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Ward Houser

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

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

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

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

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

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Evelyn Gettone

FLAUBERT, GUSTAVE (1821-1880)

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

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