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FLANNER, JANET ("GENET"; 1892-1978)

American journalist. After settling in Paris in the 1920s, Janet Flanner began a series of reports on life in the French capital in *The New Yorker*. From 1925 onwards she wrote under the pseudonym of Genet, and the acuteness of her analyses of politics, diplomacy, and culture made the name an indispensable asset during the magazine's great phase.

Having returned to the United States as the clouds of World War II gathered, Flanner met her life companion, Natalia Danesi Murray, in New York in 1940. Of Italian birth, Murray was an editor, publisher, film producer, theatrical and bookstore manager, and Allied propagandist for the United States Office of War Information. At the time of their meeting Flanner was 48, Murray 38. The two women, who had both divorced their husbands before they met, remained linked emotionally and intellectually until Flanner's death at the age of 86. They were separated physically for much of each year: Flanner returned to live in Paris, while Murray lived in New York and Italy. They both witnessed many important events of the times, knew those who created them, and commented on what they saw in pungent prose. The evidence lies in their letters, which Murray decided to publish when she "realized how unique our relationship was," but "also as a demonstration of how two women surmounted obstacles, trying to lead their personal and professional lives with dignity and feeling."

In their comments on political events, Flanner and Murray saw male vanity and the persistence of unthinking

ideological loyalties as responsible for many difficulties that could have been avoided. Much of their correspondence focuses on their friends: Margaret Anderson, Kay Boyle, Nancy Cunard, Ernest Hemingway, Carson McCullers, Anna Magnani, and Tennessee Williams. Because some aspects of the exchange do not accord with today's social conscience, it attracted mixed reviews in the 1980s. Yet the letters are an invaluable record of over thirty years of a passionate, yet honest relationship of two intensely active women.

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FLAUBERT, GUSTAVE (1821-1880)

French novelist. The son of a surgeon, Flaubert grew up in a medical milieu preoccupied with the progress of a science to which he felt himself unequal. From his early years at the lycée onward, he preferred the pen to his father's scalpel, and singlehandedly edited a minor journal, the *Colibri*, that clumsily but clearly foretold his future talent. In Paris he read law but never took the degree for reasons of health, and there met Maxime Du Camp, with whom he formed a close friendship. Together they traveled through Brittany and Normandy in 1847, bringing back a volume of reminiscences that was to be published only after Flaubert's death (*Par les champs et par les grèves*, 1885). Between October of 1849 and May of 1851 the two traveled in Egypt and Turkey, and there Flaubert had a number of pederastic experiences which he related in his letters to Louis Bouilhet.

On his return to France Flaubert shut himself up in his country house at Croisset, near Rouen. Instead of aspiring to self-discovery in the manner of the

Romanticists, Flaubert sought to bury his own personality by striving for the goal of art in itself, and he devoted his entire life to the quest for its secrets. His ferocious will to be in his works "like God," everywhere and nowhere, explains the nerve-racking effort that went into each of his novels, in which nothing is left to the free flow of inspiration, nothing is asserted without being verified, nothing is described that has not been seen. This explains the multiple versions that are periodically uncovered of almost every one of his works, with the sole exception of *Madame Bovary* (1857), which led to his being tried for offending public decency. At the trial he won acquittal but was denied the costs of the proceedings. The novel gains its power from the careful picture of the Norman town and countryside he knew so well, while the lovers with whom Emma Bovary seeks to realize her dreams are as petty as the leaders of the provincial society in which she is trapped.

In 1857 he traveled to Tunisia to collect material for a historical novel set in Carthage after the First Punic War. *Salammô* (1862), abundantly documented, is so rich in sadistic scenes, including one of a mass child-sacrifice, that it horrified some contemporary readers. It was followed in 1869 by *L'éducation sentimentale*, which relates the life and the education in love of Frederic Moreau, and although an uneventful tale, perfectly captures a certain period and stratum of French society. In 1874 he published *La tentation de saint Antoine*, a prose poem of great power and imagination. His last work, *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (issued posthumously in 1881), is an unfinished study in male bonding.

Flaubert had an interest in homosexuality that went beyond mere voyeurism. Among his mementoes was the autograph confession of a pederast who had killed his lover out of jealousy and was eventually guillotined after confessing every detail of his passion and crime. He was also delighted by the story of a group

of men surprised in a homosexual encounter in a *pissoir* in the Champs-Élysées, among them the son of a former Governor of the Bank of France. But it was in Cairo, in the winter of 1849–50, that Flaubert experienced homosexuality in its Oriental guise. A letter to Bouilhet mentions the *bardaches* (passive homosexuals): "Sodomy is a subject of conversation at table. You can deny it at times, but everyone starts ribbing you and you end up spilling the beans. Traveling for our own information and entrusted with a mission by the government, we regarded it as our duty to abandon ourselves to this manner of ejaculation. The occasion has not yet presented itself, but we are looking for one. The Turkish baths are where it is practiced. One rents the bath for 5 fr., including the masseurs, pipe, coffee, and linen, and takes one's urchin into one of the rooms.—You should know that all the bath attendants are *bardaches*." Then he relates his disappointment at not obtaining the masseur of his choice. In another letter he writes in Greek characters that "Maxime [Du Camp] tried to sodomize a *bardache* in Jeremiah's cave.—It's untrue!" Then he adds: "No! No! It's true." The experiences of the two travelers parallel in a way Sir Richard Burton's adventures while on government service in India; in the exotic setting they felt free to experiment with pleasures tabooed in their home countries. Although the major themes of Flaubert's work would always be heterosexual, it is interesting that he was not repelled by "the other love," but pursued it with nonchalance and with some evident curiosity.

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FLORENCE

This city in central Italy, the capital of Tuscany, is famous as the native or adoptive home of many of the chief