shortcoming, which I mention only in passing, is the lack of a systematic treatment of “Italian” literature in dialect.) The above criticisms are made in the hope that a second edition will correct what seem to me serious weaknesses so that the Dictionary can become an outstanding reference work in English of Italian literature.

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Futurism lends itself well to comparative analysis. Yet to date few have attempted to study in a single volume the literary aspect of this movement as it manifested itself throughout Europe, the Slavic countries, and South America. Folejewski’s work attempts to do exactly this. More precisely, his study seeks primarily to “draw an outline of the development of this movement as it arose and operated in the various local brands of the Avant-Garde” (p.119). The work is aimed at a reading public which has already a working knowledge of the basic principles and practices of futurist poets.

The work is divided into two large Parts: “The Comparative Study” or “Discussion,” and the “Selection of Futurist Poetry” which is the longer of the two. Part I, the subject of this review, comprises eight chapters. In the first chapter Folejewski brings into light the paradoxical nature of the movement and the temper of the times in which it was couched: “There is some justification in the claims of Soviet literary criticism that Futurism was doomed at its inception since its socio-philosophical motors were those of anarchism... But whether the element of ‘anarchy’ in Futurism is only a matter of just another manifestation of ‘bourgeois decadence’ as many Soviet critics claim, is an open question” (pp.8-9). The writer points out that both in Italy and Russia the Futurists were initially a group of considerable popularity. Later the condemnation of the movement by the ruling class in both countries testified to the “disturbing ability on the part of Futurism to constantly create controversy and stir up emotions” (p.10).

The second chapter deals with the emergence of Futurism, the artistic and personal temperament of Marinetti, and the early manifestoes. The writer puts forth his personal opinion concerning the origins of the movement and the essential import of the manifestoes. However, for the most part his views conform to the views and theories of other respected critics of Futurism. Folejewski brings into sharp focus the innovative and creative abilities of Marinetti calling attention to his “truly ‘American’ talent for publicity” as well as his “sincere understanding and appreciation of art and true artists” (p.21). What we have in this chapter is a three-dimensional portrayal of Marinetti the innovator, the theorist, the artist. As far as Marinetti the artist is concerned, he is best represented in his Zang-Tumb-Tuuum which is “probably the best compendium of the central theoretical issues and at the same time it is an excellent ‘clinical’
demonstration of the essential technical aspects of the futurist poet- ics” (p.35). The concluding section of this second chapter is dedicated to a brief (too brief!) discussion of the craft of Italian futurist poets. However the author rightly points out that critics have not given enough attention either to the theory or the practice of “parole in libertà” which represent an “undeniable breakthrough in the development of modern poetry” (p.35.).

The fourth chapter studies the search for a new mode of expression in Russia and the Ukraine. Here Folejewski—at times not without a certain bias for the Russian futurists—compares the Italian futurists with the Russian. He claims, for instance, that in “the history of the Italian movement there was ... a definite leader. His ‘friends’ were mentioned only in a general reference to a ‘sleepless night’ in Marinetti’s villa. ... .But the Moscow Manifesto was apparently a result of collective labour” (p.42). Moreover he states that “while the Italians hurled loud slogans and accusations which evoked indignation or laughter, the Russians more often won audience acceptance of their readings and genuine poetry” (p.43), and also that “the Russians were actually less rigid and doctrinaire than the Italians” (p.46). Indeed, the author seems to imply that the Russian movement could almost be studied independently of its European counterpart. This view is not new. In fact Ettore Lo Gatto in his Storia della letteratura russa recognizes a similar degree of autonomy in the Russian movement.

The fifth chapter, “The Anatomy of Sound and Meaning,” concentrates on the technical innovations of Russian futurist poets among whom Mayakovsky figured most prominently. The movement is studied largely in the light of the socio-economic changes taking place in Russia at this time. However, Folejewski observes that the Russian writers retained many echoes of nature and countryside in their productions. He notes that it is “striking, looking back at the various collections of these poets, how strikingly ‘rural’ if not provincial they are in their themes, emotional attachments, imagery, similes, vocabulary, etc.” (p.67). After some remarks concerning the treatment of grammatical and syntactic rules by poets of the “Hylaea,” Folejewski concludes that “Mayakovsky was the only true urban poet among the Russian futurist” (p.69).

Chapter six deals with the “Tortuous Course of Futurism in Poland.” The author is concerned here primarily with giving a factual account of the Polish movement and its achievements. He makes some penetrating remarks about the style of the very early poetry of C.K. Norwid (p.85) stating that it links him with a vital segment of “futurist ideology about the Word” (p.95). He concludes this chapter by aptly reaffirming that Polish Futurism was largely free from the extreme declarations of Marinetti and others about linguistic freedom and new technology. As a result, the movement in Poland was much more moderate: the syntax retained a sense of natural organization and the cult of the machine is openly opposed by the eminent Tadeusz Peiper who thought that “the machine, important as it was in the new reality, should be made an element subordinated to human needs and ambitions” (p.91). The author maintains that the moderate and radical elements coexisted. Had it not been for the “radical and forceful demands and experiments” of the extremist members of Futurism, the two phases of Polish Avant-Garde would not have come into being. These “experiments” the author
considers to be of major significance “for the whole development of modern poetic idiom in Poland” (p.96).

In the seventh chapter Folejewski does not comment at length on the course of Futurism in Czech and Slovak literatures since, he states, the course of the movement is already well and clearly documented. Furthermore, it followed very much along the lines of Italian Futurism since in Slovenia many writers and critics were in direct contact with Italy. The author points out that one of the most significant contributions of Futurism to the course of Slovak poetry was its bringing major Slovenian poets to perceive that “life itself could become poetry.” He quotes at length in order to evidence the newly emerging poetic style.

The expansion of futurist ideas in Spain, Portugal, and Brazil are discussed in the final segment of this same chapter. Folejewski comments on the fact that the term “Futurism” was inadvertently coined by the Catalan poet Gabriel Alomar. The author hastily dismisses the question of Portuguese Futurism in one page stating that its immediate popularity came to a sudden conclusion on account of political suppression. By contrast, the discussion of Brazilian futurism is longer. The author makes some very useful observations on stylistics (pp.113-114). He studies Brazilian artists’ interpretations of Marinetti’s theories and points to their express need to free themselves from strict allegiance to European Futurism. This process led in turn to the advent of Modernismo as well as to other, distinct sorts of art in which the futurist characteristics coalesced with “elements of native Brazilian primitivism and with the spirit of freedom, dynamism and breadth of the frontier mentality” (p.111). Folejewski surveys the poetry of Mario de Andrade from its initial attempts at creating radically different poetic forms to its subsequent more conservative stage in which the poet condemns Marinetti’s advocacy of the idea of “parole in libertà.” He recognizes the Brazilian modernists’ desire to posit their own aesthetics. But he points out that without resorting to the numerous techniques brought to light by the Futurists “the range of Brazilian Modernism would have been more narrow” (p.115).

Part II of Folejewski’s study is given over in its entirety to an extensive anthology of fifty selections from futurist poets. The original is conveniently translated on the opposite page. In each instance the author attempts to give as precise a translation as possible in verse. In the matter of onomatopoeic effect the translations often fail. Nor could it be otherwise because more than the poetry of any other period that of the Futurists demands to be read and seen in its original language.

Despite the few shortcomings I have pointed out, Folejewski’s work makes a valuable contribution to the study of Futurism. It outlines the development of the movement in its broadest manifestations and points out the influence it exerted on the evolution of modern poetry. Nonetheless, as the author himself states in his concluding remarks, it is only an “outline.” Folejewski promises to contribute a further study to the relationship of Futurism with other “isms.” We look forward to the publication of this work.

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