

territories hitherto unfamiliar to him. Zipcio's sexual and spiritual education is further advanced by one Percy Bestialskaya and, finally, by his wife Eliza.

Above all, however, *Insatiability* is an orgy of words. Unlike such writers as Hemingway, or Mrozek and Herbert in Poland, Witkiewicz does not ration his words but hurls them out by battalions in a mass of lengthy clauses, adjectives, adverbs, and neologisms. His puns and quips in six languages, and his feel for the Russian language in particular (he was an officer in the Life Guard of Tsar Nicholas II before the Revolution), are the minor delights of this novel. It was a major feat to find English renditions of Witkiewicz's convoluted sentences and anthroponyms, to invent English neologisms as replacements for the Polish ones, and to do it fairly consistently throughout some four hundred pages. Credit for all this goes to Professor Louis Iribarne, who has also supplied an informative and readable introduction to Witkiewicz's life and works.

Altogether, this is not a typical novel by the standards of the 1920s (or of the 1970s), but a fascinating one.

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DIE ČECHISCHE MODERNE IM FRÜHWERK ŠALDA: ZUR SYNCHRON-  
EN DARSTELLUNG EINER EPOCHENSCHWELLE. By *Sigrun Biel-*  
*feldt*. Forum Slavicum, vol. 31. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1975. 131 pp.  
DM 38, paper.

This is an able treatise on a narrow topic: the early work of F. X. Šalda (1867–1937), the great Czech critic. In 1892, Šalda wrote an article, "Synthetism in the New Art," that opened entirely new vistas to Czech criticism, which had previously been parochial or professorial. Sigrun Bielfeldt concentrates on this article, analyzing it carefully as an exposition of a Symbolist creed (which, however, is distinguished from any specific French group) and as an attempt at a definition of modernism. She pays proper attention to the obvious French and German sources of Šalda's views: the term "Synthetism" comes from a forgotten book by Charles Morice, *La Littérature de tout à l'heure* (1889). The somewhat incongruous concern for the psychological and social effect of literature is derived from Émile Hennequin's *Critique scientifique* (1888), a book Šalda later translated and never ceased to propagate, even to his students at the University of Prague in the 1920s. The author seems to overrate the German affiliations: Hegel, for instance, is quoted (and grossly misinterpreted) thirdhand from Edouard Rod via the Italian, Vittorio Pica. She does not see the showing off with recondite references and the haphazard eclecticism of a young man of twenty-five.

Her substantial analysis of Šalda's paper and of some polemical Letters to the Editor and other related texts is introduced by reflections on the crisis of literary history, on Czech structuralism, Russian formalism, and German *Rezeptionsästhetik*, which amount to little more than strings of quotations with confessions of embarrassment at the difficulty of any solution, and are followed by a minute examination of the vocabulary of Šalda's reviews of several contemporary Czech poets. Long unreadable lists of adjectives are a tribute to German (and not only German) requirements of "exactness" for a Ph.D. dissertation. The center of the book—the straightforward analysis of Šalda's position in his time with proven methods of literary and intellectual history—could have stood alone and is only obscured by mostly irrelevant methodological ruminations and a display of stylistic pedantries.

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