

The process of remembering has an ironic effect: self-realization leads ultimately to death.

In Part II Margenot traces the function of two elements he has identified as "shadows" (cloisters and darkness) in the novels of the *Región* cycle preceding *Herrumbrosas Lanzas*. Margenot shows the relationship between houses or cloistered spaces and the Mantua forest where Numa, the mythical guard, has his abode. He also sees a pattern of concentric narrative circles in all these novels with Mantua as their axis and explores in each novel the connection between time and memory, and reason and passion.

In the preface to his work Margenot points out that his is one of only a few critical works on Benet which have been published in Spanish. A few errors in his book show a less than perfect command of what is not obviously the author's native language ("minimaliza"; "en vez que"; "consiste de"; "marginalia"; "por recurso a"; etc.). His style is at times somewhat dense, partly attributable to his formalistic critical approach. Although some of the points advanced in this book have been made by David Herzberger, Vicente Cabrera, Malcolm Compitello and other critics, Margenot's original approach is frequently evident as in his treatment of demonic elements and his recourse to historiography in Part I. He also offers a panoramic view of Benet's novelistic work and concentrates on the most important locale in his fictional world. This book's 28-page bibliography is very useful and includes doctoral dissertations and a substantial number of critical works published after 1984, the year in which the previous bibliography on Benet was compiled.

Victor Terras

*A History of Russian Literature*

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991. Pp. 654. \$45.00

Reviewed by Allan Reid

It now appears that Victor Terras's excellent *Handbook of Russian Literature* (1985) was, in a manner of speaking, just the prelude to this grand work which will certainly be welcomed by all scholars and students of Russian literature. Previously, frustrated by the limitations of available histories such as Mirsky's or Chyzhevskij's, most had to turn to period histories or works in other languages. I usually found myself consulting the very scholarly, though occasionally wordy, two-volume *Historia literatury rosyjskiej* (ed. Marian Jakóbowiec) in Polish, but still always felt the need for a complete yet sufficiently compact one-volume work in English. *A History of Russian Literature* admirably fits the order.

It is thorough, clearly written, well laid out, and very usable. Appropriate attention is paid to all major literary genres, including drama, prose, and poetry, as well as popular traditions in the chapters devoted to pre-Petrine literature. As well, the context is expanded considerably with discussion of trends and shifts in literary theory, aesthetics, and social processes, although the latter is not overly

emphasized. The book traces the development of Russian literature from its origins in Kievan Rus' to the post-Stalin period, making the necessary transitions between stages smoothly and convincingly. The periodization employed for chapter divisions is functional and serves its purpose very well: historical units are short enough to prevent overgeneralizations in their characterization, yet long enough to permit coherence within a volume of this length.

Fortunately, Terras does not impose a single, rigid, predetermined structure on all chapters; instead, he allows the development of the subject matter to dictate the appropriate divisions within each. The information is eloquently presented, yet concise and reliable: precisely what is needed in a reference work of this sort. Even the two-column page layout merits mention, since it renders the text highly reader friendly, which is a distinct advantage since most readers will not be proceeding from start to finish, but sampling or consulting, as their individual needs dictate.

No doubt, many will regret that their favorite novelist or poet did not receive more space, however, the distribution of authors really is quite judicious. If the book has a serious shortcoming, it is that it stops a bit too short: the decision not to deal with the literature of the last generation is probably well taken, nevertheless, the chapter on the Soviet period could well have been expanded into two chapters, each nearly as long as the one we have. The most likely dividing point would probably be somewhere between 1928 and 1934, i.e., the period which, with its proclamation and institutionalization of Socialist Realism, marks the end of nonofficial writing, at least for publication, and especially of the prose experiments which dominated the 1920s, and about which we would want to hear more about. Despite the presence of outstanding poets, the twentieth century is dominated by prose in Russian literature. Thus, we would also like to learn more, especially about the prose of the post-Stalin period and its relation to Socialist Realism and other trends, even if he were to choose to give a truncated presentation and stop midway through the Brezhnev era.

Still, Professor Terras's broad familiarity with not only Russian but also other major literatures shines throughout the book. This work will stand on its own for some time to come as by far the best one-volume history of Russian literature in English or perhaps any language.

Gustave Flaubert

*Early Writings*

Trans. Robert Griffin

Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991. Pp. 275

Reviewed by Margaret Scanlan

Flaubert's juvenilia has long played a significant role in critical and biographical studies such as Sartre's monumental *The Family Idiot*, but it has never before been available in English. The University of Nebraska Press, by publishing eleven of the author's early stories and essays in Robert Griffin's clear and com-