

SUMMARY

„NUŻ W UHU”? THE CONCEPTS OF SOUND IN THE POLISH FUTURIST POETRY

The book is a comparative study of some aspects of the Polish futurist poetics in the light of the European avant-garde practice and the Polish literary tradition. The author describes and analyses sound structures in the poetry of the members of the Polish futurist movement: Bruno Jasiołkowski, Tytus Czyżewski, Aleksander Wat, Anatol Stern, Stanisław Młodożeniec. The analysis is concerned with phenomena such as: paronomasia, onomatopoeia, alliteration, anaphora etc. that can be collectively labelled as irregular sound organisation (as opposed to versification). The author focuses on similarities and differences of literary and linguistic forms, and not on genetic dependences between different avant-garde movements.

Within the Polish avant-garde, figures of sound were most conspicuous, most creative and most diverse in the works of the futurist, all of whom paid special attention to providing their poetry with an unusual acoustic frame. What is more, never before in Polish literature had sound orchestration been that intense. The futurists established a real literary "sound factory"; it worked only for a few years but its "products" are of special value in the eyes (and ears) of historians and theoreticians of modern literature.

The book consists of six chapters concerning different aspects of the futurist sound experimentation described against a broad literary background. The *Introduction* focuses on the history of the Polish movement in comparison to the European avant-garde. It also includes the analysis of theoretical problems of sound structures in the Polish futurism, summarising and revising statements made by earlier researchers of the field.

The first chapter of the book is devoted to the description of symbolist "musicality" of poetry and futurist variations on this idea. The study examines three main strategies of utilising and reviving symbolist literary practice in the futurist output: continuation, creative development of the immediate predecessors' sound aesthetics and polemic stylisation (i.e. different types of parody). The author analyses both sound and semantic structures, stressing the diversity of intertextual relations to the preceding period, which has been largely unnoticed by scholars. Futurist references to symbolist "musicality" resulted in introducing and utilising sound experiments which were practically unknown to earlier Polish literature (i.e. non-verbal onomatopoeia, disintegration of the syntax and of the word, autonomy of sounds "released" from words - phonemes becoming the only content of the verse, consistent juxtaposition emphasised by sound repetition, echolalia and glossolalia). Moreover, sound organisation was often stressed by experimental avant-garde typography. Some futurist applications of symbolist aesthetics were in fact nothing but the opposite of the traditional taste but at the same time they may be treated as a milestone on the way to the modern approach to the language of poetry.

The next part of the study examines the connections of Polish futurism with Velimir Khlebnikov's poetry (especially works experimenting with coinages) and philosophy of art. The key issue here is the role of word-formation in creating specific, intense sound orchestration. The chapter opens with the presentation of the legacy of Khlebnikov, explaining some simplifications in the Polish reception of his output. The following extensive analysis of Polish futurist poems reveals interesting similarities of literary techniques in the practice of Khlebnikov and Wat (poems called *namopaniki*), whereas philosophy of art of the two poets differed significantly. The analysis of *namopaniki* allows also for contributions to the literary theory - the author introduces a new term *sound cubism* for poetic word-building experiments with various (grammatical, non-grammatical or agrammatical) coinages based on the same stem. She also proposes precise definitions of the existing notions *mirohtady*, *namopaniki* and *shpiewnie* treating them as names for literary genres. The study continues with the description of different poems by Stern, Młodożeniec and Jasieński (some of the works can be described as derivational riddles similar to word plays), which prove that Polish futurists introduced their own, original ways of producing and utilising poetic coinages, establishing at the same time interesting figures of sound. The relation between poetic word-formation and sound texture of the poems is analysed in detail.

The next chapter describes the relation between sound poetry of dadaism and Polish futurism. Futurist movements in Eastern Europe are sometimes regarded as a version of dadaism (E. Bojtâr). The most conspicuous features the movements have in common are the strategy of scandal employed by the artists and the ludicity of their output. What is more, several sound poems of Polish futurists are treated by academics as examples of dada literature. The author examines to what extent we can link dada and Polish futurism, focusing on consistent comparative description of Polish poems and those of the dadaists (in German and French). Many sound experiments in the works of Stern, Wat, Czyżewski, Jasieński and Młodożeniec seem similar to the dada art, especially as far as striking sound "primitivism" (disintegration of words, non-typical non-verbal onomatopoeias, echolalia, glossolalia etc.) is concerned. However, extensive analysis proves that the analogies are mainly superficial. Polish futurism tended to create poetry based on sound-semantic conceptism, sometimes utilising pure nonsense (rare in the dada literary practice) and, in some cases, obeying the rules of literary genres. All these make the Polish movement closer to literary tradition rather than the total experiments of dada.

Comparative analysis of Polish futurism and the European avant-garde includes also the examination of the connections between Polish futurist poetry and the techniques introduced by F.T. Marinetti. In the Polish works one can identify constructions resembling Marinetti's "words in freedom", nevertheless they never follow all the rules established by the Italian artist. What is more, in the output of the Polish poets sound figures substituting syntax are usually more elaborate and more diverse than those known from Marinetti's works. The description of dadaist poetry, poems by A. Stern and Marinetti's theory of onomatopoeia leads to a conclusion that avant-garde echolalic and glossolalic constructions tend to be similar, irrespectively of their theoretic background.

The study also raises the question of the relation between the Polish futurist poetry and Polish folklore. The fourth chapter of the book begins with the description of the poetics of sound of folk literature and continues with the presentation and analysis of different ways in which futurists revived it: lyrical stylization, realistic presentation of peasants' life, socially conscious poetry, comic stylization. The futurists resigned from syllabic verse typical of most Polish folk texts, nevertheless the folk inspirations of their works are still conspicuous. The factor that allows for recognition of the folk literature as a pattern is sound orchestration. The futurists not only repeated structures characteristic of folklore but they also made them more intense ("extreme" sound repetition) and combined them with modern literary "inventions": disintegration of words, symbolist "musicality" and, last but not least, experiments in typography.

The last chapter of the book presents the role of Polish futurism in the history of modern Polish literature, emphasizing the problems of sound structures of poetry. The author begins with the description of the role of futurism in the Polish avant-garde - the analysis focuses on comparison between futurism and *awangarda krakowska*. Members of both literary groups paid special attention to acoustics of poetry, futurist practice was, however, more diverse, more complicated and less consistent. Still, having examined it in detail the author claims it is possible to use the term "futurist poetics of sound" to label different futurist operations on sound orchestration. The significance of the futurist aesthetics of sound can be proved by the analysis of sound experiments in the Polish post-war poetry (especially currents such as *poezja lingwistyczna* and the contemporary *neolingwizm*). Futurism started an interesting, still vivid line in the Polish poetry (not in the genetic but in the historical sense). Figures of sound introduced by Wat, Stern, Jasieński, Czyżewski and Młodożeniec are still present in the latest Polish literature.