

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-

petent translation, has done a real service to readers and teachers of the novels. Griffin's notes provide a helpful guide to intersections between the early and later work, and clarify the historical, literary, and personal context. Flaubert was just thirteen when he wrote the first of these selections, an essay on Byron; the last, "Smarh," was written when he was seventeen.

The chief interest of this work is, of course, its connection to the great career that followed it. The stories reveal just how many of Flaubert's major themes and minor quirks, even the names of his characters, were in play while he was still an adolescent. The "Orientalism" of *Salambô* and *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, the love of the exotic and bizarre, is already visible, well before the famous trip to Egypt. The language if not the theory of an impersonal art appears in a young man's description of entertaining himself with his memories "like a God who would entertain himself by watching the world he created" (185). Most of us who have heard the old chestnut about Flaubert taking the plot of *Madame Bovary* from a newspaper story have not realized that the story appeared in 1837, when he was just sixteen, the year in which he wrote "Passion and Virtue." In this story a frustrated married woman falls for a cad named Ernest; having become besotted and corrupted by passion, she poisons herself when he rejects her. In "Diary of a Mad Woman" the influence of the celebrated meeting of the fourteen-year old writer with Elisa Schlésinger is already at work; Madame Arnoux is recognizable in the beautiful maternal Maria, married to a "vulgar and jovial man" with a mistress (184). And, though not often, the reader comes across a sentence that suggests the mature tone: in "Whatever You Want," a man turns to marriage "because he was bored with living alone, and he didn't want another mistress since learning that his man-servant had one too" (84).

But equally striking are the differences. One can better understand Flaubert's characterization of himself, in an 1857 letter to Saint-Beuve, as "un vieux romantique enragé," when one witnesses the romantic excesses of which he was capable at fifteen or seventeen. Here are men buried alive, no detail spared; here is a noble savage woman straight out of Chateaubriand and there a not-so-noble savage who murders and rapes the lovely wife of the proto-Mengele Paul, who had locked his African mother into a room with an orangutan to "solve" the "problem" of whether humans could be crossbred with monkeys (89). Here are dancing corpses and there mad alchemists with long blue locks. And particularly here is Satan, a DC-Comics Satan with real "bat wings" (160), who makes an appearance in no fewer than four stories, engaging in philosophical dialogues with Christ, Nero, Death, a demiurge named Yuk, and assorted others not lucky enough to evade the sulfurous boredom of his conversation. Surely few can suppress a giggle as the Archfiend expresses an adolescent disappointment that an activity undertaken in the expectation of pleasure produces only more ennui: "Oh, how many times have I gone out to drag myself over the corpses of girls that were still warm! How often have I come back depressed . . .!" (61).

In short, reading *The Early Writings* makes one wonder if anyone, perusing them in 1838, could have predicted that their author would one day write some of the greatest novels in his language, that the hand that produced Djalioh the monkey-man would one day render the precise nuances of Emma's psychology. Could someone capable of describing the obstacles Yuk faces as she climbs the blood-

splattered marble staircase ("every step ground golden goblets and human heads underfoot" [238]) grow up to write that splendidly terse evocation of the June Massacre? Is it reasonable to expect that someone so drawn to melodrama and attitude-striking should one day be remembered for making novel-writing an art, for inventing the search for *le mot juste*? (Which phrase, thanks to one of those copy-editing gremlins who cause authors to grow old before their time, is rendered in the introduction as "*le most juste*" [xviii].) Evidently the youthful Flaubert was skeptical too, ending "Smarh" with a postscript from a fictional friend, ". . . the best advice I can give you is to stop writing" (275).

Saad Elkhadem

*Crash Landing of the Flying Egyptian*

Bilingual Edition: Arabic/English

Translated with a critical introduction by S. El-Gabalawy

Fredericton, N.B.: York Press, 1992. Pp. 4+30+25

Reviewed by A.F. Cassis

This is the third part of the planned trilogy about the Flying Egyptian in Canada. *Crash Landing* is critically intriguing, provocatively fascinating and, in its exposure of the Flying Egyptian's "festering wounds," brutally frank and uncompromising. The first part of the trilogy, *Canadian Adventures of the Flying Egyptian* (see *IFR* 17.2 [1990]: 142-43), leaves us with the unmistakable impression that the artist has died in "mysterious circumstances" before completing a novel about the immigration of Egyptians to Canada in which he was to expose the terrible political, economic, and social conditions in Egypt during Nasser's regime. The "Kings' Press" attempts to complete the unfinished novel and edit and "doctor" it before publication. In the second part of the trilogy, "Contemporary Writer Publishing House" attempts to rectify the errors of "Kings' Press" by commissioning a certain 'Ali 'abd al-Wâhid al-Fayyûmi to publish the life and works of the deceased author after interviewing his friends and acquaintances in Canada. The record of these interviews and recollections constitutes the *Chronicle of the Flying Egyptian in Canada* (see *IFR* 19.1 [1992]), and, at its conclusion, one is left with the suggestion that the Flying Egyptian may not be dead and may have faked his death.

In the third part, *Crash Landing of the Flying Egyptian*, the deceased author/narrator/protagonist is like "Lazarus come back from the dead"; however, he is not "come back to tell all" but to set "things straight and correct everything that went wrong" all within the framework of the "two hundred words at the most" that will make up the entry about him in the Literary Encyclopedia. The banal, trite, and cold entry throws into sharp relief the volcanic emotions and tempestuous experiences that were characteristic of the life of the deceased. The words used underline the inadequacy of the 'blurb' to tell much, or tell anything that is really meaningful. But these words "from beyond the grave . . . from underneath the ashes"—an oblique reference to the cremation which ends the *Chronicle*—effectively "resurrect" the Flying Egyptian from his "condition [which]