

in a short review. Given their importance, it is hoped that Ardis will follow the example of Cornell University Press and issue the Lotman volume as an inexpensive paperback in order to facilitate its use in university courses.

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MODERN RUSSIAN POETS ON POETRY. Edited by *Carl R. Proffer*. Selected and with an introduction by *Joseph Brodsky*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1976. 203 pp. \$3.45, paper.

It is a pity that Russian poets of this caliber must still be "popularized," in this case by an anthology of their views on art. Had they been French poets, for example, at least their poetry would be well known already, and something of their aesthetics as well.

The selection of poets made here is unbiased; all the major poets of a certain generation (all, except Blok, are post-Symbolists) who made significant statements about the nature of poetry have been included. The poets agree remarkably on assigning to poetry an exceptionally elevated or powerful role, greater, certainly, than is now thinkable in the English-speaking world. Blok's title, "On the Mission of the Poet," can stand for the message in which all concur. In this respect the younger poets all appear to be the neo-Romantic heirs of Symbolism. Their differences are, of course, apparent. The Acmeists Gumilev and Mandelstam speak of an "organic" quality of verse; the erstwhile Futurist Pasternak speaks of a power originating in a displacement from reality; Mayakovsky extols social command; and the unaligned Tsvetaeva grapples with the relationship between art and morality. Fortunately, the inclusion of Khodasevich has restored him to our attention.

Brodsky, in his short preface, also lauds poetry as an "intuitive synthesis." The preface is followed by a brief "Bio-Bibliographical Introduction," which might have been better placed at the end of the book. (Items omitted from the section of Pushkin criticism are John Bayley, *Pushkin: A Comparative Commentary* and David Magarshack, *Pushkin*.) The articles are fully annotated at the back of the book. These notes are useful, but they are blemished by a certain amount of editorial neglect. Mayakovsky's title, for example, is translated differently in the notes.

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OSIP MANDELSTAM: SELECTED ESSAYS. Translated by *Sidney Monas*. The Dan Danciger Publication Series. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1977. xxvi, 245 pp. \$15.95.

As always, in providing the English-speaking public with selected translations from the original, the translator's personality and personal taste mediate the selection. This is as it should be, and the book under review is no exception. Professor Monas is a good judge of himself and of his book. He is forthright in admitting and indicating his preferences: "Inevitably a certain subjective element has entered into my choices of what to include. . . . In addition, I have tried to limit myself to the literary essays. . . . I must also confess that I could not resist the eloquence of [the] angry style [of *Fourth Prose*]. . . ." He also acknowledges that "a number, though by no means the greater number of these essays, have been previously translated by other hands . . . the only one that struck me as unimprovable upon was the 'Conversation about Dante' in the version by Clarence Brown and Robert Hughes." As for the translations, Professor Monas states: "I wish I could have done better; but I have done my best."