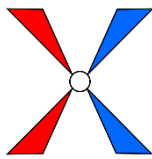


1524 AB

bncdoc.id	G1A
bncdoc.author	Barnes, J
bncdoc.year	1985
bncdoc.title	Flaubert's parrot.
bncdoc.info	Flaubert's parrot. Sample containing about 40562 words from a book (domain: imaginative)
Text availability	Worldwide rights cleared
Publication date	1985-1993
Text type	Written books and periodicals
David Lee's classification	W_fict_prose

<p><1524/c></p>  <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>; later, in his Grand Dictionnaire de cuisine (1870), he noted that 'Bear meat is now eaten by all the peoples of Europe'. From the chef to Their Majesties of Prussia Dumas obtained a recipe for bear's paws, Moscow style. Buy the paws skinned. Wash, salt, and marinade for three days. Casserole with bacon and vegetables for seven or eight hours; drain, wipe, sprinkle with pepper and turn in melted lard. Roll in bread crumbs and grill for half an hour. Serve with a piquant sauce and two spoonfuls of redcurrant jelly. It is not known whether Flaubert ever ate his namesake. He ate dromedary in Damascus in 1850. It seems a reasonable guess that if he had eaten bear he would have commented on such ipsophagy. Exactly what species of bear was Flaubert? We can track his spoor through the Letters. At first he is just an unspecified ours, a bear (1841). He's still unspecified - though owner of a den - in 1843, in January 1845, and in May 1845 (by now he boasts a triple layer of fur). In June 1845 he wants to buy a painting of a bear for his room and entitle it 'Portrait of Gustave Flaubert' - 'to indicate my moral disposition and my social temperament'. So far we (and he too, perhaps) have been imagining a dark animal: an American brown bear, a Russian black bear, a reddish bear from Savoy. But in September 1845 Gustave firmly announces himself to be 'a white bear'. Why? Is it because he's a bear who is also a white European? Is it perhaps an identity taken from the white bearskin rug on his study floor (which he first mentions in a letter to Louise Colet of August 1846, telling her that he likes to stretch out on it during the day. Maybe he chose his species so that he could lie on his rug, punning and camouflaged)? Or is this coloration indicative of a further shift away from humanity, a progression to the extremes of ursinity? The brown, the black, the reddish bear are not that far from man, from man's cities, man's friendship even. The coloured bears can mostly be tamed. But the white, the polar bear? It doesn't dance for man's pleasure; it doesn't eat berries; it can't be trapped by a weakness for honey. Other bears are used. The Romans imported bears from Britain for their games. The Kamchatkans, a people of eastern Siberia, used to employ</p> <p>the intestines of bears</p> <p>as face-masks to protect them from the glare of the sun; and they used the sharpened shoulder-blade for cutting grass. But the white bear, thalassarctos maritimus, is the aristocrat of bears. Aloof, distant, stylishly diving for fish, roughly ambushing seals when they come up for air. The maritime bear. They travel great distances, carried along on floating pack-ice. One winter in the last century twelve great white bears got as far south as Iceland by this method; imagine them riding town on their melting thrones to make a terrifying, godlike landfall. William Scoresby, the Arctic explorer, noted that the liver of the bear is poisonous - the only part of any quadruped known to be so. Among zoo-keepers there is no known test for pregnancy in the polar bear. Strange facts that Flaubert might not have found strange. When the Yakuts, a Siberian people, meet a bear, they doff their caps, greet him, call him master, old man or grandfather, and promise</p>
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	<p>not to attack him or even speak ill of him. But if he looks as though he may pounce on them, they shoot at him, and if they kill him, they cut him in pieces and roast him and regale themselves, repeating all the while, ‘It is the Russians who are eating you, not us.’ A. - F. Aulagnier, Dictionnaire des Ailments et Boissons Were there other reasons why he chose to be a bear? The figurative sense of ours is much the same as in English: a rough, wild fellow. Ours is slang for a police cell. Avoir ses ours, to have one’s bears, means ‘to have the curse’ (presumably because at such times a woman is supposed to behave like a bear with a sore head). Etymologists trace this colloquialism to the turn of the century (Flaubert doesn’t use it; he prefers the redcoats have landed, and other humorous variations thereon. On one occasion, having worried over Louise Colet’s irregularity, he finally notes with relief that Lord Palmerston has arrived). Un ours mal léché, a badly licked bear, is someone uncouth and misanthropic. More apt for Flaubert, un ours was nineteenth-century slang for a play which had been frequently submitted and turned down, but eventually accepted. No doubt Flaubert knew La Fontaine’s fable of the Bear and the Man Who Delighted in Gardens. There once was a bear, an ugly and deformed creature, who hit from the world and lived all alone in a wood. After a while he became melancholy and frantic - ‘for indeed, Reason seldom resides long among</p>
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