

Kitsch Enters the Novel: Flaubert's Satirical Ekphrasis
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Unlike most of his literary contemporaries, Gustave Flaubert did not publish art criticism. His wariness of art-critical discourse verged on overt mockery: we know that he had planned to include a history of official art in “fragments typiques” as the third part of his incomplete *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*.¹ He had been passionate about the visual arts in his youth, a period of enthusiasm that seems to have stopped abruptly in 1851, more or less when he began writing *Madame Bovary*.² The fine arts are relatively absent from his novels, but this article argues that Flaubert introduces into fiction a new form of response to visual representation, which I shall be calling satirical ekphrasis, and that this constitutes a radical innovation in the venerable tradition of inter-art relations. Flaubert's fiction abounds in ekphrastic description, not of *les beaux arts* but of images derived from them. I argue that Flaubert's approach to popular art—sometimes called in French “l'imagerie”³—requires us to call on a concept that was emerging at the time he was writing: kitsch. Visual kitsch is at the heart of Flaubert's literary creation and must be placed alongside that much more familiar Flaubertian bugbear, the *idée reçue* (a linguistic element that embodies unthinking repetition of both a verbal and conceptual nature).⁴ Naturally Flaubert's second-degree kitsch (description of objects and images that invites ironic reflection) must be distinguished from first-degree kitsch (objects and images cherished by characters, notably for the social status that they symbolise, their narrative content, or their sentimentalism). I shall nevertheless also argue that his irony cannot be reduced to a straightforward denunciation of that first-degree kitsch. Let us begin, however, with the notion of satirical ekphrasis.⁵

In classical rhetoric the term ekphrasis designated any lively description and was thus close to the neo-classical categories of *energeia* or *hypotyposis*. Its modern sense dates to the usage by Leo Spitzer in 1955, in which ekphrasis is much more specifically “the poetic description of a pictorial or sculptural work of art.”⁶ This category has since been widened to include prose, notably in James Heffernan's very influential definition: “ekphrasis is the verbal representation of graphic representation.”⁷ While some French critics argue against this modern application of the term,⁸ it is undoubtedly useful to have a specific word for the verbal description of visual art.

Critical attention to ekphrasis has often focused primarily on lyric poetry in which the entire poem is the ekphrasis, which sets up an equivalence between the work of verbal art and the visual art object that it describes (Keats' “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (1819) is a paradigmatic example). The most ancient examples of ekphrastic descriptions are however parts of longer works: utilitarian but ornamented objects (goblets, urns, vases, shields) described within verse narratives such as the epic or pastoral. For W.J.T. Mitchell, ekphrasis in these cases functions as “a kind of foreign body within epic.”⁹ Looking at a more recent period, Stephen Cheeke devotes a whole chapter to prose ekphrasis, focusing on ekphrastic description within works of art theory, and in particular descriptions supporting the claims of art to replace religion's sacramental role in the nineteenth century.¹⁰ There is, then, nothing particularly new about identifying ekphrastic practice within longer works, including prose. What I argue here is that Flaubert gives pride of place to ekphrasis with a satirical intention, in contrast to notions of pictorial art as in itself offering a form of transcendence. His ekphrastic descriptions jar with the work in which they find themselves, a discordance that echoes what Mitchell sees as the role of ekphrasis as a disruptive “other” within the longer text.¹¹

Naturally one might look for a precursor to Flaubert's use of satirical ekphrasis in Balzac. The differences are however significant: Balzac's ekphrastic descriptions reveal the monomaniacal genius of the artist (for example in *Le Chef d'œuvre inconnu*, 1831), or art as the object of an obsessive collection (for example in *Le Cousin Pons*, 1847). The art that he describes is not in itself the object of satire. His novella, *Pierre Grassou* (1839), tells the story of an artist who pastiches or plagiarizes paintings by old masters, and whose mediocrity lies in his complete lack of originality. The weakness of his paintings is not in the work itself, but in its relationship to creative genius, and although they are reproductions, they are unique reproductions. This presents some similarities with the fictive artist Pellerin in Flaubert's *Éducation sentimentale* (1869), though Pellerin struggles to finish any of his (unoriginal) canvases. More often, however, Flaubert focuses on mass-produced imagery. Where Balzac's target in *Pierre Grassou* was lack of individual originality, Flaubert's is a whole society that lives in, and through, repetition. This shifts the terrain of ekphrasis dramatically. It is Flaubert—and following him, Maupassant—in whose hands ekphrasis becomes first and foremost a tool of social and aesthetic satire. It is no longer an occasion for meditation on the nature of creative genius or an engagement with the Renaissance tradition of *paragone* (a competition between the arts in which ekphrasis is often a means of asserting the dominance of the verbal¹²). Flaubert's ekphrastic practice introduces a polemic with a new target, and it is in his works that the consciousness of kitsch enters literature: visual kitsch takes its place alongside verbal *idées reçues*.

Kitsch and non-art

Flaubert has long been recognised as the first great writer whose novels reflect the beginning of "l'âge du Kitsch—pacotille, anti-art, poncif, tape-à-l'œil"¹³ (the age of Kitsch—shoddy, anti-art, cliché, garish). Of course it is unlikely that he was familiar with the term "kitsch", which did not appear until the 1860s or 70s (in any case after the publication of *Madame Bovary*) and was not widely used internationally until the first decades of the twentieth century. It originates in the jargon of painters and art dealers in Munich, where it referred to cheap art objects. But the phenomenon itself is older than the term.

It is in the first half of the nineteenth century that reductions in the cost of production made art objects financially accessible to the working classes and the petty bourgeoisie. For Matei Calinescu, one of the great theorists of the phenomenon, kitsch arises from industrial production methods and the cheap imitations that they make possible, and thus, while it might seem the opposite of modernity, it is in reality inseparable from it. Kitsch is also the bastardized offspring of Romanticism, both in the relativism of its taste and through its promotion of sentimentalism.¹⁴ Perhaps kitsch, like Romanticism itself, arises from the debris of religious faith.¹⁵ It is on the way to her convent school that the young Emma Rouault, later Bovary, is fascinated by a set of "assiettes peintes qui représentaient l'histoire de Mlle de la Vallière" (painted plates which represented the story of Mlle de la Vallière), whose captions, scratched by the marks of knife and fork, "glorifiaient toutes la religion, les délicatesses du cœur et les pompes de la Cour" (all glorified religion, the tenderness of the heart and the pomp of the Court). She will later be moved by "les vignettes pieuses bordées d'azur"¹⁶ (pious vignettes with azure borders) that show sentimental religious scenes. Here visual kitsch and worn-out concepts, the image and the idea, are inseparable, and replace true faith. Singular or authentic experience is replaced by a reification through ready-made forms.¹⁷

Calinescu proposes two psychological explanations for the attraction exerted by kitsch: the desire, on the one hand, for social ascension and, on the other, to escape a dull or frustrating everyday reality.¹⁸ Clearly, the concept must be understood in the context of a reflection on social class: kitsch—but also the *perception* of kitsch, and thus the second-degree kitsch that we find in Flaubert—arises from social aspiration at times of (relative) social mobility. In the context of an unstable relationship between classes it becomes a marker of what Pierre Bourdieu calls “la Distinction.”¹⁹

One might be tempted to begin with a hard and fast differentiation between the first-degree taste for kitsch and the second-degree integration of this popular *imagerie* into fiction through satirical ekphrasis. And yet it is only the second degree that counts, because—to put it bluntly—kitsch in itself does not exist: there is only the perception of kitsch. Or, as Flaubert puts it, “il n’y a que des manières de voir”²⁰ (there are only ways of seeing). Of course, the increased production of cheap art is an uncontested fact. But those who consume such objects or images do not see them as kitsch: an object only becomes kitsch in the eyes of others who identify it as such. Thus the newly sharpened awareness of kitsch which appears in the writings of Flaubert reflects yet another legacy of Romanticism: the perception of a schism between the artist and the bourgeoisie, a fortiori the petty bourgeoisie. Only artists, now understood as an aesthetic avant-garde, have the judgement necessary to perceive kitsch, and they no longer identify with their original class, nor with the working classes.²¹ Kitsch is, according to Clement Greenberg, both the antithesis and the product of this avant-garde modernity.²²

This new awareness of kitsch is an important step in the much longer history of taste. Giorgio Agamben situates in the middle of the seventeenth century the moment when the work of art is no longer experienced as a manifestation of God, provoking a form of spiritual ecstasy. Looking at art becomes, instead, a chance to exercise good taste and critical judgement. (It is no coincidence that art-critical ekphrasis also emerges in the seventeenth century.²³) Following Emmanuel Kant, Agamben identifies this modern aesthetics with a judgement not of what art *is*, but rather of what it is *not*: it depends on an identification of “non-art.” Agamben’s terminology is very useful to us here because the integration of non-art into art is essential to Flaubert’s creative practice. Of course, what I am looking at in satirical ekphrasis is also a *transposition d’art*, in which visual non-art is integrated into verbal art. But Flaubert’s practice certainly represents an extremely self-aware example of modern aesthetics as described by Agamben: a complex negative theology.²⁴

A note of warning, to lay the ground for what will be the final twist in my argument: Flaubert was very critical of what he considered to be the constraints of good taste.²⁵ He clearly enjoyed collecting examples of bad art, which supplied part of the subject matter for his writing. One of the (inconclusive) theories about the etymological origins of the term “kitsch” in German has it deriving from a word meaning picking up an object from the ground. This might remind the Flaubertian reader of the cigar-case found by Charles Bovary on the road home after the couple have, in a once-in-a-lifetime occasion, attended an aristocratic ball, and which is preciousely conserved by his young wife.²⁶ Flaubert, meanwhile, collected mass-produced objects to insert into his fiction.

The object, the fake, and “l’art industriel”

In his fiction, Flaubert tends to integrate popular *imagerie* less in the form of images per se than as thoroughly embodied objects.²⁷ As Pierre-Marc de Biasi notes, thinking about

representation, for Flaubert, is necessarily accompanied by deliberation on “les bouleversements techniques (papier industriel, photographie, rotative, héliogravure, presse illustrée) qui font entrer l’image dans l’ère de la production et de la consommation de masse”²⁸ (the technological upheavals (industrial paper, photography, rotary printing, heliogravure, illustrated press) through which the image enters the era of mass production and consumption). This close attention to the material nature of the object underlies Flaubert’s satirical ekphrasis, in which the kitsch object is linked to imitation and fraud: it is an “aesthetics of deception and self-deception.”²⁹

Kitsch objects sometimes function as metaphors: the “curé de plâtre”³⁰ (plaster priest) in the Bovarys’ garden in Tostes, which breaks into a thousand pieces when the couple move house, arguably stands as a warning for the failings of the Church to help Emma when she turns to it for succour. But plaster statuary is not entirely reducible to metaphor. It functions as a polyvalent metonymy in *L’Éducation sentimentale*, where the protagonist Frédéric’s much-admired rival, Monsieur Arnoux, sells “grandes statuette en plâtre polychrome” (large statues in polychrome plaster) that represent “un nègre ou une bergère pompadour”³¹ (a negro [sic] or a Rococo shepherdess). Frédéric’s young neighbour Louise Roque, faithfully pursuing the social ascension achieved by her father, a successful peasant farmer, later aspires to buy two of these plaster statues representing enslaved black people, because she has seen them in the house of the local provincial administrator.³² Her desire to assert her taste and social status takes the form of an attempt at imitation. It is, in fact, an imitation of an imitation. The pastoral idyll (for which the Rococo shepherdess is a shorthand), and the image of the devoted slave (statues of semi-naked black people stood for the ownership of human beings, and thus for the wealth of those who displayed them in their houses), are both constructions popularised in the eighteenth century.³³ In other words, the parvenue Louise aspires to imitate the bourgeois of the 1840s, themselves posing as *ancien régime* aristocrats whose assertion of social standing was symbolically represented by their enslavement of other humans. The falsity of the material support goes hand in hand with this falsity of social pretensions: Louise dreams of purchasing painted plaster that imitates porcelain, bronze or marble. In his letters Flaubert railed “contre les fausses étoffes, contre le faux luxe, contre le faux orgueil!” (against false materials, false luxury, false pride!) Industrialisation has blown ugliness out of all proportion, and everyone now wants “de petites statuette, de petite musique et de petite littérature!”³⁴ (small statues, small music, small literature!). But in this case material and conceptual falsity are inseparable: Flaubert’s satirical ekphrasis takes as its object an “image reçue”, handed down and repeated thoughtlessly, just as the “idées reçues” that he also collected were second-hand concepts.³⁵

Monsieur Arnoux’s whole professional trajectory takes place under the sign of prefabricated art—in other words, in Flaubert’s view, non-art. At the height of his success, Arnoux is at the head of a journal and a commercial gallery that both go under the name “L’Art industriel,” a hybrid term that was oxymoronic in Flaubert’s eyes. The stages of Arnoux’s professional decline are marked by a dilution of “art” in favour of “industry.” He becomes the owner of a shop and factory producing ceramics and plaster statuary; when this doesn’t work out, he sells cheap religious objects, sometimes known as *imagerie sulpicienne*. His is not the only trajectory in *L’Éducation sentimentale* that takes place under the sign of non-art. Pellerin, who at the end of the novel becomes a photographer (and thus, in Flaubert’s eyes, someone who by definition was producing art reduced to its mechanical form), shares his name with Jean-Charles Pellerin, founder of the famous printing press in the town of Épinal which, from 1796 onwards, produced cheap coloured prints known as *images d’Épinal*. The term is still current in French to indicate a simplistic, stereotypical image. In Flaubert’s novel Pellerin

begins as an artist, but even when he paints in oils—producing for example a portrait of the courtesan Rosanette in a Venetian Renaissance style—Pellerin is always copying, more or less badly, the notions and styles of others.

No doubt the most extraordinary oil painting evoked by Flaubert is Pellerin's portrayal of Jesus Christ driving a train through the jungle, an allegory which might stand for the Republic, or Progress, or Civilisation.³⁶ Here we see how Flaubert's satirical ekphrasis combines the *image reçue* and the *idée reçue*, bad art and banal ideas conjoined in artistic and intellectual laziness, with a message that is so well-worn it is, in the end, indecipherable. Earlier Pellerin had himself protested against the socialist Sénécal's pompous declaration that "L'Art devait exclusivement viser à la moralisation des masses! Il ne fallait reproduire que des sujets poussant aux actions vertueuses."³⁷ (The sole aim of Art should be the moral benefit of the masses! Only subjects encouraging virtuous actions should be reproduced.) But in a typical reversal, he has come round to moralising platitudes. Flaubert's satirical ekphrasis mocks morally utilitarian art, while also (in a move beyond ekphrasis) implying the conflation of Catholic missionary ideology with the notion of the *mission civilisatrice*. Integrating kitsch within the novel is a dialectical overcoming of kitsch as propaganda.

Pellerin's oil paintings are treated very much as objects (perched precariously on a chair, or displayed in a shop window) but, in the world of Flaubertian ekphrasis, they are less common than popular art objects. Flaubert's foregrounding of the art *object* rather than the art *image* is particularly striking in the case of the Keepsakes that Emma admires during her convent years. These Keepsakes, gifts received by her wealthier schoolfriends, represent a prestigious social capital. "Maniant délicatement leurs belles reliures de satin" (Delicately handling their beautiful satin bindings), Emma is intensely moved by the objects themselves, and her contact with the books is very sensual: "Elle frémissait, en soulevant de son haleine le papier de soie des gravures"³⁸ (She shivered, her breath raising the silk paper that protected the engravings). Hybrid objects, both verbal and visual, these albums were published annually as desirable objects for collection by women. They were lavishly illustrated with engravings that reproduced paintings chosen to embody certain Romantic ideals. The model of the French Keepsakes was *The Keepsake*, edited annually between 1828 and 1849 by Frederic Mansel Reynolds in England.³⁹ The French Keepsakes, published from 1830 onwards, generally reproduce the images of the English versions but add new texts. They are, in other words, reproductions of reproductions, in which true art—in the sense of unique creation—is doubly distant.

We might, then, need to nuance Leo Bersani's claim that in Flaubert's writing "The word as object tends to replace the world of objects."⁴⁰ Flaubert's fiction dwells on objects as well as language, though these are often objects with a double existence, since they are both represented (via the word) and themselves representational. According to Marta Caraion, nineteenth-century thinking about objects is founded on the "opposition de l'unique et du reproductible, de la singularité et de la sérialité" (opposition between the unique and the reproducible, singularity and seriality). The desire to move from the series to the unique is, she argues, one of the motors of the literature of the century.⁴¹ Flaubert's metropolitan fiction certainly reflects this: he introduces into literature an acute awareness of the condition of modern art, under threat from the ready-made and mass-produced. The religious objects sold by Arnoux—that is, the divine reduced to the material, mass-produced object—embody the status of the work of art in the era of mechanical reproduction as it is described by Walter Benjamin: art that has lost its "aura." These objects of industrial art are defined, in Flaubert's conception at least, by their status within what Jean Baudrillard calls "l'opposition

MODÈLE/SÉRIE.” Baudrillard suggests that this opposition is seen as a sort of entropic process, with a degradation of energy occurring in the movement between the model and the series.⁴² But it is towards a reversal of this movement in a return to the unique—that is, nothing short of a reversal of entropy, albeit only in the closed system of a work of art—that Flaubert labours. His innovation lies in a paradoxical attempt to transmute the serial and repetitive into a unique work of art.

Juxtaposition and *la blague supérieure*

As I have argued, Flaubert integrates the visual arts into his fiction in the form of objects that are derived from art, in other words copies. The visual arts follow the pattern of the *idées reçues* or verbal commonplaces that he collected. He inserted these chunks of second-hand language into his fiction, often employing indirect free discourse in which the narrator’s language coexists with the language of the commonplace. Like this collection of verbal ready-mades, Flaubert’s descriptions of art objects are also a form of collection, or a quotation of a visual element. Flaubert thus adopts, in relation to mass-produced products derived from art, an attitude close to the ironic position he adopts in relation to verbal platitudes. In the case of the Keepsakes, the point of view projected by the image (that is, the Romantic attitude) is undermined by a second, ironic point of view, with no need for an explicit comment by the narrator. The integration of these images within the novel is comparable to what Bakhtin, in discussing verbal dialogism, calls hidden polemic: that is, cases where statements are constructed to strike a “polemical blow” at the other’s discourse.⁴³ This polemic is what distinguishes Flaubert’s satirical ekphrasis from earlier descriptions of art.

One of the essential techniques of Flaubertian irony is the juxtaposition of two types of verbal cliché. The double discourse of the Agricultural Fair scene in *Madame Bovary* is the most famous example of this: the clichés of pure Romantic love, mobilised by Rodolphe to seduce Emma as they watch from inside the Town Hall, are interspersed with the discourse, both pompous, banal, on agriculture, manure and cows from the speeches at the Fair itself. This cross-cutting or juxtaposition, along with indirect free discourse, is a technique that allows Flaubert to minimise the overt presence of a narrator: it makes it possible to expose how ridiculous a discourse is without needing to introduce an explicit commentary. A comparable effect is achieved, in relation to the visual, by the juxtaposition of *images reçues*. In the final part of the long passage about the Keepsakes that Emma lingers over, Flaubert proceeds by adding image on top of image:

Et vous y étiez aussi, sultans à longues pipes, pâmes sous des tonnelles, aux bras des bayadères, djiaours, sabres turcs, bonnets grecs, et vous surtout, paysages blafards des contrées dithyrambiques, qui souvent nous montrent à la fois des palmiers, des sapins, des tigres à droite, un lion à gauche, des minarets tartares à l’horizon, au premier plan des ruines romaines, puis des chameaux accroupis; —le tout encadré d’une forêt vierge bien nettoyée, et avec un grand rayon de soleil perpendiculaire tremblotant dans l’eau, où se détachent en écorchures blanches, sur un fond d’acier gris, de loin en loin, des cygnes qui nagent.⁴⁴

(And you were there too, sultans with long pipes reclining in bowers in the arms of dancing girls, giaours, Turkish sabres, Greek bonnets, and you most of all, pallid landscapes of dithyrambic countries, which often simultaneously show us palm trees, fir trees, tigers to the right, a lion to the left, Tartar minarets on the horizon, in the foreground Roman ruins, then some crouching camels; —everything framed by a nice clean jungle, and with a broad perpendicular ray of sunlight shimmering in the water,

where white lines, against a backdrop of iron grey, here and there indicate swimming swans.)

This is a *reductio ad absurdum* in which accumulation and juxtaposition reveal the platitude of each individual element. Despite being absurd, or even surreal, the description is nevertheless very precise: the grey and white lines confirm that these are not paintings but, as one would expect in a Keepsake, engravings. And the hackneyed images of Byronic orientalism evoked here have direct parallels in the *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* : “Palmier. Donne de la couleur locale” (Palm tree. Adds local colour), “Ruines. Font rêver et donnent de la poésie à un paysage” (Ruins. Inspire musing and add poetry to a landscape).⁴⁵

Taken individually, each part of this lengthy description is utterly devoid of originality. Some have seen in the pile-up of disparate images a reflection not only of Emma’s incoherence, but perhaps also of Flaubert himself having conflated different things.⁴⁶ In my view, on the contrary, these hackneyed elements must be taken together and understood as an ekphrastic whole that is original precisely because of its absurd pile-up. In Flaubertian ekphrasis, one must grasp not the individual parts, but the view of the totality; less the kitsch elements than their absurd juxtaposition. In his own theorisation of writing, it is crucial that focusing on the individual pearls does not make the writer lose sight of the strand that gives unity to the necklace.⁴⁷ Or, as he wrote in a less precious image: “Quand est-ce qu’on écrira les faits au point de vue d’une blague supérieure, c’est-à-dire comme le bon Dieu les voit, d’en haut?”⁴⁸ (When will we write facts from the point of view of a superior joke, that is to say as God himself sees them, from above?)

This *blague supérieure* is in evidence in the Bovarys’ wedding cake, of which I commissioned a rendition, in real cake, to expose the full absurdity of the object (Fig.1).⁴⁹ This tiered cake inspired a term that Vladimir Nabokov employs to describe the Flaubertian technique of juxtaposition. In his lectures on *Madame Bovary*, Nabokov describes what he calls the “layer-cake theme” or the “counterpoint method.”⁵⁰ It is also reminiscent of what Flaubert himself, describing Charles Bovary’s infamous hat, calls the composite order (that is a mixture of the three classical orders: Doric, Ionic and Corinthian). Both the cake and the hat, are, I argue, objects that have the opposite effect from what Roland Barthes famously described as the “effet de réel.”⁵¹ While the reality effect signifies “this is the real world,” these objects accumulate multiple descriptions that may individually have verisimilitude, but which add up to an impossible whole that signifies, instead: “this is not the real world, it is merely representation.”

When the tiered cake is brought in, all the guests at the Bovarys’ country wedding exclaim aloud.

À la base, d’abord, c’était un carré de carton bleu figurant un temple avec portiques, colonnades et statuettes de stuc tout autour, dans des niches constellées d’étoiles en papier doré; puis se tenait au second étage un donjon en gâteau de Savoie, entouré de menues fortifications en angélique, amandes, raisins secs, quartiers d’oranges; et enfin, sur la plate-forme supérieure, qui était une prairie verte où il y avait des rochers avec des lacs de confitures et des bateaux en écales de noisettes, on voyait un petit Amour, se balançant à une escarpolette de chocolat, dont les deux poteaux étaient terminés par deux boutons de rose naturelle, en guise de boules, au sommet⁵².

(The base was a blue cardboard square representing a temple with, round its sides, porticos, colonnades and stucco statuettes in niches spangled with gold-paper stars; the second tier was a medieval castle made of sponge cake, with little angelica

battlements, almonds, raisins and orange segments; and, finally, on the topmost layer, which was a green meadow with rocks, lakes of jam, and hazelnut-shell boats, a little Cupid was to be seen on a chocolate swing, the uprights of which were finished with real rosebuds in the place of knobs, crowning it all.)

Here we find the perfect exemplar of the technique by which Flaubert piles up different parts of an image which conflict and cancel each other out. The physical creation of a cake that follows his description literally makes it obvious quite how implausible these juxtapositions are. Flaubert delivers the description in a single sentence, adopting the perspective of the *blague supérieure*, which allows us to see unified in one object wildly disparate individual elements. The first two tiers juxtapose two major artistic movements: neo-classicism, and Romanticism, with its references to Walter-Scott-style medievalism. One might note that the town hall of Yonville, where Emma will later be seduced by Rodolphe, is “une manière de temple grec” (a Greek temple of sorts) with three columns.⁵³ Surreally situated on top of these lower tiers, the lake with its rocks in a green meadow suggests the sentimentalism of the picturesque. There are echoes of Lamartine’s poem “Le Lac,” which Emma later recites by heart (the manuscript drafts of the novel accord even more space to the “lacs laiteux des Lamartiens”⁵⁴ (the milky lakes of the Lamartinians) in Emma’s early reading). And beyond Lamartine, this is also the lake and rocks where St Preux and Julie walk together in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. The chocolate cherub would seem to require no commentary, except to note its later echo in the simpering little bronze Cupid that decorates the Rouen hotel room where Emma has her weekly meetings with Léon.⁵⁵

The wedding cake is a marvellous example of kitsch, illustrating both social pretention and escapism. It also embodies the fake, with the blue cardboard representing marble and sponge cake standing in for a stone fortress, while the lake itself is made of jam. Even the real rosebuds are passed off as ornamental finials for the upright supports of the swing: real flowers imitate fake flowers. According to Mitchell, from the late eighteenth century onwards the aesthetics of the picturesque plays a “crucial ideological role [...] in mediating a double desire to own and renounce property.”⁵⁶ Here the picturesque (lake, rocks, meadow) is the meeting point of the two (potentially conflicting) motivations that Calinescu identified in kitsch: the desire for social ascension and escapism. But the picturesque is not alone in this eclectic cake. Above all, it is characterised by its combination of different and incompatible visual styles, reflecting Flaubert’s conception of the aesthetics of his time, which he railed against while in the tortuous process of writing *Madame Bovary*: “Ainsi nous avons eu le Romain, le Gothique, le Pompadour, la Renaissance, le tout en moins de 30 ans, et *quelque chose de tout cela subsiste*.” (So we have had Romanesque, Gothic, Rococco, Renaissance styles, all in less than 30 years, and *something of all that lingers on*.) But, he asks immediately: “Comment donc tirer profit de tout cela, *pour la Beauté* ?”⁵⁷ (How then can we make all that serve *the cause of Beauty*?) How, indeed, could the presence of multiple, derivative artistic forms be used in the service of a new aesthetics? The juxtaposition of clashing elements forms a new creation, characterised by a joyous, carnivalesque appreciation of bad art, which Adrianne Tooke evokes in her book on Flaubert and the visual arts.⁵⁸ Each part of the cake is merely kitsch, or imitation of an imitation, but taken all together the various parts become an absurd object: this is the composite order, or the *blague supérieure*. Together they form a new type of beauty.

Kitsch and Beyond

Kitsch aesthetics, if we follow Calinescu in understanding them as a means of fantasizing social ascension or escapism, are linked to the desire to be what one is not. In this respect,

kitsch resembles bovarysm itself, as it was defined after Flaubert's death by the philosopher Jules de Gaultier: "la faculté déparée à l'homme de se concevoir autrement qu'il n'est"⁵⁹ (the faculty given to man to conceive of himself as other than he is). This resemblance of kitsch to bovarysm already suggests that Flaubert's attitude to kitsch cannot be reduced to simple contempt. As I have shown, the accumulation of commonplace images is more than the sum of its parts. It is the whole that strikes the reader through its excess and absurdity. And this dualism of his attitude to kitsch is a central attribute of Flaubert's modernity.

The calamities of Emma Bovary's life were caused, as Jean Seznec already said in 1945, less by her having read too many books than having spent too long looking at their lithographic illustrations.⁶⁰ Her case appears to exemplify the idea that kitsch is not only aesthetically, but also ethically, harmful, since it leads us into error. The condemnation of kitsch in the name of ethics reached a peak in the 1930s, when it was denounced by Hermann Broch, who saw it as the embodiment of Evil. A by-product of the rise of the bourgeoisie, kitsch, for him, represents submission to the dogmatism of the past. In kitsch art aesthetic vocabulary becomes ossified into cliché, embodying nostalgia for an idyllic imaginary past in which everything was good and pure.⁶¹ It is understandable that in 1933 Broch, an Austrian Jew confronted with a world which had lost its sense of irony, diagnosed radical Evil in the form of aesthetic falsity and did not envisage any second-degree engagement with kitsch. And more recently some Flaubertian critics have also accepted the equivalence of the aesthetic and the ethical, following Broch in identifying kitsch with Evil.⁶² Among philosophers, and in particular in political philosophy, there have however been recent attempts to defend sentimentalism in art, and thus what is perceived by some as kitsch, against attacks that are arguably elitist.⁶³ The condemnation of kitsch thus remains the subject of considerable debate in the present day.

The double attitude taken by Flaubert towards kitsch encourages us to nuance any simplistic notion of the subject. Of course his representation of kitsch is already situated on two levels of aesthetic response, whose coexistence creates the hidden polemic that I evoked earlier, that is, the simultaneous presence of two contradictory attitudes: admiration for the object and implicit irony at the expense of those who enjoy it. But Flaubert's satirical ekphrasis, like his irony more generally, is not reductive in a straightforward way. Some of his descriptions of "industrial" art are not without tenderness. For example, in *L'Éducation sentimentale* when Frédéric reminisces with Louise Roque about her childhood, they evoke a book that was dear to Flaubert himself: "—Et le *Don Quichotte*, dont nous colorions ensemble les gravures? — Je l'ai encore!"⁶⁴ ("And the *Don Quichotte*, whose engravings we used to colour in together?" "I still have it!") This is an example of bad reading: a crucial text reduced to its illustration and that illustration itself reduced to childish colouring-in. But Flaubert remembered having coloured engravings during his own childhood. Earlier, in the process of writing the passages about Emma Bovary's own early reading, he had written to Colet: "Je viens de relire pour mon roman plusieurs livres d'enfant. Je suis à moitié fou, ce soir, de tout ce qui a passé aujourd'hui devant mes yeux, depuis de vieux keepsakes jusqu'à des récits de naufrages et de flibustiers. J'ai retrouvé des vieilles gravures que j'avais coloriées à sept et huit ans et que je n'avais pas revues depuis." (I have just reread several children's books, for my novel. I'm half mad, this evening, with everything that has passed before my eyes today, from old Keepsakes to stories of shipwrecks and buccaneers. I found old engravings that I had coloured in at the age of seven or eight and that I hadn't seen since.) He relives his childhood fears, his memories of exotic reading, and in his mind everything "danse avec de prodigieux flamboiements et monte en spirale"⁶⁵ (dances like tremendous flames rising in a

spiral). This evokes what was for Flaubert the near-mystical, ecstatic state of the “spirale,” provoked in this case by memories triggered by clichéd images from his deepest past.

The most famous example of spiritual transcendence that begins with an object of mass-produced art is however that of the parrot in “Un cœur simple.” The simple-minded, selfless Félicité is struck by the resemblance between her adored pet parrot and the Holy Ghost as it is depicted “sur une image d’Épinal, représentant le baptême de Notre-Seigneur. Avec ses ailes de pourpre et son corps d’émeraude, c’était vraiment le portrait de Loulou.”⁶⁶ (in an *image d’Épinal* representing the baptism of Our Lord. With its purple wings and emerald body it really was Loulou’s spitting image.) This ekphrasis seems to be based on a real *image d’Épinal* of John the Baptist baptising Christ, in which the Holy Ghost is not white like a dove, but coloured like a parrot (Fig.2). Félicité buys the print and substitutes it in her attic room for another cheap print, a portrait of the comte d’Artois. Thus begins, in Félicité’s mind, the progressive identification of the parrot with the Holy Ghost. The *image d’Épinal* seems to promise a substitution that tends towards the divine: John the Baptist will be replaced by Jesus, the precursor replaced by the messiah. But “Un cœur simple” is a tale structured by multiple series of repeated substitutions, which do not tend in such an orthodox direction. The parrot replaces the Holy Ghost; its image replaces the out-of-date portrait of the comte d’Artois, future Charles X but who, at the very moment when Loulou the living parrot arrives in Félicité’s life, has just been dethroned in favour of another Loulou, the bourgeois king Louis-Philippe.⁶⁷ The parrot, once dead, stuffed and then eaten by worms, is in fact the penultimate in another series of substitutions, comprising the various beings that Félicité has loved, in an entirely selfless way. In chronological order they include her fiancé, her nephew, her mistress’s daughter, an old Polish refugee, and Loulou. At the moment of Félicité’s death even the stuffed parrot, that grotesquely inadequate art object and object of love, is absent, since at her request it has been included in the procession of the Feast of Corpus Christi. While that occasion celebrates the presence of the blood and body of Christ in the Eucharist, it is Félicité who, dying in her room as the procession passes outside, witnesses the miracle of the transubstantiation “elle crut voir, dans les cieux entrouverts, un perroquet gigantesque, planant au-dessus de sa tête”⁶⁸ (she thought she saw, in the half-opened heavens, a giant parrot hovering above her head). The *image d’Épinal* that inspired Félicité to see her parrot as the Holy Ghost is a form of kitsch, and so too is the stuffed parrot itself, with its glass eyes, posed on a pretentious mahogany branch in the act of biting a gilt nut. It is characterised by the traits we saw earlier: escapism, pretention and falsification of materials, as well as being a visual representation (simultaneously icon and index) of the bird that once was. Both these forms of bad art are thus transmuted, via the miraculous alchemy of Félicité’s simple heart, into authentic ecstasy. The reification of religion into kitsch is reversed, so that kitsch, erased by the absence of the object, leaves a space for true spirituality. We must not forget, after all, that Flaubert saw irony as increasing, rather than diminishing, pathos.⁶⁹

This is, then, not a matter of straightforward contempt. Flaubert’s use of kitsch within satirical ekphrasis cannot be reduced to a simple assertion of Bourdieusian “distinction” whose function is to shore up cultural elitism on behalf of the beleaguered bourgeoisie. Of course, one might take with a grain of salt Flaubert’s oft-proclaimed contempt for the bourgeoisie to which he belonged. And yet in his hands the banal mass-produced image is transformed and reaches a level of meaning beyond itself. In Félicité’s heart the *image d’Épinal* is transcended by the grace of simplicity itself, but in Flaubert’s writing it is transcended by self-awareness. This awareness of kitsch permits its own dialectical overcoming. Or, as Agamben suggests, as kitsch moves from the status of non-art to art, it becomes a sort of liberating force.⁷⁰ One might argue, in terms derived from Bourdieu, that

this does not in any way detract from the notion that cultural objects are marked by a “subtle hierarchy,” simply that Flaubert takes on the role of a holy man capable of shifting a cultural object from one level of hierarchy to another.⁷¹ Let us not however lose sight of the joyful excess of Flaubert’s satirical ekphrasis, seen in the examples of the Keepsakes and the wedding cake.⁷² Flaubert employs second-degree kitsch in an avant-garde form, in the service of carnivalesque laughter.

Henry James, writing rather scathingly about Flaubert, saw above all contempt in his attitude to the verbal objects that he identified: “To use the ready-made was [for Flaubert] as disgraceful as for a self-respecting cook to buy a tinned soup or a sauce in a bottle.”⁷³ But an essential part of Flaubert’s art is in fact to incorporate the verbal ready-made, or *idées reçues* in the form of platitudes and clichés, and as we have seen this is also true of the visual ready-made in its most material forms (Keepsakes, *images d’Épinal*, cake). And his satirical ekphrasis cannot be reduced to mere satire: as so often, ekphrasis operates at multiple levels.

Flaubert’s wariness about language announces what Nathalie Sarraute called “l’ère du soupçon;” she saw in him “le précurseur” of that new era.⁷⁴ By incorporating popular *imagerie* in his writing he is also the precursor of some key twentieth-century responses to the problem of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. Introducing kitsch into the novel, he incorporates visual ready-mades, or found objects. The term *objet trouvé* was used from the early decades of the twentieth century onwards to evoke the integration of pre-existing objects, manufactured or natural, into works of cubist or surrealist art. The exact term used disparagingly by Henry James—“ready-made”—was used by Marcel Duchamp, in English, of his own art. This referred to man-made objects displayed alone, with no intervention from the artist apart from their original function being transformed by dint of their display in a museum; Flaubert’s practice is closer to the integration of *objets trouvés* within a cubist work.

Mitchell bemoans the absence of a real theory of the found object in art and simultaneously sketches one out by arguing for its doubleness: it “may undergo an apotheosis, a transfiguration of the commonplace, a redemption by art” but at the same time retain its homely nature.⁷⁵ Incorporating visual *objets trouvés* within a verbal text also involves a *transposition d’art*. But the effect of re-framing remains essential. The object becomes an integral part of the literary work. It is another way of achieving Flaubert’s goal of “bien écrire le médiocre (writing the mediocre well):”⁷⁶ attempting to reconstitute the aura that the work of art has lost in the era of mechanical reproduction. Re-framing—which occurs through key Flaubertian techniques such as juxtaposition, layering, free indirect discourse—incorporates both the object and an ironic judgement of it, but in a work of art that dialectically overcomes both of these stages. While Mitchell argues that “Clement Greenberg’s ‘kitsch’ became the impure negative foil for his purist ‘avant-garde’ at a certain cultural moment around World War II,” he also points out the variety of other forms taken, at other places and times, by “this dialectic between mass and elite culture.”⁷⁷ Flaubert’s incorporation of the kitsch *objet trouvé* makes of it an impure negative foil for the verbal work of elite art, but his process of *transposition d’art*, integrating the visual fragment into the verbal whole, is also a transformation into celebratory, carnivalesque excess. Long before the post-modern revalorisation of kitsch, non-art is thus transformed into art by Flaubert.

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- ¹ Gustave Flaubert, *Œuvres complètes*, 5 vols, “Pleiade” (Paris: Gallimard, 2001–2021), 5:1270 (and also 5:1675 n. 7). Further references to Flaubert’s works will be to this edition of the complete works, using the abbreviation OC. Translations from the French are the author’s own.
- ² Adrienne Tooke, *Flaubert and the Pictorial Arts: From Image to Text* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 6. On the notes that he took on art, particularly in Italy, during his youth, see Gisèle Séginger, “Introduction,” in her edited volume *Flaubert et la peinture* (Caen: Minard, 2010), 3–16.
- ³ Bernard Vouilloux, “Le siècle de l’imagerie,” *Romantisme* 187:1 (2020), 16–27.
- ⁴ Awareness and theorisation of kitsch in the second half of the nineteenth century coincides with the frequent appearance of terms relating to the cliché (such as *poncif*, *stéréotype*). See Bernard Vouilloux, *Le Tournant “artiste” de la littérature française: écrire avec la peinture au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Hermann, 2011), 464.
- ⁵ An earlier version of material making up some of this article was presented at a one-day international symposium on “Flaubert et les arts visuels” at the Musée d’Orsay, 5 March 2022, under the title “Flaubert, les arts visuels, et l’invention du kitsch”.
- ⁶ Leo Spitzer, “The ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn,’ or Content vs. Meta-Grammar,” *Comparative Literature* 7 (1955), 203–225, p. 207.
- ⁷ James A. W. Heffernan, “Ekphrasis and Representation,” *New Literary History* 22:2 (1991), 297–316, p. 299. This definition is itself not without potential pitfalls, notably because it excludes the description of non-figurative works of art (such as abstract paintings).
- ⁸ Vouilloux rejects the modern “anglo-saxon” usage of the term “ekphrasis”, because it has a broader sense in ancient rhetoric, where it is not just limited to the description of works of art. He argues that it should not be extended to modern literature or separated from the rhetorical tradition in which it originated (*Le Tournant*, 33).
- ⁹ W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 165, 179.
- ¹⁰ Stephen Cheeke, *Writing for Art: the Poetics of Ekphrasis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 163–189.
- ¹¹ Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, ch. “Ekphrasis and the Other.”
- ¹² For an argument against the dominance of the *paragone* model in understanding ekphrasis, see the introduction by Davis Kennedy and Richard Meek in their edited volume *Ekphrastic Encounters* (Manchester University Press, 2018).
- ¹³ Claude Duchet “Romans et objets. L’exemple de *Madame Bovary*”, *Europe* 485 (1969), 172–201, p. 176. He does not consider the description of objects in terms of ekphrasis or offer any theorisation of kitsch itself.
- ¹⁴ Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1987 [1977]), 234–5, 242.
- ¹⁵ As Roger Scruton puts it, “the loss of religious certainty facilitated the birth of kitsch,” in “Kitsch and the Modern Predicament,” *City Journal* (Winter 1999) <https://www.city-journal.org/article/kitsch-and-the-modern-predicament> [consulted 26 May 2023].
- ¹⁶ OC 3:180.
- ¹⁷ On the relationship of religion and kitsch, see for example Patrizia C. McBride, “The Value of Kitsch: Hermann Broch and Robert Musil on Art and Morality,” *Studies in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Literature* 29:2 (2005), 282–301, p. 286.
- ¹⁸ Calinescu, *Five Faces*, 229.
- ¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *La Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris: Minuit, 1979).
- ²⁰ To Léon Hennique, February 2–3, 1880, in Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance*, ed. Jean Bruneau and Yvan Leclerc, 5 vols, “Pleiade” (Paris: Gallimard, 1973–2007), 5:811.
- ²¹ The class prejudice that underlies the concept of kitsch is emphasized, for example, in a special issue of *Rethinking Marxism* 22:1 (2010). In Flaubert’s treatment, however—relatively early in the history of kitsch—hackneyed art is not exclusive to the working classes and the split is not so much between *le peuple* and the bourgeoisie, but rather between the latter and the artist.
- ²² “Avant-Garde and kitsch” [1939] in Clement Greenberg. *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 1, 1939–1944, ed. J. O’Brian (University of Chicago Press, 1986) 5–22, p. 11. See also Monica Kjellman-Chapin, “The Politics of Kitsch,” *Rethinking Marxism* 22:1 (2010), 27–41, p. 33.
- ²³ Michel Costantini, “Écrire l’image, redit-on,” *Littérature* 100 (December 1995), 22–48.
- ²⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *The Man Without Content*, trad. Giorgia Albert (Stanford University Press, 1999 [L’uomo senza contenuto, 1994]), 42–43.
- ²⁵ “Il y a une chose qui nous perd, vois-tu, une chose stupide qui nous entrave, c’est le goût, le bon goût.” To Louis Bouilhet, September 4, 1850, *Correspondance* 1:676.
- ²⁶ Levilson C. Reis, “Artifacts of Adultery: Flaubert’s Use of Kitsch in *Madame Bovary*,” *French Studies Bulletin* 23:85 (2002), 10–13.

- ²⁷ On objects in contrast to images see W.J.T. Mitchell, *What do pictures want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (University of Chicago Press, 2005) 111–196.
- ²⁸ Pierre-Marc de Biasi, “Flaubert, une théorie de l’image”, in *Voir, croire, savoir. Les Épistémologies de la création chez Gustave Flaubert*, ed. Pierre-Marc de Biasi, Anne Herschberg Pierrot and Barbara Vinken (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 3–29, p. 11.
- ²⁹ Calinescu, *Five Faces*, 229.
- ³⁰ OC 3:177, 226.
- ³¹ OC 4:253. In *Madame Bovary* Homais too signifies his social ascension through artistic taste by purchasing “deux statuettes *chic* Pompadour, pour décorer son salon” (OC 3:454).
- ³² OC 4:391.
- ³³ On this use of images of enslaved men in reproductions that hark back to the eighteenth century, see Jennifer Yee, “Undermining Exoticism: Flaubert’s use of antithesis in *L’Éducation sentimentale*,” *Dix-Neuf* 15:1 (2011), 26–36.
- ³⁴ To Louise Colet, January 20, 1854, *Correspondance* 2:518.
- ³⁵ The comparison is made by Yvan Leclerc, *Album Gustave Flaubert* (Paris, Gallimard, 2021), 216.
- ³⁶ OC 4:433.
- ³⁷ OC 4:198.
- ³⁸ OC 3:182.
- ³⁹ On Flaubert’s extensive research while preparing the passage on the Keepsakes, see Takashi Kinouchi, “*Madame Bovary* et les keepsakes,” in *J-Stage, Études de langue et littérature françaises* 115 (2019), 107–124, and for a detailed analysis see Carol Rifelj, “‘Ces tableaux du monde’: Keepsakes in *Madame Bovary*,” *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 25: 3–4 (1997), 360–85.
- ⁴⁰ Leo Bersani, “Flaubert: The Politics of Mystical Realism,” *The Massachusetts Review* 11:1 (Winter, 1970), 35–50, p. 35.
- ⁴¹ Marta Caraion, *Comment la littérature pense les objets. Théorie littéraire de la culture matérielle* (Ceyzérieu: Champ Vallon, 2020), 71.
- ⁴² Jean Baudrillard, *Le Système des objets* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), 191, 201.
- ⁴³ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 195.
- ⁴⁴ OC 3:182–3.
- ⁴⁵ OC 5:1179, 1184.
- ⁴⁶ Rifelj, “Ces tableaux du monde”, 364.
- ⁴⁷ This image recurs in various letters. See the explanatory note in *Correspondance* 2:1038.
- ⁴⁸ Letter to Louise Colet, October 7, 1852, *Correspondance* 2:168, his emphasis.
- ⁴⁹ My ‘Making Madame Bovary’s Wedding Cake’ project was a collaboration with the Oxford Cake Shop, funded by TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities), to mark the bicentenary of Flaubert’s birth in 2021. See <https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/making-madame-bovarys-wedding-cake>
- ⁵⁰ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature* (New York/London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 128, 147.
- ⁵¹ Roland Barthes, “‘L’effet de réel” [1968] in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Éric Marty, 3 vols (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 2:479–84.
- ⁵² OC 3:174.
- ⁵³ OC 3:212.
- ⁵⁴ Manuscripts of *Madame Bovary*, Centre Flaubert (Université de Rouen): <http://www.bovary.fr/> I:167.v.
- ⁵⁵ OC 3:384.
- ⁵⁶ Mitchell, *What do pictures want?*, 117.
- ⁵⁷ To Louise Colet, January 20, 1854, *Correspondance* 2:518–9, his emphasis.
- ⁵⁸ Tooke, *Flaubert and the Pictorial Arts*, 52. See also 33, 50.
- ⁵⁹ Jules de Gaultier, *Le Bovarysme. La Psychologie dans l’œuvre de Flaubert* □1892□(Paris, Éditions du Sandre, 2008), 38.
- ⁶⁰ Jean Seznec, “Flaubert and the Graphic Arts,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 8 (1945), 175–90, p. 179.
- ⁶¹ Hermann Broch, “Evil in the Value System of Art” □“Das Böse im Wertsystem der Kunst”, 1933□ in *Geist and Zeitgeist. The Spirit in an Unspiritual Age. Six Essays by Hermann Broch*, trad. John Hargraves (New York, Counterpoint, 2002), 3–39, p. 33–34. In 1939, Greenberg also identifies kitsch as a vehicle of totalitarian propaganda (20–21).
- ⁶² Francisco González, “Les Décombres de l’aura: Flaubert face à l’émergence du kitsch”, in *Voir, croire, savoir*, ed. Biasi, 131–150, p. 132.
- ⁶³ Robert Solomon defends sentimentalism, arguing that objections to kitsch are really objections to emotionality and revelatory of class prejudice. “On Kitsch and Sentimentality,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 49:1 (1991), 1–14. See also *Rethinking Marxism* (2010).

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- ⁶⁴ OC 4:385.
- ⁶⁵ To Louise Colet, March 3, 1852, *Correspondance* 2:55.
- ⁶⁶ OC 5:242.
- ⁶⁷ Steve Murphy, *Complexités d'un cœur simple* (Chêne-Bourg: La Baconnière, 2018), 44.
- ⁶⁸ OC 5:247.
- ⁶⁹ To Louise Colet, October 9, 1852, *Correspondance* 2:172.
- ⁷⁰ Agamben, *Man Without*, following Musil, 49.
- ⁷¹ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 226.
- ⁷² My view is not shared by everyone. Although he does indicate “l’aspect *double* du kitsch” in Flaubert (his emphasis), Jacques Chessex sees this as a “jubilation morose”, and a “kitsch morose” or even “meurtrier”. *Flaubert ou le désert en abîme* (Paris: Grasset, 1991), 170, 172.
- ⁷³ Henry James, “Gustave Flaubert” [1893] in *Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. Morris Shapira (London: Heinemann, 1963), 152.
- ⁷⁴ Nathalie Sarraute, *L'Ère du soupçon* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956 □ 1950□) et “Flaubert le précurseur” in *Paul Valéry et l'enfant de l'éléphant. Flaubert le précurseur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986).
- ⁷⁵ Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?* 114.
- ⁷⁶ To Louise Colet, September 12, 1853, *Correspondance* 2:429, his emphasis.
- ⁷⁷ Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 246.