (1835). The manuscript of the novel was kept in a private collection. Jean Bruno mentioned it in the list of manuscripts inaccessible to researchers, but did not consider it possible to include it in the cycle [8].

"The Last Scene of the Death of Marguerite of Burgundy" One of Flaubert's early literary experiments, united by the title "Transcriptions and Paraphrases" [9], was perceived by him as a student exercise. However, this text differs significantly from school retellings and adaptations in the choice of plot, and its form directly precedes the historical scenes "The Death of the Duc de Guise" and "Two Hands on a Crown" (1835-1836). The earliest of all Flaubert's known works, the novella Louis XIII, is "precisely a historical work" [10]. In a brief introduction, the author gives an outline of the historical situation: "Louis XIII was barely nine years old, and the parliament appointed Marie de' Medici, his mother, as regent. Intrigue and meanness reigned at court. Sully, a friend of the illustrious King Henry IV, resigned.

Maria approached a certain Italian named Concini and his wife. The Duke of Luigne, the young king's favorite and the queen's personal enemy, having conceived the idea of eliminating the Marshal d'Ancre, that is, Concini, persistently inspired the Dauphin with the desire to rule. He goes on to describe how Louis XIII came to power. This part has its own title: "The Fall of the Marshal d'Ancre." Flaubert follows various historical sources, not only "copying" them, but also "composing" his work. The neutral and austere intonation is in keeping with the historical narrative. In this early experience, Juliette Froliche noted, there are already those features that are characteristic of historical works and works of fiction that tell about the past, and the main one is the impassivity of the historian [12].

In the summer of 1835, Flaubert, fulfilling the tasks of his teacher, a professor at the Royal College of Rouen Gourgaud-Dugazon, was engaged in the arrangement of famous works. In a notebook entitled "Transcriptions and Paraphrases," Flaubert placed "The Last Scene of the Death of Margaret of Burgundy" next to his version of the novella "Matteo Falcone" and an arrangement of the story of the Carthusian monk from the school reader ("The Carthusian Monk, or the Ring of the Prior").

In a rough manuscript, he outlined the plan of the composition and pointed out the connection of the plot with Dumas's *The Tower of Nel*: "The plot: the last scene of the death of Margaret of Burgundy. It's a sequel to *The Tower of Nel*, and it's hard to understand for someone who doesn't know drama. Buridan arrives at Château-Gaillard and strangles Marguerite with her own braids. She used to be his mistress [13].

Rough drafts for *The Scene* suggest that this idea was not proposed by the professor, but belongs to Flaubert himself [14]. The appeal to this episode of French history is explained not only by the fascination with Dumas's books, but also by the fact that the event took place in Flaubert's native Normandy, in the castle of Château-Gaillard. He knew the history of this castle well and had been there many times in his childhood and youth. The scene opens with a "portrait" of the ancient fortress: "The ruins of Château-Gaillard, they still tower over the Seine and seem to laugh at each generation that is born and dies. The past seven centuries have robbed the castle of only a few stones, which were thrown into the moat by a violent storm and torrents of rain. Flaubert goes on to describe the castle he knew in 1316, when Marguerite of Burgundy was his prisoner: "In those days the castle was young. The wind waved the white banner over the donjon in waves, guards crowded into the courtyard, a prisoner languished in the dungeon, she watched the fading reflections of the sun with a farewell glance, and in this look there was both rage and hopelessness. The scene of the execution of the captive of Château-Gaillard cannot be called an arrangement, but rather it is a prose addition to the play by Alexandre Dumas, signifying the young author's desire for creative freedom. Flaubert attributes to Léonne de Bournoville, the executor of Marguerite's execution, hatred for her: he not only carries out the king's order, but takes revenge on the disgraced queen for turning him into a criminal. Flaubert soon refuses to transcribe the arrangements. In 1836, under the title "Historical Sketches", he combined two works: "The Death of the Duc de Guise" and "Two Hands on a Crown, or the Fifteenth Century. An Episode of the Reign of Charles VI". The choice of subjects now belongs to Flaubert himself. The composition of the *Historical Sketches*, in comparison with the arrangements, is more complex. The chapters of *The Reign of Charles VI* are preceded by epigraphs taken not only from literary works (Dumas's *The Tower of Nel*, *Thérèse*, and Hugo's *Angelo, Tyrant of Padua*), but also from Froissart's *Chronicle of the Fifteenth Century* and Barant's *History of the Dukes of Burgundy*. He seeks to emphasize the documentary basis of the narrative, and after de Guise's remark, "I see death climbing through my window, but I will not

run from it through the door," he adds the note: historique. He adds this word after the king's remark: "To imprison Giza R is like throwing a thin net over a boar, R he will break it" [17].

In conclusion, after analyzing the novels of Gustave Flaubert, we can say that he was always looking for the most truthful, the most perfect expression for every image, for every feeling and sensation. He echoed La Bruyère's idea that there is only one expression for the transmission of any thought, he wrote: "Perfection is everywhere the same character – exactness, correctness."

Flaubert's imagery is always concrete. The desire to "show" people, things, landscapes in all their real objectivity, and not to "tell" his feelings about them, helps Flaubert to achieve great clarity. For all their picturesqueness, his descriptions are very plastic, the quality that he himself valued most of all.

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