

these political prejudices of an erroneous aesthetics—in the formation of which I took an immediate part.” In addition to dissociating himself and Futurism from Mayakovsky, a recent suicide and a critic of Stalinist controls in art, Livshits also was careful to stress that the Italian Futurists, together with their leader Marinetti, influenced Larionov and Goncharova more than the Hylaeans. In 1933, while Marinetti was linking Futurism with fascism by ascribing a “marvelous Futurist temperament” to Mussolini, Livshits was carefully disentangling Russian Futurism from its Italian sources. He points out that Marinetti “focused all fundamental aspirations of young Italian imperialism,” but describes in great detail how Livshits and Khlebnikov argued with Marinetti during his 1914 Russian visit and even distributed leaflets attacking him. In addition, Livshits admits that the Hylaeans’ search for Greek roots in southern Russia was itself a kind of “racial theory of art.”

Readers should thus approach this memoir with some caution, because Livshits has in part translated a political anti-Westernism of 1933 into a remembered cultural anti-Westernism of 1911–14. This strategy of survival (Livshits ultimately perished during the purges in 1939) was undoubtedly responsive to the ominous warnings by the Soviet publishers, in their introduction to the 1933 edition, that Livshits’s memoir contained “false and erroneous elucidations” and “idealist, bourgeois positions” about a “racial theory of art (Fascist in embryo).” Such a strategy helps account for the overemphasis on the “Scythianism” of Russian Futurism, more properly associated with the poet Alexander Blok and the left-wing Socialist Revolutionaries after 1917. A remembered cultural Easternism is Livshits’s defense against real or imagined political links with Western fascism in the 1930s.

This book remains a crucial source on Russian Futurism, and John Bowlt has again performed a useful service by making another major document of the Russian avant-garde available in English, accompanied by attractive illustrations and explanatory notes. Occasional typographical errors and historical misstatements (for example, that the Socialist Revolutionaries “merged with the Mensheviks”) are a minor blemish on an otherwise excellent job of editing and translating. One eagerly awaits more in this series.

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WHITE STONES AND FIR TREES: AN ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY SLAVIC LITERATURES. Edited by *Vasa D. Mihailovich*. Rutherford, N.J. and London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses, 1977. 603 pp. \$18.00.

Over the years, the *Literary Review*, a magazine published by Fairleigh Dickinson University, has engaged in the praiseworthy endeavor of printing translations of contemporary writing from many foreign countries. The present volume reprints about 125 works previously published in the *Literary Review*, evenly divided among Yugoslavia, Soviet Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. In addition, there are five reprinted essays (also from the *Literary Review*), plus a new general introduction by the editor of the volume, Professor Vasa D. Mihailovich, which presents a strong case for reading and studying Slavic literatures as a unit. The inclusion of 130 items in the 603 pages of the volume, or an average of less than five pages per piece of writing, means that, for the most part, only brief poems and short stories are included, and, consequently, a general impression of slightness results from a reading of the volume.

The works are not grouped by country, language, or chronology, but by theme—“A Poet’s World,” “Love,” “War,” “Mind, Heart, and Soul,” “The Child,” “My

Native Land," "Riddles," and "Here and Now." The desire to de-emphasize the separate nationalities of the authors and to stress their common interests may also explain why the nationality of the writers is not listed with each work, but in the biographical notes about authors, found at the end of the volume. It is here that a word of caution ought to have been addressed to the reader. The notes (and the five essays) have been reprinted without correction or updating (some were inaccurate even at the time of first publication). The special Polish issue appeared in 1967, the Yugoslav issue in winter 1967, and the Soviet issue in spring 1970. It might have been better to omit the notes than to mislead readers in 1977. Conditions have changed greatly since 1968, as we are reminded when we read, in the present tense, that Havel's "critical essays appear regularly in the magazine *Divadlo*," or that Josef Skvorecký "has published three books: *The Cowards*, a novel which appeared when he was 25 . . ." (he has by now published more than a dozen books and lives in Canada; moreover, he wrote *The Cowards* when he was thirty-four). The editor's article is entitled "Soviet Literature Today" but mentions that the news of "Anatoly Kuznetsov's defection broke during the final stages of writing this article" (he defected on July 30, 1969).

When we look up the issues of the *Literary Review* in which the translations first appeared, we come to understand other features of the selections and translations which are puzzling when we read the book alone. The Czech issue, we are told in the magazine but not in the book, was "compiled by the Union of Czechoslovak Writers" before "the upheaval" (the Soviet occupation in August 1968). Thus, we are presented, in 1977, with works and biographical notes written before 1968; since then, much new literature has been written, and many writers have been silenced, or have emigrated. In addition, the book does not give the places and dates of publication of the original versions, information which would have been useful to the serious student.

In a short review, one reviewer of limited competence cannot even begin to discuss the quality of translations or the selection of works from five countries, in nine languages. One very general comment can be made, however: some of the works read very well indeed, but the translations are uneven. This is not surprising, because the Russian works seem to have been translated as a project by students at the University of North Carolina, and the Czech works by translators in Czechoslovakia about whom the editors themselves were unable to obtain any information.

Slavic literatures, particularly the non-Russian ones, have been neglected by American publishers, and this attempt to make a selection of recent writing available is certainly welcome. Much of this volume makes excellent reading, for the general reader and for the browser, and the book will be useful for courses in East European and world literature.

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POLISH ROMANTIC DRAMA: THREE PLAYS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION. Edited, selected, and with an introduction by *Harold B. Segel*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1977. 320 pp. Photographs. \$17.50.

The rhetoric of Polish Romanticism is unconvincing. Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve*, part 3, contains magnificent poetry, and its anti-Russian sentiments were inflammatory in People's Poland, yet the play fails to move us. Much the same could be said about Krasiński's *The Un-Divine Comedy* and Słowacki's *Fantasy*. After all, how chauvinistic was Byron or Schiller? Those schooled in the Western Romantic tradition may find the deeply felt patriotism of the Polish Romantic trinity artificial. "Trinity" is an apt word, because these three writers have become sacrosanct; they need to be demythologized.