(95). Salsano concludes by making interesting comments and observations on the role and function of *insularità* in Pirandello's literary production.

Although this study is structurally sound, Salsano conceived each chapter as a singular entity, which he later revised and unified into a book-length study. For this reason, there are, at times, a few repetitions from chapter to chapter, such as the constant reference to Pirandello's preface to *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*. The strength of Salsano's prudently researched and comprehensive Pirandello study is evident in his ability to utilize secondary critical sources to illuminate the impressive number of primary textual citations; the ease with which the critic succeeds in reading the author's creative texts with a scholarly critical acumen is notable. The critic's thorough knowledge of the subject matter, coupled with his critical and linguistic erudition, make this study a highly informative and enriching reading of Pirandello's oeuvre, which the critic persuasively places within the broader literary, philosophical, and cultural contexts and perspectives of the Italian and European milieu.

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Ernest Ialongo. *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. The Artist and His Politics*. Madison and Teaneck: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015. Pp. xii + 330. ISBN 978-1-61147-756-6 (cloth); 978-1-61147-757-3 (electronic).

While a growing body of scholarship has secured F. T. Marinetti's place in the canon of the European avant-garde and modernism, we still do not have a comprehensive biography, in English, of the founder and leader of the Futurist movement. While clearly more concerned with the second aspect of Marinetti's activity identified in the subtitle, Ernest Ialongo's *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. The Artist and His Politics* goes a long way towards filling that gap, and is one of the most important monographs on the author published in the last decade. Ialongo's thesis, clearly articulated in the book's Introduction, is that Marinetti's politics were oriented by "two fundamentally contradictory" (3), and ultimately irreconcilable, sets of goals. On the one hand, Ialongo writes, Marinetti "sought to advocate individual liberties in modern society"; on the other, "he also desired national greatness for Italy, which entailed a certain level of collective order and

unity that perforce required limits to individual liberties” (3–4). Interestingly, it could be argued that the same two principles also oriented Marinetti’s artistic production, proof, perhaps, of the inextricable link between art and politics in Futurism: the liberation of artists from the constraints imposed by traditions, institutions, and even the very material of art (consider, for instance, his own rejection of the structures of language itself in his poetry) allowed Marinetti to position himself and Italy at the forefront of artistic modernity. However, what Marinetti could manage as the leader of an avant-garde movement, he was unable to do as a political figure, so when a synthesis of his socially radical and nationalist goals proved to be unworkable, Marinetti almost “invariably chose the latter” (4).

The rest of the volume shows in great detail the waxing and waning of the two impulses on which Marinetti’s politics were founded, drawing upon not only published sources and Marinetti’s own diaries and memoirs, but also a wealth of unpublished documents, including his still relatively little-studied police file during Fascism and his correspondence with various members of the Fascist cultural institutions. Indeed, Ialongo’s careful mining of the archives is one of the greatest merits of this study, which demonstrates how much work of historical reconstruction remains to be done on Futurism in general and on the so-called *secondo futurismo* in particular. If there is a shortcoming in the overarching argument of the book, in my opinion it lies in its assumption that Fascism was the inevitable outcome of the contradictions of Marinetti’s politics: granted, Marinetti did become an almost paradigmatically “organic intellectual” of the regime, and Ialongo does an excellent job of showing how, one compromise after another, the erstwhile Futurist firebrand became the defender of practically every regressive and repressive policy of the regime, up to and including the anti-Semitic racial laws. At the same time, there was a moment around 1919–1920—and Ialongo studies it well—when Marinetti had been on the cusp of producing a nationalist and libertarian program that was antithetical to much of what Fascism would stand for and that led to Marinetti’s brief resignation from the Fascist party. This may be a specious argument, but it seems to me that the failure was not so much in Marinetti’s political project, at least in the form it took then, as in Marinetti’s own ability and willingness to live up to it.

After a discussion of the main sources of Marinetti’s politics—in particular, Nietzsche, Le Bon, and Sorel—in the Introduction, Ialongo devotes each chapter of the book to a particular phase of Marinetti’s career. The first chapter, from the foundation of Futurism to World War One, traces the emergence of Marinetti’s

cult of the nation first with the colonial conquest of Libya and then with the intervention in the Great War. Ialongo argues persuasively that the war gave Marinetti the illusion that his program of radical individual freedoms subordinated only to the needs of the fatherland could be realized in the war's aftermath, as Marinetti became convinced that, through the conflict, Italians had forged such a sense of collective belonging to the nation that they would willingly submit their liberties to it when called upon to do so. The Arditi "became the model Italians for Marinetti: brave, reckless, independent, but committed to the *Patria*" (61). On this basis, in 1918 Marinetti founded the Futurist Political Party, the fortunes of which are traced in chapter two. Here, Ialongo also looks at Marinetti's early and stormy relationship with the Fascist party, as well as at his mounting concern over both the rise of the Catholic Popular Party and Socialist and Communist unrest (his reactions to the workers' actions during the Red Biennium were ambivalent, to say the least). By May 1920, when Marinetti publicly split with Mussolini over Fascism's lack of support for his republican and anti-clerical program, his vision of a mediation between the expansion of personal liberties and economic opportunities on the one hand and the needs of the nation on the other had been dealt a severe blow by political reality. As Ialongo notes,

Socialists and workers took over the radical end of the political spectrum and had little faith in nationalists who proclaimed radical social agendas. More importantly, nationalists, and specifically the Fascists, were unwilling to tolerate any proposals that [like Marinetti's social program] smacked of Socialism. (106)

The next chapter details Marinetti's return to Fascism once all other political options became untenable (the socialists were too international and did not share his elitist vision of political leadership; the *popolari* were too close to the Church; the anarchists rejected his nationalism). If initially he could justify his return to the fold as a way to keep alive the spirit of *diciannovismo*—that is, of the more radical Fascist program of 1919—Marinetti progressively sacrificed his libertarian ideas to the authoritarian drift of Mussolini's politics, suppressing the voices that were critical of Fascism during the Futurist congress held on 23–24 November 1924, in the midst of the Matteotti crisis. Chapter four traces Marinetti's integration into the regime as a cultural policymaker—contributing, for instance, to the formation of the Sindacato Fascista delle Belle Arti—, as a de facto Fascist

spokesperson on various trips throughout Europe and South America, and finally as a Fascist *notabile* with his appointment to the Accademia d'Italia.

Chapters 5 and 6, which cover various aspects of the 1930s, show Marinetti increasingly “moving towards” the Duce, to use an expression that Ialongo takes from the historian of Nazism Ian Kershaw—that is, supporting and promoting the aims of Fascism, first among them its imperialist policies, of his own initiative rather than under direct order from Mussolini. However, Ialongo also shows how, while in effect selling out to the regime, Marinetti was singularly unsuccessful in obtaining even what we might call his minimal compensation for this collaboration, that is, the defence of Futurism and its promotion to a sort of state art. Indeed, while his growing role as a cultural ambassador of Fascism cost him the support of much of the European intellectual world—his increasing marginalization in the international PEN Club, of which he had once been a prominent member as secretary of the Italian section, is a telling example—the internationalism of his movement, especially in its early years, was seen as suspect by the more stridently jingoistic wing of the regime represented by Farinacci, among others. Marinetti was, in other words, simultaneously too Fascist and not Fascist enough. Even his unquestioning support of Mussolini’s most imperialist policies, most notably the Ethiopian war for which Marinetti volunteered at the age of 58, failed to garner full acceptance of Futurism at home and further alienated its leader from the international avant-garde. Towards the end of his career, his compromises with the regime to which he had sacrificed most of his ideals included the tacit acceptance of its anti-Semitic racial policies, when, in defending Futurism from the attacks stoked by the campaign against “degenerate art” in Germany, he strenuously argued that the movement was neither Bolshevik nor Jewish. As Ialongo puts it quite incisively, Marinetti “effectively accepted and perpetuated the idea that the Jews were somehow a problem for Italy, and thus helped legitimate their persecution” (260). The epilogue of Marinetti’s life, sketched in chapter 7, is known: faithful to the end to the regime and the man to which he had hitched his yoke for over 20 years, after the armistice he followed Mussolini to the Repubblica di Salò, and he died in Bellagio on 2 December 1944.

As already mentioned, this is an excellent piece of scholarship. I have only two reservations. The first has to do with the fact that Ialongo begins Marinetti’s political biography with the foundation of Futurism in 1909 (with, as noted, an account of the main cultural influences underlying his political thought). It would have been interesting to consider in detail how Marinetti’s youth in the

cosmopolitan atmosphere of turn-of-the-century Alexandria and his personal and artistic relations with many figures of the French Symbolist milieu, whose relationship with anarchism is well known, contributed to shaping his early political ideas. While Marinetti might cast it as such, the foundation of Futurism was not simply an absolute point of departure, but it was also a point of arrival of almost two decades of artistic and political maturation. My second objection has to do with the fact that in arguing for a political reading of Marinetti's life and work, Ialongo exaggerates the prevalence of an apolitical interpretation of the writer and of Futurism in general, writing in the conclusion that "[t]he explosion in Futurist studies from the end of the 1960s had everything to do with the stripping of ideology out of the equation" (304). That this is at best an overstatement is borne by the fact that the list of scholars exempted from this charge includes some of the major figures in the field—among them Walter Adamson, Emily Braun, Christine Poggi, and Jeffrey Schnapp—and in such sufficient numbers that they constitute a bit more than "exceptions to the rule" (304). Indeed, the list could be expanded to include scholars of Marinetti's literary works, both in Italy and in the English-speaking world, who have hardly shied away from foregrounding the political and ideological implications of Marinetti's artistic production, from Rinaldo Rinaldi and Fausto Curi to Cinzia Sartini Blum and Barbara Spackman. If anything, one might suggest that Ialongo's biography presents a similar and specular problem, namely that in focusing on Marinetti's politics, it almost completely neglects his literary works, which are usually mentioned in a cursory fashion as mere supporting evidence of the author's ideological positions. That said, this book is by far the best reconstruction of Marinetti's politics that I am aware of, and it constitutes a very important addition to the growing body of scholarship on the history of Futurism and the culture of Fascism.

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