

and the essay, it is still difficult to recognize where, in Matiushin's philosophy, alchemy and astrology ended, and where chemistry and astronomy began. How did Matiushin's "impressionism" differ from Kul'bin's? Why does Khardzhiev regard Matiushin as a "venerable representative of the international 'avant-garde' of the twentieth century" (p. 131), but Kul'bin as a "dilettante" (p. 124)? Such issues remain enigmatic.

On the whole, Khardzhiev's bittersweet footnotes form a positive and much needed directory to names and dates relating to the Russian avant-garde. On occasion, however, Khardzhiev's attempts to inflict his authoritarian views are both vexing and questionable. When many members of the avant-garde such as Chekrygin, Punin, and Tatlin were discussing the ideas of Nikolai Fedorov, why assume that Malevich "was never interested in him" (p. 89)? When, in his diaries and letters of the 1920s, Punin described Malevich's experiments at the Leningrad Institute of Artistic Culture and drew parallels between the work of Malevich, Matiushin, and himself, why dismiss this obvious connection as "fiction" (p. 124) but then refer to the collaboration of Malevich and Matiushin at the same institute a few pages later (p. 132)? When Kul'bin created many abstract appliquéés of colored paper in 1913–14—one of which was shown at the 1973 exhibition commemorating *The Stray Dog* in Leningrad and three of which belong to Kul'bin's nephew in Leningrad—why reject Kul'bin as a "dilettante" and the works as "fakes" (p. 125)? In seeking to impose his pedantic and exclusive opinions on the course of history, Khardzhiev may distort it even more than his colleagues have done.

JOHN E. BOWLT
University of Texas

THE ONE AND A HALF-EYED ARCHER. By *Benedikt Livshits*. Translated, annotated, and with an introduction by *John E. Bowl*t. Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1977. 272 pp. Illus. \$25.00.

A well-known memoir of Russian Futurism now makes its rather expensive debut in English translation. The "archer" of the title is both the destructive Scythian riding out of the East and the thoroughly Westernized half-blind promoter of the Russian avant-garde, David Burliuk. Burliuk once declared that twenty-five years was the proper "life span for any truth." In this case, Livshits's recollections must be read in the perspective of 1933 (when they appeared in Russian), as well as of 1911–14 (when the events described took place).

Specialists know this memoir of the Hylaeans (a group of provincial avant-garde poets and painters including the Burliuks, Mayakovsky, Alexandra Ekster, Velemir Khlebnikov, and Livshits himself) from either the 1933 original or the 1971 French translation. The familiar stories are all here: Ekster returning from Paris with photographs of the latest artistic novelty; schoolboy friends on vacation at Burliuk's Crimean home deciding to create the Hylaea movement in 1911 because "a label was indispensable"; Burliuk's father's comment that he could "paint better with my left foot"; Burliuk's discovery of Mayakovsky; and the painted faces, scandalous performances, and toilet-paper manifestoes of the young Futurists. According to Livshits, Russian Futurism was a poetic search for Russian roots whose genius was Khlebnikov, not Mayakovsky, a movement which "died without heirs" during World War I. He states that Mayakovsky "joined the Revolution independent of Futurism, if not in spite of it," and maintains that Russian Futurism was unconnected with the Russian Revolution and did not survive it.

Livshits's interpretation of Russian Futurism must be understood in the context of 1933, when a 47-year old Jewish artist and critic recanted his youthful mistakes under party pressure. Livshits himself wrote that his memoir was intended to "expose

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.

ROBERT C. WILLIAMS
Washington University

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