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THE SKETCH OF MANNERS AND ALIENATION IN THE POETICS OF FLAUBERT AND DOSTOEVSKY

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Abstract. *This paper examines the poetics of Realism through the genre of the sketch of manners as this genre is described in theory in the manifestos of Realism and used in practice by two major writers of the 19th century, Flaubert and Dostoevsky. The paper briefly examines the postulates of Realism as these appear in Les français peints par eux-mêmes [The French portrayed by the French], published in 1840 by Curmer, in Paris, together with Baudelaire's doctrine of Beauty which is taken as an elaboration on the poetics of the physiological sketch and feuilleton. With these tools, the paper examines the literary procédé of the two major Realists of the European canon. Based on a brief examination of three novels – Bouvard and Pécuchet, Madame Bovary and The Adolescent - this analysis seeks to uncover how the sketch of manners is transformed to become the vehicle for the representation of the desire of the age, which is will to power understood as self-overcoming and constituted as alienation of the self. Dostoevsky, who thought highly of Flaubert as a writer, with a more pronounced, deliberate artistic gesture than Flaubert's, puts alienation centre-stage in a new space – the space of the unconscious. In this space, Dostoevsky does not capture "living beings…and their luminous explosion in space," as Flaubert did. Dostoevsky's portraits of the time are, like Constantin Guys' sketches, impressionistic 'daubs' in black crayons, alluding to a shadowy world of the unknown which underlies all appearances. This is the world of repressed desire which is the actual domain of alienation.*

Key Words: *Realism, culture, paradigm, Baudelaire, Janin, Bashutsky, imagination, genre.*

INTRODUCTION

It is a well known fact that Gustave Flaubert toiled over the style of his fiction in search of the perfect means of expression. His Russian contemporary, Fyodor Dostoevsky, on the other hand, is reputed to have worked fast, to editor's deadlines, with the result that the style of his novels is always uneven, chaotic. This myth about Dosto-

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evsky's work method is not dispelled even by the fact that he worked on countless drafts to his novels, which read like a short-hand poetics – instructions to the writer himself on how to structure all elements of the work, from character profiles to speech peculiarities. On closer inspection, the French and the Russian writer have much in common: they share a poetics of Realism which is historically grounded in the French and Russian literary manifestos of the 1840's-1860s and model the process of representation as a phenomenology of perception in the arts of modernity.

MANIFESTOS OF REALISM

The term 'Realism' is a much misunderstood concept. It is susceptible to popular usage in which it usually implies a method of representation which 'imitates' or 'copies' 'reality'. This understanding of 'Realism' is based on two misunderstood concepts: Aristotle's concept of "imitation" and the generalised concept of 'reality'. Correctly understood, art as the "imitation" of an action was for Aristotle[1] the modelling of an action – an 'as if' of the action, a possibility that the action could have taken place, could have been conceived. This implies that all represented action in art is virtual. From this follows that art cannot be mimetic in the vulgar sense – it cannot 'copy' anything because its business is to 'invent' and to imagine possible worlds.

The concept of art – encompassing the writer and the painter of the 19th century – is subject to a precise definition in several important literary documents which could collectively be viewed as manifestos of 19th century Realism. These documents relate to the genre of the sketch of manners or the physiological sketch or feuilleton. The poetics of this genre is privileged in "physiologies" which made their appearance in several national literary canons.

The first of these was an almanac, containing sketches of English national life, published in two volumes in 1838-1839, under the title *Heads of the People or Portraits of the English.*[2] The French 'copied' the idea of the English physiologies, which were also translated into French and German. The French collection of physiological sketches, entitled *Les français peints par eux-mêmes [The French portrayed by the French],* was published in 1840 by Curmer, in eight volumes: five in Paris and three in the provinces. The French project was then widely noted in Europe and America. The French series of physiologies contained 250 sketches which represented a panorama of French life: professional and ethnographic "types," institutions and social micro-structures. It featured 137 authors, including Honoré de Balzac, Jules Janin, Georges Sand, Alexander Dumas, Théophile Gautier and Gerard de Nerval. In 1840, Alexander Pavlovich Bashutskii, an aristocratic man of letters, announced that there would soon be a Russian translation of the French and English manifestoes, *Les Français et les Anglais peints par eux-mêmes [The French and the English portrayed by Themselves]*(Okhotin, 1986:13). The translator, Bashutsky, went one step

[1] Compare S. H. Butcher's decoding of Aristotle's term "imitation" as a function of art: "Art, therefore, in imitating the universal imitates the ideal; and we can now describe a work of art as an idealised representation of human life – of character, emotion, action – under forms manifest to senses." *Aristotle's Poetics*: *Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, *with a Critical Text and Translation of* The Poetics. Translated and with critical notes by S. H. Butcher and a new introduction by John Gassner. Fourth Edition. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1951), pg. 153.

[2] See N. G. Okhotin, *Nashi, spisannye s natury russkimi. A. P. Bashutskii i ego kniga. [Russians copied from Nature by Russians. A. P. Bashutskii and his Book].* (Izdatel'stvo "Kniga", 1986), p. 13-15.

beyond this promise, and published, in 1841, an almanac of sketches of manners, modeled on *Les Français,* entitled *Nashi spisannye s nataury russkimi [Russians copied from Nature by Russians]*. Thus the *sketch of manners* became the accredited genre of the new European literature of the 19th century, which acquired the name of "Realism" in the subsequent scholarly periodisation of European cultural epochs.[3]

The sketch of manners and its place in 'modern' art is also at the centre of the essays on art, written between 1845 and 1863[4], by the Parnassian Charles Baudelaire, in which the French poet develops a doctrine of Beauty which is essentially historical and which functions as a value system of an epoch. Baudelaire's conception of "circumstantial" Beauty as a manifestation of history resonates with the conception of literature as representation of the times, outlined in *Les français* and summed up in Janin's call to the contemporary writer to capture this 'history' for posterity. The Russians, with their "physiologies", implement this poetics of historicity of the present and develop a doctrine of Realism under the term 'Natural School' (natural'naia shkola).[5]

What is of interest in our analysis is how the poetics of Realism is reflected in the literary procédé of two major Realists of the European canon: Flaubert and Dostoevsky. Based on a brief examination of three novels – *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, *Madame Bovary* and *The Adolescent* - this analysis seeks to uncover the points of contact of the French and Russian writer along a common trajectory of a Realist poetics formulated in Baudelaire's doctrine of Beauty and its near-contemporary poetics of the sketch of manners in *Les français peints par eux-mêmes.*

3. Baudelaire's Doctrine of Beauty and the Sketch of Manners

With its focus on manners and mores as the source and material of what should be captured by the modern artist, Baudelaire's doctrine of Beauty becomes an unintended elaboration on the poetics of the physiological sketch and feuilleton, which appeared in collections and almanacs, published in England, France and Russia just before Baudelaire's first *Salon* essays.[6]

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[3] Chronologies of "Realism" range from the early 19th century to the inclusion of Modernist art. Compare the "traditional" concept of "Realism" in H.A. und E. Frenzel, *Daten deutscher Dichtung: Chronologischer Abriss der deutschen Literaturgeschichte,* Band I "Vom Biedermeier bis zur Gegenwart." (München: dtv, 1962), pp. 62-70, with a revised concept encompassing Realism in painting in Linda Nochlin, *Realism.* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983).

[4] Compare Jonathan Mayne (Ed.) *The Mirror of Art: Critical Studies by Charles Baudelaire.* Translated and edited with Notes and Illustrations by Jonathan Mayne. (London: Phaidon Press, 1955). This collection contains all the *Salon* essays. Compare also Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays.* Translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne. (London: Phaidon Press, 1964).

[5] Compare a Russian "physiology," such as *Fiziologiia Peterburga* [electronic resource]. Izdanie podgotovil V.I. Kuleshov; otvetstvennyĭ redaktor A.L. Grishunin. (Moskva: "Nauka", 1991). Linked resources: Full text available from Center for Research Libraries Compare also N. Nekrasov (Ed.) *Peterburgskii sbornik.* (Sanktpeterburg: V tipografii Eduarda Pratsa, 1846) and F. Bulgarin, *Ocherki russkikh nravov ili litsevaia storona i iznanka roda cheloveshеskogo.* (Sanktpeterburg: Tipografiia Eduarda Pratsa, 1845). For a Formalist study of Russian "naturalism" see V. V. Vinogradov, *Evoliutsiia russkogo naturalizma: Gogol i Dostoevskii.* (Leningrad: "Academia", 1929). A classic Soviet study on the "Natural School" as the beginning of Russian Realism is V. I. Kuleshov, *Natural'naia shkola v russkoi literature.* (Moskva: Izd-stvo "Prosveshchenie", 1965). However, while Kuleshev mentions Bashutsky's *Nashi,* the Russian scholar does not devote much attention to it, nor does he discuss Russian Realism as part of a pan-European cultural paradigm.

[6] N. G. Okhotin, *Nashi, spisannye s natury russkimi. A. P. Bashutskii i ego kniga.[Russians copied from Nature by Russians. A. P. Bashutskii and his Book]*, p. 13-15.

While Baudelaire understood the term Realism in a pejorative sense, as a "flat negation of the Imagination, associated with Positivism" (Baudelaire, 1964: xiii), much of what he says about the mission of the modern artist in his 1863 essay on a relatively minor painter, Constantin Guys, overlaps, in principle, with the program of *Les français.* Baudelaire's doctrine of Beauty is thus like a sophisticated and mature (unintended) elaboration on the poetics of the genre privileged in *Les français* – a document of French literary history which is almost contemporaneous with Baudelaire's earliest art commentaries in Salon *1845*.

Baudelaire's stated ambition is to develop a "rational and historical theory of beauty" because, we infer, "the idea of beauty" controls History:

> "The idea of beauty which man creates for himself imprints itself on his whole attire, crumples or stiffens his dress, rounds off or squares his gestures, and in the long run even ends by subtly penetrating the features of his face. Man ends up by looking like his ideal self" (Baudelaire, 1964:2).

Fashion and physiognomy are also the dominant topics in the "Introduction" to *Les français,* written by Jules Janin, in which a call is issued to the French writers of the day to provide a snap-shot in time of their age to be preserved for posterity:

> *It is a good thing when the writers of a certain epoch give back to their public some of what that public had lent them. The writer is happiest and at his most popular when the public places great demands on him and when he can respond to these. The more numerous his borrowings, the greater a man of genius the writer turns out to be. This is what made Molière the foremost poet in the world; for no one else had borrowed humanity's vices, absurdities, passions, hates, loves to the same extent as he. Fortunately for the borrowers to come, while the repository of human nature remains the same, its form is infinitely varied and subject to change. Each century – no, what are we saying – each year has its manners and morals as well as its characters: humanity arranges its absurdities and its vices every twenty-four hours, just like a grand coquette arranges her dress trimmings, her jewellery and her lace. And we are none the wiser while the fashion merchants keep their Sybilline books, expressly for the purpose of explicating, day by day, the revolutions of their fashion empire. Why, then, would we not – a frivolous and mobile people par excellence – have a special record into which to transcribe the delicate but oh so true nuances of our everyday manners and mores?*[7]

Fashion is also the focus of Baudelaire's aesthetics. In his essay on Guys, entitled "The painter of modern life,"[8] Baudelaire finds that the artist's subject is "the outward show of life." This means that the artist portrays – and interprets for his contemporaries - that which is *manifest* and which can be *observed*. Baudelaire's painter of modern life is therefore ideally "an observer, philosopher, flâneur," while his subject of observation is the "passing moment," manifest in the fashions of the times.

[7] *Les français peints par eux-mêmes [The French portrayed by the French].*Tome Premier. Paris. L. Curmer, Éditeur. 49, Rue de Richelieu, au premier. M DCCCXL (1840), pg. 11. From now on cited as *Les français.*

[8] The essay was written from 1859 to 60 and published in 1863, in "Figaro," in instalments. Another English translation can be found in Charles Baudelaire, *My Heart Laid Bare and other prose writings.* Edited with an Introduction by Peter Quennell. Translated by Norman Cameron. (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Limited, 1950), pp. 21-72.

Fashion is the key to Baudelaire's doctrine of Beauty, which rests on the notion of a "double composition" of Beauty: its split into "eternal" and "circumstantial" aspects. With this split, any notion of "an unique and absolute beauty" is cancelled out:

"Beauty is made up of an eternal, invariable element, whose quantity it is excessively difficult to determine, and of a relative, circumstantial element, which will be, if you like, whether severally or all at once, the age, its fashions, its morals, its emotions." (Baudelaire, 1964: 3)"

Thus beauty is a function of history, while aesthetics, expressed through fashion and physiognomy, is the key to the manners and mores of a historical epoch. Man's "ideal" of beauty, we infer, is thus coeval with his *desire* which manifests itself as the dominant value system of a particular moment in time.

For Baudelaire, Constantin Guys is the artist of the sketch of manners *par excellence* who responds to the challenges of modern life. He is the model of that "true painter" for whom Baudelaire was looking at the end of *Salon 1845,* "who can snatch its epic quality from the life of today and can make us see and understand, with brush or with pencil, how great and poetic we are in our cravats and our patent-leather boots" (Mayne, 1955: 38).

The starting point for Baudelaire's aesthetics, represented by the 'painter of modern life', as well as for that of the physiologists in France and Russia, is the capturing, in representation, of the "present moment." The "present" is defined by Baudelaire as "an essential quality of being present," from the "representation" of which we "derive pleasure."(Baudelaire, 1964: 1)

The modern artist, according to Baudelaire, perceives the world around him through a subjective vision by being receptive to impressions of the external world. These impressions are condensed in the crucible of the imagination – "that Queen of all the Faculties!" (Mayne, 1955: 232) Imagination, "thanks to its *supplementing* nature, embraces also the critical spirit." (Mayne, 1955: 235) Thus Baudelaire's "formula" of "the true aesthetic" is based on the power of imagination to structure and interpret the world as a storehouse if signs:

"The whole visible universe is but a storehouse of images and signs to which the imagination will give a relative place and value; it is a sort of pasture which the imagination must digest and transform. All the faculties of the human soul must be subordinated to the imagination, which puts them in requisition all at once." (Mayne, 1955: 239)

Supplement and critique – these are concepts with which post-structural theory has been familiar at least since Derrida's privileging of "that dangerous supplement" as the operative term of the new cultural paradigm of European modernity. While "the supplement" is referenced by Derrida specifically to J.-J. Rousseau, it has wider implications: it is a metaphor or portmanteau term for the culture of the virtual (the Symbolic Order), which is grounded in the externalisation of desire through language which lacks essence. Thus the virtual (Symbolic) is a 'supplement' to Nature which it 'displaces' through logos (meaning) or *interpretation*.[9] Baudelaire appears to have hit upon the same idea – in embryonic form - in his essays on art, one hundred years or more before the advent of Derrida and post-structuralism.

Imagination is a yard-stick by which Baudelaire categorises artists into two types, the 'realists' and the 'imaginatives':

[9] Compare Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology.* Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1976), pp. 141 ff., in which Derrida deploys his thesis of "writing" as (unconscious and hence "absent" trace) inscription which for him stands in opposition to the European "metaphysic of presence" as a system of understanding language, perception, history and meaning.

"There are those who call themselves 'realists' – a word with a double meaning, whose sense has not been properly defined, and so in order the better to characterize their error, I propose to call them 'positivists'; and *they* say, 'I want to represent things as they are, or rather as they would be, supposing that I did not exist.' In other words, the universe without man. The others however – the 'imaginatives' – say, 'I want to illuminate things with my mind, and to project their reflection upon other minds.' ...the man of imagination has generally tended to express himself in religious paintings and in fantasy, while landscape and the type of painting called 'genre' would appear to offer enormous opportunities to those whose minds are lazy..." (Mayne, 1955: 239-40)

Baudelaire's denigration of "genre paintings" is odd since genre painting is the expression, in the visual medium, of the literary physiological sketch. It is the genre of the Russian *Itinerants*[10] as well as the French 'painters of modern life': Courbet, Degas, Manet, de Goya, Antigna and others.[11] However, this peculiarity aside, Baudelaire's "true aesthetics" is grounded in the power of the artist's Imagination which is ultimately the ability to condense ("illuminate") the outward 'signs' of the age (fashion, manners, mores, gestures), and to communicate these insights (as the 'knowledge' of the times) to others. The same task – of interpreting the age to itself – is set by Janin for the modern "physiologist" in *Les français.*

Both Janin and Baudelaire insist on the historical nature of fashion, which is an index of the manners and mores – or value system - of an age, and on the ephemeral character and mutability of the present moment.

In order to capture these ephemera in literature, the writer according to *Les français* becomes a "borrower" (*emprunteur*), who records what he observes, like a local historian, in the sketch of manners, establishing a record of national types of all classes of the nation, of all professions. The French and Russian "physiological" almanacs are portrait galleries of "ethnographic types." *The Russians [Nashi]* contained sketches and feuilletons, with titles such as The Waiter, The Water Carrier, The Lady (Baryshnia), The Army Officer, which emulated the sketches in *Les Français,* such as Une femme a la mode, La femme comme il faut (by Balzac) Le médecin, Le spéculateur, L'Épicier (by M de Balzac), and L'étudiant en droit. All were accompanied by daguerreotype illustrations - an invention, by Louis-Jacques Daguerre, in the mid-19th century, of a photographic process. The proto-photograph, still between a sketch and a mechanically reproduced image, as the medium to best capture the reality of the present moment, points to the future of Realism in the new medium of the photographic image (invented around the 1860s), followed by the evolution of the moving image (in 1880s in France and elsewhere).

While the sketch of manners is seen by both the champions of the new literature and new art as the best genre to capture a moment in time, Baudelaire's approach to the representation of the moment is framed by nuances which are absent from the French and Russian manifestos. Like the physiologists, Baudelaire concedes that the "circumstantial element of beauty" (as opposed to "the eternal one" which is difficult to determine) is constituted by the age, its fashions, its morals and its emotions, and that it can best be captured by the sketch of manners. But to do this, his painter of modern life, Guys, requires new technical means with which he can respond to the "speed of modern life."

[10] Compare Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art 1863-1922.* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1971, pp. 9-29. Gray call the Itinerants 'Wanderers': they include Serov, Vasnetsov, Levitan, Surikov, Repin, Korovin and Leonid Pasternak.

[11] Compare Linda Nochlin, *Realism,* opt. cit..

These new technical means consist of his "murky daubs" and "primitive scribbles," far removed from the clichés of a learned, academic style, which imposes (falsely) a "classical" ideal onto the figures of the present (Baudelaire's example of this imposition is Ingres). Thus Baudelaire's artist is "impatient," he paints "like a barbarian" or a "child" who sees things "in a state of newness." But this "barbarousness" is an "inevitable, synthetic, childlike barbarousness," which defines the modern painter's creativity in term of selection and memory. Even his frenzy has an artistic function: it is a metaphor for synthesis or an "execution" which appears to be unconscious after the artist "has become master of every means of expression" (Baudelaire, 1964:17). The result of this method is the expression (or representation) of "the attitude and the gesture of living beings…and their luminous explosion in space" (Baudelaire, 1964:18). The living beings (subjects), perceived as spatial, not as temporal objects, are structured by the artist's imagination - that "most scientific of faculties" which in fact is for Baudelaire the faculty of perception, or what in psychoanalytic theory would be called the agency of *the gaze.*[12] Capturing the living object in its totality, in attitude and gesture, translates into what Mikhail Bakhtin has described, in relation to the portrayal of characters in Dostoevsky's novels, as the total point of view or total spiritual directedness (*tselostnaia dukhovnaia ustanovka*) of subjectivity. Baudelaire's painter of manners thus penetrates into the psychic or unconscious roots of *the desire* of his age, which means that both desire and the unconscious are portrayed as *historical*: they manifest themselves in history, as *signs* of the times.

To what extent do writers of the Realist canon – such as Flaubert and Dostoevsky – obey the imperatives of the Realist manifestos of the 1840s and Baudelaire's doctrine of Beauty as an expression of the desire of the age? How do artists other than Guys, - writers who are his contemporaries in the case of our analysis - achieve that totality of vision Baudelaire outlined as the criterion of true art capable of capturing the historical moment? The inclusion of writers into Baudelaire's category of the true artist and 'painter of modern life' is justified by Baudelaire's definition of the "painter of manners" who has a "strong literary quality," being "an observer, philosopher, flâneur," (Baudelaire, 1964: 4) and thus "close to a novelist or a moralist." To reinforce his thesis about *observation* being the main instrument of the modern artist, Baudelaire references Edgar Alan Poe's story "The Man of the Crowd" because he is particularly attracted by Poe's hero who observes the passers-by "voraciously" from his fixed point of view in the café on a street in London.

FLAUBERT'S SKETCH OF MANNERS AND THE POETICS OF NON-KNOWLEDGE

Both Flaubert and Dostoevsky, who are almost exact contemporaries (1821-1880 and 1921-1881), display a historian's interest in relation to the physiognomy and 'physiology' of their time. Flaubert personifies Baudelaire's modern artist who is a "man of the world," who has traveled (Flaubert's trips to Egypt), "the specialist", who "understands the world and all its uses" (Baudelaire, 1964: 6). Flaubert knows and studies his own world – the world of the French bourgeoisie[13] of the conservative monarchy of Napoleon III of which

[12] Compare Jacques Lacan, "The Split between the Eye and the Gaze," in Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis.* Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. Tranlsated by Alan Sheridan. (NY & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), pp. 67-79.

[13] It is well known that Flaubert referred to himself as "Bourgeoisophobus" – the hater of the bourgeois. However, despite this hate, he devoted all his masterly attention to studying this segment of French society.

he is a respected citizen and celebrated artist (despite the adverse public and official reaction to his *Madame Bovary*).[14] Flaubert's concentrated literary opus could be subsumed under the title of his last project, the so-called 'unfinished' novel *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, (published posthumously in 1880), which Flaubert described as "the farcical story of [those] two characters who copy a kind of critical encyclopedia" of "received ideas." The two main characters, Bouvard and Pécuchet, are on one level text-book illustrations of Jules Janin's manifesto in *Les français.* They and the milieu in which they function reflect the fashions, the tastes, the political and scientific opinions of their age. Each one is a 'man of the people' ("homme du people") - a civic minded 'new man' with a 'scientific' and 'civic consciousness', forged in the crucible of the post-Napoleonic era in France, which itself had its source in the successes and failures of the French Revolution and the great epoch of Napoleon, from 1800-1815.

But like Dostoevsky's characters, in *The Adolescent,* and elsewhere, Bouvard and Pécuchet are without essence: they are literally like a snapshot in time, a face, framed by a sensibility (caprice, likes, dislikes), a signifier (they do not even have Christian names). Because of their two-dimensionality, they come across as comic and as portrayed in the manner of Charles Dickens' Mr Pickwick. They are 'copy-clerks' like a whole series of Dostoevsky's heroes (and Gogol's hero, Akaky Aklakievich before that) – characters which ground Russian Realism. They are metaphors of/for inscription: their business is to 'record': they 'keep' records of received ideas (their *Dictionary*). But in keeping with the new positivistic, scientific spirit of the age, which they have imbibed without knowing, they try to put into praxis the many professions and disciplines, which the two autodidacts teach themselves through reading the authorities - received 'authorities' on the various subjects which the friends broach: farming, archeology, acting, sociology, historiography, philosophy.

This quest for knowledge as a function of the application of received ideas through a linear, referential reading of these ideas, fails. At the end of their failed quest for knowledge as praxis, in Chapter Eight, the friends are 'parents' to two waifs, Victor and Victorine, who are out-of-control children from criminal and dysfunctional families, much like Dostoevsky's "accidental families." Disillusioned with their final experiment – of applying their received ideas to education – the friends return to their initial activity, that of copying. They order a double desk so that they can spend the rest of their years side by side. What they will copy is allegedly planned, by Flaubert, as the content of the next volume of the novel, which was never written.

Flaubert's earlier novel, *Madame Bovary*, was also grounded in the heroine's reception and live enactment of received ideas. In Emma's case, the ideas are those of current fashions (1857), elegance, luxury, excess, *dépense*. Born into a strictly regulated petty bourgeoisie – she is a farmer's daughter who has been educated in a convent and plays the piano – Emma finds release from what she perceives as a stifling marriage to a provincial doctor who is not on the cutting edge of medical science of his day, through her reading, This includes popular literature and women's magazines but also Flaubert's contemporaries, the 'physiologists' and feuilletonists Balzac, George Sand & Eugène Sue. Emma

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Compare Frederick Brown, *Flaubert: A Biography.* (New York, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2006), pg. 295.

[14] Compare details about the "trial" of Flaubert, in early 1857, for the 'corruption of public morals', after serialisation of *Madame Bovary* began in the *Revue de Paris* from October 1, 1856. See Frederick Brown, *Flaubert, opt. cit.,* pp. 322-7.

reads not for self-education, as do Bouvard and Pécuchet, but for gratification of unfulfilled longings:

"She started taking the women's papers *Work-basket* and *Sylph of the Salon*, devouring in their entirety all the accounts of first nights, race-meetings and parties…She knew all the latest fashions, where to find the best tailors, the days for going to the Bois or the Opéra. She studied descriptions of furniture in Eugene Sue, and sought in Balzac and George Sand a vicarious gratification of her own desires." (Flaubert, 1970: 71)[15]

She reads literary texts in the manner in which Flaubert's readers – to his consternation – read *Madame Bovary* (which led him to announce provocatively: "Madame Bovary, c'est moi!"): she reads in linear (vulgar) 'realist' fashion, searching in her reading for a source of factual, positivistic knowledge that can be 'translated' into the practice of everyday life. This is not the translation of impressions of which the modern artist is master – and Emma is not a student of the history and ideas of her time. Emma, in fact, inverts Baudelaire's and the Realists' poetics, which places "everyday life" at the centre of representation, as the material for art, and takes art as the material for everyday life, or as a manual for self-improvement, as a self-help book.

While Flaubert's characters, like Emma, live in self-delusion and self-deception, seduced by ideas of science, of fashion, even of beauty, the artist, Flaubert, is in possession of a superior knowledge which he cannot disseminate amongst his characters but which he can "project" "upon other minds" - those of his readers - through a proper reception of his poetics, which can be reconstructed in the context of a poetics of Realism. The "illumination" of "things" with the writer's "mind," and the projection "of their reflection upon other minds," is precisely what constitutes the evocation, in representation, of the "present moment": it is the moment of the 'meeting' of two minds, that of the writer and that of the reader. It is this "essential quality of being present" within the space of representation and projection, which brings "pleasure" - the pleasure of the text.

In essence, Baudelaire's painter of modern life and Flaubert (but also Dostoevsky) as the painters of the manners and mores of their time are one and the same manifestation: they represent a mode of knowledge which is couched in aesthetics as perception and interpretation of the perception of the moment in time.[16]

Flaubert is a painter, literally and figuratively,[17] in *Madame Bovary*. Figuratively his plot is populated by "genre paintings" – so deplored by Baudelaire - which yields a gallery of the 'national types' called for in *Les français*. Léon, Emma's first and last lover, is a typical law student, Rodolphe is a country squire, Emma is "une femme à la mode," Lheureux, the draper, is "Le spéculateur," Charles, the husband, is "Le médecin" and so on. These 'portraits' do reflect the feuilleton-like style of the physiologies in that they re-

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[15] All quotations from *Madame Bovary* are from Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: A Story of Provincial Life.* Translated by Alan Russell. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970).

[16] Compare Lev Tolstoy's tractat on aesthetics, "What is art?" which also privileges the communication of feelings ("infectiousness" of the work of art, as he calls it) as the chief criterion by which to judge a work of art as true or false. Tolstoy's theory of art thus reinforces Baudelaire's to which it must be indebted.

[17] An analysis of Flaubert's approach to the visual which misses the mark by discussing Flaubert's alleged failure to take an interest, in his writings, of contemporary painting, is offered by Aimée Israel-Pelletier, in "Flaubert and the Visual," in: *The Cambridge Companion to Flaubert*, edited by Timothy Unwin. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), pp. 180-195. A more synthetic analysis – because it takes into account mood and sound, is offered in an older study by Benjamin F. Bart, *Flaubert's Landscape Descriptions.* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1956). But this study, too, speaks of Flaubert's "descriptions" mainly as a function of a "technique" of writing.

veal "everyday life" with all its tawdry facts. Flaubert renders the 'national portraits' of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie in the full force of their banality and even Emma is not spared when seen through the unloving eyes of Rodolphe: "he thought her dress showy and her ogling look quite deplorable." (Flaubert, 1970:213)

But this vision of the banal is countermanded or over-coded by another mode of painting in the novel which is more pronouncedly visual and spatial in character. The plot, which is still couched in narrative form, as part of a story being told, is punctuated by inserted landscape scenes, which are like landscape paintings. These inserted paintings transcend the linear story-telling because they invoke a moment in time which becomes coeval with space. It is through this fusion of the temporal and the spatial that Flaubert's text manages to capture "the present moment" and that "essential quality of being present" invoked by Baudelaire. From the contemplation of these 'paintings' in the present, the reader derives "pleasure." The numerous visual impressions of Emma, given from the perspective not of a character but from a voyeuristic yet impersonal artist's gaze, literally responds to the method of Baudelaire's artist, who brings to expression "the attitude and the gesture of living beings,…and their luminous explosion in space." (Baudelaire, 1964:18)

The first of these extended landscape paintings occurs at the opening of Part Two of the novel, as the anonymous third-person chronicler-narrator introduces the setting of the next part of Emma's life: Yonville-l'Abbaye, "a small town twenty-four miles from Rouen" (Flaubert, 1970: 82). While the name of the town is fictional, the countryside appears like a concrete place, like the countryside around the village of Croisset (near Rouen), in Normandy, where Flaubert lived from the age of 25 till his death, with his mother and his niece. The manner of visualizing this fictional yet apparently concrete landscape is through a series of 'little pictures' which succeed one another as the eye moves across its own horizon like a camera's eye, capturing the scene in a single frame and then moving smoothly on, to capture the next frame. Thus what appears to be a descriptive narrative given from the point of view of an omniscient narrator is a chain of picture frames, given through the perspective of an impersonal camera's eye to which the gaze of the reader is assimilated.

Other inserted landscape passages are reminiscent of the early French Impressionists, who capture the moment with its light and atmosphere or mood. Such is the view of the houses of the village of Yonville at midday:

"It was midday. The houses had their shutters closed, and the slate roofs, glittering in the hard glare of the blue sky, seemed to be sending up sparks from their gable-tops. A warm breeze was blowing." (Flaubert, 1970: 104)

Other paintings follow: "They returned to Yonville along the river…"(this is Emma and Leon after their first rendez-vous at the nurse's house, [Flaubert, 1970:107]); Emma's forehead is "like marble where the light slid over it…" without revealing her thoughts (Flaubert, 1970:132); Emma in a bonnet, with her nostrils' "pale pink glow" (Flaubert, 1970:148); Leon at Rouen, walking in the direction of Notre Dame, going to meet Emma for the first rendezvous, taking in the a street scene (Flaubert, 1970: 250); finally, Emma in the boat with Leon, in a black dress, in the picturesque pose of a Madonna (Flaubert, 1970:268).

Flaubert's verbal paintings glow with light and color in the same way that the Van Gogh landscapes or portraits come to life as an immediate impression through their light effects which make the paintings pulsate as living beings. Such are the various pictures of Emma:

"Madame Bovary made for the kitchen fireplace. With the tips of her fingers she took hold of her dress at the knees, lifted it over her ankles and stretched out her black-booted foot to the fire, above the leg of mutton on the spit. The flames lit up her whole body. The texture of her dress, the smooth pores of her clear skin, even her eyelids, which she blinked from time to time, were penetrated by the glare; and when the wind blew through the open door, a warm glow spread all over her." (Flaubert, 1970: 92)

Even Emma's dress – her fashionable attire, normally a programmatic subject for a physiology – acquires the properties of a living thing. Such is the portrait of her at the Chemist's Sunday soirée, perceived through the perspective of Lean, who is standing behind her chair, giving advice, while she plays cards with M. Homais: "…From her coiled hair a dark glow ran down her back, paling gradually until it merged into shadow…her dress puffed out on either side of her, in full folds that reached to the floor. When, occasionally, Leon felt the sole of his foot resting on it, he stepped aside as if he had trodden upon a living thing." (Flaubert, 1970: 111)

While Emma's amorous sentiments and idyllic imaginings are tawdry (Flaubert, 1970: 208), expressed (through inner speech rendered as free indirect discourse by the narrator) in clichés and platitudes, her portrait, perceived through the impersonal yet obsessively attentive gaze of the painter of modern life – Flaubert – is translucent, luminous and captivating. It is on a par with the pulsating, living landscape which is like her twin image, always posited as her implied analogy, one of which she is not consciously aware but with which she is nevertheless in communion, as she breathes in the night air around her, during her and Rodolphe's last rendezvous:

"Full and flushed, the moon came over the skyline behind the meadow, climbed rapidly between the branches of poplars, which covered it here and there like a torn black curtain, rose dazzling white in the clear sky, and then, sailing more slowly, cast down upon the river a great splash of light that broke into a million stars, a silver sheen that seemed to twist its way to the bottom, like a headless snake with luminous scales; or some monstrous candelabra dripping molten diamonds. The soft night was all about them Curtains of shadows hung amid the leaves. Emma, her eyes half-closed, breathed in with deep sighs the cool wind that was blowing." (Flaubert, 1970: 210)

The tension between the landscape paintings which evoke nature and everything of which it becomes the setting, on the one hand, and the banal sentiments and beliefs of the characters narrated as story line, on the other (the story of received ideas, manners and mores of the times), is the tension which illuminates "the epic quality of the life of today" (Baudelaire) and which renders the banal into the raw material for the heroic. It is because this tension produces (in the reader) the most acute feeling of alienation, couched as empathy for Emma's suffering (boredom, dejectedness, despair), despite full knowledge of the profanity of her motives and her actions. Although Emma's destiny has been interpreted as 'tragic', this is by no means the case. For tragedy, in the strict sense of Aristotelian poetics, arouses the feelings of pity and fear in the spectator. The Ancients do not know alienation as a gnawing, soul-rending division of the subject into self and other, described poignantly at the onset of European Realism by Dostoevsky in *The Double* (1846). The situation of the modern subject, portrayed by the 'painter of modern life', in painting and in literature of the 19^{th} century national canons, is non-tragic but marked by alienation through culture. On the level of Emma and the French petty bourgeois, this alienation manifests itself as social discontent, as desire for supremacy expressed as a hankering after status, luxury, wealth and an imaginary 'high life'. On the level of Emma's creator, this alienation manifests itself in his much attested striving for stylistic perfection, for the properly cast sentence, for the *mot just.* The tortuous quest for a form which would be adequate to his creative idea invokes a suffering no less acute than Emma's in her striving to live her aesthetics of heroic sentimentalism amidst a social reality that has given her only received ideas and the clichés of custom and habit. That she herself is capable of generating mere clichés to channel her erring spirit and to formulate her misguided quest for form only deepens the shade of alienation in which her destiny is set. She is un-knowing and un-self-reflecting and so, unlike Flaubert, who can almost truly say: "Emma Bovary, c'est moi!" she is utterly doomed to oblivion. This is how those who survive her are portrayed: they go about their business, never giving her a thought even in memory. Flaubert's alienation of the artist – who reflects the alienation of modern life and the modern subject on a conscious level – on the other hand, is very much remembered and commented. The reception of alienation as a theme of modern life by the subsequent generation of artists and writers – from the Goncourts and Zola through to Beckett and Blanchot – testifies to the powers of the 'painter of modern life' – Flaubert - as an 'observer' and 'interpreter' of his own time.

This is precisely the content of Flaubert's poetics: instead of a simple 'positivistic' portraiture of types of the nation, it probes the 'unconscious' physiognomy of the times, seeking to reveal "the ideal" of the age as well as the hidden desire which is its source. This poetics becomes an instrument of critique which illuminates the cultural values – expressed as sensibility - dominating the national psyche at a certain 'moment in time', the illumination of which gives 'pleasure'. In Flaubert's opus, the sensibility which comes to the fore is expressed as the sentiment of alienation and the state of non-knowledge – the 'stupidity'[18] that is caused not by a psychological failing of modern man and woman but by the gap between Being and Knowing,[19] the gap that represents the incurable division of the split subject of language. It is as a 'history' of morals that Flaubert's literary works become "documents" of the times, thus answering the imperatives of both Baudelaire's aesthetics of modernity and the poetics of Realism outlined in *Les français* or demonstrated in the Russian 'physiologies' of manners.

DOSTOEVSKY'S SKETCH OF MANNERS AND ALIENATION

If Flaubert explores and paints the world of the French petit-bourgeoisie in its desires, manners and mores, Dostoevsky explores a Russia on the brink of modernity and revolution.

Dostoevsky, who thought highly of Flaubert as a writer, with a more pronounced, deliberate artistic gesture than Flaubert's, puts alienation centre-stage in a new space – the space of the unconscious. In this space, Dostoevsky does not capture "living beings…and their luminous explosion in space," as Flaubert did. Dostoevsky's portraits of the time are, like Constantin Guys' sketches, impressionistic 'daubs' in black crayons, alluding to a

[18] A linear reading of "stupidity" in this novel is to be found in Alan Raitt, *Gustavus Flaubertus Bourgeoisophobus: Flaubert and the Bourgeois Mentality.* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), where Bouvard and Pécuchet are said not be characterised by "lucidity" (p. 147). This kind of reading does not take into account the comic device of the *ingénue* whose 'simplicity' is a means of revealing the truth.

[19] Compare Jacques Lacan's diagrammatic representation of alienation as constituting the non-knowing subject of language and its relation to the 'other' in Jacques Lacan, "The Subject and the Other: Alienation," in: Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, opt. cit.,* pp. 211.

shadowy world of the unknown which underlies all appearances. This is the world of repressed desire. As if to distance himself from Flaubert's still aesthetic vision of desire as consisting at least in part of "eternal Beauty," Dostoevsky references *Madame Bovary* at the end of his novel *The Idiot*. At the end of the novel, Prince Myshkin is looking for his runaway bride Nastasia Filippovna, who is lying dead in the merchant Rogozhin's house. In his frantic search, Myshkin visits a flat at which Nastasia Filippovna had recently stayed. Casting a forensic gaze around the sitting-room, Myshkin notices a copy of *Madame Bovary*, which he absent-mindedly takes with him. Myshkin is credited with two aphorisms about Beauty: "Beauty will save the world" and "Beauty is a terrible force." The phenomenological form of this "terrible force," the form in which it *appears,* is *desire*. Flaubert alludes to this terrible force, but in his 'painting of modern life', desire is presented as a *synaesthetic* (proto-Symbolist) luminous picture of Beauty, even if this Beauty is captured in the act of descending into the banality of everyday life, and is thus subject to an alienating dichotomy. Dostoevsky, on the other hand, does not paint his portraits in luminous coulours; his characters are so reduced in their characterological features that they appear as dark shadows out of which emerge the violent images of their dreams and hallucinations. The "Notes" of the hero of *The Adolescent*, Arkady Dolgoruky, do not even have a point of reference outside the consciousness of the hero-narrator. Dostoevsky thus pushes out the boundaries of non-knowledge set by Flaubert in *Bouvard and Pécuchet* and *Madame Bovary*. In the case of *The Adolescent*, it is impossible to ascertain whether any of the narrated events – which in themselves are highly stylised actions – ever took place in actual fact. The real world is 'bracketed out' in Dostoevsky's fiction. This is true of all of Dostoevsky's novels.

Arkady's plot life develops under the sign of *excess*. The excess is embodied in his Rothschild idea. Arkady's "idea" is described as a "feeling" rather than a "thought" (Part One, Chapter V, sub-chapter i) and is born through "forging at high temperature." This is the idea that he can become anything he wants, anything that his caprice dictates to him, provided he has "perseverance" and "continuity" – in other words, willpower. That is, an 'idea' – of which the "Rothschild idea" is a kind of structural template or 'model,' is something that is forged 'red hot' in the crucible of the will. While protruding into consciousness and appearing to be manipulated by consciousness and intention, this will is not a simple wishing, willing or wanting. Rather, like the Ego,[20] it has its roots in the unconscious which is revealed through the subject's fanatical and maniacal adherence to *the* 'idea.' Arkady's Rotschild idea operates like an *idée fixe* – an obsession – which he only seemingly controls through conscious willpower. In reality, his 'idea' is the by-product of *desire* and arises from the unconscious in the form of a substitution: Arkady's *Notes.* Willpower, which marks Arkady as a *charactère*[21] – a character of Realist fiction with a social biography – in actual fact belongs to the dialectic of unconscious drives and is will-to-power. For the reader of today but even for Dostoevsky's reader of 1870, this transforms Arkady from a Russian into the universal, European man of modernity, de-

[20] In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920), Freud contends that "much of the ego is itself unconscious, and notably what we may describe as its nucleus; only a small part of it is covered by the term 'preconscious.'" Peter Gray (Ed.), *The Freud Reader.* (London: Vintage, 1995), pg. 603.

[21] The term *charactère* belongs to La Bruyère, France's 17th century satirical moralist and 'proto-physiologist' of manners invoked as a model for the 19th century writer in Janin's Introduction to *Les français.*

fined by Hegel as the subject of desire,[22] by Nietzsche as the unstable identity of genealogical research, and by Freud as the pathological subject of the unconscious grounded in the death drive or 'the will to will.'

While desire is desire for recognition - hence for power – the latter (Power) is freedom of self-overcoming. This is illustrated in Arkady's attempts to 'save money' by superhuman feats of asceticism, such as an intolerable 'fasting'. Arkady compares the birth of an idea out of desire to the taking on of "feats of monastic self-discipline" (Dostoevsky, 1994:84),[23] which puts him in touch with the tradition of the Russian *skhima* and *skhimnichestvo* – the highest monastic rank, requiring the fulfilment of cruel ascetic rules. However, unlike the quest for spiritual self-perfection of the Russian monastic tradition, Arkady's quest is not for perfection but for mastery over the Other. Power leads to the attainment of freedom (Dostoevsky, 1994: 94). Arkady's Rothschild idea is thus not a quest for money, and not even a pursuit of power, but a search for freedom which is attained in the consciousness of one's own "superior strength," one's superiority over all others. Desire is accompanied by transgression: Arkady's transgressive, lewd street behaviour is followed by shame or repression. Thus Arkady wants to be alone, to brood: "Yes, I am morbid, I constantly close in upon myself." (Part One, Chap V, sub-chapter iii). Arkady also notes that in order to engender 'his idea,' he needs his own "corner" (*ugol*). Thus an 'idea' is a spatial object,[24] but the space and the object are not material. Instead, they are phenomenologically reduced and virtual.

Arkady's feeling of superiority issues from the fact that he *has* money - a fact which is never explained on the plot level. The mysterious presence of money, which marks Arkady as an agent of capitalism, allows him to indulge in acts of great generosity: he rescues an abandoned baby girl (who subsequently dies), paying for her to be breast-fed by a foster-mother. When the baby dies, Arkady regrets not having taken a photograph of the dead baby.

This peculiar wish, expressed by Arkady, resonates with his Father's aesthetics: Versilov has a life-size photograph of Arkady's 'Mother' in his study - a 'secret' flat which is separate from his 'home' with Sofia Andreyevna – Versilov's own 'ugol' in which his ideas or Versilov as 'an idea' – an unconscious - come into existence. The 'photograph' in Versilov's study transforms the space of the study into a kind of 'archive' of modern 'ideas' – one of which is the photograph, a technological advance on the daguerreotype illustration of the Realist manifestoes of 1840-1841. The photograph, in turn, transposes the 'object' of the 'world' into an 'object' (image/sign) in phenomenological space. The Mother's photograph and the dead baby's (unrealised) photograph thus play a crucial role

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[22] G W F Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit.* Tran. by A. V. Miller, with Analysis of the Text and Foreword by J. N. Findlay. (Oxford, NY, Toronto, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1977). Hegel was the first European philosopher to define desire as a function of the modern phenomenological subject and its identity. Hegel formulates desire in terms of "the essence" of self-consciousness or of "what is essential" (*wesentlich*) to it in its quest for unity with itself or *identity*. He finds that the 'identity' of the subject is constituted by 'difference' (from the 'other') and that self-consciousness *is* desire (*Begierde*) - or the groundless ground of identity as difference.

[23] All quotations are from Fyodor Dostoevsky, *An Accidental Family.* Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Richard Freeborn. (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). From here on cited as Dostoevsky, 1994 plus page number.

[24] Thus Wittgenstein: "Each thing is, as it were, in a space of possible states of affairs. This space I can imagine empty, but I cannot imagine a thing without a space." Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractataus Logico-Philosophicus.* Translated by D.F. Pears & B.F. McGuinnes, with an Introduction by Betrand Russell. (London: Routledge, 1974), paragraph 2.013.

in the structure of Dostoevsky's novel. They are like the key to a new model of culture which Dostoevsky encoded in the unconscious structure of the poetics of his text. The photograph announces the advent of the virtual in European culture to come. The novel is set in the1870s. The photograph was invented in the mid-19th century, starting with a process by which daguerreotype illustrations (1837) were produced (such as featured in the physiological sketches of the French and Russian Realist manifestos). The invention of the photograph changed European aesthetics and led to the introduction of popular or mass culture. Dostoevsky's novel is set in a still feudal Russia, albeit one in which the emancipation of the serfs had already taken place (in 1861). The novel is populated by princes and aristocratic figures, but like Arkady, they are aristocratic in name only and mingle with the plebs, even 'intermarry.' This is not a historically accurate detail. It is a metaphor. The 'elite' here is a 'virtual' elite, constituted as a metaphor which stands for the will-to-power in the structure of the unconscious with its 'faculties': reason and feelings/ideas. This 'virtual elite,' who no longer has an *essence* or value and who revolves around the empty centre of money and capital (the plot is framed by intrigues around money sums and inheritances), engages in games of power and prestige, set in the alienated landscape of desire and the unconscious.

This is Dostoevsky's portrait of his time: a Russia poised on the brink of European modernity, with the repressed memories of a national religious past representing alienated value - of "eternal Beauty"- now emptied of content; an alienated nobility which has lost its 'essence' to capitalist exchange; and a common people who will embrace Europe only through an alien ideal - utopian socialism – through which the national psyche will become completely alienated from its spiritual (Orthodox) past.

CONCLUSION

The answer to the question posed in this paper is this: both Flaubert and Dostoevsky follow the imperatives of the poetics of their times – the poetics of Realism as distilled in literary and artistic manifestos which are aesthetic "documents" of the epoch. Both major writers produce "physiological sketches" in the manner of the French and Russian almanacs which capture national "types" in serial "physiologies" and feuilletons. However, like all great art, Flaubert's and Dostoevsky's "physiological sketches" are extended tableaux in three – even in four dimensions, if one takes into account the representation of unconscious desire. Both writers achieve that totality of vision which is required of the 'painter of modern life' according to Baudelaire in order to capture the historical moment. Both writers are keen observers of the minutiae of manners and mores which extend from fashion to the subtlest ideas and emotions, and interpret these minutiae, in epic fashion, as signs of the times. Both Flaubert and Dostoevsky are thus 'local historians' or *emprunteurs* [borrowers] of their times, in the spirit of Janin's call to the writers of the present to capture and interpret the passing moment for posterity.

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ESTETSKI PRIKAZ DRUŠTVENE STVARNOSTI I OTUDJENJE U POETICI FLOBERA I DOSTOJEVSKOG

Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover

U ovom članku se predlaže jedna koncepcija realizma kao deo pan-evropske kulturne paradigme 19. veka, koja ima čvrste istorijske korene u literarnim i kritičkim dokumentima 1840-h – 1860-h godina, u francuskoj i ruskoj književnosti. Sa osvrtom na ova dokumenta – uglavnom deklaracije izdavača "fiziologija" kao i eseje o savremenoj umetnosti Šarla Bodlera – analiziraju se romani Flobera i Dostojevskog kao 'dokumenti' svoga vremena u estetskom obliku. Pritom se estetski način gledanja na savremenu društvenu stvarnost – modu, manire, poglede, sensibilitet – tumači kao vrsta znanja i način interpretacije i kritike.

Ključne reči: *realizam, kultura, paradigma, Baudelaire, Janin, Bashutsky, imaginacija, žanr.*