

FUTURISM AND PROPAGANDA: MANIFESTOS, THEATRES, AND MAGAZINES

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## ABSTRACT

Sydney Kellen Conrad: Futurism and Propaganda: Manifestos, Theatres, and Magazines  
(Under the direction of Federico Luisetti)

My dissertation argues that Italian Futurism, in twentieth century Europe, was able to gain widespread recognition because it modelled its methods of diffusion after the parliamentary styled campaigns of social movements. Futurism not only introduced a new style of art but also transformed the way in which art was promoted, politicized, and used as a tool for propaganda. Through an analysis of the Futurist communicative strategies - in particular the use of the manifesto, theatrical space, and literary magazines - the dissertation shows how Marinetti and the Futurists were able to bring together different methods of collective action with symbolic acts of self-representation. These elements coalesced into the Futurist campaign, which allowed the movement to spread throughout the world.

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## INTRODUCTION

### FUTURISM AS AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

As soon as Futurism was launched on February 20, 1909 on the front page of the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro*, it immediately gained worldwide attention. Futurism offered a new aesthetic in the landscape of modernist and avant-garde movements, inspired by the technological advances of modernity. The machine, war, and speed became powerful symbols of the movement because they had the ability to change dramatically one's sense of being. Futurist art served to articulate the ongoing changes in society that were in many respects psychological, physiological, and sociological. In the "Fondazione e Manifesto del Futurismo," also referred to in English as the "Founding Manifesto", Marinetti writes:

È dall'Italia, che noi lanciamo pel mondo questo nostro manifesto di violenza travolgente e incendiaria, col quale fondiamo oggi il «*Futurismo*», perché vogliamo liberare questo paese dalla sua fetida cancrena di professori, d'archeologi, di ciceroni e d'antiquarii.

("Fondazione e Manifesto del Futurismo")

[It is from Italy that we hurl at the whole world this utterly violent, inflammatory manifesto of ours, with which today we are founding "Futurism," because we wish to free our country from the stinking canker of its professors, archaeologists, tour guides, and antiquarians.]<sup>1</sup>

As Marinetti suggests, Italian Futurism represented more than a cultural renewal for Italy but served as a model of renewal for the rest of Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> All Italian quotes from "Fondazione e Manifesto del Futurismo" come from Luciano de Maria while all English translations of the document come from Berghaus' volume *Critical Writings*.

Thirty years later, Italian Futurism's leader Filippo Tommaso Marinetti reflected on the international influence of Italian Futurism in an unpublished document entitled *Futurismo nel mondo* (1938-39).<sup>2</sup> Housed in the archives of the Getty Research Institute, the document addresses the international scope of Futurism in three brief articles written by Marinetti: "Poeti e artisti futuristi rumeni," "Tai Kambara e i futuristi giapponesi," and "Le avanguardie artistiche letterarie straniere influenzate dal futurismo italiano."<sup>3</sup> The first article, "Poeti e artisti futuristi rumeni," begins by describing the relationship between Romanian and Italian literature. According to Marinetti, the theater of D'Annunzio and Pirandello influenced Romanian literature, but Futurism led to the direct creation of Dadaism. The movement of Tristan Tzara was inspired by Marinetti's "Zang Tuum Tuuumb" and the visual poems founded on words-in-freedom. The sound poems of Tristan Tzara and other Dadaists, for example, shared a similar nihilism that Futurism had already articulated in their theatrical manifestos and in the "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature." In addition, Marinetti informs us that some Dadaists left the movement in order to create a Romanian Futurism. In "Tai Kambara e i futuristi," Marinetti attributes the arrival of Futurism in Tokyo to the movement's launch in *Le Figaro*, but the diffusion of Futurist ideas was a result of Japanese artist Tai Kambara. Marinetti writes that Kambara wrote the first book on Futurism in Japan and integrated the symbols of the machine, speed, and dynamism in the Japanese avant-gardes. In the last article, "Le avanguardie artistiche letterarie straniere influenzate dal futurismo italiano," Marinetti shifts his focus from describing other Futurist movements to naming the specific aspects of Italian Futurism that were popular abroad. For Marinetti, Futurism proved its international impact given that many avant-garde

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<sup>2</sup> The folder labeled *Le futurismo nel mondo* at the Getty Research Institute consists of these three articles that are typescript with many pen and pencil additions and erasures. The latter article is addressed to Lo Duca and was probably submitted for publication in *L'Impero* or *La Gazzetta*.



movements integrated the Futurist's zeal for technology and the machine. Moreover, he equates the success of his movement to his new literary expression found in words-in-freedom. Literary groups turned to words-in-freedom because it offered new ways of communication that stemmed from the typographic revolution. Lastly, Marinetti suggests that Futurism paved the way for other avant-garde movements such as Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Abstractivism, and Vorticism. Marinetti, in this essay, suggests that Futurism did more than set a new artistic agenda but rather systematically changed how art was created and placed on the market.

What becomes apparent is that Futurism was international in nature, expanding to many different countries, diffusing its methods of divulgation, and having a lasting impact on other avant-garde movements such as Dadaism and Surrealism. This manuscript may represent one of the most reflective pieces written by Marinetti on the international impact of Futurism; and therefore, it suggests the need to examine, question, and reassess one of the masters of early twentieth century's propaganda and understand how Marinetti popularized the Futurist movement.

Many accounts of the Futurists' activities come from Francesco Cangiullo's *Le serate*, who did not join the movement until 1912. As a result, half of his accounts were based on newspaper articles. Berghaus notes that Marinetti was able to create a flattering image of Futurism because many articles were either written, or at least edited, by Marinetti (Berghaus, *Theater* 85). Therefore, Cangiullo's critical assessment of Futurism in the initial years was solely based on second hand accounts, which inadvertently passed Marinetti's exaggerations for fact. Throughout the Futurist movement, personal relationships and networks allowed Marinetti to maintain a certain level of discipline in marketing his movement. Moreover, he built an impressive

infrastructure of organization, coordination, and financing of his movement that rarely garners the attention it deserves in scholarly criticism.

Given this lack of attention, my dissertation aims at examining Futurism through a sociopolitical and comparative lens. This approach will highlight the inner workings and structural elements of Italian Futurism, as it turned into an important, pan-European movement, instead of concentrating on national and regional specificities. It is true that Futurist circles were different in Milan and in Florence, as well as in Russia, France, and Portugal; but nevertheless, these groups identified with Futurism and declared themselves Futurists.

Marinetti viewed Futurism as an international phenomenon early on, but it was specifically the structure and organization, which was modelled after social movements, which led to the movement's diffusion throughout Europe. Examining Futurism within social movement theory and questions of propaganda and collective action brings forth a new approach to the field of Futurism Studies. Furthermore, this interdisciplinary and comparative approach continues the current orientation of Futurism Studies, which is studying Futurism beyond the Italian context and its aesthetic agenda.

The work of Günter Berghaus has been instrumental in highlighting the international impact of Futurism, but there have also been a number of scholars who have contributed to the exploration of the international dimension of Futurism. One of the first volumes that addressed the international diffusion of Futurism, *I luoghi del futurismo, 1909-1944: Atti del convegno nazionale di studio* (1986), is by art historian and critic Enrico Crispolti. This work expanded the discourse on Futurism outside the Milan and Florence axis to include other regions such as Umbria, *Italia meridionale*, and Le Marche; in addition, it presented Catalan Futurism in Spain

through the works of Joan Salvat-Papasseit. The volume *International Futurism in Arts and Literature* (2000), edited by Günter Berghaus, is another work that fully recognized the international scope of Futurism. This compendium of Futurism was conceived at the conference “Futurism in an International and Inter-disciplinary Perspective” (1995), at the Institute of Romance Studies in London and was published as part of the series *European Cultures: Studies in Literature and the Arts*. The essays ranged from the genesis of Futurism to its relationship to French culture, and the treatment of Futurism in England, Japan, Portugal, Czech Republic, and Russia.

The centennial of Futurism, in 2009, marked an important moment in Futurism Studies and shifted the attention to the international dimension of the movement. One example is the volume *Shades of Futurism* (2009), edited by Pietro Frassica, which explored Futurism across different countries and lesser known Futurist artists outside of Italy, contributing with several interesting essays such as “Futurism in Exile: From Milan to Dublin via Paris,” by Deirdre O’ Grady, and “Futurisms in Portuguese: from Azores to India,” by Rita Marnoto to name a couple. The latter examined how Futurism spread throughout the Portuguese-speaking world and ex-colonies. More recently, Berghaus established the series *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* that investigates Futurism outside of Italy. In the first volume (2011), essays are dedicated to the offshoots of Futurism in Central Eastern Europe. For instance, the article “Zenitism / Futurism: Similarities and Differences” written by Irina Subotić, discusses the Czech avant-garde era and its affinity to Futurist themes such as the machine cult, simultaneity, and dynamism. This particular volume also presents Futurism’s influence in Poland, Georgia, and Slovenia. In 2013, Berghaus followed with a volume devoted to Iberian Futurism. It explored the relationship between Marinetti and the Iberian artists who modelled their movements such as *Ultraísmo*,

*Creacionismo*, and *Sensacionismo* after Futurism. The book series *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* represents the second and most ambitious attempt by Berghaus to stress the international dimension of Futurism. In the introduction, Berghaus comments on his goals:

One of the lessons that can be learned from this situation is that the debate on Futurism must become more globalized and be less centered on Italy. Futurism had a world-wide impact and generated many international Futurisms. It made important contributions to numerous avant-garde movements, despite the fact that their agendas only partially overlapped with Marinetti's aesthetic and political programme. (Volume 1:XI)

Even though Berghaus sets the tone for analyzing lesser known Futurist movements outside of Italy, there is still no consensus on the forms Futurism took outside of Italy. For example, the article "Futurism in Portugal" written by Nuno Júdice, leaves the reader understanding Portuguese Futurism as something between Italian Futurism and Portuguese *sensacionismo*. This problem has less to do with Berghaus than perhaps the contributors of the book series, who are presenting some of these movements for the first time to an English-speaking audience. These essays are representative of how scholars are retrospectively applying the term "Futurism" to other avant-garde movements, while at the same time revising some of the traditional assumptions about Futurism. In the same vein, my study further complicates our understanding of Futurism, by analyzing Futurist propaganda, an aspect that is central to the movement's aesthetic and political aims.

If we accept that Futurism had an international impact, how exactly did this occur? What mechanisms helped to spread Futurism throughout Italy and the world? I do believe that Marinetti always viewed Futurism as an international movement. Not only did he launch his movement in the most cosmopolitan newspaper, *Le Figaro*; Marinetti also embarked on an international lecture tour, in which he presented the tenets of Futurism to audiences and various political organizations in England, Spain, Portugal, Russia, Brazil, etc.

Futurism expounded two important questions of identity. The first was Italy's place within Europe, and the second was a national concern aimed at reinvigorating the Italian psyche. Marinetti's willingness to integrate cultural and political questions into a broader discussion on identity, coupled with his relentless campaign to achieve his goals, placed Futurism within the realm of social movements. In order to examine Futurism's international reach, I will rely mostly on Charles Tilly's definition of social movements. Futurist manifestos, theatrical space, and literary magazines were in my opinion the propagandistic elements that created the collective action of the movement. These media and spaces helped to diffuse Futurism throughout the Italian peninsula and into other nations.

### **Marinetti and Futurism**

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, was born on December 22, 1876 to parents Enrico Marinetti and Amalia Grolli.<sup>4</sup> He was raised in Alexandria, Egypt, and his international upbringing and family's wealth would greatly influence his literary and political interests. As a child, Marinetti attended the French Jesuit Collège Saint-François-Xavier. It was a school for the foreign elite, which offered a curriculum with an international perspective, arts-based, Catholic, and instruction in French. During his studies at the Collège, he developed a passion for French literature and culture, with French becoming his second mother tongue (Berghaus, *Genesis* 4).

Once the family returned to Italy, Marinetti continued his education at the Sorbonne and afterwards returned to Italy to pursue a career in law. He started his law studies at the University

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<sup>4</sup> The family spent twenty years in Egypt where Marinetti senior worked as a lawyer. Upon their arrival, Egypt had just completed the Suez Canal and became an attractive option for investors. Marinetti senior earned his wealth by advising foreigners who took part in the industrialization efforts in Egypt. However, the family returned to Italy during the rise of Muslim and Egyptian nationalism because the foreign elite were often targets of violence. See Berghaus, *Genesis*, p.5.

of Pavia and finished at the University of Genoa defending his thesis on *La corona del governo parlamentare* (The Crown in Parliamentary Government). However, it was his time in France that convinced him to abandon his law studies and pursue a literary career. At the age of twenty-two, Marinetti won the *Samedis populaires*, a literary contest organized by Gustave Khan in search of young, new talent. Marinetti accepted his award in Paris and witnessed the declamation of his poem.<sup>5</sup> While there, Khan introduced him to various editors, actors, publishers, playwrights, and theater directors. The experience had such an impact on Marinetti that he became a frequent participant of the Abbaye group, who was known for experimenting and developing new literary devices and aesthetic theories. Marinetti's relationship with the bohemian artists generated a number of ideas that formed the basis of Futurism and brought together poets that would later participate in the movement.

After establishing contacts in Paris, Marinetti undertook a number of literary endeavors. He published several poems in French for multiple journals such as *La Plume*, *La Revue blanche*, *La Rénovation Esthétique*, *Vers et prose*, and *L'Hermitage* just to name a few. In addition, he published two books of poetry and served as the General Secretary for *Anthologie-Revue de France et d'Italie: Recueil mensuel de littérature et d'art*, whose goal was to popularize French Symbolism in Italy and give exposure to Italian Symbolist writers. By 1905, Marinetti had left

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<sup>5</sup> Gustave Kahn, known as the creator of *vers libre*, inspired Marinetti's *parole in libertà* (words in freedom) and showed him the art of declamation, which later became an integral part of the Futurist theater. With the Abbaye group, Marinetti met several bohemian artists such as Alfred Jarry to whom Marinetti dedicated his play *Le Roi Bombance* and Jules Romains, who had just launched his new movement Unanimism. Romains' movement explored group consciousness in the modern metropolis and much of Futurism's obsession with modernity and urban life functioned as an extension of Romains' ideas. The Abbaye group dated from 1906 to 1908 at which point Marinetti started reviewing Romains' works in his journal *Poesia*. Romains' Unanimism is credited for shaping Futurist painting in 1910. Marianne Martin in "Futurism, Unanimism, Apollinaire" claims that Romain's influence on Boccioni, Carrà, and Russolo gave their Futurist paintings a more spiritual and abstract impression rather than solely relying on the machine and the novelties found in modern cities. Unanimism probed more the spiritual impact of modernity than Futurism. See Martin 262.

his post as General Secretary and started his own literary journal called *Poesia*. The journal, which lasted until 1910, continued Marinetti's previous work in promoting Italian writers and Symbolist aesthetics until the launch of Futurism in 1909.

Even though Marinetti did not become a lawyer as his father had wanted, politics remained an integral part of Marinetti's interests. His early political writings, now preserved at Yale, have garnered attention by scholars such as Berghaus, Ugo Piscopo, Francesco Flora, and Gaia Michelini, who have highlighted the influence of Nietzsche, Bergson, Mill, and Sorel as the progenitors of Marinetti's political ideology. The Nietzschean concepts of the will to power, *übermensch*, and the philosopher's views on history were at the core of "the Futurist individual." The Futurist *superuomo* has vitality and denies the past and traditional institutions. He is creative, brave, strong, and aggressive. Marinetti as well as other Italian intellectuals were greatly influenced by the German philosopher; however, Michelini has noted that Nietzschean ideas were often adapted and even misused (Michelini 18). Futurism shares Nietzsche's pessimism for the past but denies the utility of history.

Marinetti's political education characterizes much of the first half of the movement. Marinetti often criticized the parliamentary system, and this theme was evident in his thesis and in the political manifesto "Against Sentimentalized Love and Parliamentarianism." The political and economic arguments presented in the so-called Futurist technical manifestos<sup>6</sup> sympathize with

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<sup>6</sup> Generally, criticism has gravitated towards making a distinction between Futurist manifestos. The treatment of "technical manifestos," seems to always suggest those manifestos that were more concerned with aesthetics. Often times, these manifestos, introduced the application of Futurist ideas in new artistic mediums such as the "Futurist Photography," "Manifesto of Futurist Cuisine," "Futurist Dance," etc. These manifestos are different from the inaugural manifesto in that the "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" lays down the socio-political motives for Futurism as well as the political manifestos.

Mill's ideas of liberalism.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Marinetti demonstrated an affinity toward Sorelian anarchism and violence. In the "Manifesto of the Futurist Party," Marinetti shares his desires to transform "[P]arliament through the equal participation of industrialists, agrarians, engineers, and businessmen" and the "abolition of the Senate (Berghaus, *Critical* 45)." From the "Founding Manifesto," Marinetti, criticizes institutional power, imitating that institutions and their power structures discourage artistic creativity. As a consequence, the nation is not able to progress, which harms the national evolution of the country. This kind of political rhetoric was expected in the "manifesto" part of the document, but Marinetti also uses symbolist aesthetics to provide the imagery of his political rhetoric. In the narrative, Marinetti compares Italy to museums, which evolve into graveyards. Even as the analogy intimates that institutional powers lead to decay and even death, immediately the image leads the reader or spectator to envision its antithesis. Marinetti implies, in order to have a vibrant Italy, the country must give birth to new ideas; and more importantly, Italy has to foster a space where new voices can be cultivated and heard, which is quite consistent in his political rhetoric. The idea that creativity was necessary for evolution, and without it, the result can be as ominous as death echoes Bergson's influence on Marinetti. Futurist literature and the Futurist Synthetic Theater both integrated Bergson's ideas on intuition, simultaneity, and interpenetration. Given Marinetti's literary and political background, Futurism was based on a hodgepodge of different elements that Marinetti encountered throughout his education and international experience.

Marinetti came from a generation that had greatly benefitted from the bourgeois activities of their forefathers to only critique the bourgeois ideals of materialism and consumerism. His education and international background always underscored his "particular" relationship with

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<sup>7</sup> See Mill's essay on "Liberty," <http://www.constitution.org/jsm/liberty.htm>.



Italy. Because of his upbringing, Marinetti was most likely going to reject Italian traditionalism and advocate for a French model of modernization. Italy had only become a nation-state in 1861, and the failures of unification thereafter produced a weak national identity where the only recognizable symbol of unity was often seen in the Roman Empire. As a result, classicism and traditionalism defined Italian culture because these sentiments were tied to Italian identity in the incipient stages of nation building. Futurism was opposed to Italian culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and promoted the ideals of innovation and cosmopolitanism of the Parisian cultural milieu.

### **Other Futurisms: Portugal and Russia**

Throughout the study, I will draw from examples not only from the Italian Futurist movement(s) but also from the Portuguese and Russian Futurist movements to suggest that the kind of techniques that Marinetti developed as part Futurism also diffused alongside his aesthetic and political agenda. The fact that there were other Futurist movements, despite having different cultural and political agendas from Marinetti, demonstrates that Futurism had gained international recognition. Futurism had become like any other product, its ideals could simply be copied or pared down and still have resonance in most countries during the twentieth century, giving the mass push for global wealth and hegemony. Both Russia and Portugal offered a modified version of Futurism related to their specific historical problems, and they used similar tactics for self-publicizing themselves. Futurism became so well-known for its publicity stunts and propaganda that any literary group who engaged in similar tactics was associated with Futurism.

Futurism in Portugal has not garnered much attention until recently, but there was probably no other Futurist movement that resembled as closely Italian Futurism than the Portuguese.

Marinetti only visited Portugal in 1932 where he participated in a conference at the Sociedade das Belas Artes in Lisbon. The Portuguese Futurists viewed the meeting negatively, stating that the leader of Futurism arrived “23 years and a day late.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Marinetti was eagerly welcome by Júlio Dantas who had been the main opponent of Futurism in Portugal. The meeting between the two led Fernando Pessoa to write a scathing poem entitled, “Marinetti, Académico” (“Marinetti, the Academician”), which criticized Marinetti’s convergence to the conservative establishment.

Even though Futurism lasted only briefly in Portugal, some scholars such as Nuno Júdice and Stefin Dix have found that Futurism greatly shaped the modernist terrain in Portugal, spurring a series of modernist movements and journals. The movement did produced a group who identified with Futurist aesthetics and politics, and generated a number of Futurist literary works including poems, manifestos, literary magazines. The members even partook in similar propagandistic events that were popular in Italy such as the *serate* and art exhibitions.

Portuguese modernism developed out of a tumultuous political period that included assassination of the King and his son , military coups, strikes, censorship, colonial wars, etc. The political and

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<sup>8</sup> Negreiros wrote about his disdain of Marinetti in a polemical article in *Diário de Lisboa* stating, “O mais grave é que Marinetti não desconhece que Portugal é o único país latino, além da própria Itália onde houve um movimento futurista. Pois da parte de Marinetti não houve uma única e simples saudação aos seus companheiros de Portugal e pelo contrário, bem custodiado pelos austeros ‘pompiers’ nacionais, veio de casaca estabelecer mais confusão que as que já cá havia entre os que gostam de fazer equívocos e os eternos equivocados. Quanto ao admirável e sempre novo criador do futurismo, F.T. Marinetti lastimamos, nós os futuristas portugueses, a sua amnésia quanto a Portugal, a sua falta de memória acerca do que nomes heroicos do futurismo fizeram aqui na nesta terra, em guerra sem trégua. Contra os putrefactos e botas de elástico. Lastimámos, nós, os futuristas portugueses, que o grande cosmopolita Marinetti tenha por desgraça o grande e irreparável defeito de não saber viajar, pelo menos em Portugal (November 25, 1932).” [I have translated the quote as follows: The most serious thing is that Marinetti does not know that Portugal is the only Latin country outside of Italy where there was a Futurist movement. Then on Marinetti’s part there is not even a simple acknowledgement to his Portuguese companions; and on the contrary, well placed as the guardian of the austere, pompous to create more confusion between the ones who do not understand about the situation with those who pretend to understand it. As Portuguese Futurists, we bemoan his lack of amnesia towards Portugal, his lack of memory regarding the heroic names of Futurism made here in this land in a war without a truce. Against all of the putrefied and elastic boots. We, Portuguese Futurists, regret that the great cosmopolitan Marinetti has the misfortune or rather a humongous flaw of not knowing how to travel at least to Portugal.]

anarchic overtones of Futurism greatly contributed to its brief existence in Portugal. The movement ended within a year when the police seized publication of their literary journal *Portugal futurista*.

Futurism was immediately discussed in Portugal right after its initial publication in Paris. Editor, José Xavier de Carvalho, who was very familiar with the avant-garde movements, having stayed in Paris quite some time, wrote the first article on Futurism, “Uma nova escola poetica—o Futurismo” on February 26, 1909 in the Oporto newspaper, *Journal de Noticias*. Xavier de Carvalho briefly introduced the new literary movement, its aesthetic and political goals, and gave a biography of Marinetti. Several months later, the first translation of the manifesto was published on August 5, 1909 in *Diários dos Açores* that contained the eleven points of the manifesto and Marinetti’s interview with *Comoedia* in translation (Marnoto 73).

Futurism - and to a greater extent Portuguese modernism - started much later than in other Western European countries. The group involved in *Orpheu* (1915) marks the date of Portuguese modernism. The Orpheu group, which consisted of Mário de Sá-Carneiro, Guilherme Santa-Rita, José de Almada-Negreiros, and Fernando Pessoa in his heteronym Álvaro de Campos, represented the pre-Futurist stage in Portugal (Neves 24). The writers came together as they departed from Saudosismo—a literary movement that was inspired by the past lyrical tradition of Portugal. The Orpheu poets’ main task was “to bring metropolitan and cosmopolitan literature to its readers and make the life of a modern person appear through a subjectivization of accelerated psychologization of experience of reality and an excessive self-reflexivity (Dix 158).”

The poets exhibited a variety of *isms* in *Orpheu* such as Paulism, Intersectionism, Vertigism, Sensationism, and Futurism without adhering to a specific platform. Some of the most popular

Futurist text were written by Mario de Sá Carneiro, who wrote “Manucure” and Álvaro de Campos’ sensationalist poem “Ode Marítima,” (Júdice 354 ).<sup>9</sup> Critics called the Orpheu group “madmen” for their antics and rhetoric, which resembled the Italian Futurists. In fact, the academic, Júlio Dantas, accused the Futurists of being poets who just wanted to be read, discussed, and purchased (Júdice 355). The Orpheu group brought moderate success even without a clear program. The members achieved the break from Portugal’s literary past, and the two issues of *Orpheu* led to another important modernist journal *Portugal futurista*.

The transition from *Orpheu* to *Portugal futurista* (1917) represents the high point of Portuguese Futurism. One noticeable difference between the two, *Portugal futurista* was illustrations. The literary magazine often juxtaposed text and visual imagery, taking advantage of the typographic revolution in print media. The second attempt to promulgate Futurist ideas did lead to new members such as Raul Leal, José Pacheco, Amadeo de Sousa-Cardoso, and Ruy Coelho. The Futurist artists of the literary journal *Portugal futurista* aligned themselves more closely to Futurist principles, creating a number of manifestos and embracing the themes of speed, dynamism, and violence (Júdice 357). Furthermore, the group adopted Marinetti’s concept of *parole-in-libertà* and Santa-Rita Pintor contributed a number of Futurist paintings to the movement. The movement came to a symbolic end after the death of Santa Rita Pintor (1918), who was characterized as the most Futurist of the group. The government of Sidónio Pais ended further aspirations of group, but the regime’s censorship did not contribute to an immediate halt. Some of the Futurist artists went on publishing their work in the newspaper *O Heraldo* under various pseudonyms, which was part of a smaller active cell of Futurists in the

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<sup>9</sup> Pessoa situates sensationalism in the same current of futurism—a movement that is energetic, vibrant, full of admiration for life, raw material, and force (Dix 156).

south of Portugal. In addition, the Portuguese Futurists also held a couple of exhibitions of Futurist works as well as a *serata* event on April 14, 1917.

Russian Futurism, unlike in the Portuguese variant, has been a well discussed topic. Several groups emerged in Russia, who identified with Futurism; but, the Cubo-Futurists were the most influential group, having established their movement in 1910 under the name Hylaea. The group was founded by three brothers David, Nikolay, and Vladimir Burluk, and their friend Benedict Livshits. It was only later that Vasily Kamensky, Velimir Khlebnikov, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and Aleksei Kruchenykh joined the group. The Hylaea group published their own manifesto entitled “Slap in the Face of Public Taste” (1917) as well as declaimed their manifestos in theaters, cafes, public places, etc. The manifesto echoed similar motifs of Italian Futurism, railing against the past, denouncing commercially successful artists such as Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy, and having contempt for institutions that hold on to the past such as academies and libraries.

Although the Cubo-Futurists saw themselves as something completely different from the ideas advocated by Marinetti, and this was clearly visible when the leader of Futurism visited Russia in 1914. Marinetti came into contention with other Russian Futurists on the creation of transrational language—a literary idiom that was based on phonetic analogy and rhythm rather than on grammar and syntax. Words, for the Russian futurists, lacked conventional meaning as they focused on sound and deconstruction of traditional language. Two of the most important followers of transrational language were Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh whose approach focused on revealing the hidden primeval meaning of existing words roots, expressed through consonantal sounds rather than conventional semantics. Kruchenykh’s approach differed from Marinetti’s in that he viewed language as a spontaneous creation which only had meaning

through contextual relationships. Marinetti saw the Russian Futurists' experimentation with language as a derivative of words-in-freedom, but the nationalist fervor of this Russian invention cooled the relationship between the two groups.

One primary difference between the Russian and Italian Futurism was the incorporation of the slavophile ideology that came from the preceding century. The Russian Futurists believed in archaism, leaning toward primitivism of forms, and themes of Slavic folklore. Even though the Russian Futurists addressed themes such as urbanism, technology with less excitement, they still used the same strategies that Marinetti had been developing in Italy: public declamations, antics to gain public attention, manifestos, theater, and relying on a network of artists who participated in the literary magazines.<sup>10</sup> In the aftermath of the October Revolution, Futurism becomes a political organ of the Communist regime in similar fashion as Italian Futurism and fascism.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For a complete analysis on Russian Futurism see Markov Vladimir.

<sup>11</sup> The relationship between Futurism and Fascism is too important not to mention; but in reality, it warrants a thorough assessment that can be viewed in Berghaus' *Futurism and Politics* or either in *La nostra sfida alle stelle: Futuristi in politica*. See also my discussion in chapter three on the role of the literary journal *Roma futurista*, which helped to consolidate Marinetti's combatants' support. Marinetti writes in *Taccuini* that it was Mussolini who first approached the Futurists (284). Berghaus has summed up this relationship as political opportunism that afforded Mussolini access into the combatant's movement. Marinetti had already established a strong presence in the combatants' movement with the Arditi, and the political alliance between the Futurist and Arditi formed the basis of the Futurist Political Party, which is later absorbed into the fascist movement under the *Fasci di Combattimento*. In 1920, Marinetti decided to part ways with the fascist given that Mussolini was moving to consolidate the conservative Right, but he returns to the fascist party in 1923. Perhaps, Marinetti also displayed political opportunism by reintegrating himself and Futurism back into the Fascist Party. Marinetti was able to guarantee the survival of his artistic movement at a time when Mussolini was cracking down on left-wing parties. In return of his support, Mussolini financed a number of Futurist exhibits, integrated the Futurists into the propagandistic apparatus of the fascist regime, and named Marinetti as a cultural ambassador that required Marinetti to travel abroad in support of the regime.

## Futurism as a Movement

Marinetti published his manifesto as *Le Futurisme* on the front page of *Le Figaro* on February 20, 1909. The document was later renamed in Italian as the “Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo” (Founding and Manifesto of Futurism).<sup>12</sup> The Parisian newspaper had already acquired a reputation for generating cultural debates, having previously introduced Naturalism and Symbolism. The newspaper’s prestige also made it difficult to get published in the newspaper, but Marinetti overcame this problem through his father. Pashah Mohammed el Rachi was a friend of Marinetti’s father; and more importantly, he was a shareholder in *Le Figaro* (Berghaus, *Genesis* 7). The launch of Futurism on the front page of *Le Figaro* provided Marinetti with an international audience and immediately led to the manifesto’s critical assessment, translation, and divulgation in other countries.

The “Founding and Manifesto of Futurism” announces, as part of its preoccupation, a revolution in the arts and a new role for the modern artist. It consists of an introductory narrative followed by eleven enumerated points that articulate the Futurist’s dilemma followed by a series of actions. Even though the document presents Futurism as a new literary movement, the introductory narrative was a reincarnation of Symbolist aesthetics.<sup>13</sup> The narrative begins by describing the creative writing process. The scene depicts the young poets discussing and

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<sup>12</sup> Martin Puchner in *Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, and the Avant-Gardes* explains that the term manifesto was retroactively applied to the document, which bore the name *Le Futurisme*. However, it was an established practice to introduce movements by name only. It was only after the French publication that the document became known as the “Fondazione e Manifesto del Futurismo” (“The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism”); but within scholarship, it has also been referred to as the “Manifesto of Futurism,” “Futurist Manifesto,” and the “Initial Futurist Manifesto.”

<sup>13</sup> De Maria mentions in the introduction of *Teoria e invenzione* (XXI) that Marinetti relied heavily on Symbolism, but in the sequel text “Uccidiamo il chiaro di luna (13),” he tries to disassociate himself from the movement. In addition to Symbolism, Marianne Martin highlights influences from Fauvism in the text. Marinetti makes several references to color and light such as the “multicolored lights,” “mosque lamps,” “electric heart” that are reminiscent of the color experimentation by Fauvist painters. Additionally, Martin sees the Fauvist spirit of the wild beast in the depiction of the centaur and anthropomorphized automobile. See Martin, p.41.

furiously writing down their ideas in a backdrop characterized by “mosque lamps,” “electric lights,” and “Persian rugs.” The sound of the “double decker trams” interrupts the writing process, and the poets are faced with the realization of their surroundings. On one hand, there are lights and noises of a modernized city; but on the other hand, there are also the “decrepit canals” of the Po River surrounded by “mossed covered buildings.” Marinetti juxtaposes the new with the old, and in doing so, delineates the current dilemma in his country. Italy lagged behind neighboring countries and experienced a late industrialization boom that only achieved pockets of industrialization. Because of this economic backwardness, Marinetti proposed that Futurism was the medicine to help modernize Italian society as well as the Italian psyche.<sup>14</sup> As the poets are confronted with two ways of life, it is understood that they side with modernity when they enter into the “snarling beast.” Marinetti constantly refers to the automobile in an anthropomorphic way, giving the machine animate qualities that highlighted man’s new relationship with technology. This union between man and machine is further depicted in the manifesto when Marinetti crashes his speeding car into a ditch trying to avoid two bicyclists on the road. This scene is described in a baptismal way in which the leader climbs out of the muddy waters, and his car is slowly pulled out of the ditch by another equally impressive machine. The thrill of danger and near death experience ignites a new fervor and is responsible for “the birth of the centaur,” leading into the enumerated section of the manifesto:<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Soon after the launch of Futurism, Marinetti was interviewed by the French theater magazine *Comoedia* on March 26, 1909 in which he responded to various criticisms about his movement. In defense of his movement, Marinetti established a relationship between the individual and collective noting that what happens at the individual level indeed affects the collective. He depicted Futurism as the medicine that would heal the sick individual and cure the nation (the collective) of its problems. See Berghaus, *Critical*, p.18.

<sup>15</sup> Timothy Campbell in “Vital Matters: Sovereignty, Milieu, and the Animal in Futurism’s Manifesto” claims that the events leading up to the birth of the Futurist demonstrated not only a transformation in Marinetti but also a “dramatic shift from death to life” (161). Campbell uses Foucault’s notion of biopower in which the sovereign ultimately is designed to foster life or disallow it until death. The technological sovereign, according to Campbell, is



1. Noi vogliamo cantare l'amore del pericolo, l'abitudine all'energia e alla temerità.
2. Il coraggio, l'audacia, la ribellione, saranno elementi essenziali della nostra poesia.
3. La letteratura esaltò fino ad oggi l'immobilità pensosa, l'estasi e il sonno. Noi vogliamo esaltare il movimento aggressivo, l'insonnia febbrile, il passo di corsa, il salto mortale, lo schiaffo ed il pugno.
4. Noi affermiamo che la magnificenza del si è arricchita di una bellezza nuova: la bellezza della velocità. Un automobile da corsa col suo cofano adorno di grossi tubi simili a serpenti dall'alito esplosivo ... un automobile ruggente, che sembra correre sulla mitraglia, à più bello della *Vittoria di Samotracia*.
5. Noi vogliamo inneggiare all'uomo che tiene il volante, la cui asta ideale attraversa la Terra, lanciata a corsa, essa pure, sul circuito della sua orbita.
6. Bisogna che il poeta si prodighi, con ardore, sfarzo e munificenza, per aumentare l'entusiastico fervore degli elementi primordiali.
7. Non v'è più bellezza, se non nella lotta. Nessuna opera che non abbia un carattere aggressivo può essere un capolavoro. La poesia deve essere concepita come un violento assalto contro le forze ignote, per ridurle a prostrarsi davanti all'uomo.
8. Noi siamo sul promontorio estremo dei secoli! ... Perché dovremmo guardarci alle spalle, se vogliamo sfondare le misteriose porte dell'Impossibile? Il Tempo e lo Spazio morirono ieri. Noi viviamo già nell'assoluto, poiché abbiamo già creata l'eterna velocità onnipresente.
9. Noi vogliamo glorificare la guerra—sola igiene del mondo—il militarismo, il patriottismo, il gesto distruttore dei libertari, le belle idee per cui si muore e il disprezzo della donna.
10. Noi vogliamo distruggere i musei, le biblioteche, le accademie d'ogni specie, e combattere contro il moralismo, il femminismo e contro ogni viltà opportunistica o utilitaria.
11. Noi canteremo le grandi folle agitate dal lavoro, dal piacere o dalla sommossa: canteremo le maree multicolori e polifoniche delle rivoluzioni nelle capitali moderne

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much closer to the aspect of death where the Futurist is strengthened by approaching death through the technological advances of speed.

canteremo il vibrante fervore notturno degli arsenali e dei cantieri incendiati da violente lune elettriche; le stazioni ingorde, divoratrici di serpi che fumano; le officine appese alle nuvole pei contorti fili dei loro fumi; i ponti simili a ginnasti giganti che scavalcano i fiumi, balenanti al sole con un luccichio di coltelli; i piroscafi avventurosi che fiutano l'orizzonte, le locomotive dall'ampio petto, che scalpitano sulle rotaie, come enormi cavalli d'acciaio imbrigliati di tubi, e il volo scivolante degli aeroplani, la cui elica garrisce al vento come una bandiera e sembra applaudire come una folla entusiasta.

*(“Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo”)*

1. We intend to sing the love of danger, the about the use of energy and recklessness as common, daily practice.
2. Courage, boldness, and rebelliousness will be the essential elements of our poetry.
3. Up to now literature has exalted contemplative stillness, rapture, and reverie. We intend to glorify aggressive action, a restive wakefulness, life at the double, the slap and the punching fist.
4. We believe that this wonderful world has been further enriched by a new beauty, the beauty of speed. A racing car, its bonnet decked out with exhaust pipes like serpents with galvanic breath ...a roaring motorcar, which seems to race on like machine-gun fire, is more beautiful than the Winged Victory of Samothrace.
5. We wish to sing the praises of the man behind the steering wheel, whose sleek shaft traverses the Earth, which itself is hurtling at breakneck speed along the circuit of its orbit.
6. The poet will have to do all in his power, passionately, flamboyantly, and with generosity of spirit, to increase the delirious fervor of the primordial elements.
7. There is no longer any beauty except the struggle. Any work of art that lacks a sense of aggression can never be a masterpiece. Poetry must be thought of as a violent assault upon the forces of the unknown with the intention of making them prostrate themselves at the feet of mankind.
8. We stand upon the furthest promontory of the ages! ... Why should we be looking back over our shoulders, if what we desire is to smash down the mysterious doors of

the Impossible? Time and Space died yesterday. WE are already living in the realms of the Absolute, for we have already created infinite, omnipresent speed.

9. We wish to glorify war—the sole cleanser of the world—militarism, patriotism, the destructive act of the libertarian, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman.
10. We wish to destroy museums, libraries, academies of any sort, and fight against moralism, feminism, and every kind of materialistic self-serving cowardice.
11. We shall sing of the great multitudes who are roused up by work, by pleasure, or by rebellion; of the many-hued, many-voiced tides of revolution in our modern capitals; of the pulsating, nightly ardor of arsenals and shipyards, ablaze with their violent electric moons; of railway stations, voraciously devouring smoke-belching serpents; of workshops hanging from the clouds by their twisted threads of smoke; of bridges which, like giant gymnasts, bstride the rivers, flashing in the sunlight like gleaming knives; of intrepid steamships that sniff out the horizon; of broad-breasted locomotives, champing on their wheels like enormous steel horses, bridled with pipes; and of the lissome flight of the airplane, whose propeller flutters like a flag in the wind, seeming to applaud, like a crowd excited.

(“Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism”)

The enumerated points function to recast the Symbolist imaginary into a clear, direct discourse characterized by a violent and aggressive tone. The reader learns that Futurism represented a departure from a passive, stagnant society because the very state of the nation was at risk. Marinetti proscribed destroying the past as only way to cure Italy, and in a sense, forget it ever existed, before building anew. The leader depicts the Futurist metropolis as an urban spaced filled with factories, railroad stations, shipyards, electric lighting, bridges, etc. The endless possibilities of modernity are used in the second half of the narrative to speak directly to the youth, extending Futurism beyond the confines of aesthetics to a national agenda. Since Marinetti claims that Futurism will last no more than ten years, his movement is characterized by a sense of urgency. The Futurists only have a generation to exert change before they become irrelevant.

The Futurist manifesto alludes to the ongoing social transformations that new technologies such as the automobile, telegraph, and airplane have had on everyday life. Aesthetically, Futurism gave expression to these changes within their art. In the “Manifesto tecnico della pittura” (1910) (“Technical Manifest of Futurist Painting”), the Futurists introduced the idea of dynamism in the visual arts, arguing that all things are in motion. A running horse, for example, did not have four legs but twenty, demonstrating his speed and movement. The sensation of simultaneity and the penetration of time and space underscored the kinds of social changes that art could express. In the literary field, the Futurists advocated the destruction and abolishment of syntax, punctuation, and the use of adverbs and adjectives to establish the free word poems *parole in libertà* (words-in-freedom) in the “Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista” (1912) (“Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature”). The concept incorporated onomatopoeia, mathematical signs, symbols, which gave language a new sound reminiscent of the clashing noises of modernity. It also introduced a new graphic style that developed from the mechanization taking place in typography. More importantly, words-in-freedom offered an efficient use of language. The aesthetic alluded to the movement of people and ideas through travel and telecommunications. The elimination of unnecessary structures and the use of analogies allowed the Futurists to express the fleeting, in doing so, communicated on a subconscious level.

The Futurists also applied their theories to the theatrical space. The Futurist Synthetic theater freed traditional theater from its classical roots of verisimilitude. The Futurist theater manipulated time and space and applied the ideas of *simultaneità*, *irruzione*, and *compenetrazione* to express the fleeting, alogical, and the multiplicity of sensations that were part of the modern experience. These mediums represent some of the ways in which the Futurists

bridged the gap between art and life, but their ideas extended beyond the aforementioned areas to include music, radio, politics, clothing, etc., demonstrating a true desire to bring all of society under the Futurist influence. Futurism symbolized not only a new art movement, but also an attempt to regenerate the nation socially and culturally, which naturally placed the movement in the political realm.

The second issue that emerges from the foundational text is the broader argument of cultural production in modernity. In *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism*, Somigli argues that the underlying collective claim in the Futurist manifesto derived from the intense relationship between modernity and the artist, which caused him to re-negotiate and re-legitimize his role in society. The period of social transformation to which Somigli refers started from the end of the eighteenth century and continued until the mid-twentieth century. This time framed involved the most radical transformations of mankind including the French Revolution, WWI, and WWII. During this period, democratic ideals and institutions emerged while the monarchy went into decline. Democracy, as a result, encouraged collective action within the public space. The rise of the bourgeoisie and the transition into a capitalist economy transformed economic social relations. Scholars refer to this time frame as the start of modernity, and Berman Marshall provides the most complete analysis of the period in *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*:

The maelstrom of modern life has been fed from many sources: great discoveries in the physical sciences, changing our images of the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life, generate new forms of corporate power and class struggle; immense demographic upheavals, severing millions of people from their ancestral habitats, hurtling them halfway across the world into new lives; rapid and often cataclysmic urban growth; systems of mass communication, dynamic in their development, enveloping and binding together the most diverse people and societies; increasingly powerful national states,

bureaucratically structured and operated, constantly striving to expand their powers; mass social movements of people, and peoples, challenging their political and economic rulers, striving to gain some control over their lives; finally, bearing and driving all these people and institutions along, an ever-expanding, drastically fluctuating capitalist world market. In the twentieth century, the social processes that bring this maelstrom into being, and keep it in a state of perpetual becoming, have come to be called modernization. (16)

Criticism views modernity in terms of the social transformations that have the ability of transforming social behavior while modernist movements, such as Futurism, represent the cultural reactions to modernity. Futurism, in part, responds to the difficulties specifically experienced by the poet, and it offers its own way of dealing with cultural production in the new economic system.

In revisiting Charles Baudelaire's prose poem "*Perte d'aureole*" ("The Lost Halo"), Benjamin situates the fall of poet as part of the crisis of art in modernity:

[...] Just now, as I was crossing the boulevard, and hopping in the mud, in quite a hurry, through the shifting chaos where death comes galloping from all sides at once, my halo slipped off my head, in one abrupt movement, into the mire of the macadam. I didn't have the guts to pick it up. I considered it less disagreeable to lose my insignia than to break my bones. And anyway, I said to myself, misfortune is good for something. Now I can walk about incognito, commit foul acts, and indulge in debaucher like ordinary mortals (Baudelaire 112).

As Benjamin and Somigli point out, the relationship between the lost halo and modernity becomes clear when the Baudelairian poet has to scurry across the boulevard. The technological advancements that resulted in an increased pace of life were responsible for the lost halo, demonstrating the transformative powers of modernity. The halo symbolized the qualities attributed to the artist from the Romantic tradition when he gained a social status and participated in the social and cultural matters of the nation. The halo was based on his uniqueness; therefore, the loss of the halo implies a transformation of the traditional role and

self-understanding of the artist. Having lost his halo, the poet has to make an important decision: retrieve it or leave it there in the macadam. The Baudelairean poet leaves the halo behind as not to compromise his principles, and he takes his newly found freedom to be completely honest about the ideological foundations of the social, cultural, and political structures of the bourgeois order. Baudelaire described the new relationship between art and the artist as a form of prostitution where the artist produces and sells his products on the market similarly as a prostitute sells her body or a worker sells his or her labor (Somigli 10).

Somigli attributes the lost halo to two fundamental changes. The first derives from symbolic goods or rather artistic works that were constrained to the capitalist laws of free market economy. Art experienced various pressures that stemmed from the new consumer-based economy, which rewarded art that reflected the public's taste. As a result, the consumer becomes much influential in dictating the terms of what is considered to be art, and it calls into question the very validity of art. Artists felt that they had to sacrifice creativity and innovation for profits and prestige. The halo rested on an artist's uniqueness, and once this disappeared, there were very few incentives for progress. From this context, the Futurists' developed a preoccupation with cultural stagnation to raise legitimate concerns over capitalist principles. Moreover, the artist feels further alienation with the emergence of the politician. The artist loses his social function as the national symbol to the politician; and therefore, he is no longer asked to take a role within leading society.

Modernist movements, such as Symbolism, reacted to the lost halo by trying to recover it and reestablishing the distance between the artist and the masses, leading to the distinction between high and low art forms. Baudelaire, in his poem "*Correspondences*," employed artistic

techniques in synesthesia that were too advanced for the average reader to decode.<sup>16</sup> Futurism, on the other hand, rejected the halo as part of the norms imposed by the bourgeoisie and portrayed the lost halo as what defined art in the modern age. Art no longer functioned within an autonomous space and the new relationship between art and life takes place in the sphere of commodification.

According to Peter Bürger in the *History of Italian Art*, the commodification of the artist was a gradual process in which he went through two transformative stages. The first occurred when the artist became an entrepreneur, beginning as early as the fourteenth century and culminating in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The process started with the increased demand for art and artists began to hire and contract work to other artists to keep up with demand. In return, the art market developed and forced the artist into mass production making the same item over and over. The second transformation occurred when the artist became a civil servant. This phase began when larger institutions such as the Church and State wanted to use art to display a cultural heritage, which required the knowledge of artists. These institutions gave artists the opportunity to create new academies or reform old ones and rewarded them with teaching posts and professorships in architecture, painting, and sculpturing, which were designed to develop a professional background for the artist (Bürger 18). Cultural production was a direct result of “differentiation generated by the diversity of the publics at which the different categories of producers aim their products (Bourdieu 113).”

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<sup>16</sup> Baudelaire published “*Correspondences*” in the 1857 compilation *Les fleurs du mal*. The poet establishes two kinds communication or *correspondences*. The first is seen in a vertical relationship between the material and spiritual world, and the second correspondence encompasses the world of senses, which scholars have referred to as synesthesia or the process of linking one or more of the senses to create meaning through visual imaginary.



The development of art as art, according to Bordieu, occurs when the artist gains a professional status, at which point he listens to only those who shared the same intellectual and artistic tradition which served as the point of departure or rupture. Bordieu refers to this process as “autonomization” and further states:

This process is correlated with the constant growth of a public of potential consumers, of increasing social diversity, which guarantee the producers of symbolic goods minimal conditions of economic independence and, also, a competing principle of legitimacy. It is also correlated with the constitution of an ever-growing, ever more diversified corps of producers and merchants of symbolic goods, who tend to reject all constraints apart from technical imperatives and credentials. Finally, it is correlated with the multiplication and diversification of agencies of consecration placed in a situation of competition for cultural legitimacy: not only academies and salons, but also institutions for diffusion, such as publishers and theatrical impresarios, whose selective operations are invested with a truly cultural legitimacy even if they are subordinated to economic and social constraints. (Bordieu 112)

As Bürger and Bordieu theoretical paradigms converge, the direct result of the artist’s new position leads to his own institutions that became involved in consecrating art. These self-appointed institutions competed for cultural legitimacy, and their ability to promote and bring goods to the market was based on one’s reputation, education, prestige, knowledge, and connections. Institutions became depended on profits to sustain their organizational activities and livelihoods. What becomes clear is that art was unable to escape the principles of capitalism, and the Futurists no longer believed in or sought the mythic halo. Instead, we see that the Futurists embraced the system by establishing their own tools of divulgation, advertising campaigns, journals, and publishing companies that ignored traditional institutional structures that controlled art.

As we see, Futurism articulated a number of meta-narratives that consisted of economic, aesthetic, and political discourses that should not be separated from the movement. One

observation that comes from Marinetti's *Futurismo nel mondo* is that Futurism provided the blueprint that many avant-garde groups used to popularize their movements, allowing artists the ability to pursue non-traditional forms of art such as Dadaism and Surrealism. The economic, political, and cultural issues surrounding Futurism's preoccupation with the artist and art in society represented the driving forces of the social movement that shaped Futurism alongside its nationalist agenda.

### **Social Movement Theory and Futurism**

In *Social Movements 1768-2004*, Tilly compares social movements to electoral style campaigns that represent a distinct way of pursuing politics, resulting from the synthesis of the following elements:

1. A sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities "called campaign."
2. Employment of combinations from among the following forms of political action: creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering "called the social movement repertoire."
3. Participants' concerted public representations of WUNC: worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies "called WUNC displays." (Tilly 3-4)

Tilly pinpoints the political form to the John Wilkes movement (1768) in Britain where beforehand collective action consisted of one-off events or contentious gatherings that led only to violence, rather than displaying a particular, connected, evolving, historical set of political interactions and practices that came to be called social movements (7). Wilkes was also the editor of *The North Briton* newspaper and became involved in several public scandals that placed him against the government and monarchy.<sup>1</sup> In *The North Briton*, Wilkes had accused King George III of purposefully misleading the public, which immediately led to his arrest and incarceration.

On another occasion, Wilkes published the pornographic pamphlet *Essay on Woman*, and the government expelled him from office and incarcerated him once again. Wilkes became a local hero for testing the boundaries of free speech in British society. The social mobilization that developed around Wilkes was not directly related to his politics or being denied his seat, especially since most of his supporters were unable to vote; but rather, he was able to mobilize people around a broader narrative that questioned the monarchy's overall authority and use of force. His message tapped into an already existing sentiment amongst the working classes, who were often against the monarchy. Wilkes was able to keep his supporters constantly engaged by financing and organizing petition drives, marches, chanting slogans, and public gatherings, which allowed his followers to display their solidarity and determination (Tilly 17).

In the case of Britain, since the government had refused to seat Wilkes, his parliamentary campaign transformed into a political campaign against the government's attempt to disenfranchise voters. Social movements came into existence by incorporating various forms of political action. The distribution of the pamphlet, manifesto, coupled with different acts of unity and worthiness seen in the street march and rally developed the basis of political campaigning. Tilly notes that social movements are influenced by other factors that are specific to time and place. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, social movements employed the same tactics but also integrated new techniques of reaching the masses that took advantage of the advances in telecommunications. Technology had a direct impact on the social movement allowing it to diffuse quickly and to reach contacts abroad. By the twentieth century, the result of increased

accessibility gave social movements an international dimension that was used to exert more pressure and display greater unity by incorporating external legitimation (64).<sup>17</sup>

Futurism functions similarly to the paradigm offered by Tilly, combining a campaign of collective claim-making with forms of political action and acts of self-representation. The movement's willingness to approach politics, seen in the "Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo," and even advocate for political change in the "Manifesto politico dei futuristi" gave Futurism the political and contentious elements of social movements. Even though the Futurist manifesto was posited between aesthetics and politics, the document still functioned to highlight the collective claims brought by a marginalized group of artists. In my analysis of how the Futurists utilized the theatrical space and literary journals, I will show how, through repeated performances, Futurism integrated the manifesto in the *serate* and in the literary magazine. These theatrical events allowed for political action and acts of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (WUNCs) to occur on stage in front of public audiences. Another link between social movements and Futurism is the literary magazine, which functioned as a tool of propaganda. The literary magazine often shaped the discourse around Futurism but also aided in establishing a network of collaborations and contacts that were both national and international in scope. The literary magazine played a pivotal role in diffusing the Futurist message to proponents and opponents of the movement.

In the next chapters, I will focus specifically on how the manifesto, theatrical events, and the literary magazine came together to create the repeated performances of claim making, the parliamentary style campaigns that were responsible for sustaining and diffusing the movement,

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<sup>17</sup> With regards to nineteenth and twentieth century social movements, some of the more interesting examples used by Tilly are: the French Revolution of 1848, the Chartist movement in England in 1848, and the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

while also revolutionizing the methods of social mobilization. In chapter one, I examine the historical evolution of the manifesto as an instrument of propaganda. In the age of modernity, the manifesto was frequently used to voice the concerns of the marginalized. The Futurist Manifesto helped to control and define the movement; and in terms of collective action, it welded together multiple identities such as the alienated artist, the aspirations of the younger generation, and made appeals to national aggrandizement that resonated in nationalist, political circles. The collective identity that is articulated within the Futurist Manifesto addresses questions of nationalism and citizenship, and Italy was not the only country that used nationalism as the rhetorical tool to advance Futurism. The manifesto “Ultimatum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século xx” (“Futurist Ultimatum to the Portuguese Generations of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century”), written by Almada Negreiros, is another example of how the collective identity that emerged from the Futurist manifesto was tied not only to the poet’s plight in modernity but also to a national concern over the direction of one’s country. In this analysis, the Futurist manifesto gives insight to the complexity of the Futurist claim and how the Futurists sought to create a coalition to support their movement. The manifesto also played an important role in not only defining the nature of Futurism, but its incorporation into the literary performances, known as *serate*, gave way to a theatricalization of the manifesto. The declamation of Futurist manifestos in the theatrical space promoted collective action. Lastly, one sees the Futurist manifesto translated and divulged throughout a network of literary magazines that supported Futurism, which ultimately led to the movement’s internationalization.

In chapter two, I will demonstrate how the Futurists converted the theatrical space from a form of entertainment to a propagandistic tool for mobilization. After having established the collective identity of the movement seen in the manifesto, the Futurists used the theatrical space

for political mobilization. The Futurist *serata* drew inspiration from the French Salon during the Enlightenment as well as contemporary theater such as the variety show. However, the political and cultural elements of the Futurist *serata* were based on propaganda of agitation and knowledge of crowd psychology that retooled the function of art and transformed it into art action. In *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, Jacques Ellul describes the theater as “inherently propagandistic” and identifies propaganda of agitation as the “most often subversive propaganda and has the stamp of opposition. It is led by a party seeking to destroy the government or the established order (71).” The theatrical space, which was an integral, popular part of Futurism, used in the Italian, Portuguese, and Russian Futurist movements, allowed the Futurists to push their aesthetic and political agenda to the masses instead of solely focusing on the cultural elite. The *serata* is comparable to Tilly “social movement repertoire” where the theatrical performances are designed to generate political action.

In the final chapter, I will put forth my own analysis of a series of Futurist magazines and their role in social mobilization. My analysis of *Poesia*, *Lacerba*, *L'Italia Futurista* and *Portugal Futurista* will highlight the ways in which the Futurists waged their campaign at the textual level. I am most concerned with how the Futurist magazine is used to link various Futurist supporters and movements through a considerable amount of collaborative work that took place amongst the journals. Sometimes this collaboration consisted of publishing works of other Futurists; and at other times, it involved real, working relationships between the Futurists. The analysis of the literary magazines brings into relief the close relationship between the Futurists, mass media, and advertising. Furthermore, the literary magazines were designed for quite a different audience than the theatrical performances, and they helped to establish a network between movements and supporters.

The methods of propaganda utilized by Futurism can also help us understand our current state of social mobilization. In my concluding remarks, I will proposed some parallels between the Futurist movement and collective action in today's society. A thorough understanding of how collective action was created in the Futurist movement can only help us better understand the current dynamics of social mobilization.

## CHAPTER 1

### FUTURIST MANIFESTOS: WELDING IDENTITY AS A COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGY

The manifesto is the starting place of this dissertation that will allow us to understand the communicative strategies of Futurism. To reiterate Tilly's remarks, social movements are based on "a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities (3)." This represents the first and most important step in collective action because the challenge for social movements is to have the continual momentum of a following to eventually exert political change. In terms of Futurism, the identity and claims of the movement were stipulated in manifesto form, and it functioned as part of the Futurist repertoire that defined the movement's performances of political action. In this sense, the Futurist manifesto functioned in similar ways as past manifestos: highlighting a problem of a group who feels marginalized, stating the consequences of their marginalization, and providing a blueprint of actions to solve the current crisis. The Futurist manifesto was integrated in all aspects of the movement, and it was widely circulated at various Futurist events, newspapers, literary journals, and on the streets. As the document was declaimed in front of audiences at the *serate*, it also carried the symbolic imagery of unity. In this chapter, I explore how the collective identity and claims that emerge from the document led to mobilization and diffusion of Futurism.<sup>18</sup> The overall impact of the Futurist

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<sup>18</sup> Throughout this study, I refer to the Futurist manifesto in terms of the foundational text that stated the terms of Futurism whether in Italy, Portugal, Russia, or in Catalan seen in "Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo" in Italy, "Ultimatum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX" in Portugal, "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste" in Russia, and "*Contra els poetes amb minúscula: primer manifest català futurista*" in Catalonia. These manifestos represented the foundational text and the establishment of Futurism ist movement in each country. I make this distinction so as not to overgeneralize my comments to all manifestos in the movement as some very aesthetic such as the technical manifestos produced by Marinetti and Italian Futurist.



manifesto was that it functioned as a propagandistic tool that connected potential sympathizers to the Futurist movement by appealing to multiple identities with compelling arguments.

### **Evolution of the Futurist Manifesto**

Even in today's society, people still associate "manifesto" with issues of social justice where some group or individual make visible their concerns and seek to find like-minded individuals to join their cause. However, recent manifestos, such as the one posted on Facebook by Christopher Doner (2013)<sup>19</sup>, captured how modern society has once again altered the manifesto into a digital format that can be easily accessible to the whole world. Technology is a quintessential example of modernity and how often times modernity brings with it contradictions. On one hand, the digital age has collapsed space and time, bringing us closer together; but on the other hand, it has drastically transformed our social and communicative behavior by deemphasizing "the collective" and focusing on the "individual," which ironically leads to further alienation. As a consequence, there has been a shift in this age where manifestos have been used to advocate very individualistic goals rather than pursuing collective claims. If one analyzes the Futurist manifesto within the context of the early twentieth century, one sees that it was yet another permutation of the genre where the political environment and technological advances made it the perfect tool of propaganda.

The Futurist manifesto was a unique form of political action. Studies on the evolution of the manifesto date the genre to the historical transformations that occurred during French Revolution. Before this time, the manifesto functioned within a restricted space used primarily

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<sup>19</sup> Doner was a former member of the United States Navy Reserves and also worked for the Los Angeles Police Department before he went on a mass killing spree that involved several police officers and civilians. His manifesto, posted on Facebook in February 2013, listed 40 police officers that he wanted dead as what appeared to be a call for substantial change within the LAPD. Doner claimed that his firing in 2008 was unjustified and declared that it was in retaliation for a previous claim that Doner filed against another officer.

by the king or his officials.<sup>20</sup> This meant that the manifesto represented a privileged site of interaction that was often characterized by its unilateral communication; that is to say, the average person was denied the opportunity counteract claims with one's own manifesto. The document, which was placed in the public square, communicated important matters related to the citizenry. Sometimes officials used the manifesto to defend their reputation or to anticipate a damaging claim; and other times, the document was used as a political tool of persuasion in which the King or his officials would issue manifestos to generate support for future political actions. Only after the waning influence of the monarchy did the contemporary form of the manifesto appear. The French Revolution represented the rise of the bourgeoisie to political power; and as a consequence, the transcendental authority was no longer found in the "king" or the hereditary bonds of the aristocracy but rather in the "people" (Somigli 40). The Enlightenment ideals of democracy, liberty, and egalitarianism changed the notion of authority within the manifesto, and it allowed the manifesto to represent a multiplicity of voices that went on to address religious, class, and cultural conflicts that often represented competing groups and agendas.

Criticism on the manifesto has presented the genre as a "rupture" often echoing the work of Janet Lyon who argues that "manifestos and related forms appear most often in cluster around political crises that involve definitions of citizenship and political subjecthood" (16). Somigli, Vondeling, and Puchner have argued that the manifestos of the avant-garde focused on the question of legitimacy. The need for legitimacy, according to Puchner, comes from the increased tension of competing aesthetic movements, which used the manifesto to distinguish one group

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<sup>20</sup> Somigli notes that "manifesto" as an adjective can be seen in Dante's *Divina commedia* in the famous episode between Dante the pilgrim and Farinata degli Uberti (*Inferno X*), where Farinata recognizes the pilgrim by his Tuscan accent. However, "manifesto" in the noun form, appeared in the French language referring to a detailed cargo list that was checked by the captain. It was only after the mid-sixteenth century that the manifesto took on the meaning of public declaration (Somigli, *Legitimizing* 30).

from another. Somigli states that “the formation of literary groups witnessed the need for artists to redefine their social role, although in ways that oppose the dominant ideology of productivity and financial profit (54).” The manifestos from avant-garde movements, especially in the case of Futurism, differentiated the field of cultural production from other social domains, thus legitimating its autonomy. Moreover, the Futurist manifesto articulated the identity of the various groups of individuals who, by either signing the manifesto or assuming the name which it proposes, explicitly affirm their allegiance to it. Those deemed as “Futurists” were able to bring the symbolic capital associated with their names, and in turn, share in the symbolic capital of the group (Somigli 55). The manifesto acted as a tool of propaganda because it defined and defended the worldview of a particular group while at the same time imposing negative and stigmatized definitions on others in an effort to shape and control the discourse. Both views of the manifesto raise valid points with regards to the Futurist manifesto. On one hand, it served to legitimize a specific artistic program and on the other hand question the very notion of Italian identity in its quest for cultural and national renewal. As we will see in the following sections, these elements defined the collective identity and action that extends from the Futurist manifesto.

The critical assessment of the manifesto, through Somigli, Puchner, and Lyon, seems to gravitate toward three essential components: authority, communication, and space. Authority, which also functions as an extension of power, refers to the individual(s) who possessed the status to issue manifestos, which is often determined by the political climate. Communication, instead, speaks to the nature of the dialogue that the manifesto seeks to create whether it is open or closed, informative, persuasive, militant or reactionary. Lastly, space occupies an important place within the structural framework of manifestos giving that it represents the site of encounter between issuer and public. The Futurist manifesto is a result of a radicalization that took place

within each sphere in the nineteenth century that was shaped by the political atmosphere and technological advances of the twentieth century.

Puchner has argued that the Futurist Manifesto embraced the rhetoric of the *Communist Manifesto*, exhibiting the political and combative tone of Marx and Engels as well as sharing their materialist critique on society. The integration of politics and aesthetics was a defining aspect of the Futurist manifesto. These dynamics had been lacking in the aesthetic manifestos of Naturalism, Symbolism, and Unanimism that functioned more as programmatic texts often explaining and clarifying a cultural movement without providing an overarching social program (Puchner 77).<sup>21</sup> As previous iterations of the manifesto were restricted to the town square and then eventually to newspapers, the Futurist manifesto is distinguished by its omnipresence. By the early twentieth century, the “public” gathers not only in the square but also in the media outlets, the streets, salons, cafes, and theaters, wherever the Futurist manifesto was displayed. The Futurists’ ability to saturate all media outlets and public spaces occurred in part because of technological innovations such as the rotary press, cheaper paper goods. The rise of the advertising industry also contributed to the diffusion of the Futurist manifesto. The Futurists distributed thousands of manifestos from the top of the clock tower in St. Mark’s Square to publicize the Futurist *serata*. They were also known to throw manifestos from cars and airplanes. The Futurist manifesto replicated some of the initial functions of manifestos, such as persuading and informing the public. However, within the Futurist movement, the manifesto added advertising to its intended purposes. The founding text of the Futurist movement, for instance,

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<sup>21</sup> The term “avant-garde” was not always associated with aesthetic movements or manifestos but rather used in the political sphere to denote military advancement into unknown territory. Artist and their work became known as avant-garde because it pushed the boundaries of cultural producing through experimentation. In many respects, these artists were discovering new terrain as they epitomized the militaristic qualities of courage, boldness, and aggression.

tried to reach a wide base audience seen in the collective identity that Marinetti established in the manifesto and throughout Futurism. His efforts were even replicated to a certain degree by Negreiros in the Portuguese Futurist manifesto “Ultimatum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX.” In the following section, I examine collective identity in the Futurist manifesto and how it translated into a broader campaign of diffusing Futurism even reaching countries outside of Italy, such as Portugal.

### **Collective Identity in the Futurist Manifesto**

The collective identity that made up the repeated performances of claim making gave the Futurist movement its tone and momentum. The purpose of creating a collective identity or framing is to make clear the individuals who are the protagonists and those who are the antagonists (Buechler 155). Furthermore, establishing a collective identity gives a movement cohesion, as it is able to identify and target its message to a specific audience. The Futurist manifesto functions within these terms. For instance, the foundational text of the Futurist movement focuses considerably on the identity of the “poet.” Marinetti states, “My friends and I stayed up all night, sitting beneath the lamps of a mosque, whose star-studded, filigreed brass domes resembled our souls, all aglow with the concentrated brilliance of an electric heart (Berghaus, *Critical* 11).” As Berghaus notes, Marinetti often sat with his friends Buzzi, Cavacchioli, Notari, and Lucini in his salon filled with oriental objects that were brought back from Egypt, and these friends took on active roles in the Futurist movement (Berghaus, *Critical* 429-28). Moreover, Marinetti repeatedly refers to the poet and his extraordinary abilities in the second and sixth bullet point of the Futurist Manifesto:

2. Courage, boldness, and rebellion will be essential elements in our poetry.

6. The poet will have to do all in his power, passionately, flamboyantly, and with generosity of spirit, to increase the delirious fervor of the primordial elements.

If we carefully examine the enumerated points in the manifesto, one will also notice Marinetti's use of the subject pronoun "we", which is representative of the collective group of poets that begins the narrative. The focus on the poet becomes a centerpiece of the Futurist movement because the poet embodies energy, vitality, innovation, boldness, and creativity, which for the Futurists, are the true elements of social progression. In this sense, the poet is tasked with the duty of leading not only poets in the cultural renewal but also the nation.

By elevating the poet to the position of leader of a cultural revolution, the Futurists were also elevating the role and function of art in society. The work of Maria Lolla, who traces the fusion between politics and literature in, "Reader/Power: The Politics and Poetics of Reading in Post-Unification Italy" argues that at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century literature was promoted based on the belief that it served as an index of the greatness and power of a country. Lolla points to Michele Lessona's *Volere è potere*, which showcased Italian cities, Italians of international reputation, and stressed Italian achievements to urge Italians to think internationally and competitively (23). Lessona's work, in particular, was pivotal in creating the self-help genre, which often focused on questions of citizenship in Italy. In addition, there were a number of artists such as Pompeo Molmento, who voiced his concerns to parliament in a study regarding investments in libraries. Molmento declared that libraries and readers determined a nation's international standing, and he concluded that Italy's backwardness in literature and her high illiteracy rate was a national security crisis. He based the success of European powers such as England, France, and Germany on how much they invested in literature, research, and libraries. Not only did Italy spend the least in this regard, it also had illiteracy rates in some places as high as 80%, along with Spain and Portugal (Cerasi 205-32). A strong cultural

background was indicative of a nation's ability to harness the necessary resources to educate its population and participate in important roles in the international arena. The implication of Molmento's study, according to Lolla, led to a political rallying call that promoted investment in the print industry, literature, and libraries as part of an educational civic program (Lolla 25).

Lolla's analysis demonstrates that literature was already in the *fin-de-siècle* era was deemed a powerful tool that had the potential to change and make nations. This view meant that the cultural sphere had already invaded the political sphere; therefore, Futurism is a continuation of the cultural politics at the turn of the century. The foundational text of Futurism places the poet at the helm of the Futurist movement, and it also articulates the coming together of the political and cultural spheres. The identity of the poet, found in the manifesto, symbolizes what Somigli has identified as the process of re-legitimation and re-negotiation of the poet's position in society. In the Futurist manifesto, the artist is firmly established as a cultural politician that uses his talents and work to advocate for the nation. The collective identity and claims of Futurism, therefore, seek to mobilize first artists within the movement, focusing on themes such as aesthetic liberalism that is further exhibited in the subsequent technical manifestos such as "Manifesto of Futurist Playwrights," "Manifesto of the Futurist Painters," and "Manifesto of Futurist Musicians." Furthermore, there is a more specific target of those artists who aspire to a great nation. Overall, the strength of Futurism relied on its ability to reach a wide-range of people, and Marinetti did not stop here.

The youth identity made up another important segment of the Futurist movement. After the enumerated section, Marinetti directs his comments to a wider audience, indicating the shift with the use of *voi*.<sup>22</sup>

In verità io vi dichiaro che la frequentazione quotidiana dei musei, delle biblioteche e delle accademie (cimiteri di sforzi vani, calvarii di sogni crocifissi, registri di slanci troncati!...) è, per gli artisti, altrettanto dannosa che la tutela prolungata dei parenti per certi giovani ebbri del loro ingegno e della loro volontà ambiziosa. Per i moribondi, per gl'infermi, pei prigionieri, sia pure: l'ammirabile passato è forse un balsamo ai loro mali, poiché per essi l'avvenire è sbarrato... Ma noi non vogliamo più saperne, del passato, noi, giovani e forti futuristi!

I più anziani fra noi hanno trent'anni: eppure, noi abbiamo già sperperati tesori, mille tesori di forza, di amore, d'audacia, d'astuzia e di rude volontà; li abbiamo gettati via impazientemente, in furia, senza contare, senza mai esitare, senza riposarci mai, a perdifiato... Guardateci! Non siamo ancora sposati! I nostri cuori non sentono alcuna stanchezza, poiché sono nutriti di fuoco, di odio e di velocità!... Ve ne stupite? ... È logico, poiché voi non vi ricordate nemmeno di aver vissuto! Ritti sulla cima del mondo, noi scagliamo una volta ancora, la nostra sfida alle stelle! (De Maria 12)

...

[I declare, in all truth, that a daily visit to museums, libraries, and academies (cemeteries of futile efforts, Calvaries of crucified dreams, record books of broken assaults!...) is as dangerous for artists as a prolonged guardianship under the thumb of one's family is for certain young talents intoxicated with their own genius and their ambitious aims. For the sickly, the ill, or the imprisoned—let them go and visit: the admirable past is perhaps a solace for their troubles, since the future is now closed to them... But we intend to know nothing of it, nothing of the past—we strong and youthful Futurists!

The oldest of us is thirty: and yet already we have cast away treasures, thousands of treasures of force, love, boldness, cunning and raw will power; have thrown them away impatiently, furiously, heedlessly, without hesitation, without rest, screaming for our lives. Look at us! We are still not weary! Our hearts feel no tiredness because they are fed with fire, hatred, and speed! ... Are you astounded? Of course you are, because you can't even recall having ever been alive! Standing erect on the summit of the world, yet once more we fling our challenge to the stars!] (Berghaus, *Critical* 15)

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<sup>22</sup> *Voi*, in Italian, represents the plural, informal subject pronoun you.



The quote shows Marinetti directing his arguments to the younger generation. The cult of youth, according to Renato Poggioli, is endemic to avant-garde movements and takes on a regressive condition that sends the psyche back to infantilism where art is considered just another plaything (35). The scene of the car crash, for example, illustrates a certain infantilism in Marinetti, who completely throws caution and self-control out of the window. Poggioli sees the youth in terms of a psychology, but this perspective ignores the political and social implications that were involved.

Marinetti addressed the youth throughout his movement and was able to integrate them within Futurism in a number of ways. Berghaus notes in his monograph on Futurist theater that many of the *serate* events were filled with students. They often helped the Futurists publicize the *serate* in pre and post propagandistic activities, which Berghaus has called political action theater—consisting of publicity stunts to advertise the *serate* and their political program (70). On one occasion, the Futurists arrived at the University of Bologna where they entered into the lecture hall of Alfredo Galetti, who had been labelled as a pacifist by local adherents of Futurism. Marinetti and his entourage disrupted Alfredo's lecture and severely criticized the assembly of the university (74). Moreover, it was the university setting in Rome where Marinetti and the Futurists first introduced the anti-neutral clothing, stemming from a manifesto written by Balla in 1913. Marinetti gained much support from students when he advocated the abolishment of Latin and Greek to be replaced with more practical studies.

Even within Marinetti's political rhetoric of Futurism, he was able to integrate the collective identity of the younger generation into his politics. In the first political manifesto, written during

the general elections of 1909, Marinetti makes a plea to the youth to fight to reconstruct Italian society:<sup>23</sup>

We Futurists, whose sole political program is one of national pride, energy, and expansion, denounce before the whole country the irrevocable shame which a possible clerical victory would bring upon us.

We Futurists call on all talented young people of Italy to engage in a struggle to the bitter end against candidates who have any truck with the traditionalist wand with the priests.<sup>24</sup>

(Berghaus, *Critical* 238)

In many circumstances, Marinetti juxtaposes the youth with the Futurist war for collective action. The youth transcended class differences, demographically represented the largest segment of European society, was most likely to fight in a war, and was the least institutionalized. The youth mirrored the attributes of the poet because of their inherent vitality and creativity, and perhaps one can argue they are one of the same. The older generation was shaped by the rationalism of the Enlightenment that many felt was responsible for the loss of creativity and social decay (Antliff 61).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Another example can be seen in *In quest'anno futurista*. This document has had a variety of names with each reprint. It was first printed in November 29, 1914 entitled *In quest'anno futurista*. However, a notable change in the title occurred during its reprint in *Futurismo e Fascismo* (1924) to "Manifesto agli studenti." In the manifesto, Marinetti tells the younger generation the reason for war stating that: "for a nation that is poor, yet prolific, war is a business, namely the acquisition of the lands that it lacks, by virtue of the superfluity of its blood."

<sup>24</sup> This translation comes from Berghaus' *Critical Writings* (2006). Berghaus notes that manifesto was first published with the title *Elettori futuristi!* As a small flier and a large poster during the General Elections of March 7 and 14. It also appeared as *Manifesto politico dei futuristi* in *La democrazia* on March 13, 1909. See Berghaus pg. 40-50.

<sup>25</sup> The cult of youth and the Futurist myth of war work similarly to Sorel's myth of the general strike. In his introductory letter to Daniel Halevy in *Reflections on Violence*, Sorel uses the myth of the general strike to generate the class-based revolution between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, which was deemed necessary in cleansing society from the harmful effects of the bourgeoisie order. Sorel formulates his notion of myth based on the rise of Christianity. He argues that Christianity got its status as a world power through the creation of myth of the second coming of Christ. Understanding the power of myth, Sorel applies the same notion with regards to Marxism. Capitalism was not going to collapse, but if one perpetuated the myth of collapse, it would lead the proletariat to act thus making the myth reality (Sorel 22-36).

As we can see from the aforementioned examples, Futurism articulated a psychology common to youth movements. In the article “Perspectives on Student Political Activism,” Philip Altbach situates youth activism within the Lewis Feuer’s thesis of generational revolt, which places youth activism as a struggles against one’s parents. There is some proof that Futurism integrated this sentiment within its dialectic seen in the Founding Manifesto:

I declare, in all truth, that a daily visit to museums, libraries, and academies (cemeteries of futile efforts, Calvaries of crucified dreams, record books of broken assaults!...) is as dangerous for artists as a prolonged guardianship under the thumb of one’s family is for certain young talents intoxicated with their own genius and their ambitious aims.

(Berghaus, *Critical* 15)

The quote captures the tumultuous years in youth adolescence when the youth no longer sees themselves as children but rather adults with the ability to make their own decisions. However, Altbach adds that youth activism also coincides with nationalist movements as he points to the *Risorgimento* and Fascism in Italy (98).<sup>26</sup> Lastly, Altbach situates youth activism as a response to serious political and economic questions that have the potential of determining the youth’s fate and role in society (104). Marinetti’s rhetoric on reforming the university system as well as the Futurist war spoke to the preoccupation as well as the idealism that the younger generation possessed. Just as Futurism advanced specific arguments that appealed to the artist, Marinetti messaging was not monolithic. Futurism incorporated to a great extent youth psychology, taking

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<sup>26</sup> *Risorgimento* refers to the process of unifying the nation- states on the Italian peninsula to form the Italian state. Scholars have interpreted Machiavelli’s work *The Prince* as a plea for Italian unification; however, the events that created Italian unification began with the attempted assassination of Napoleon III by Felici Orsini. During his trial, he wrote a passionate appeal to Napoleon to free Italy. This later precipitated a meeting between Napoleon and Cavour, who planned to expel Austrian rule in the North and Bourbon rule in the South in exchange for Savoy and Nice. The plan was not completely successful in expelling Austrian rule. Piemonte, under the rule of Victor Emmanuel II, received Lombardy. During the Expedition of the Thousand (*Spedizione dei Mille*), General Giuseppe Garibaldi landed in the South to expel the Bourbons, uniting Sicily and Naples under Piedmontese rule. Garibaldi was also pivotal in annexing the Papal States and acquiring Venetia from the Austrians. In all, the process of Italian unification dates back to the mid-1800s until 1861 when Parliament declared Victor Emmanuel II as king of Italy. However, the process of unification continued after 1861 incorporating Rome and Venetia into the newly formed kingdom. As Italy entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the social and cultural questions of how to create Italian identity became the most pressing issue. See Christopher Duggan pg. 199-273

Futurism to the universities and speaking to the aspirations of the youth as they searched for their role in a changing world.

The identity of the “other” represents the third identity that makes up the Futurist dialectic. Marinetti had a strong relationship with the periphery having grown up in Alexandria. More specifically, it was the periphery where the Marinetti’s accumulated their family wealth. During the launch of Futurism, Marinetti was preparing concurrently his manuscript *Mafarka il futurista*. In this particular work, Marinetti addresses allegorically the benefits of imperial warfare and the conquering of African tribes and territories. Barbara Spackman has interpreted the colonial conquest in *Mafarka il futurista* in terms of Futurist Europe’s proximity to its once and future colonies where Africa symbolizes not the pre-modern past but rather the future of a rejuvenated Italy (90-91). In this regard, we see that Marinetti’s rhetoric encompasses the idea of a racialized alterity that is first alluded to in the Futurist manifesto but later makes up an important part of the movement.

In presenting the racialized “other,” the manifesto seeks self-realization through the consolidation of a national identity that was tied to acquiring international legitimacy. Postcolonial scholars, such as C.L.R James, have described European political modernity as a result of the colonial periphery. The bourgeoisie’s adoption of the Enlightenment ideals of equality, democracy, and universalism after the French Revolution were part of a broader strategy to gain greater control of its wealth and destiny. Their new found beliefs would allow them to circumvent the high taxation of their overseas ventures under the monarchy. However, once the slaves in the periphery demanded the same rights of their European colonizers, they were denied those rights because of the millions invested in the colonies (James 68). Post-colonial theory has argued that the periphery was essential to Europe’s growth. On the one hand,

it offered economic strength and stability through imperialism and the subjugation of far off lands; and on the other hand, it contributed to the formation of self-identity that worked in two different ways. The first dealt with a rise in nationalism where individuals within a country joined together as they saw themselves as a superior race, and the second dealt with the economic benefits tied to colonialism that allowed a country to distinguish itself from others on the world stage.

In the Futurist Manifesto, Marinetti depicts aesthetically the racialized other in his treatment of the Sudanese nurse. The scene begins with the violent car crash that provokes a transformation of the modern subject, going from passive state to a state of collectivist action. According to the text, Marinetti appears to be the only individual that crashed his vehicle in the ditch, but once the automobile is retrieved from the cesspool of sludge there is a new level of unity marked by the subject pronoun *noi* (we) and possessive adjective *le nostre* (our):

Allora, col volto coperto della buona melma delle officine – impasto di scorie metalliche, di sudori inutile, di fuliggini celesti—noi, contuse e fasciate le braccia ma impavidi, dettammo le nostre prime volontà a tutti gli uomini *vivi* della terra.

(Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo)

[And so, our faces covered with the good factory slime—a mix of metallic scum, useless sweat, heavenly soot—our arms bruised and bandaged, we, still fearless have dictated our first intentions to all the living men of the earth.]

(“Founding and Manifesto of Futurism”)

The cesspool of factory slime, which is compared to the milk of the Sudanese nurse, symbolically serves to nurture and produce the metallized man that represents the revolutionary subject of modernity.

Oh! Materno fossato, quasi pieno di un'acqua fangosa! Bel fossato d'officina! Io gustai avidamente la tua melma fortificante, che mi ricordò la santa mammella nera della mia nutrice sudanese.

[Oh! Maternal ditch, nearly full of muddy water! Fair factory drain! I gulped down your bracing slime, which reminded me of the sacred black breast of my Sudanese nurse.]

*(Founding and Manifesto of Futurism)*

Winkiel notes that Marinetti's rebirth as a machine-man is diametrically opposed to the consumable body of the Sudanese nurse metonymically related to the factory slime. It gives way to a fantasy of absolute cultural difference carrying undertones of national and ethnic purity. The metallicized subjects, unlike the consumable body of the Sudanese nurse, are different in that they are immune to the threats of danger, degeneration, fatigue, mortality, and the weight of the past and can use their superior faculties to bring others into submission (74-75). I agree with Winkiel's assessment that a metallicized subject represents a far superior being than the consumable body of the Sudanese nurse; however, I see the relationship not as one of opposition but one that is interconnected. The imagery of the Sudanese nurse intimates the triangular relationship between the periphery, Europe, and the new identity/individual that emerges from this relationship. Essentially, the milk of the Sudanese nurse acts as the building block of life. It helps to transform the individual from his weak and defenseless state into a strong, powerful individual capable of exerting his new found strength onto others.

The racialized "other" was integrated into the Futurist movement not only by advocating war and imperialism but also through irredentism. The irredentism movement attempted to redeem lands that were considered Italian based on ethnic identity or a shared historical past. Much of the movement was framed against the Austro-Hungarian Empire even though there were smaller irredentist movements seeking lands from France and Switzerland. The Italians had a long

history of territorial disputes with the Austro-Hungarian Empire dating back to the Risorgimento in the fight for Lombardy and Veneto. In the twentieth century, Italy looked to incorporate territories such as Trieste, Fiume, Dalmatia, as well as other territories into the Italian Empire, which came as a result of what historians refer to as the “mutilated victory.” It referred to the promises that were made to Italy under the Treaty of London for her participation in WWI on side of the Triple Entente. The treaty stipulated several territories to be given to Italy for its participation ranging from lands in the Balkans, territorial land from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Dalmatian coast, but these the terms of the treaty were reneged much by the U.S administration under Wilson.<sup>27</sup> The so-called “mutilated victory” was considered a public humiliation and damaged the national psyche. Marinetti frequently capitalized on irredentist sentiments in the *serate* to galvanize people towards the Futurist cause. Marinetti would play patriotic music of Giuseppe Verdi and declaimed nationalist poems and odes in front of his audiences. Irredentism represented one of the few issues that united Italians across different backgrounds, and this kind of collectivity was exactly what the Futurists were trying to replicate as an extension of their movement. The alterity echoed in the Futurist manifesto allowed the movement to address questions of national identity, which made Futurism a perfect fit for nationalist causes such as irredentism or nationalist movements such as Enrico Corradini’s Italian Nationalist Association, the political organization *Fasci di Combattimento*, or Mussolini’s fascism.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> In Wilson’s “Fourteen Points,” he strongly advanced the notion of self-determination through parliamentary democracies of former subjugated lands. It was also stated that Italy had not contributed enough to win the war to demand such compensation.

<sup>28</sup> Marinetti only flirted with Corradini’s Italian National Association. Instead, he gave is nationalist support to the anarcho-syndicalist movements. According to Berghaus, both groups had a nationalist agenda but Marinetti early in his movement was concerned more with freedom and justice while the militarism and warmonger of the conservative Nationalists served the interests of the capitalist class. (See Introduction in *Critical Writings*, pg xx.)

## Identity in the Portuguese Futurist Manifesto

The rhetorical strategy of Marinetti was at the basis of Futurism in Portugal. The manifesto, “Ultimatum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX” (The Futurist Ultimatum of the Portuguese Generations of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century) represented the first programmatic text that applied Futurist principles to Portuguese society. José Sobral de Almada Negreiros (1893-1970) declaimed the manifesto on May 5, 1917 in a sold out theatrical performance similar to the Italian *serata*.<sup>29</sup> Negreiros was known as an artist, literary critic, caricaturist, and translator of Marinetti’s manifestos. He was one of the foremost leaders of Futurism in Portugal responsible for its diffusion, having created the Lisbon Futurist Committee (1916), coordinated exhibitions and conferences, and controlled the Futurist message in the press (Cabral Martins 378).

The opening narrative to “Ultimatum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX” conveys a highly politicized tone communicating its message with passion and clarity and not through Symbolist aesthetics. Negreiros starts the manifesto by identifying himself as the poet who will save Portugal from rotting away. He immediately addresses the youth to join him in the fight to save their country from the decadent ills of the bourgeoisie. Negreiros explains to the Portuguese public the need for war, a concept that most likely he understood from Marinetti’s interview with *Comoedia*.<sup>30</sup> In following Marinetti’s footsteps, war is presented as the “*grande experiencia*,” that repeated Marinetti’s use of Social Darwinism. Futurism applied the theories of

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<sup>29</sup> In the following chapter, I will discuss at length the role of the *serata* within the Futurist movement; however, it is sufficient to mention that the *serata* represented an evening theatrical event. It consisted of declamations of Futurist works such as poetry and manifestos and later on Futurist theatrical works.

<sup>30</sup> Negreiros explains the concept of war in terms of hygiene. What most likely contributed to the detailed understanding between Futurism, war, and national rejuvenation comes from one of the first published articles regarding Futurism in Portugal. Luís Francisco Rebelo Bicudo published the most detailed account of Futurism in *Diário dos Açores*. He presented a long essay about Futurism and a translation of Marinetti’s interview in *Comoedia*. See Marnoto 74.



natural selection to societies to justify the war effort. As Negreiros indicates, war has the ability to separate the weak from the strong, awaken the creative spirit of man, and most importantly war represents the means to constructing new social structures through sublime destruction. The war imagery fostered a unifying collective force able to increase the nation's standing in the world. Negreiros also maintains Futurism's anti-traditional thrust, denouncing academies, museums, the educational system, and the traditional role of the family.

The manifesto culminates into ten enumerated points that start with "*porque*" or why. Negreiros relies on the bullet points to prove to the Portuguese public why their country is a decadent nation. He states that Portugal is undergoing a process of de-nationalization that occurs in and outside of the country. The Portuguese intellectuals are quick to learn other languages and cultures while abroad while back at home most of the citizens are illiterate. According to Negreiros, this has contributed to a lack of Portuguese literature with very few people knowing the true value of their language. Additionally, Portuguese poets were criticized for looking at the past for inspiration. In the Portuguese context, this meant frequently revisiting the Age of Discovery in the fifteenth century. This moment in Portuguese history formed part of the Portuguese national identity in the same way that the Roman Empire was frequently used as a national symbol. Negreiros criticizes the political system and the rise of the politician who puts his interests before the nation. Interestingly, Negreiros also blames his country's decadence to not having enemies. Pacifism was a sign of weakness and signaled that the country had no international role. There are many interrelated themes that tied Portuguese Futurism to Marinetti's movement; however, one major difference between two manifestos is that Negreiros does not articulate a machine aesthetic even though he embraces modernity through speed and war.

Portuguese Futurism is centered on the poet. The manifesto opens with the following declaration: “Eu sou um poeta portuguesa que ama a sua pátria. Eu tenho a idolatria da minha profissão e peso-a. Eu não tenho culpa nenhuma de ser português, mas sinto a força para não ter, como vós outros a cobardia de deixar apodrecer a pátria.” [I am a Portuguese poet who loves his country. I am devoted to my profession and I carry it with me. I am not to blame for being Portuguese, but I strongly feel that I should not be a coward like you and let my country rot.]<sup>31</sup> Negreiros acknowledges a poet’s responsibility to his nation; but at the same time, he blames his country’s cultural decline on the 16<sup>th</sup> century poet Luís de Camões, and the *saudade* sentiment of the Portuguese populace.<sup>32</sup> Camões represented a national, cultural symbol, known for his work *Os Lusíadas*, which recounts the heroic voyages of Portuguese explorers during the Age of Discovery. Camões was always linked to the idea of *saudade*, an untranslatable word in English, which conveys a complex emotional state that comprises of nostalgia, sadness, suffering, and longing of a past that used to be. Negreiros criticizes the popular sentiment:

...é uma nostalgia mórbida dos temperamentos esgotados e doentes. O fado, manifestação popular de arte nacional, traduz apenas esse sentimento. A saudade prejudica a raça tanto no seu sentido atávico porque é decadência, como pelo seu sentido adquirido porque definha e estiola.”

[...it is a morbid nostalgia of a tiring and painful temperament. Fado, a national popular art, translates only this sentiment. *Saudade* harms the race as much as in its atavistic nature because it represents decadence as in its acquired feeling because it decays and withers away.]

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<sup>31</sup> Quotations from Negreiros’ manifesto “Ultimatum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX” comes the second edition of *Portugal Futurista*, a facsimile of the original copy, which includes essays by Judice Nuno and Teolinda Gersão. All translations from Portuguese to English are my own.

<sup>32</sup> As Negreiros criticizes the Portuguese sentiment of “saudade,” the term also alludes to the literary genre *saudismo*, which represented the most popular literary movement in Portugal at the turn of century. Futurism and Portuguese modernism seen in Orpheu represented a break from *saudismo*, a literary movement made popular by Teixeira de Pascoaes that was characterized by its nationalist, neo-Romantic, traditionalist aspects. Before starting Orpheu, Fernando Pessoa and José Negreiros were writing in the style of *saudismo* in the literary magazine *A Águia* before they broke from the traditionalist style to start Portuguese modernist period seen in the Orpheu literary magazine. See Pizarro.

He acknowledges the importance poets play in shaping a nation's identity but advances the notion that Portugal, just as Marinetti had intimated, needed to find new symbols of national unity that spoke to the current social, political, and economic realities.

In addition to the poet's identity, *Negreiros* address the younger generation. The generational divide is more explicit in *Negreiros* who dedicates his manifesto specifically to the "Portuguese generation of the 20<sup>th</sup> century." As *Negreiros* speaks directly to the youth of his country, he calls for them to "throw out the old ones that tell you what is good for you and throw yourselves independently towards sublime brutality of life," thus situating Portuguese Futurism within youth psychology. *Negreiros* invokes the word "war" over thirty times to the Portuguese youth. His anaphoric use of the term conveys a call to action and mimics the political ideas in the "Founding Manifesto" and the political writings of Marinetti. The manifesto, through the identity of the youth, underscores the collective work ethic that would result in a new social order organized around industrial production and expansion. The Futurists do not convince the youth necessarily by aesthetic values but rather question what role they will have in transforming their own country.

The last part of the rhetorical strategy in "Ultimatum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX" alludes to the colonial periphery. *Negreiros*, also influenced by the African continent, was born in the Portuguese colony of São Tomé and Príncipe. The island contributed to Portugal's wealth through its sugar production and slave trade. *Negreiros'* father held a political post on the island but eventually returned to Portugal with his family. Upon his return, *Negreiros* attended a Jesuit boarding school in Lisbon where he became interested in literature and dance (Cabral Martins 378).

Negreiros evokes the racial other through the title of the manifesto. The “ultimatum” carried an historical importance that every Portuguese would have understood. It referred to the British Ultimatum of 1890 in which the Portuguese monarchy conceded its power to rule over its colonies to Britain.<sup>33</sup> The Portuguese gave into British demands because they were too weak economically and politically to counteract. Instead of acting as the subjugator on the world stage, the perception was that Portugal was being subjugated by the British. The political move compromised Portugal’s veil of superiority in the region and soon encountered numerous conflicts in the colonies that disrupted the flow of economic benefits (D’Alge 37). In a time when imperialistic policies and colonial possessions helped to define not only a country and its identity, the cultural and political crisis that developed from the British Ultimatum contributed to political instability. The discontent with the king’s decision created the republican movement. King Carlos I and his son were assassinated in 1908, and the Republican Revolution of October 5, 1910 sent the remaining royal family into exile (Júdice, “Futurism in Portugal,” 352). The historical event highlights Portugal’s marginalization in the world economy, but it also calls into question Portuguese identity and the need to create a new state:

Nós vivemos numa pátria onde a tentativa democrática se compromete quotidianamente. A missão da Republica portuguesa já estava cumprida desde antes de 5 de Outubro: mostrar a decadência da raça. Foi sem duvida a Republica portuguesa que provou conscientemente a todos os cérebros a ruína da nossa raça, mas o dever revolucionário da Republica portuguesa teve o seu limite na impotência da criação. Hoje é a geração portuguesa do século XX quem dispõe de toda a força criadora e construtiva para o nascimento de uma nova pátria inteiramente portuguesa e inteiramente atual prescindindo em absoluto de todas as épocas precedentes

(“Ultimatum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX”)

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<sup>33</sup> The British Ultimatum of 1890 was a colonial dispute between Britain and Portugal concerning their colonial territories in Africa. The British wanted to connect their northern colonies to their southern colonies by rail. As the Portuguese were connecting their eastern and western African colonies, the British demanded that they stop efforts in connecting their territories.

[We live in a nation where the current attempt at democracy is compromised every day. The mission of the Portuguese Republic had already been at risk before October 5: showing the decadence of our race. Without a doubt, it was the Portuguese Republic that proved to all of its geniuses the decay of our race, but the revolutionary duty of the Portuguese Republic had its limit in impotency of creation. Today it is the Portuguese generation of the twentieth century who will display all of the creative and constructive strength for the birth of a new nation entirely Portuguese and entirely modern, forgoing in absolute all of the preceding epochs.]

Alterity in both manifestos was part of a rhetorical trope that was rooted in nationalism. It evoked images of the periphery that determined the livelihood of a nation as well as evoked images of the enemy who threatened that livelihood, which was used as the reason for individuals to come together for the sake of the nation.

Given the identities and the historical events that emerge from the Futurist manifesto in Italy and Portugal, we can begin to weigh how powerful the Futurist rhetoric was. Whether it is the *Risorgimento* and irredentism in Italy or the collapse of one's colonial empire or aspirations, these cultural traumas had significant consequences on how citizens perceived themselves in the world. For this reason, we do not only see Portugal following Futurism, but also Catalonia, Spain. The Catalans gravitated towards Futurism because of the very notion of identity that Futurism raised. Catalonia had been denied their language and identity for almost a century because of the *Nueva Plata* decrees that banned speaking Catalan in public until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup> Jeffrey Alexander, in his article "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma" describes

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<sup>34</sup> Understanding Catalan Portuguese in relationship to Italian Futurism, see Irene-Gomez Castellano. In her article, "Tot l'enyor de demà" and the nostalgic futurism of Joan Salvat-Papasseit," she explains that Catalan Futurism did not embrace the radical departure from the past as the Italians; but rather, the Catalans used Futurism to recapture their glorious past. The relationship with the past was communicated through the Catalan concept of *enyorança* or nostalgia for the past, which functions similarly to the Portuguese *saudade* sentiment. The concept represented "the symbolic return to the homeland and to the mother tongue (54)." Catalan identity had been suppressed until the nineteenth century, at which point the region underwent a cultural revival known as *Renaixença*, which serve to modernize Catalan language and the aesthetic field. In this regard, Catalan Futurism seen in Salvat-Papasseit, for example, shows how the Catalans came to terms with their past through Futurism. Despite the difference regarding the past, Catalan Futurism, just as in Italy and Portugal, seeks self-identify for a group of individuals.

what I feel is the true essence of the Futurist manifesto on a sociological level. Alexander analysis is simple—some social movements are defined by cultural traumas. They occur when a collective group feels they have been subjected to a terrible event that leaves permanent scars upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways (1). What makes the Futurist manifesto such a powerful rhetorical tool in terms of identity was that it captured a particular psychoneurosis that was very common to countries on the periphery of modernization and industrialization in Europe. The ability of Futurism to address national and international concerns is at the heart of the movement's popularity. The process of identity creation within the Futurist manifesto was complex, and identity within movements is rarely monolithic. In other words, Futurism understood its audience and targeted its message accordingly to various groups to galvanize the populace towards the goal of national self-actualization.

## CHAPTER 2: FUTURIST THEATER

As we witnessed in the previous chapter, collective identity represents one of the main elements of social movements, and the creation of the Futurist manifesto represented the first step in articulating the shared experience among individuals that would be used for collective action. Tilly reminds us that in order to turn collective identity into collective action, a group must incorporate various forms of political action in a way that is recurrent and representative of the unity that the group embodies. For the Futurists, this synthesis of elements occurred in the theatrical space.

The Futurists extended their principles in almost every form of art, but the theater represented one of their most successful and influential art forms, having created the Futurist *serata*, Synthetic theater, Surprise theater, touring throughout Italy and Europe, and producing a number of manifestos that articulated the revolutionizing changes that the Futurists brought to the theatrical space. This chapter is particularly concerned with the Futurist *serata*. Berghaus, who has given us the best historical perspective of Italian Futurist theater dating from the birth of Futurism until the 1940s when the second wave of Futurists had assumed a prominent role within the movement. Even though theater was a popular twentieth-century form of entertainment, Berghaus attributes Futurism's popularity and diffusion to the integration of politics within the movement:

Marinetti and his companions realized that art alone, as a weapon wielded only by an intellectual elite, was not going to have enough force to overthrow the whole existing system. They had to seek allies in the political arena and take the concept of a

revolutionary art-in-action into the midst of the socio-political revolutionaries (*Theater* 66).

Politics surely widen the scope of Futurism, which began to incorporate more and more political questions of national identity, war, and global dominance. Political themes such as these allowed Futurism to become part of mainstream conversations. Rainey Lawrence, in his introduction of the edited anthology *Futurism*, named the Futurist theater as one of primary reasons that Futurism was able to flourish, stating that the movement fell off the radar after the initial launch of the “Fondazione e Manifesto del Futurismo” but resurged in 1910 when Marinetti expanded his movement into painting with the publication of “Pittura Futurista: Manifesto Tecnico” and in the theatrical space with “Manifesto dei Drammaturghi,” which inspired the structure for the first *serata* in 1910 (7). Lawrence argues that transforming Futurism into an all-encompassing movement with renewed focus on the masses, seen in Futurism’s reliance on theater, contributed the most in promoting Futurism throughout Italy. I would also add that Futurist theater contributed to the movement’s diffusion throughout Europe given the Synthetic Futurist tour and the theatrical experiments in Portugal and Russia.

Berghaus and Rainey are both correct in that politics and theater contributed to the success of Futurism; however, it was how the Futurists combined the two that really propelled the movement. Theater functioned as a propagandistic tool that carried the benefit of extending Futurism beyond the cultural elite and to surpass the commodity value that the bourgeoisie and aristocracy had attached to theater as part of leisure. For this reason, the Futurist *serata* becomes an important aspect to analyze as it represented an integral part the Futurist repertoire in mobilizing an audience. The theater, in particular, the *serate* were not one-off events but rather continuous events that went to every major Italian city, sometimes more than once, in a span of 4 years. Moreover, the theatrical performances gave the Futurists the opportunity to be united and



symbolically convey a collective identity by appearing together on the proscenium. The *serata*, which is best characterized as a performative genre that incorporated art, politics, declamation, and agitation, took full advantage of theater's ability to propagandize their perception of life. In this sense, we must reexamine the Futurist theater as part of political action, which was based on propaganda and a focus on the crowd. The following analysis will shed light on the kinds of propaganda that the Futurists were able to incorporate in the theatrical space, which greatly stemmed from their understanding of crowd psychology. I will focus primarily on the *serata* in Italy but will also draw on examples from the Futurist theater in Portugal and Russia. Before arriving at the propagandistic elements of the *serate*, it will be imperative to introduce the state of Italian theater before Futurism, Marinetti's background in theater, and the philosophical ideas that contributed to the birth of Futurist theater.

### **State of Italian Theater in the 1800s**

There is a consensus among scholars that Italian theater in the early twentieth century had changed very little from the previous century. The most obvious evidence of this was that Italy did not have a *teatro stabile* but rather moving theaters that travelled up and down the Italian peninsula as in the days of the Renaissance. In some respects, Italian theater was still associated with the Renaissance theater of *la commedia dell'arte*. The constant moving of theater companies discouraged any kind of investment that would have improved the visual presentation of a play given that stage settings had to be simple and light enough to transport on covered wagons. This meant that one could only carry a few different scenes, thus impacting the number of plays performed. Stage sets were nothing more than generic settings that represented a couple of painted backdrops indicative of a classical, medieval, or modern play. The simplicity of stage

presentation did keep costs to a minimum, which reflected a concern of the new capitalist model that began to shape Italian theater in the nineteenth century.

Capitalism had completely changed the inner workings of the theater industry with every aspect concerned with profits. The role of the *capocomico* or actor-manager, for instance, was in charge of arranging the business dealings with theater owners and touring companies and assumed complete control over the legal and financial obligations of the company as well as producing the play. Since the *capocomico* was also an actor in the play, it was almost always certain that he or she had a leading role. He managed the troupe of actors as if it were his own business, giving flexibility to the top earners and negotiated the terms of each actor's contract. The *capocomico*'s salary depended directly on the box office revenue, hence it was necessary to implement measures that would have garnered the most profits. One way in which the *capocomico* increased revenue was to bring in actors such as the *artista di cartello* or *primo assoluto*, who were internationally known actors that would garner attention and increase ticket sales (Berghaus, *Theatre* 12).<sup>35</sup> The *capocomico* had an economic incentive to perform theatrical pieces that catered to the audience's taste. At the time, the bourgeoisie represented the majority of theatergoers, and their desire for lowbrow comedy was quite different from a pre-industrial middle class that was cultured, educated, and sophisticated. The most popular theme in bourgeois plays was the depiction of upper classes in adulterous affairs or rather the traditional love triangle. As theater became more focused on profits, it gradually lost its ability to offer anything new and innovative; and as a result, Italian theater was seen as stagnant, predictable, and backwards.

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<sup>35</sup> The following schema was used to compensate actors: the highest rank was *artista di cartello* (an actor of international fame), *primo assoluto* (one with a major national reputation and the right to choose his or her roles), *primario* (lead), *secondario* (secondary), *generico* (bit-player), and *comparso* (non-speaking). See Berghaus *Theatre*, p.12.

Actors also bear some responsibility for the deteriorating state of Italian theater at the turn of the century. The added focus on the actor resulted in the star system, which deemphasized the role of the playwright. The playwright relinquished his control of his work to satisfy the main actors involved in the play as they were instrumental in making profits. Actors gained a considerable amount of power that allowed them to modify scripts to their liking, cut out scenes that did not showcase the protagonist's abilities, and eliminate subsidiary and minor parts so that the principal actor could engage the audience. Actors became known in a similar fashion to Hollywood stars today where they attracted much attention by the public. Their stage presence and persona led to a way of life in which the two became indistinguishable. Even though actors embraced the new level of attention, it also brought certain difficulties. Actors spent most of their earnings in supporting a lavish lifestyle to maintain their theatrical persona. The overall impact of the star system, as Berghaus and Lapini have argued, was at the center of the "Manifesto dei drammaturghi" (Manifesto of Playwrights) in which Marinetti and his followers expressed the need to innovate not only the aesthetic qualities of theater but also the business operations of the theater industry.

The state of Italian theater represented an important cultural issue given that theater was being revolutionized throughout Europe with the introduction of art theaters such as the Théâtre Libre in Paris and the Freie Bühne in Berlin. The art theater dismantled the framework in which the *capocomico* worked, creating a space for authors to realize their creations. Script writers and directors became an essential component to the creative aspect of the art theater. They were more concerned with the artistic value of their work more than its commercial success. This does not mean that they did not act in their economic interest, as we have already seen in Bordieu's analysis, but rather, they presented a new kind of attitude in theater that encouraged pushing the

boundaries of art and situating it as an art form and not just a commodity. The art theater was known for its technical elements that consisted of hiring qualified actors, pushing actors beyond traditional boundaries, and focusing more on the background scenery and visual effects.

Italy, on the other hand, had experimented with art theaters in Turin, at the *Casa di Goldoni* in Rome, but none of these theaters lasted beyond the start of Futurism in 1909. However, Futurism seems to have been the catalyst that re-sparked the art theater movement, which introduced a new generation of writers and artists who were trained in modern art and were better apt at translating dramatic literature into an innovative art form. Some of the most popular forms of art theater in Italy became synonymous with the work of Mario Praga, Dario Niccodemi, Luigi Pirandello, and Bragaglia's Teatro degli Indipendenti.<sup>36</sup> Even though there were some signs of innovation with theater in Italy, those efforts did not compare to the development that was occurring in other European countries. In many ways, the backwardness that defined Italian poetry, as identified in the "Founding Manifesto," was systematic and infiltrated all realms of cultural production in Italy.

### **Marinetti's Background in Theater**

Even though Marinetti started his literary career as a poet, his theatrical works were greatly influenced by his early poetic experiences. After having won the *Samedis populaires* at the age of twenty-two, Marinetti became good friends with Symbolist poet Gustave Khan.<sup>37</sup> Khan

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<sup>36</sup> Anton Giulio Bragaglia was known for his contributions to Italian cinema and theater in the 1920s. Bragaglia took up photography, publishing the manifesto "Fotodinamismo." In 1918, he opened up his own art house where he housed over 200 exhibitions showcasing works by Futurists and Dadaists. After a successful run, Bragaglia added a theater and club to his art house where he staged plays by Pirandello, Soffici, Apollinaire, and as well as Futurist syntheses by Settemelli, Corra, and Marinetti.

<sup>37</sup> From the *inchiesta* in *Poesia* (May-June 1905 issue 9), we know that Marinetti had also promoted Khan as the creator of *vers libre*. His survey question garnered much criticism by the cultural elite for bestowing such a title to Khan. See Somigli "Towards a Literary Modernity *all'italiana*: A note on F.T. Marinetti's *Poesia*."

revolutionized the literary scene by creating *vers libre* or free verse in poetry. His annual contest was specifically designed to encourage and discover young, creative talent and give them the necessary visibility and connections to pursue a literary career. When Marinetti won the contest in 1898, he went to Paris to see his poem declaimed by actress Sarah Bernhardt.<sup>38</sup> It was the first time that he experienced the art of declamation, and he would later incorporate the technique within Futurism in the theatrical performances *le serate*. Marinetti and his followers relied on the art of declamation to add the necessary fervor to their works. In fact, Marinetti became known for his distinct form of declamation that was characterized as “dynamic” according Berghaus (*Theatre* 31). His unique styled was first recognized at the Grand Théâtre du Gymnase in Marseille, which was the premier school of the art of declamation. Marinetti performed a series of Italian and French poems in front of the young poets and was highly regarded for having departed from the traditional style of declamation. After having received a positive reception at the Grand Théâtre du Gymnase, Marinetti went on tour declaiming poems throughout Italy. By the time Marinetti incorporated the art of declamation into the Futurist theater, he had already spent a sufficient amount of time practicing and refining his technique to propel Futurism.

The art of declamation was not the only element that would shape Marinetti’s Futurist theater. Through Gustave Kahn, Marinetti met several influential poets in the bohemian community of Montmartre where Kahn introduced him to Alfred Jarry, the playwright of *Ubu Roi*. In a letter between Jarry and Marinetti dated July 1906, the French writer highlighted the friendship between the two, thanking Marinetti for sending him a copy of *Le Roi Bombance*. The play was first published in 1905 in *Mercure de France* and first performed in 1909 at the Théâtre de l’Oeuvre in Paris. The critics of *Le Roi Bombance* highlighted its shared

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<sup>38</sup> Actress, Sarah Bernhardt, was considered a primo assoluto. She was internationally known and was in very high demand across theaters in Europe.

characteristics with Jarry's *Ubu Roi*. Marinetti had employed the same production team and marionette acting style as Jarry. *Le Roi Bombance* represented the first time that Marinetti experimented with eliminating the fourth wall, a technique he had already seen in *Ubu Roi*. Furthermore, both plays assumed an anarchist undertone, explored freedom and individual fulfillment, celebrated rebellion, called for the overthrow of the established order, and criticized corruption, religious hypocrisy, and false moral values (Berghaus, *Theatre* 35-36).

Luciano de Maria has called *Le Roi Bombance*<sup>39</sup> one of the most significant works written by Marinetti that foreshadowed much of Futurism. The play was characterized as a satire in 4 acts that depicted excessive greed in the voracious appetites of the Cirulli people. Such an association between greed and hunger was to highlight not only its self-destructive quality but also the collective damage greed posed. This sense of nihilism in *Le Roi Bombance* is furthered echoed in the Futurists' view on the past. The Futurists shared a similar Nietzschean perspective about the past as Richardson writes in *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History*. Nietzsche, Richardson argues, viewed history as important in defining who we are; but also noting, it has the potential to carry unnecessary burdens at which point one needs to forget history and live "unhistorically" (Richardson 95). Moreover, we see that *Le Roi Bombance* was the first work that showed Marinetti's interest for crowd psychology. The focus on the crowd became an integral part of Futurism especially in the Futurist *serata*. During the same time that Marinetti

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<sup>39</sup> *Le Roi Bombance* presents the struggle of power through the allegory of hunger or *la fame*. Not only does hunger refer to an empty stomach but also symbolizes characteristics such as the desire to gain power, greediness, and abuse of power as Nuzzaci has referred to as the "universal symbols of man" (13). The characters are none other than puppets who personify the Monarchy, Religion, Socialists, and the Libertarians. The play begins with the death of king Bombance's cook, who was the only person that could tame the thirst and hunger of the subjected population called the Cirulli. As the citizens become hungry, they declare a revolution and eventually bring an end to the king's rule by eating him and his vassals. However, when the Cirulli find out that the cooks gave them the scraps while they ate better food in the kitchen, the Cirulli end up eating the cooks. The smells of the cadavers summons the ghost of Santa Putredine who comes and finishes all of the dead corpses. She brings back to life the king, his vassals, and the three cooks from the stomach of the Cirulli. At the end, Santa Putredine also brings back to life the Cirulli and invites them to eat the king once more.

had befriended Jarry at Montmartre, he was also helping Romain Rolland to develop his new movement Unanimism—a literary movement that focused on the crowd and depicted life in the urban centers. The movement relied on crowd psychology illustrating the growing population in Europe, industrialization, and the emergence of a working class.

Marinetti published a second play entitled *Poupées Electroniques*,<sup>40</sup> which was actually the first play he staged. The debut of *Poupées Electroniques* took place in Turin on January 15, 1909, almost a month before the launch of Futurism. Marinetti later published the Italian version as *La donna è mobile*.<sup>41</sup> The play was considerably different than the historical play *Le Roi Bombance*, integrating the typical love triangle that bourgeois audiences enjoyed and were accustomed of seeing in the grotesque theater, Pirandello, and others. Despite its contemporary similarities, the public showed complete disdain for the work through boos and whistles. The commotion caused by the audience worsened until the point that Marinetti addressed the public thanking them for their response at the end of the second act. According to reports of the time, the audience seemed confused by the positive reaction of Marinetti as if their right to judge a work of art had been taken away. Therefore, in an attempt to recapture their right, the audience became even louder and pandemonium broke out in the theater. Nuzzaci, in *Il Teatro Futurista: Genesi, Linguaggi, Tecniche*, suggests that the whole event was staged, and Marinetti used a

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<sup>40</sup> The drama consists of four main characters. The first character encountered, Giulietta Duvernoy, who declares her love for Count Paolo de Rozieres. Giulietta commits suicide when she realizes that the Count is in love with another lady, Mary Wilson. Mary is married to engineer John Wilson, who makes electric dolls and is in love with Giulietta. Mary and John begin their love affair and develop a desire to be watched during their sexual interactions. To satisfy their sexual fantasy of voyeurism, John creates two electric dolls to watch them, who later throw him into the sea. Paolo returns home from his trip, and he makes love to Mary, but the guilt of betrayal leads Mary to kill herself.

<sup>41</sup> Marinetti uses the second act of *La donna è mobile* as part of the Futurist synthetic theater carrying various names such as *Elettricità*, *Elettricità sessuale*, and *Fantocci elettrici*. This synthetic piece was quite popular being performed first at Politeama Garibaldi of Palermo September 13, 1913 and thereafter in the public square of several Italian cities. The piece was later performed under the name *Elettricità* by the Compagnia di Grandi Spettacoli directed in Milan at Teatro Dal Verme in January 1914. In Rome, the theatrical piece was performed under the name *Fantocci Elettrici* in the Teatro degli Indipendenti di Anton Giulio Bragaglia.

claque to provoke the audience to react strongly against the play. It was a way to raise Marinetti's profile and generated the necessary publicity for the launch of Futurism that was a month away (19). The events surrounding Marinetti's initial theatrical works led to the basis of the *serata*'s structure, which further led to Marinetti's theatrical manifestos that introduced the concepts of "the pleasure of being booed" and "the destruction of the fourth wall." As we can see in this brief overview, Marinetti's theatrical background lays the foundation for what came to be Futurism, and we can best understand the years 1905–1909 as sort of a gestation period or rather pre-Futurist phrase.

### **Futurist Theater and Its Initial Manifestos**

As I have detailed in the introduction, the "Founding Manifesto" can be viewed as a treatise on creativity as it is preoccupied with cultural production, and it was not long after the launch of Futurism that members wanted to revolutionize the theatrical space. Much of the Futurists' theoretical ideas on theater evolved from the "Manifesto dei Drammaturghi" (Manifesto of Futurist Playwrights, 1910) and "Il Teatro di Varietà" (The Variety Theater, 1913). The Futurist theater takes shape in 1910 with the invention of the *serata* and reaches its pinnacle in 1915 with the creation of the Futurist synthetic theater.<sup>42</sup> This does not mean that Futurists' interest for the theatrical space completely disappeared. Fortunato Depero<sup>43</sup> developed the Futurist Mechanical

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<sup>42</sup> The creation of the Futurist Synthetic Theater was first presented in manifesto form under the same name in 1915 written by Marinetti, Emilio Settimilli, and Bruno Corra. The Synthetic Theater was based not only on the idea of brevity but integrated dynamism, alogical, and a-technical elements. The theatrical pieces, also known as *sintesi*, illustrated the ways in which the Futurists played with time and space by using simultaneity, compression, and intrusion. The Futurist Synthetic Theater represented a direct contrast to traditional theater and aimed to convey the fleeting sensations that made up modern society.

<sup>43</sup> Fortunato Depero was a painter, sculptor, designer, and writer who joined Futurism around 1913. Depero was attracted to the Futurists' mechanical aesthetics of the 1920s and contributed to a variety of set designs and costumes for plays, ballets, and participated in advertising campaigns for Campari. His contributions to the Futurism and mechanical aesthetics were different from other Futurists such as Enrico Prampolini and Vinctio Paladini in that Depero focuses on the fantastic. His designs encompassed a rural and folkloristic interpretation of mechanical



theater, Fedele Azari<sup>44</sup> contributed to the Futurist Aerial theater, and several Futurists helped to enhance the Fascist theater system.

The “Manifesto dei Drammaturghi” depicts the inner workings of the theater industry, and it is one of the most business-oriented manifestos of the movement that still addressed the Futurists’ concerns over aesthetic liberalism.<sup>45</sup> Marinetti employed a very technical language that showcased his experience as entrepreneur using words such as “industry,” “product,” “success,” “financial award,” “business,” and “innovative.” This jargon was very indicative of how capitalist principles dating from the previous century had pervaded the theatrical sphere. In the first part of the manifesto, Marinetti highlights the difficulties that have developed from the triangular relationship of author-actor-audience. Producing and consuming art is depicted through the image of a shipwrecked man. Marinetti states, “L’autore può sforzarsi di trarlo a sé, fuori dalla sua mediocrità, come si trae un naufrago alla riva. Si guardi però dal lasciarsi afferrare dalle sue mani paurose, poiché andrebbe a fondo con lui, a suon di battimani.” [The author may try his damndest to entice the spectators away from their mediocrity, as one pulls a shipwrecked man toward the shore. He needs to take care, though, not to let himself be grasped by their fearful hands, for he would go to the bottom with them, to the sound of clapping hands.]<sup>46</sup> The

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aesthetics often depicting mechanical toys such as the toy locomotives in the ballet *Anihccam del 3000*. See Berghaus (*Theatre* 471).

<sup>44</sup> The Futurists returned to theatrics with the creation of Aerial Theater that was first introduced by Fedele Azari in the manifesto “Il Teatro Aereo Futurista” in 1919. The premise of the manifesto presented the airplane as a character in a play and let it perform dances, plays, dramas, and operas. Azari’s ideas were realized in several organized air shows, using the sky as the theatrical space. His work led to aerial painting that used the sky for its canvas. On Azari see Berghaus *Theater*, p. 487.

<sup>45</sup> Throughout the text, I have incorporated Ernest Ialongo’s term “aesthetic liberalism” to artistic freedom. Ialongo argues that Marinetti always had to cede his individualism to his nationalist concerns for national unity and advancement.

<sup>46</sup>All English translations of the theatrical manifestos are taken from Berghaus’ *F. T. Marinetti Critical Writings*. For the Italian versions, I have consulted *Teoria e invenzione futurista* by Luciano De Maria.

fearful hands or rather the audience's approval leads to prestige and economic rewards, and thus makes it even more tempting to concede artistic creation to the public. In this sense, the manifesto questions the very notion of art.

The next part of the manifesto is dedicated to unraveling the capitalist paradigm. In the manifesto's enumerated points, the Futurists advanced three main concepts to regain aesthetic freedom. The first is seen in the disdain for the public or *disprezzo del pubblico*:

Noi futuristi insegniamo anzitutto agli autori il disprezzo del pubblico e specialmente il disprezzo del pubblico delle prime rappresentazioni, del quale possiamo sintetizzare così la psicologia: rivalità di cappelli e di *toilettes* femminili – vanità del posto pagato a caro prezzo, che si trasforma in orgoglio intellettuale -, palchi e platea occupati da uomini maturi e ricchi, dal cervello naturalmente sprezzante e dalla digestione laboriosissima, che rende impossibile qualsiasi sforzo della mente.

[We Futurists instruct authors to despise the public, and especially those habitués of opening nights, whose psychology we can sum up like this: rivalry between women's hats and dresses; the vanity associated with expensive seats that gets transformed into intellectual pride; boxes and stalls occupied by the aging rich, whose attitudes are naturally dismissive and whose digestion is so appalling it makes any kind of mental effort impossible.]

Contempt for the audience represented a systematic way to undo its power gained through the consumer based economy. The Futurists displayed their disdain for the public by selling multiple tickets for the same seat, using repartees and insults, and provoking fist fights with patrons in the audience. The Futurist theater was designed to antagonize and provoke the crowd to behave in a certain way. The theater experience for the bourgeoisie, according to Marinetti, had little to do with art but rather represented an opportunity for people to socialize and exhibit their social status. The idea that the bourgeoisie did not take art seriously or even understand art meant it should not be given the role of consecrator. From this perspective, we can see the significance of “the pleasure of being booed” as the next component in redefining the audience's role:

Noi insegniamo infine agli autori e agli attori la voluttà di essere fischiati. Tutto ciò che viene fischiato non è necessariamente bello o nuovo. Ma tutto ciò che viene immediatamente applaudito, certo non è superiore alla media delle intelligenze ed è quindi cosa mediocre, banale, rivomitata o troppo ben digerita.

(“Manifesto dei drammaturghi”)

[While we are waiting for this to happen, let us remind authors and actors of the pleasures of being booed. Everything that is booed is not necessarily either beautiful or new. But everything that is immediately applauded is certainly not superior to the average intelligence and is thus something that is mediocre, banal, spewed up again, or overdigested.]

(“Manifesto of Futurist Playwrights”)

As Marinetti comes to the end of his discourse, he defines the concept of a commercialized product in the following enumerated point:

Noi insegniamo inoltre l’orrore del successo immediato che suol coronare le opere mediocri e banali. I lavori teatrali che afferrano direttamente, senza intermediari, senza spiegazioni, tutti gl’individui di un pubblico, sono opere più o meno ben costruite, ma assolutamente prive di novità e quindi di genialità creatrice.

(“Manifesto dei drammaturghi”)

[Moreover, we express our horror of instant success, which usually crowns works that are mediocre and banal. The plays that enthuse an entire audience, without intermediaries, without explanations, are works which are more or less well constructed, but which are absolutely devoid of innovation and therefore of creative genius.]

(“Manifesto of Futurist Playwrights”)

The horror of having instant success is best understood in terms of commercialization. The phrase, even today, still carries a negative connotation that assumes an inferior quality. Marinetti sees the playwright in a precarious position because if he caters to the masses he is left with a piece of work that is average at best, having used very little creativity and artistic acumen where the commercialized product is designed to satisfy a multiplicity of taste. Just like Baudelaire, Marinetti was aware of the consequences that develop from commodifying symbolic goods. The “Manifesto dei Drammaturghi” is part of a long line of Futurist manifestos that recall

Baudelaire's problem of the lost halo and the materialistic view of Marx and Engels, who had made clear in the "Communist Manifesto" that the bourgeoisie had a way of "stripping of its halo every occupation honored and looked up to with reverent awe." The manifesto ends with placing blame not only on the bourgeoisie but also on the artist who succumb to such practices.

If the "Manifesto dei Drammaturghi" represents the destruction of traditional theater then the manifesto of "Il Teatro di Varietà" ("The Variety Theater") signals the construction of a new theater that is based on Futurist principles. The manifesto appeared in *Lacerba* October 1, 1913, and it was inspired by the music-hall, variety, and *café-concert*, which were becoming more popular at the start of the century in Europe. Marinetti attended various popular forms of theater during his time with Bohemian artists at Montmartre in Paris. He would have experienced little separation between high and low art given that artists of both genres frequently mingled and collaborated with each other. He also experienced popular theater in London and Berlin, having taken several trips there between 1910-1914 (Berghaus, *Theatre* 165-66). The music-hall genre was a different kind of theatrical performance geared towards masses. In general, the music-hall was part of lowbrow entertainment, which provided its spectators the opportunity to experience some of the latest fads and cultural trends that were taking place abroad such as the showgirl, American jazz scene, new tunes, fashion, etc. The Variety theater overthrew the traditional theatrical experience by creating an environment based on informality where people could drink, smoke, eat, in addition to watching fast paced performances that showcased energy, dynamism, and exoticism. Theater was a leisure activity for the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, and Italians were not accustomed to the format of the Variety theater. The revolutionary qualities of the variety show formed the basis of the Futurist theater:

Il Teatro di Varietà offre il più igienico fra tutti gli spettacoli, pel suo dinamismo di forma e di colore (movimento simultaneo di giocolieri, ballerine, ginnasti, cavallerizzi multicolori, cicloni spirali di danzatori trottolanti sulle punte dei piedi). Col suo ritmo di danza celere e trascinate, il Teatro di Varietà trae per forza le anime più lente dal loro torpore e impone loro di correre.

(“Il Teatro di Varietà”)

[The Variety Theater offers the healthiest of all the kinds of entertainment, by virtue of the dynamism of its form and color (simultaneous movement of jugglers, ballerinas, gymnasts, multicolored riding troupes, dancers *en point*, whirling around like spinning tops). With the rhythm of its quick, exhilarating dances, the Variety Theater inevitably drags the most sluggish souls out of their torpor and forces them to run and to leap.]

(“The Variety Theater”)

The Variety theater centered on the most daring, absurd, or creative act where each performance tried to surpass the previous; therefore, it possessed the necessary mechanisms to ensure constant creativity and innovation.

The Futurist theater, like other parts of the movement, centered on the new reality found in the modern city, inspired by the machine, velocity, electricity, and the negation of time and space. Only the music-hall format could bring these elements to life on stage and encourage active participation from the audience. Marinetti in “Il Teatro di Varietà” introduces his desire to eliminate the fourth wall in the theatrical space, stating that action should take place in the stands:

Il Teatro di Varietà è il solo che utilizzi la collaborazione del pubblico. Questo non vi rimane statico come uno stupido *voyeur*, ma partecipa rumorosamente all'azione, cantando anch'esso, accompagnando l'orchestra, comunicando con motti impreveduti e dialoghi bizzarri cogli attori. Questi polemizzano buffonescamente coi musicanti.

(“Il Teatro di Varietà”)

[The Variety Theater is the only one that closely involves the audience. The latter does not sit there unmoving, like some stupid *voyeur*, but noisily participates in the action. It sings along with the actors, beats time with the orchestra, and communicates through spontaneous witticisms and bizarre exchanges with the actors, who themselves lark about with the musicians.]

(“The Variety Theater”)

In the Futurist theater, Marinetti demands more from the audience. Contemporary theater regarded the theatergoer simply as a viewer rather than a participant as we will see in the *serate*. The benefit in destroying the fourth wall allows the theatrical space, especially with the *serate*, to easily become a politicized space in which methods of propaganda are more suited for collective action amongst the masses.

### **Serate**

The public engaged in the Futurist literary performances, which represented a performative genre that transpired within an informalized theatrical space. Historically, the *serata* can be traced back to the Enlightenment where intellectuals gathered to discuss political and cultural matters at the *caffè letterario* or salon. However, the Futurist *serata* distinguished itself from the closed, restricted space of the salon to a more accessible dialogue about cultural and political matters. The cultural exchange of ideas between its members and audiences that took place at the *serate* served only to promote the Futurist ideology, but it was accessible as all social classes were present. The *serate* were highly politicized as it was the main vehicle in espousing Futurist rhetoric of war, national identity, and superiority.

Many times the *serata* represented the site of debuting aesthetic and political manifestos. Marinetti and the Futurists delivered their political and cultural concerns in the style of declamation that allowed even the illiterate to feel part of national issues. Marinetti treated the *serate* much like his political meetings with the anarchist-syndicalists and the socialists where he would perform and educate members on the relationship between Futurism and politics. These political meetings were very fruitful as Marinetti met Arturo Labriola, Turati, Kuliscioff, and

Walter Mocchi.<sup>47</sup> In reality, the lectures and declamations at various political associations served to gain political allies. The *serate* were modelled after these political performances with the added hope of appealing to the masses.

The sociopolitical impact of the performative genre is another characteristic of the *serata*. The performances were part of a 4 year tour that visited every major city on the Italian peninsula. The success of the *serate*, if we relate it to Charles Tilly's notion of social movements, is measured by its broad campaign of repeated performances of claim making over a substantial period of time. The *serata* acted as part of the movement's repertoire because it compelled others to act or react. It is important not to overstate the amount of influence Marinetti had on the public with the *serate* because he created just as many opponents as proponents of Futurism. Perhaps the main difference and uniqueness of Marinetti is that he understood the relationship between the public, the capitalist system, and media. Those individuals who opposed Futurism were still aiding in the diffusion of Futurism, giving the movement a sense of notoriety that translated into numerous articles, interviews, and led to more genuine curiosity of the movement by the public. The symbolic image of the Futurists on stage voicing their collective claims of cultural and national rejuvenation were well received by the youth, university students, nationalists, interventionists, and even some members on the political left. The *serate* gave Futurist art its propagandistic value as the theatrical space was used to introduce, educate, and persuade the audience of Futurism's utility.

The first *serata* occurred on January 12, 1910 at the Politeama Rossetti theater in Trieste, a city closely associated with the irredentist movement. What took place in Trieste goes on to

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<sup>47</sup> Marinetti also associated the left leaning bohemian artists of the Lombard *scapigliatura*. Later in the movement, Marinetti gained political alliances with the *Arditi* and the Fascists in 1918. The *Arditi* were men that fought in the assault units during the First World War. The soldiers were influential and granted a number of special privileges.

become part of the *serata*'s structure. The participants of the first *serata* included Marinetti, Aldo Palazzeschi, and Armando Mazza.<sup>48</sup> Marinetti started the event by introducing the principles of Futurism, familiarizing the audience with themes such as the hatred of the past, the pleasure of being booed, and artistic freedom. Armando Mazza, a Futurist poet from Palermo, declaimed “Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo.” The remaining parts of the *serata* were dedicated to other works by young Futurist poets.

The performances integrated different elements and tactics to provoke the audience. The first Futurist *serata* was staged under the guise of irredentist sentiments, and the leader of Futurism went on to use irredentism in subsequent events. By the second *serata* in Milan, Marinetti had perfected his technique and delivery of political agitation. He declaimed an ode to General Asinari di Bernezzo, who was forced into early retirement following anti-Austrian and irredentist speeches. The irredentist spirit of the ode led to various chants such as “down with Austria” and “down with the fatherland.” The chants increased tension between the irredentists and internationalists, fights ensued between anarchists, Futurists, astrophiles, socialists, and syndicalists. The Futurist political message was one of war, pan-Italianism, and the downfall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The political tone that irredentism added to the movement often turned the theatrical space into a battlefield where the audience reacted violently to varying political views, starting fights and throwing projectiles at the Futurists and at each other. If the bourgeoisie were not enough to blame, the Futurists' attacks on the Austro-Hungarian empire created another enemy for the maladies in Italian society. The political aesthetics that we find in the *serata* can be described using Claudio Vicentini words:

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<sup>48</sup> Aldo Palazzeschi was an Italian poet who joined the Futurist movement in 1909. He had close ties to Marinetti, having published *L'incendario* and *Il codice di Perelà* through Marinetti's publishing company. Armando Mazza was from Naples and actively participated in *parole-in-libertà*, having published four books in the genre. It has been documented that Mazza (being a trained boxer) often got into fistfights and was arrested along with Marinetti and Boccioni for their interventionist demonstrations. See Introduction Rainey, p. 19.



The theatrical performance is the twin brother of the political demonstration. Both emerged from the *serate*; both have been constructed according to the same model of action; both develop in a discordant situation which involves all people present; and both evoke each other in turn. The demonstration has the theatrical quality of a performance, and the performance has the political efficacy of a demonstration (73).<sup>49</sup>

One can attribute much of the agitation in the *serata* to the political discourses of the movement, but the aesthetic and cultural arguments, with their anti-traditional and anti-establishment rhetoric, also played a role in inciting the audience. The *serata* at Modena in Teatro Storichi, for example, shows exactly how the Futurists used the theatrical space to put theory into action. The Futurist painter Russolo, who also was an accomplished pianist, revealed his manifesto “L’arte dei rumori” (“The Art of Noise”). Russolo used the Modena *serata* to expand Futurism into the realm of music, presenting to the public his Futurist invention the *intonarumore* or noise machine. Russolo introduced the only completed *intonarumore* called the *scoppiatore*, which produced the sound of a car engine. The new innovative approach to music signaled the Futurists’ desire to depart from the traditional concept of music and instrumentation, equating sounds of a modernized city to a form of music.<sup>50</sup>

The unveiling of the machine created such hilarity and laughter that nobody could hear the sounds coming from the noise machine. Marinetti chastised the audience for not giving Russolo the time or respect to present his new invention. His insults did nothing but fueled the audience to react and all control was lost. Fights between the Futurists and public broke out on stage and throughout the theater, and the police was summoned to gain control over the rowdy crowd.

What happened at Teatro Storichi was a standard element of the *serate*. The use of repartees to

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<sup>49</sup> See Claudi Vicentini, “Azione politica e azione teatrale nel futurismo di Marinetti,” p. 71. The English quote is an translated version by Gunter Berghaus in *Futurism and Politics*, p. 73.

<sup>50</sup> Francesco Balilla Pratella joined Futurism in 1909 and conceptualized the ideas of Futurist music, having written several manifestos on music. Pratella studied music at the Conservatory of Pesaro and studied under Pietro Mascagni. Pratella also wrote the first Futurist opera *L’aviatore Dro*.

attack the taste and institutions of the bourgeoisie and the theatricalization of an anti-traditional art on stage served to challenge status quo perceptions. The theatrical space became a perfect propagandistic tool that allowed the Futurists to declaim their technical manifestos and present applications of their theoretical ideas such Futurist painting, clothing, literature to name a few.

The *serata* at Modena also represented a shift in Marinetti's tone in addressing the audience's behavior. It was customary for the Futurists to sling insults at the audience designed to provoke them; but this time around, Marinetti's remarks were more pointed to the audience's unwillingness to listen rather than their poor taste in art. The change in tone signaled a growing frustration in how the *serate* were becoming less effective means of mobilizing people around Futurist principles. In fact, before the Modena *serata*, having been accused by not producing works of art, the Futurists suspended the theatrical shows to develop new works to captivate the public, as the Futurists became aware of the waning influence of the *serate*. Therefore, it was not surprising that the performative genre ended a year later in Milan on April 21, 1914.<sup>51</sup>

Taking into consideration the accounts we have from the Futurists, one can argue that the main purpose of the *serate* was to inform and change the public's view on art in modernity while also getting the public socially engaged in politics. However, the *serate* consisted of other characteristics that are worth mentioning. The activities that we see in the first two *serate* demonstrate that the performative genre consisted of a set program, which entailed a certain level of coordination and planning. In fact, the *serata* was composed of a pre-planning stage and a post-performance that highlighted Marinetti's ability to dominate and manipulate media outlets.

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<sup>51</sup> Berghaus highlights that Russolo was quoted commenting on the last *serata* that the "audience did not hear anything that evening, simply because they preferred to make their own, unharmonized, noise. Okay, I can understand if an audience whistles, boos, and throws projectiles ... after having heard something they did not like. However, to go to the theater, pay for a ticket, and then not wanting to listen, is beyond my comprehension (Berghaus, *Theatre* 129)

During the planning stage, Marinetti would send copies of the manifestos and poems that were going to be declaimed to all journalists in the city. Next, he would arrive a couple of days before the show with other Futurists to hold interviews with local journalists, who in return, would write stories about the leader of Futurism, his journal *Poesia*, and his new literary movement Futurism. The next step consisted of placing posters around the city to announce the upcoming show. The Futurists would invite the cultural elite to the show and post-performance and mobilize the students to carry out propaganda events for the movement. Once the show ended, the post-performance took place at a local restaurant or public square where sympathizers could witness and partake in the improvised banquets, celebratory processions, and marches led by the Futurists. The post-performance of the Milan *serata* occurred at Caffè Milano, which was attended by journalists and the cultural elite who wanted to celebrate the spectacle that they had just witness. Dinner was served in reversed order, starting with the coffee and ending with a glass of vermouth. Each courses was accompanied with declamations of Futurist poetry and manifestos (Berghaus, *Theatre* 90).

The economic benefits that the *serate* yielded were another important aspect of the theatrical invention. It was one of the few Futurist activities that generated profits according to the accounts of Altomare, who stated that the box-office earnings were more than enough to cover the expenses even though the theater owners took the majority of the earnings (Altomare 15). This reconfirms my suspicion that Marinetti gave up on the *serate* not because of money but rather because it was no longer effective teaching the audience about Futurism, which was its main purpose. In general, Futurism was an expensive enterprise with the *serata* being the most expensive activity of the movement. The costs included renting theaters, accommodations, dinners, advertising, printing, and travel expenses. The *serate* generated profits, for whom

exactly is questionable, but the events were normally sold out. One of the unique factors of the *serata* was its affordability alongside its accessibility. Marinetti extended the theatrical space to non-traditional theatergoers by allocating adequate seating for the lower classes usually for one Lira and charging 5 Lire for the seats traditionally occupied by the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. The *serate* also carried economic benefits in terms symbolic capital for the younger artists, who were trying to become known figures in society. The *serate* franchised increased the profiles of young artist such as Buzzi, Palazzeschi, and Settimelli, who went on to have successful literary careers.

### **The Portuguese *Conferência***

The political meetings with an artistic format, as Marinetti would later call the *serate*,<sup>52</sup> gave way to the Portuguese Futurists political format in their *conferência futurista*. The little information that is known about the *conferência futurista* comes from the work of Júdice Nuno and Carlos D'Alge, who have compared the event as the Portuguese version of the Italian *serata*. The *conferência futurista* allowed Futurists such as Almada Negeiros and Rita Santa Pintor to contextualize Futurism within the Portuguese experience and present those ideas to a wider audience. The event marked the arrival of Futurism from the pre-Futurist stage of the Orpheu group. The evening event took place on April 14, 1917 in Lisbon in Teatro República was organized and advertised by the aforementioned Futurists.

The Portuguese Futurists had already made a name for themselves with the publication of the Futurist poem “A Cena do Ódio” and the “Manifesto Anti-Dantas” in 1915 that criticized every aspect of the bourgeoisie. The manifesto became famous for its aggressive, violent tone, which

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<sup>52</sup> Marinetti's first makes this comment regarding the *serate* in “Un movimento artistico crea un Partito Politico” in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, p. 298.

called for the death of the most famous, contemporary playwright in Portugal Júlio Dantas.<sup>53</sup> The Futurists and Dantas often expressed their disagreement over modern art in the press with the playwright calling the Futurists “paranoid poets.” Therefore, when the announcement of the *conferência* was made, the Futurist performance caused much consternation amongst the public and police. The anxiety and curiosity leading up to the event forced Negreiros to publish an open letter in the local newspaper *A Capital* where he addressed rumors and described the details of the event.<sup>54</sup> The very fact that Negreiros had to enter into the public space to ease tensions speaks to the international success of Futurism as the Portuguese public had already judged Negreiros and Pintor as troublemakers by association. Moreover, it highlights the very inner workings of the Futurist *serata* as action-theater, which depended on antics, polemics, and scandals as a way to self-promote, something that Negreiros had already achieved with public confrontations with Dantas.

The *conferência*, much like the Italian *serata*, consisted of three parts that presented a number of Portuguese Futurist works as well as Futurist works outside of Portugal. As the Futurists stepped onto the stage, they attacked the politicians, political system, and the decadence of the Portuguese race. Their opening remarks were followed by the declamation of “Ultimatum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX.” It was the primary document that contextualized the Portuguese experience within the framework of Futurist ideology. The

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<sup>53</sup> The launch of the manifesto coincided with the premiere of Dantas’ play *Sóror Mariana*; and in order to avoid public embarrassment, Dantas confiscated and burned all of the possible copies he could find, leaving very few for the public to see. Dantas was the most popular playwright in Portugal and just as the Italian Futurists railed against D’Annunzio, the Catalan Futurists demonized the popular poet Joan Maragall, and the Russian Futurists were against Pushkin, Dantas was accused of the same crime—commercial success. Famous for his realist works, the Futurists did not recognize his work as art because it lacked creativity and did nothing to elevate Portuguese society or culture.

<sup>54</sup> He also the controversy surrounding the Reading of The announcement that Saint-Point’s manifesto worried some Lisbon women who question whether the event for be appropriate for ladies to attend. Almada responded to their concerns in an open letter published in *A Capital* ensuring the event was respectful of women.

*Manifesto Futurista da Luxúria* was featured in the second part of the show. The manifesto, written by Madame de Saint-Point, presented lust as a natural and guilt free sentiment that possessed energy and vitality. Since the document treated the taboo subject of “female sexual freedom” in the public space, the piece received a strong reaction from the audience. The third and final part consisted of two manifestos by Marinetti, “Music-Hall” and “Tuons Le Clair de Lune,” translated and declaimed by Negeiros with Pintor providing commentary.

The theatrical event in Lisbon was the public’s first face-to-face encounter with Futurism in Portugal, and the event gathered politicians, the cultural elite, students, the proletariat, and the bourgeoisie in the same space to discuss Futurism’s role in improving Portugal’s standing in the world. The excitement from the event generated support from university students to whom much of the Futurist works were dedicated. Negeiros, similar to Marinetti, offered a low admission price of 52 centavos, which guaranteed a full house and all the social classes. The attempt by Negeiros and Pintor to replicate the same success as the Italian *serata* fell short in financial backing and was unable to create an enduring campaign like we see in Italy. Nonetheless it is important to highlight the *conferência* because not only do we see the aesthetic, political, and cultural concerns reached other countries, but Marinetti’s Futurist propagandistic techniques were exported along with the movement.

The *serata* is considered a performative genre that consisted of political and artistic elements. No other activity by the Futurists was able to solicit such a huge cross-segment of society in one space. However, the analysis above shows that the *serate* were more complex in that they acted an instructive tool that gave people, who were often illiterate, the opportunity to witness Futurist aesthetics and politics. In the manifesto, “Teatro futurista sintetico” (Futurist Synthetic Theater) Marinetti acknowledged the sociopolitical impact of the theater stating that “90% of Italians go

to the theater while only 10% read books and journals.” Given this assumption, Marinetti not only viewed theater for its artistic value but also for its social utility. The theatrical space provided the audience with a unique atmosphere seen in the crowd.

### **Futurist Propaganda in the *Serate***

The *serate* became a successful enterprise for diffusing Futurism because the theatrical events gave way to multiple types of propaganda that were used to promote the movement. Propaganda represents the act of changing an individual’s mind, opinion, or feelings about a particular topic; furthermore, it is based on the scientific field of psychology and sociology. The propagandist is keenly aware of how the individual behaves in society, and his techniques are based on understanding one’s desires, needs, tendencies, conditioning, and environment. At the turn of the century, sociology and psychology were two growing, influential fields that shaped European culture. Sociology had influenced European culture since the 1800s when Auguste Comte proposed his philosophical theory of positivism. Sigmund Freud shaped generations of intellectuals with his theory of psychoanalysis. Most intellectuals during the time of Marinetti were familiar with, for example, Gustave Le Bon theories on crowd psychology, and this is especially true in the Italian case given that many of Le Bon’s ideas were also found in *La folla delinquente*, written by Italian sociologist/criminologist Scipio Sighele. However, in modern times, Ellul notes that propaganda moved from changing an individual’s opinion to pushing the individual into action in what he calls orthopraxy (9). The *serate* integrated multiple kinds of propaganda to move people to action on both sides of an issue because the push was so effective at soliciting a reaction.

One type of propaganda that was present in the *serate* was political propaganda. This form of propaganda is probably the most recognizable in the Futurist *serata*. Ellul notes that political propaganda is normally conducted by a government, a party, an administration, or pressure group that wants to achieve political goals through changing the public's behavior (62). Because Futurism sought cultural renewal, many Futurist movements advocated political change and acted as a pressure group towards the political establishment.<sup>55</sup> If we revisit the political undertones of the first two *serate* in Trieste and Milan, irredentism characterizes the political objectives of the Futurists. Marinetti had previously expressed his irredentist beliefs on a trip to Trieste in 1908 where he attended the memory service of irredentist martyr, Guglielmo Oberdan, who was executed by the Austrians in 1882 for having attempted to murder the Austrian Emperor (Berghaus, *Theatre* 87). When he returned two years later to Trieste for the first *serata*, he used the political tensions between Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire to incite the public. In "Guerra sola igiene del mondo," Marinetti comments that the whole evening event was organized in honor and defense of General Asinari di Bernezzo. This most likely was an over exaggeration, as Berghaus points out, because Marinetti had penned the ode only the night before; however, Marinetti's experience in the region made him acutely aware of the possible fallout that irredentist sentiments would provoke. Political propaganda surfaced also in the Portuguese *conferência* in Lisbon. Negreiros and Pintor used the theatrical space to advocate for pan-Iberism and against the political establishment for compromising the Portuguese attempt at democracy. Their invectives placed blame on the political establishment for Portugal's inferior position on the international stage, late industrialization, and losing control over its colonial

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<sup>55</sup> Catalan Futurism did not embrace politics as it had done in Italy, Portugal, and Russia as the Catalans passed hundreds of years not allowed to speak their language and advance their culture. Irene Gómez Castellano argues that because Catalan culture was repressed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Catalan modernism was inspired by the past through the concept of *enyorança* or nostalgia and did not engage in activities to overturn the political system for fear of censorship.



possessions. In both circumstances, the political propaganda was an extension of national politics that urged people to support Futurism for the moral sake of country.

The political propaganda of Futurism was regional specific, and it demonstrates a key element in Futurist rhetoric: the ability to continually to calibrate and target individuals with their ideas. Most *serate* incorporated new elements that were based on the host city. Several manifestos written by Marinetti such as “Contro Venezia passatista,” “Discorso futurista di Marinetti ai Veneziani,” “Contro la Spagna passatista,” “Contro Roma Passatista,” etc. further illustrate the geopolitical considerations of Marinetti.<sup>56</sup> The manifestos normally contextualized the movement for Italian metropolitan cities, relying on local symbols and politics to spark interest in Futurism. Often times the manifestos were also included in the pre-propagandistic activities published in local newspapers and distributed throughout the streets. Futurism’s ability to integrate the environment into their propaganda meant that the movement could push people to act by appealing to one’s heritage, desires, emotions, and anxieties. As Marinetti advocated for war (Libyan War, 1911) and used patriotic and nationalist rhetoric in the *serate*, it is no coincidence that during this time his political propaganda led to political alliances that would in return help to promulgate Futurist ideas and material (Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics*, 60). The anarchists, syndicalists, and Nationalists even joined forces in the publication *La Lupa*, which had Sorel and Corradini on its editorial board. The newspaper propagated the idea that there was a war between proletarian and bourgeois nations.

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<sup>56</sup> In “Futurist Proclamation to the Spaniards,” Marinetti with symbolist aesthetics describe of a once glorious past of Spain to the current decadence of the country. The manifesto informs the Spaniards of how to create a national identity and unity. In “Against Traditionalist Rome” Marinetti specifically comes out against the tourist industry in Rome. He refers to the North as industrial and commercial cities that create iron projects while Rome was catering to foreigners. In his nationalist rhetoric, Marinetti criticizes Rome for not industrializing and for failing to create a strong, stable economy.

Many times political propaganda can be easily turned into propaganda of agitation. In fact, the use of irredentism functioned as both political and agitation propaganda. The difference between the two kinds of propaganda, according to Eull, is propaganda of agitation “tries to stretch energies to the utmost, obtain substantial sacrifices, and induce the individual to bear heavy ordeals. It takes him out of his everyday life, his normal framework, and plunges him into enthusiasm and adventure (72).” Propaganda of agitation, in the *serate*, focused on mobilizing individuals for war, and it was most effective on lower classes that tended to be less educated and informed, which represented the principle target audience of the *serate*.<sup>57</sup> The Futurists depended on reactionary words such as “hygienic cleansing,” “war,” and “decadence” to provoke the audience to action even though the populace would rarely fully comprehend these words. There are other examples in which the Futurists used propaganda in support of a war. Negreiros invective’s to the youth in the *conferência* advocated for war and proceeded to give the audience a long list of grievances and symbols to promote war. Besides the chants and calls for war, the Italian Futurists also declaimed a number of patriotic works such as the poems *La battaglia di Adrianopoli*, *La campana della guerra*, *Uccide il chiaro di luna* as well as patriotic music of Giuseppe Verdi “Battaglia di Legnano” that were designed to carry the Futurist message of war, revolt, and national renewal. The Futurist political program was integrated throughout the *serate*, with the Futurists reciting various parts of the “First and Second Futurist Political Manifesto.” In the *serata* at Naples, the Futurists directed their political program to the youth and asked them to take up arms against the old guard, institutions, and *passéists*. Even though agitation propaganda

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<sup>57</sup> The Russian Futurist, Vladimir Mayakovsky, was known for integrating agitation within his plays. He turned to the Agitprop theater (agitation and propaganda), a theatrical styled that was carefully designed to promote one’s agenda and push people into political action. The Agitprop theater became popular in Russia during the Bolshevik revolution of 1917; however, its origins are traced back to the proletarian movements in France and Germany dating back as early as the 1830s used to educate the proletarian class on socialist ideas.<sup>57</sup>

play a smaller role in the Portuguese movement, it functioned as a legitimate tool in the Italian *serata* where their message was well received by not only the nationalists, anarchists, and syndicalist but also the youth and college students who were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for the homeland.

The last type of propaganda that I would like to discuss in terms of the *serate* is sociological propaganda. This form of propaganda is more vast and less certain, but it seeks to integrate the maximum number of individuals into itself, to unify its members' behavior according to a pattern to spread its lifestyle abroad, and thus impose itself onto other groups (Ellul 62). Capitalism, for example, influenced unknowingly the public's buying behavior. The commodification of symbolic goods made it harder to sell goods that were not part of traditional practices; therefore, the public often held negative views regarding avant-garde art. From Bordieu's arguments, institutions (e.g. academies, schools, museums, publishers, etc.) of cultural production are often embroiled in a vicious cycle. The craftsman transforms into an entrepreneur in order to keep up with demand; in modernity, the system has grown to include art dealers, publishers, translators, etc. that continue the cycle of commodification out of mere survival, and thus the perpetuation of the status quo. The counter argument, anti-traditionalism, spoke to all of the social, cultural, and economic factors that dictated art. Being anti-traditionalist meant that the individual, quite naturally, possessed the mindset of embracing creativity and innovation. This message was often directed to the youth in what Marinetti viewed as a key to solve the problem at its root.<sup>58</sup>

Therefore, generational politics played an important role in creating the Futurist utopia, and Marinetti refers to this point in the "Founding Manifesto":

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<sup>58</sup> The analogy of the "tree" and Italy's decay was first used in "Guerra sola igiene del mondo." The document was written in French before being translated into Italian, appearing in a number of Marinetti's speeches. Marinetti states, "We want to dig out its deepest roots and burn them, those which are planted in the mind of man" (Berghaus, Critical 53).

I più anziani fra noi, hanno trent'anni: ci rimane dunque almeno un decennio, per compier l'opera nostra. Quando avremo quarant'anni, altri uomini più giovani e più validi di noi, ci gettino pure nel cestino, come manoscritti inutili. Noi lo desideriamo!

(“Fondazione e manifesto del futurismo”)

[The oldest among us are thirty; so we have at least ten years in which to complete our task. When we reach forty, other younger and more courageous men will very likely toss us into the trash can, like useless manuscripts. And that’s what we want!]

(“Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism”)

The self-regenerative element of Futurism was based not only on the youth but also the belief that if a society was taught to value the principles of creativity, innovation, and freedom then the seeds of progress would already be culturally sown into the fabric of Italian society; and as a result, Italy would never find herself in the position of cultural and economic stagnation. The anti-traditionalist and disdain for the past functioned as a less overt form of propaganda, but nonetheless, worked towards bringing the widest possible audience under Futurism.

### **Crowd Psychology in the Futurist *Serata***

Futurist propaganda, to be effective, rested on understanding crowd dynamics. Crowd psychology represented the study on how the masses behave when they come together in a group setting. Futurism came into existence in part based on the ideas that Marinetti and Romains had borrowed from crowd psychology. Marinetti even thought about calling his new movement Dynamism but opted for a more general name in Futurism.<sup>59</sup> Jules Romains used crowd psychology in his literary movement Unanimism to depict group consciousness.<sup>60</sup> He believed

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<sup>59</sup> Marinetti originally was going to call his *Elettricismo* or *Dinamimismo*, further highlighting his affinity toward Romains’ Unanimism; however, he settled on the name Futurism, which ironically was already in used as early as 1904 by Catalan poet Gabriel Alomare, see Lily Litvak.

<sup>60</sup> Marinetti, who was friends with Romains through their activity in the Abbaye group, reviewed the collection of poems in his literary journal *Poesia*. As Berghaus has suggested, Marinetti’s incorporation of the modern city and dynamism into Futurism illustrated the direct influence of Romains had on Marinetti (*Genesis* 33). The depiction of

that when individuals banded together they lose their individual *âme* or soul to form a new collective being *les unanimes*. Modernization efforts such as the Parisian boulevard opened up the whole city to all its inhabitants making it easy to move between neighborhoods and through the city. As people gathered at the bars, cafés, street corners, restaurants, and department stores, they confronted the new realities of the modern city. The group activities that became part of the modern city were often illustrated in Futurist paintings.<sup>61</sup> However, Marinetti takes a departure from Romains' Unanimism with the *serate*. The theatrical space represented a laboratory to put theories of crowd psychology into practice.

Most intellectuals understood crowd dynamics through the work of, collective psychologist, Gustave Le Bon. Unanimism, which incorporated Le Bon's idea of the *âme*, purported an altered view of crowd dynamics than what was prevalent in scientific circles. Romains presented the crowd as a symbol of strength that had the ability to transform the political, cultural, economic structures of the status quo (Walter 864 ). In *The Origins of Crowd Psychology*, Nye argues that collective psychologists viewed the crowd with pessimism, in part, because it was associated with pathology, and in part, because most collective psychologists were conservatives from the bourgeoisie order, who viewed the social phenomena as a critique on modernity. Democratic political theory placed the individual at the center of political power, but as Le Bon criticized, democratic politics were becoming more involved in collective groups that partook in irrational and spontaneous behaviors, which led to an increase of student risings, political parties, strikes, etc. These destructive acts, according to Le Bon, occurred because the crowd reverts man back to

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city life in the works of Boccioni and Carrà, according to Martin, is yet another example of how Futurist aesthetics, in this case Futurist painting, borrowed from Romains' Unanimism (66).

<sup>61</sup> Russolo's Futurist painting *Solidity of Fog* (1912), for example, recalls Pablo's Picasso blue period. Russolo is able to transmit movement between the light and thick clouds of fog as well as a group of soldiers making their way through the fog.

its ancestral past consisting of atavistic or primordial qualities. As a result, the crowd loses its intellectual aptitude and is more inclined to be dominated by the unconscious elements or hallucinations that metastasize and bind each individual into a new collective, homogeneous body. This kind of “mental contagion” was supported and encouraged by the role of the *suggesteur* or provocateur, who used repetitions and affirmations to bring people under his spell. At other times, the provocateur could gain control over a crowd by relying on his prestige and public persona to provoke the audience (Nye 71). For collective psychologists, the universalizing dynamic in the crowd was analogous to disease. Le Bon writes in *Psychologie des Foules* that “Ideas, sentiments emotions, and beliefs possess in crowds is a contagious power as intense as that of microbes...Cerebral disorders, like madness, are contagious (Nye 69).”

Crowd psychology brought a new understanding of the individual in society. Social movements, according to Tilly, depended greatly on the political entrepreneur for their scale, durability, and effectiveness. Moreover, the political entrepreneur acted as the leader and invested huge sums of resources into the movement (13). Marinetti embodies both the political entrepreneur and the *suggesteur*. He gained notoriety through fights, flag burnings, duels, etc., and his antics earned him the nickname “caffeine of Europe” and the “Pink Pill.” Marinetti relied on charisma and his persona as a “madman” / “hooligan” to rile up the audience; and as a result, people often arrived at the *serate* prepared to engage with the Futurists on the most obscene level. Most of the *serate* performances would end in chaos that pervaded the whole theatrical space. It is difficult to know whether Marinetti understood the intricacies of Le Bon’s ideas; however, there is one revealing aspect that suggests that he did. Marinetti always understood that sentiments, emotions, and states of mind were pervasive elements. This is apparent in his nationalist rhetoric and the desire to create a unified identity. The Futurist project rested on the

idea of transmitting a new Italian psyche. Most importantly, Marinetti employs the same language of pathology that we see in Le Bon to describe his movement. For instance, his interview in *Comoedia* characterizes Futurism as a program of moral hygiene, stating that “is not the life of nations, when all’s said and done, just like that of the individual who only rids himself of infections and excess of blood by having recourse to the bathtub and to bloodletting? (Berghaus, *Critical* 19).” Marinetti also uses the phrase in “The Necessary and Beauty of Violence,” speeches, and other political manifestos. Given that Marinetti viewed his movement in terms of pathology, he most likely understood the concept of mental contagion that takes place within a collective group. Marinetti’s understanding of crowd dynamics gives special meaning to the *serate* as a tool of propaganda. Similarly to the modern-day political rally, the *serate* introduced the Futurist aesthetic and political agenda in an environment where the individual was at his most vulnerable in accepting Futurist propaganda.

### **Futurist Theatrical Experiments Outside of Italy**

In the years following the October Revolution, the Russian Futurists turned to theater to articulate the Futurist/Communist project, incorporating agitprop theater as one of their tools for social mobilization. Futurists such as Osip Brik and Mayakovsyky were given credit for integrating Futurist ideas within the communist regime. The revolution in Russia created a political and cultural vacuum, and whoever decided to fill this space has the power to reset the terms of the status quo. Once the Bolsheviks assumed political power, it was the Russian Futurists who decided to fill the cultural void by “mounting a vast cultural project aimed at taking charge of the domain of arts and culture, and thereby seizing control of those forces that shape the human mind and its surroundings (Glisic 357).”

The Russian Futurists paired Futurist ideas with Marx's economic and political ideas to become the supportive engine of the Communist revolution. The Futurist, Osip Brik, who was considered by his peers the "theoretician of Futurism," put forth a definition of artistic production that was based on the idea of materialism. Art represented tangible objects in society that epitomized the Futurist utopia. Brik equated artistic production with the machine, implied that the proletariat represented the new artist in modern society. When Marx and Engels described in the *Communist Manifesto* the bourgeoisie's perpetual need to revolutionize the instruments of production, they characterized this relationship as "all that is solid melts," which highlighted the destructive nature of capitalism. According to Glisic, Brik repeats the same idiom accusing the bourgeoisie of turning 'flesh into spirit' and giving credit to the proletariat for re-establishing flesh into solid because the proletariat "artist" worked in factories, workshops, created new spaces, machines, all of which revolved around socially relevant objects that had the ability to transform the human experience. Therefore, Brik presents artistic materialism as one of the Marxist forces responsible for shaping social being and is at the center of Communist life-building. After having established the new relationship between Futurism and communism, Brik had to sell his message to the public and turned to the agitprop theater.

One of the most recognized plays of the agitprop theater during this time was *Mystery Bouffe*, which coincidentally displayed a lot of similarities with Jarry's *Ubu Roi* and Marinetti's *Le Roi Bombance*. The play demonstrated the mechanisms that made the *serate* a powerful weapon: the crowd element, political agitation, and relying on theater's ability to inform and instruct its audience. Agitprop is an abbreviation of the words agitation and propaganda, which represented a theater that purposefully was designed to propagandize certain ideas while dispelling others in an effort to push people into political action. Many point to the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 as



the starting date for the agitprop theater. However, its origins are traced back to the proletarian movements in France and Germany dating back to the 1830s. It developed as an extension of the workers' education clubs, which were responsible for educating the proletarian class on socialist ideas. The growing success of educational clubs throughout Europe indicated that the proletariat was finally becoming a conscious class ready to learn about its potential within society. These educational clubs relied on a variety of ways to educate the workers through talks, pamphlets, and etc. Art provided the easiest way, especially the theater, to communicate with a segment of the population who had low levels of education and was often illiterate. The clubs abandoned the notion of "art for art sake" and instead implemented the concept of "art for learning." Given that educating the masses represented the main priority of the Russian Futurists after the revolution, it was quite natural to turn to the agitprop theater, a technique that had its origins in socialist propaganda, as a way to exhibit the Futurists' idea of artistic materialism, which was rooted in the Communist project. The theatrical piece *Mystery Bouffe* by Russia Futurist Mayakovsky represents the best example of how the theater once again served as a communicative strategy for the movement's overarching goals.

### **Mayakovsky's Soviet Play *Mystery Bouffe***

Edward Braun writes in "Futurism in the Russian Theatre, 1913-1923" that the play was created to celebrate the first anniversary of the Revolution and incorporated many elements of clownery and carnivalesque buffoonery that took its inspiration from Marinetti's Variety Theater (83). The play represents an allegory of Noah's ark in which the citizens of the world come together to escape the flood on a trip that takes them to Mount Ararat. Historian, Huntly Carter summarizes the main goals of the play:

...(1) to stage the victory of the social revolution over the world which came to an end in 1917, in the form of a heroic and satirical picture; (2) to turn the whole theater into a stage, placing the latter as far as possible in the center of public; and (3) to persuade the public to take part in the performance (74).

Carter's analysis highlights the Russian Futurists' commitment to the Bolshevik Revolution, and the last two points demonstrate the elimination of the fourth wall, which was necessary in the theatrical space if one wanted to provoke audience into action.

The drama revolves around two primary groups the Clean and the Unclean. Immediately Mayakovsky indicates, through his characters' identity, that the play is based on class struggle. The Clean personifies the bourgeoisie, whose members are individually recognized such as the Indian Raja, Turkish Pasha, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, etc. Their nationalities, class traits, and attitudes on revolution become defining features of the group in order to situate class struggle as an international cause. The Unclean symbolizes the hardworking proletariat class, characterized by their individual titles such as carpenter, miner, hunter, and furthermore are introduced collectively. Such a characterization of the Unclean not only helps to identify the proletarian class with the action on stage but also instructs the proletariat of the importance of collective action as relevant social behavior. As Mayakovsky brings the two groups together to recreate the historical evolution of class struggle, their first encounter with class struggle comes in the form of autocracy. The Clean decides to put their faith and support in the Negus of Abyssinia, who they nominate for king. They hope to reap the benefits of establishing a close relationship with autarchic figure until the king betrays everybody by issuing a decree declaring all foodstuffs belong to the king. The betrayal exhibited in the autocracy angers the Clean and propels them to overthrow the king with the help of the Unclean. The character, Clemenceau, suggests forming a democratic government, which represents the second confrontation:

Now let's set up our democratic government.

Citizens, in order to make this easy and quick, we (God rest the Negus' soul) – the thirteen of us—will be ministers and deputy ministers; and you—citizens of a democratic republic—will bake rolls, make boots, and hunt walrus (77-78).

The democratic government, which supposed to share equally the fruits of labor, is only shared between the ministers or in this case amongst the Clean. The Unclean soon realizes the deception in democratic regimes and equate the results similar to autocracy, having replace one king for thirteen kings.

Class struggle culminates into the proletarian revolution where the Unclean throw the Clean into the sea, and the final scene depicts the Futurist utopia. Before arriving at the Futurist utopia, the Unclean, who are guided by the “man of the future” are led through Hell to vividly demonstrate the hardships of the proletariat. This journey, reminiscent of Dantean experience, ends at the Futurist utopian society with the creation of the Futurist individual. They play educations the public artistic materialism and advances the notion that society based on the proletarian worker.

Agitation, in *Mystery Bouffe*, wad used on multiples levels to push the action. Carter attributes some of the agitation to the setting, which was originally designed for an open air performance. This created an environment of revelry and singing as the audience would often sing the International (143). Agitation was also seen in the direct call of the audience participation. For example, in the prologue Mayakovsky instructs the audience:

In the Sixth Act comes the Commune.

Everyone must sing out at the top of his voice! (47)

Lastly, *Mystery Bouffe* articulated a series of difficulties and emotions experienced by the proletarian worker that were used to get creator sympathizers for the movement.

The theatrical activities varied from movement to movement; but in each example, theater tended to focus on the masses and present a compelling argument for the political and aesthetic agendas it espoused. The inclusion of theater, especially in the Italian case, marked Marinetti's move to popularize his movement outside of the cultural elite:

Theater was conceived by Marinetti as a means of 'introducing the fist into the artistic battle' and of enabling 'the brutal entry of life into art.' Marinetti believed that theater as a form of 'cultural combat' would lead the artists out of their ivory tower and give them a chance 'to participate, like the workers or soldiers, in the battle for world progress.' The Futurist performer became a storm-trooper in the front line of the Futurist revolution, employing fighting methods that were derived from the anarchists' *beaux gestes destructifs*. Theater, when imbued with such a bellicose spirit, would have the necessary force, Marinetti believed, 'to snatch the soul of the audience away from base everyday reality' and have a liberating effect on society at large (Berghaus, *Theatre* 60).

Theater was used as a political tool for action, and it was analogous the political rally. Ellul states that the success of propaganda is based on its ability to become part of a long campaign as well as its ability to integrate a variety of tools to influence the individual's psyche (Ellul 9),<sup>62</sup> which is also how Tilly defines the social movement repertoire. The tools of political action inherently rest on the basis of propaganda.

The Futurist theater was politicized, aestheticized, and integrated into visual performances of claim making. The theatrical events mobilized through a combination of various types of propaganda that made use of crowd dynamics. According to the historian, Philip Morgan:

Le Bon's study seemed to show that what drove and inspired people en masse to collective action were their emotions and feelings, not rational discourse and argument. So if a speaker wanted to arouse and excite his listeners, what mattered was not the quality or logic or truth of his argument, but his ability to tap into the subconscious will and soul of his audience (17).

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<sup>62</sup> When looking at the Futurism movement in its entirety, Ellul's idea of total propaganda (9), best characterizes Marinetti's propagandistic activities. He utilized all means of communication, the press, newspapers, journals, posters, meetings, canvassing, etc., and employed a variety of different kinds of propaganda.

The integration of the theatrical space, seen in the *serate*, as part of the Futurists' repertoire of political action allowed the leaders of Futurism to reach a new segment of the population that was mostly not going to react to some of the cultural discourses surrounding Futurism. In addition, the theatrical events brought in a substantial amount of money and notoriety that provided the necessary resources for a continuous campaign. The average individual knew of Futurism in large part because of the *serate*; and in this sense, theater was greatly responsible in branching Futurism beyond the Parisian and Milanese literary circles.

## CHAPTER 3

### NETWORKING AND THE FUTURIST MAGAZINE

In creating their own institutions and organs of diffusion, avant-garde artists depended greatly on the literary magazine to promote their agenda. The literary magazines that were integrated into the Futurist movement functioned differently than the ones in the preceding century where many journals offered a space of public and intellectual debate. By the early twentieth century, there is a heightened sense of urgency amongst the various groups vying for legitimation; and as a result, the literary journal becomes a propagandistic tool to push specific programs and to enlarge one's base of supporters. This is not to say that propaganda was the sole mission or benefit of the literary magazine, and it would be imprudent to ignore the economic impact that these journals brought to their movements given that they were sold and bought on the market. Moreover, the avant-garde literary magazine mirrors in similar ways the manifesto since it has the ability to attack one's enemies and to defend and define oneself from others. The literary magazine gave way to a collective space that enabled a network of individuals to emerge with shared values, connecting subgroups directly and indirectly to Marinetti's movement. According to John Krinsky and Nick Crossley, networks provide the channels whereby movement repertoires are diffused beyond instigators to a wider population of potential participants (4). In this sense, the Futurist magazine was highly responsible for the kind of diffusion that Futurism experience throughout Europe.

Futurism relied on a number of literary magazines to promote its agenda; and unfortunately, it is impossible to discuss all of the journals that were involved in promoting Futurism. However,

my analysis of the following magazines: *Poesia*, *Lacerba*, *L'Italia futurista*, and *Portugal futurista* will demonstrate the different ways in which the literary magazine was integrated into the Futurist movement as a tool of propaganda and mobilization. The aforementioned literary journals supported and sustained Futurism in and outside of Italy by creating concrete examples of Futurist aesthetics, republishing manifestos, educating the public on the philosophical aspect of Futurism, introducing new Futurist artists, and pushing the movement's political agenda.

### **Marinetti's Network at *Poesia***

Digital technology has contributed greatly to the rediscovery of literary magazines and has allowed scholars to reexamine the role that literary magazines played in the avant-gardes. For my analysis of the Futurist magazine *Poesia*, I have turned to the Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institute in Florenz that has accumulated over 500 Futurist works and 40 newspapers from the first and second phase of Futurism. In particular, the Pro Firenze Futurista project offers a complete digital collection of *Poesia* and 51 issues (1916-1918) of *L'Italia Futurista*. In addition, the project undertaken by CIRCE (catalogo informatico riviste culturali europee) of the University of Trento included the digitalization of eleven Futurist journals. Digital copies along with archival and scanned copies represented the starting point of reassessing the value of the literary magazine in the Futurist movement.

When situating *Poesia* in the long line of Futurist journals, it is important to note that Marinetti financed all operations of *Poesia* with his inheritance and acted as chief editor of the journal alongside Sem Benelli and Vitaliano Ponti. Unlike most literary magazines at the time, *Poesia* paid its artists for their contributions, and the literary magazine also functioned as an official publishing house for its contributors. In the March issue (1909), the literary magazine

announced unapologetically its full support of Futurism. Somigli argues in “Towards a Literary Modernity all’italiana: A Note on F.T. Marinetti’s *Poesia*” that the French avant-garde by 1906 already understood that *Poesia* was not a neutral space where individuals could freely exchange ideas but rather represented calculated efforts of propaganda (85). The literary magazine was part of an ever growing landscape of literary journals that advocated or pushed specific agendas around the turn of the century. *Poesia* exhibited the use of ads, special promotions, and illustrations as a way to separate it from its competitors, highlighting Marinetti’s business acumen that was greatly influenced by the advertisement industry.

In the first issue of *Poesia*, there was no announced program or agenda; however, after a few issues, it was apparent that Marinetti’s goal was to push contemporary French poetics onto an Italian audience. His mission, in part, stemmed greatly from his role as General Secretary of the literary magazine *Anthologie-Revue de France*, which was dedicated to popularizing French Symbolism in Italy and increasing the profile of Italian Symbolist poets in France. Given his duties as General Secretary, Marinetti, also known as the cultural mediator between Latin nations, was nothing more than a propagandist of Symbolist aesthetics. For this reason, one can date Marinetti’s involvement in propaganda to pre-*Poesia*, but what makes *Poesia* remarkably different is the shift from the French model of cultural renewal and modernization to the formulation of an Italian response that was specific to Italy seen in Futurism. The desire to find Italy’s own vocabulary to a set of historical, political, and cultural problems underlined the overarching purpose of *Poesia*.

The structure and organization of *Poesia* suggested that the content was subordinate to the content. The poetic and critical material was found in the center of the magazine, which was surrounded by promotional material. The majority of the critical material came from well-known



French avant-garde artists, who were part of the Symbolist movement. Even though the magazine showcased many French writers such as Cocteau, Claudel, Jarry, Verlain, Mallarmé, the magazine was very European centric, frequently publishing poems by Fred G. Bowles,<sup>63</sup> works by Yeats, Swinburne, Salvador Rueda while also introducing its readers to a number of works in Greek, German, Spanish, and Portuguese.<sup>64</sup> *Poesia* established itself as a significant player in diffusing European culture with a print run of 40,000 and placed Italy within the cultural discourses that were taking place across Europe.<sup>65</sup> The literary review offered Marinetti the opportunity to enlarge his international contacts, which meant that the magazine, to a certain extent, focused on the figure of Marinetti. Once the magazine became the organ of Futurism, it had already gained a significant amount of symbolic capital, which was vital in building the necessary network to launch, support, and diffuse Futurism.

As previously stated, the promotional material played a part of Marinetti's propagandistic strategy, opening and closing each issue with advertisements. Even the letters to the editors functioned to promote Marinetti and his project. Marinetti published letters from well-known poets who had responded to Marinetti's initial request for submissions. The common themes expressed in the letters were of regret and included congratulatory statements regarding the new

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<sup>63</sup> Bowles contributed quite frequently in *Poesia* having published over twenty poems in literary magazine. Marinetti knew Bowles quite well given that the poet had translated Marinetti's poem "La Vie des Voiles" in English for the literary journal *Literature* in 1901. Bowles was the most frequent English contributor to *Poesia*; however, there were a number of other artists from England that were featured in *Poesia*. See Vinall.

<sup>64</sup> To illustrate the international dimension of the magazine, I would direct readers to the March-April-May issue of 1906. Benno Geiger contributed two poems in German in the, "Die Quellen" and "Das tote Glück." The poem, "Crepuscolo Campestre" presented as "*poème bresilien*" accompanied by the French translation of the Portuguese version written by Carlos Magalhães de Azaredo. More interestingly, there is the inclusion of the poem "Avril" written by Romanian poet Andonescu Smarandei. The accompanying note to the poem indicates that it was translated from Romanian by Marinetti, adding that the Smarandei was a pseudonym.

<sup>65</sup> The back cover of each issued included the cities in which *Poesia* was sold: Trieste, Trento, Zara, Spalato, Fiume, Gorizia, Pola, Parigi, Londra, Berlino, Vienna, Madrid, Lipsia, Nizza, Atene, Corfu, Malta, Bukarest, Lugano, and Pietroburgo. Marinetti also include the name of the bookstores of each city where his journal could be purchased.

cultural project launched by *Poesia*. One letter came from Giovanni Pascoli, who addressed his remarks to Marinetti and Sem Benelli.<sup>66</sup> Pascoli informed the editors that he had been too busy working at the university and finishing other projects to contribute to the first issue but would gladly do so in the future. We learn that Pascoli had a very positive view of Marinetti's work stating, "da un pezzo seguo con la profonda simpatia di adoratore dell'unione latina e di preconizzatore d'una grande letteratura trilingue seguo i trionfi italici di questo cantore italo-francese" (*Poesia* February 1905). Pascoli chose to end his letter by thanking Marinetti essentially for the publicity "ch'egli mi fece per istampa." After reading Pascoli's comments, one realizes that the letter functioned as an extension of *Poesia*'s propaganda. Pascoli as well as Leon Dierx, Giovanni Marradi, Guido Mazzoni, and Adolfo De Bosis, all praised Marinetti for his literary contributions. As the editors skillfully chose which letters to publish, Marinetti introduces himself to the world under the laudatory words from notable poets, who acted to increase Marinetti's symbolic capital. In return, Marinetti featured their work in proceeding issues.

Pascoli fulfilled his promise to contribute something to *Poesia*, and it was not surprising to see him as the first poet to receive "il medaglione." In the second issue (March 1905) of *Poesia*, Marinetti gave the first honorary literary award to Pascoli, which consisted of a full page spread highlighting the author's works and literary contributions.<sup>67</sup> This section, buried within the promotional material, highlighted major poets such as Giovanni Marradi, Gustave Khan, Arturo Colautti, and others. Sometimes the winners were recognized for their work through a biographical sketch (as with Pascoli), a dedication (as with Khan), or by an original work from

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<sup>66</sup> The letter was dated December, 12 1904 Pisa, which coincided with his tenure as at the University of Pisa as a professor of Latin. The letter appeared in the first issue of *Poesia* (February 1905).

<sup>67</sup> The review of *Poemi Conviviali* was actually to the second edition that was published in 1905. The second edition included a new poem called "Gemelli," which was also featured in *Poesia* (April 1905).

the poet. The journal took its instructive role seriously, introducing the Italian audience to many important contemporary artists. The featured section seems to have been part of a broad campaign to solicit work from some of the most respected poets, whose participation undoubtedly gave Marinetti and his cultural project an air of seriousness. Unlike other magazines, *Poesia* paid its contributors, and soon after, a quid pro quo relationship developed. All featured artists found their work in subsequent issues, illustrating that the promotion of one poet led directly to recognition and a permanent contact for future submissions.

In a similar fashion, the poetry contests held by *Poesia* worked to establish a long list of contacts and adherents many of whom continued to work with Marinetti on Futurism. The literary competitions were geared towards finding young artists and providing them the economic support to establish a literary career. The latter point is an undeniable reason to why many of the young discovered poets became part of the Futurist enterprise. The first *concorso*, announced in the first issue, offered an award of 500 lire for an original poem in Italian regarding any argument, genre, and meter. After Marinetti, Benelli, and Ponti had chosen the winner, the poet was offered a generous package. In addition to the financial award, the chosen poet would receive the full support and weight of *Poesia* in promoting the artist and his work. This consisted of a front page sketch of the poet, a biography, and the publication of the winning poem. The winner also received a plaque with his name engraved in silver. The first winner of the poetry competition was the young poet Paolo Buzzi who had submitted the poem “Divina anima puerilis.”

In Marinetti's presentation of Buzzi, he reminds the public that *Poesia* will continue to search for new talent with yearly poetry contests as well as international contests.<sup>68</sup> As promised, the first few pages were dedicated to Buzzi; however, Marinetti reveals that Buzzi has promised to share with the readers of *Poesia* some additional works, namely the prose poem "L'esilio" in the following issue. This marked a long relationship between Marinetti and Buzzi with the young poet eventually acting as one of the editors of *Poesia*. He published a number of works through Marinetti's publishing company, was among the first to join the Futurist movement, and frequently participated in the *serate*. Marinetti not only used the literary contest to find new talent but also as a way to fill the pages of his journal at a minimal cost. Out of 318 poems that were submitted, Marinetti and his editors highlighted 32 poems that were deemed worthy of publication, which appeared in subsequent issues of *Poesia*. The winners and runners-up of Marinetti's literary contest almost always played a continual role in *Poesia* through publications and supporting Marinetti's endeavors. Through *Poesia*, Marinetti was able to create a patronage system that consisted of notable poets in the field of cultural production and newly discovered poets. He frequently published works by Khan, Pascoli, and Jarry, which helped to legitimize his magazine. Perhaps even more interesting is that Marinetti publically lived out these friendships in the pages of *Poesia*, often publishing letters, dedications, and reviews of these notable artists. Having the reader to understand these personal relationships further broadened Marinetti's public persona. The poets, discovered by *Poesia*, guaranteed a constant flow work for the magazine and a loyal following, and they were able to earn money for the time for their literary efforts.

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<sup>68</sup> The poetry contest seems to be one of the major ways Marinetti was able to solicit works for his magazine. Marinetti also sponsored a contest for a critical work in Italian on any work by Pascoli. He does not deny his agenda, stating that "lo scopo di questo primo concorso è di proclamare degnamente fra gli stranieri il genio del grande poeta nostro" (*Poesia* February/March 1906). The competition offered an award of 1000 lire and gave full ownership to *Poesia*. Marinetti explains in the announcement that the money made from the critical work will be used to pay the award and to offer future literary contests. Other competitions were designed for novels, free versed poems, and contests open solely for its international audience in search of works in different languages. These contest never had just one winner given that Marinetti published multiple submissions from each competition.

Other parts of the promotional material revolved around self-promotion. Marinetti filled each issue of *Poesia* with advertisements on his most recent work and activities. He frequently advertised his lyric poem “Destruction” and epic poem “La Conquête des étoiles” and typically dedicated a whole page to promote his satiric tragedy *Le Roi Bombance*.<sup>69</sup> However, self-promotion did not end in an advertisement alone; Marinetti also republished critical reviews of his work and activities from leading literary figures and magazines. In the newspaper style article, “Il Trionfo di Poesia,”<sup>70</sup> Marinetti includes a republished review from *Mercure de France*, which was a well-known literary magazine that had published *Le Roi Bombance* and was always featured in an ad on the back cover of *Poesia*.<sup>71</sup> *Mercure de France*, called Marinetti’s intention “*excellente*,” while the poet Ada Negri called his magazine “*audace*” and “*di altissimo significato artistico*.” Negri also took the time to include a few positive remarks about “La Conquête Des Étoiles.” This kind of self-promotion consisted of the juxtaposition of republished reviews from popular writers, magazines, and/or newspapers, often from friends of Marinetti that went into making his image and controlling the message of his movement.

In the first two issues proceeding *Poesia*’s new affiliation with Futurism, the magazine opened with the Founding manifesto in French, Italian, and with an English translation in the April issue 1909. The main difference between *Poesia* before and after the official announcement “Poesia organe du Futurism” is captured best by Somigli, who states that this phase “constituted a space of encounter and confrontation of all the advanced poetic tendencies

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<sup>69</sup> Sem Benelli also used *Poesia* to promote his poem “Un Figlio Dei Tempi” and his tragedy *La Maschera Di Bruto*.

<sup>70</sup> Appeared in the March issue 1905.

<sup>71</sup> In addition to *Mercure de France*, Marinetti offered space to *La Rénovation Esthétique*, *La Toison D’Or*, *Românul*, *Vers et Prose*, *Le Beffroi*, *La Balance*, *Vir*, *Antée*, *Renacimiento*, *Le Censeur*, and *Les Marges*. Each advertisement included the director of the magazine, address, theme, and price.

of the *fin de siècle*” (Printed media 85). Acting as the official organ of Futurism meant that the letters to the editor, literary contests, featured poets, republished reviews, and ads came together in an organized fashion around a more precise and detailed agenda that was designed to promote Futurism. Marinetti continued to make Futurism accessible by featuring more translations of the manifesto in Spanish and in German.<sup>72</sup>

Marinetti promoted his movement through antagonism, which was a tactic he had already used in *Poesia* with the *enquête*.<sup>73</sup> Paul Adam, in his letter to the editor, voiced his affinity to the valorization of science, the machine, and speed but rejected the notion of “*détruire, abolir, anéantir*” the past while others such as Ivanhoé Rambosson and André Ibels praised Marinetti’s disregard for museums as “graveyards of the past.” The most negative responses to Futurism came from Robert De Montesquieu who expressed naivety in Marinetti’s approach and Pierre Loti who was insulted by the very invitation to comment on Marinetti’s polemics given that his work embraced the past (*Poesia* Issue 6, 1909). Marinetti also continued to push Futurism’s antagonistic sentiment in the republished reviews from the international press. The *Sun*, for example, summed up the Futurists’ plight, “[Our] subjection to this dominating presence of the past is like that of a youth burning to be up and doing in the wide world, but held back in tutelage (*Poesia*).”<sup>74</sup> Marinetti stressed the most antagonistic elements such as its anti-traditional stance in a similar way he had done with the *enquête* to encourage discussion about Futurism.

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<sup>72</sup> Various translations of the manifesto begin to appear from issue 3 – issue 6 in 1909, which included the Spanish translation in the Madrid newspaper *El Liberal* and in *El Diario Espanol* in Buenos Aires. The German translation appeared in *Kölnische Zeitung*, and the English translation was published in New York newspaper *The Sun* and the British newspaper *Telegraph*.

<sup>73</sup> In the first year of *Poesia* Marinetti launched to *enquête* questions. The first survey question (February 1905) asked best to honor Giovanni Pascoli, and the second question (April 1905) was dedicated to “la bellezza della donna italiana.” The first two questions garnered very little response, but the third question regarded Gustave Kahn, the creator of *vers libre*. Marinetti’s question in French was different and provocative compared to the Italian version. Marinetti seems to purposefully solicit vitriol responses from his French peers as the question assumed that Khan was the creator of free verse.

Marinetti, of course, welcomed praises of his new movement, but he also found value in the negative responses to Futurism. Marinetti would revisit this concept through his notion of “the pleasure of being booed” first introduced in the “Manifesto of Futurist Playwrights.” Antagonism in the theatrical space served to regain control of cultural production from the audience, but the Futurists’ provocations solicited strong reactions from the public, which were always documented in the press. Antagonism led to a kind of free publicity that Marinetti took advantage of to promote his movement.

Marinetti was able to fill the pages of *Poesia* in part through the national and international literary contest that consisted of poetry, novels, and critical studies. Because Futurism was new, *Poesia* could not commission a Futurist work through its literary contest. The magazine now had the responsibility but also authority to illustrate applications of Futurist works. In this sense, *Poesia* and its publishing activities under Edizioni Futuriste di Poesia produced several Futurist works, for instance, “Manifesto Politico,” “Tuons le clair de lune,” and *Mafarka il futurista* (Marinetti); *L’incendiario* and *Il codice di Perelà* (Aldo Palazzeschi); “Aeroplani”(Buzzi), and *Poesie elettriche* (Corrado Govoni) to name a few.<sup>75</sup> These projects were further publicized throughout the pages of *Poesia*, appearing in the front and back pages of the promotional material but also at the bottom of the pages in poetic and critical section. The literary winners, Buzzi and Cavacchioli, acquired prominent roles within the journal and Futurist movement. Buzzi, in his position as a co-editor of *Poesia*, allowed him to publish many of his works and critical essays. Cavacchioli, Govoni, Lucini, and Palazzeschi contributed frequently to the magazine and were the first members to join Futurist enterprise giving its members a significant

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<sup>75</sup> The cost of *Poesia* was located on the back cover. An annual subscription to *Poesia* cost 10 lire and a single issue costing 1 lira. Overseas subscriptions cost 15 lire and single issues cost 1.5 lire. Marinetti offered readers a deal that consisted of choosing four free “gifts” from the “Edizioni della Rivista.” Marinetti also included the prices of the various works that readers could choose from, which not only gave the price of individual works but gave readers an idea of how much of a value they were getting by buying a subscription as opposed to a single issue.

amount of symbolic capital. The literary magazine not only diffused Futurist works but also brought new members to the movement and provided the economic incentives for this to take place. I agree with François Livi's assessment that the journal *Poesia* was based on a system of patronage (33-38), and this framework most likely evolved from Marinetti's initial meetings with Gustave Khan after the *samedis populaires* contest. However, the organizational structure and the network that emerged within *Poesia* were quickly exported and instituted in other journals, creating a complex web that allowed for greater diffusion, mobilization of resources, and the realization of Futurism's goals.

### ***Lacerba* and Futurism**

The literary journals *Lacerba* acted as a brief organ of the Futurist movement, helping to popularize new aesthetic projects such as words-in-freedom, the Futurist collage, and divulging the movement's interventionist politics. Moreover, the literary magazine had a lasting impact on the spread of Futurism in Florence. The Florentine journal was headed by Giovanni Papini and Ardengo Soffici, who broke from the literary journal *La voce*.<sup>76</sup> As the name suggests, *La voce*, as well as the literary magazine *Leonard*, embraced a conservative and rational approach in solving Italy's cultural and political questions. *La voce* opposed the Libyan war in 1911 and viewed negatively the experimentation occurring in the avant-gardes. According to Soffici, *Lacerba* represented the antipode of *La voce*, conveying a sense of immaturity and youthfulness and at the same time a sour taste to the readers, who were thought of as simpletons and unprepared (Papini and Soffici 323). *Lacerba* gave Papini and Soffici a platform to voice their

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<sup>76</sup> Giuseppe Prezzolini was the editor of *La voce*, who had acquired a reputation for giving reasoned analyses of Italy's political dilemma. It was, in part, this careful, measured approach of *La voce* coupled with the idealism of Prezzolini Benedetto Croce that leads to the split between the two parties.



interventionist politics and the freedom to engage with the avant-gardes, which was impossible with Prezzolini at *La voce*.

The alliance between Papini, Soffici and the Futurists was not a surprise since both sides shared interventionist goals and the penchant for scandal.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, *Lacerba* had showcased many proto-Futurist works that dealt with the cult of violence, the modern, disdain for women, and industrialization. However, Soffici and Papini were initially critical of Futurism, claiming that Futurist painting was nothing novel but rather presented an improvised form of Cubism. They also believed that true artists did not have to resort to advertising. However, this opinion changed in 1913 when Soffici wrote a letter to Papini regarding the Futurists:

It is the only movement with which we can associate ourselves. Working with the others we can render it more serious and more effective—fertile. To become something important and productive the Futurists require qualities that we possess and that we can usefully bring to this movement (Richter 217).<sup>78</sup>

On March 15, Papini officially announced the new relationship between *Lacerba* and Futurism in his ironic article “Contro il futurismo.” Even though the alliance only survived one year, Futurism quickly proved beneficial for the magazine exposing it to Marinetti’s international audience and introduced *Lacerba* to the typographic experimentation that was occurring in the print industry. In return, the magazine provided a space for Futurist works and political agenda.

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<sup>77</sup> Lawrence Rainey states in the introduction to *Futurism* that Soffici and had gotten into an altercation with Boccioni and the Futurists. Soffici had given Boccioni’s work a negative review during a brief encounter with the Futurists at an early Futurist exhibition where Boccioni, Marinetti, and other Milanese Futurists arrived by train in Florence. They went to the local café where Soffici was known to frequent and upon seeing him the Futurists started a fight. The police ordered Marinetti and Boccioni back to Milan on the next year, but Soffici was waiting at the station with a number of his friends. As the second fight broke out, the police arrested both groups and placed them in a holding room awaiting the police commissioner. Once the commissioner arrived, he found the two sides talking amicably to each other, delighted by what they had in common (16).

<sup>78</sup> Translated quote appears in Poggi (30).

The March issue (1913) marked the formal alliance between the Milanese Futurists and the Florentine avant-garde, which published works by Marinetti, Luciano Folgore, Buzzi, Boccioni, and Carrà. Marinetti introduced readers of *Lacerba* to his free-word poem “Adrianopoli Assedio Orchestra,” which, according to Poggi, was the first step in Marinetti’s campaign to popularize the art form words-in-freedom (31). Marinetti had already published in 1912 “Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista” (Technical manifesto of Futurist literature) where he tackled the problem of language in modern times. The manifesto advocated for the destruction of syntax, the elimination of grammatical rules, punctuation, adverbs, adjectives, and the use of the infinitive and mathematical symbols. In freeing words from their traditional bonds, it allowed for a language to communicate as fast and efficient as the telegraph. Marinetti captured this poetic language through the use of onomatopoeia, free expressive orthography, and typographic deformation such as stretching a word’s font size to indicate varying intensities and distances. The end result formed a poetic language that transmitted sensations and images, which far surpassed trends in the advertising industry. Marinetti continued to develop and refined his theories on poetic language, publishing in *Lacerba* the manifesto “L’immaginazione senza fili e le parole in libertà” (Wireless Imagination and Words-in-Freedom), “Lo splendore geometrico e meccanico nelle parole in libertà” (Geometric and Mechanical Splendor in Words-in-Freedom), “Onomatopoeie astratte e sensibilità numerica” (Abstract Onomatopoeias and Numerical Sensibility).<sup>79</sup>

One encounters much overlap between Marinetti’s “Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista” and the ensuing manifestos published in *Lacerba*. Despite the repetitive nature of

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<sup>79</sup> The manifesto was published in two installments occurring first in the March 15 issue of *Lacerba* and then in April 1914.

Marinetti, “L’immaginazione senza fili e le parole in libertà” does provide new details into the theoretical outline given in the technical manifesto. For instance, Marinetti introduces the phrase “Futurist Sensibility,” which represented a phrase that encompassed the whole Futurist movement. Marinetti equates the Futurist sensibility to the “complete renewal of human sensibility brought about by the great discoveries made by science (Marinetti *Critical* 120).” The increased pace of life, Marinetti notes, gave way to multiple and simultaneous consciousnesses.<sup>80</sup> Modernity was highly understood by its physicality, the construction and production of goods; but Marinetti acknowledges a psychological effect. The invention of the plane, for example, collapses time and further promotes travel and tourism or rather encourages greater diffusion of people and ideas. In the manifesto, Marinetti captures the new mindset that emerges in modernity:

A human being successively acquires awareness of his home, his neighborhood, his town, his region, his continent. Today he possesses a sense of what the world is. He has a despicable need for knowledge about his ancestors, but also a constant desire to know what his contemporaries, in every part of the world, are up to (Marinetti, *Critical* 122).

Modernity, in this sense, was composed of its physical changes but also its psychological changes on the individual that experienced new sensations. Words-in-freedom became the language that mirrored the psychological impact of modernity no matter how imperceptible and minute the sensations may be. Smells and sounds, for example, were invisible to the eye but *visible* to the olfactory and auditory senses possessing the ability to disperse and fill spaces.

Onomatopoeia represented another literary device that captured the noises of modernity.

Consequently, the literary technique forced a new relationship between orthography and

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<sup>80</sup> Simultaneous consciousness was also at the root of the Futurist synthetic theater. Marinetti describe his idea of compact theater in the manifesto “A Futurist Theater of Essential Brevity,” stating that the synthetic theater gives way to actions that take place in a single scene without any shifts in time or in place and where two environments and many different time levels can interact and exist at the same time.

typography in which the aural and visual aspects of language came together. Typographic experiments in font style and size gave new meaning to analogies and onomatopoeic words that were able to express the realms of noise, weight, and smell. In the free word poem *Zang tumb tuum*, Marinetti relied on onomatopoeic effects to evoke the battlefield of the Balkan war. He divided onomatopoeia into several different categories in “Abstract Onomatopoeias and Numerical Sensibility.” The first category is characterized as sounds that are direct, imitative, elementary, and realistic. This is followed by the second type that consists of indirect, complex and analogical sounds. Marinetti also mentions an abstract onomatopoeia and a psychic onomatopoeic arrangement. Words-in-freedom represented a suitable alternative than the fixed structures in traditional poetry to articulate the nuances of modernity especially in the sensorial realm.

The Futurists transitioned from words-in-freedom to *dipinti paroliberi* or free-word pictures. *Lacerba* was instrumental in popularizing the Futurist collage. The free-word pictures represented the integration of textual elements into paintings or drawings where it becomes increasingly difficult to decipher between pictorial and verbal works of art. But in a Futurist manner, the Futurist collage was used for self-promotion where artists frequently inserted text from their works, reviews, manifestos, etc. within the collage. Soffici, in the collage *Composizione Lacerba*, not only promotes his involvement with the journal incorporating the heading into the work but also inserted part of the book cover from his recent book *Cubismo e oltre*.

In addition to Futurist aesthetics, *Lacerba* also provided the space for the Futurists’ political goals, publishing the manifesto “Programma Politico Futurista” (Futurist Political Program) on the front pages of the October 15 issue. Even though the Futurists and the Florentine group

shared the same political goals, which consisted of bringing Italy into the war, the relationship between the two groups had already ended when *Lacerba* announced its sole focus on politics. The official breakup resurfaced old tensions that were never displaced. Boccioni and Papini ardently disagreed with nature of artist production. In the article, “Il cerchio si chiude” (*Lacerba* February 1915), Papini voiced his disagreement with the Futurists on several points. First, he criticized the inclusion of bits of reality in painting, the use of onomatopoeia and images in poetry, and everyday noises in music, which Luigi Russolo had established in “The Art of Noises” (1913). Moreover, Papini disagreed with Marinetti’s assault on the past and felt uneasy about bridging the gap between life and art. For Papini, creating art for a tool of action devalued art and relegated it to mere propaganda, which threatened the very existence of the “artist.” Shirley Vinall argues that Papini and Soffici never wanted to disregard the value in the past and neither their background in French Symbolism. Papini considered the Florentine avant-garde group as Italian inheritors of French Symbolism from Baudelaire through Rimbaud and Mallarmé. Furthermore, the Florentine Futurists exhibited more advanced techniques under the umbrella of Futurism, and the antics, polemics, manifestos of Marinetti and Milanese group was nothing more than *Marinettismo*, accusing the Futurists of being unoriginal and followers of Marinetti (Vinall 28-29). The notion that Papini considered himself more Futurist than Marinetti again points to the common practice of legitimation that these movements encountered. Vinall states that Papini began to distance himself from Marinetti once *Lacerba* became more internationally known in part by Marinetti’s contacts (29). Papini’s desire to retain ownership of the Futurist brand, while casting another word onto Marinetti, illustrates how influential and wide-spread Futurism had become and the symbolic capital that the movement offered.

*Lacerba* and Futurism had a lasting effect on each other even if the actual relationship was brief. First and foremost, *Lacerba* would have not received the publicity it garnered if it had not been associated with Futurism. This marked a new direction for the magazine and the careers of Papini and Soffici. Politically, the two groups shared the same agenda; and as a result, Florence becomes an important city for political alliances that Futurism later cultivates for its political party. This political influence becomes the legacy of the Futurist journal *L'Italia Futurista*.

### ***L'Italia futurista* and Futurism**

After the official break with Futurism, *Lacerba* became more involved in political activities. By August 14, 1914, the war had broken out, and Papini made the decision to announce *Lacerba*'s complete dedication to politics. The journal went from a bi-weekly circulation to a weekly one, and the price was cut in half. Having given up their aesthetic program altogether, the journal was specifically focused on drafting Italy into the war on the side of the Allies. Once Italy's entrance into the war was official, the journal ceased circulation with the last issue carrying the headline "Abbiamo vinto!"<sup>81</sup> The political success of *Lacerba*, as Poggi argues, derived from the fact that the magazine targeted a specific alienated crowd that was composed of highly intelligent members of the bourgeoisie such as officials, tradesmen, and craftsmen, who felt their power threaten from the rise of socialism (55). Once the publication published its last issue, it created a political void that was later filled by *L'Italia futurista*.

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<sup>81</sup> The last issue, dated May 22, 1915, which presented a piece written by Papini entitled "Ultimo Appello" in which the poet demanded that the Italian government to enter into war: "O la guerra ai tedeschi o la guerra civile," "O la guerra ai tedeschi o la repubblica," "O la guerra ai tedeschi o il protettorato anglo-franco-russo," "O la guerra ai tedeschi o la vergogna italiana perpetua e irreparabile." (War with the Germans or Civil war. War with the Germans or revolution. War with the Germans or a republic. War with the Germans or an Anglo-Franco-Russian protectorate. War with the Germans or perpetual and irreparable Italian shame).

The beginning of *L'Italia futurista* marked an important stage in Futurism because a younger generation of poets took the stage in support of the Futurist project. The small group of poets consisted of Tuscan natives such as Remo Chiti, Vieri and Neri Nannetti, Emilio Settimelli and Bruno Corra, Arnaldo Ginna, and Maria Ginanni. In some ways, the group shared similar characteristics with *Lacerba*. For instance, there was a mutual dislike for rationality, seriousness that embodied the works of Prezzolini at *La voce* and criticized the idealism of Croce and the Decadentism of D'Annunzio. Scandals and insults were at the heart of the propagandistic strategy, and they continued with the anti-feminist sentiment of the preceding group. Lastly, *L'Italia futurista* followed in *Lacerba's* footsteps in supporting the Futurist aesthetic program such as *parole-in-libertà* and *tavole parolibere* but wholeheartedly embraced the Futurist love of speed, flight, and the machine much more than *Lacerba*. One sees that many of the Futurist aesthetic works in *L'Italia futurista* dealt with the war, which was not the case in the early part of *Lacerba*.

In an attempt to silence critics and to distinguish the group and their objectives from *Lacerba*, Settimelli clarified to his readers the differences:

We do not continue *Lacerba* and we are proud to say so. In fact, being ill-mannered and using bad words (the self-styled audacities of medieval university students) have nothing to do with Futurism. We hold strongly to our refined and elegant geniality, which though modern does not exclude fisticuffs and smacks on the ears, as well as to our divine virility. *L'Italia futurista* will be the first dynamic Italian journal. It will have writer-combatants, subscribers from the trenches, and critics who frequent taverns (which are safe from airplane raids) as well as aviator propagandists.<sup>82</sup>

One of the main differences that distinguished the two groups was their complete devotion to Marinetti. The younger Florentine group did not believe in Marinettism; and in reality, they

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<sup>82</sup> The translated quote appears in *Avant-Gard Florence* by Walter Adamson (220), which was published in manifesto form in *L'Italia futurista* on June 1, 1916.

viewed Futurism as a free space for creativity, which by the mid-teens had produced the Milan-Florence axis but also saw Futurism becoming more influential in the south of Italy, taking on slight variations. Artistic freedom, according to the group, was not possible at *Lacerba* where Papini and Soffici advocated for creation within tradition. Besides the adulation of Marinetti, it was clear that he played a vital part, albeit behind the scenes, giving that he was serving as underlieutenant in the Third Artillery Regiment in the war. While serving, Marinetti and the Futurists developed a close relation with soldiers on the frontline. Futurists such as Mario Carli, Ferruccio Vecchi, Giuseppe Bottai, Ottone Rosai, Pietro Bolzon, and Enrico Rocca served within the assault units known as the *Arditi*.<sup>83</sup> The group was able to divulge Futurist ideas to the *Arditi* that not only produced material for the pages of *L'Italia futurista* but also led to a political alliance between the Futurists and *Arditi* (Berghaus Politics 102). *L'Italia futurista* definitely benefitted from the close relationship with soldiers, giving the magazine a unique feature as it brought the wartime experience to its readers. The war experience represented a defining aspect of the literary group, and one sees that aesthetic concerns take a backseat to the political agenda of the group, which was markedly different from *Lacerba* that worked towards Italy's involvement in the war. The members of *L'Italia futurista* had the war they wanted; therefore, the main concern of the group was trying to leverage this success into a broader political agenda. Adamson notes that the group around *L'Italia futurista* achieved "an aura of military bearing and resolve, of individualism subordinated to collective will in a manner completely unlike the older generation of Florentine avant-gardists (Adamson 223)." In a sense, Adamson sees the

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<sup>83</sup> The term "Arditi," which meant "the daring ones," was used to describe soldiers in the assault units in World War I. These soldiers were considered the finest in the Italian army because they undertook the riskiest missions. Nearly 20% of all soldiers serving the assault unit would not return; therefore, the *Arditi* became very famous for their courage and was offered a number of luxuries such as higher pay, comfortable living quarters, less likely to undergo disciplinary actions, and did not have to serve in the trenches. In analyzing the relationship between Marinetti and the *Arditi*, Berghaus states that Marinetti felt the *Arditi* embodied the Futurist individual, calling them "the man of the future and the genius of the Italian race (Politics 102)." Marinetti's words reflected the mythic aura that most people gave the *Arditi*.



group as a protopolitical party, which was tasked in making Futurists' political concerns mainstream.

The overall influence the journal had on Futurism was felt aesthetically and politically. First, the younger Florentine group, who was led by Settimelli and Carli, took Futurism aesthetically into a different direction, showing slight deviations from the previous Florentine group as well as Marinetti himself. According to Maria Papini's introduction to *L'Italia futurista (1916-1918)*, the group's Futurism incorporated "*magico realismo*" (52-53), a foray into the unconscious and dream world, a point that Adamson says placed the group in the realm of Dadaism (221). Secondly, despite the anti-feminist sentiment of the movement, *L'Italia futurista* lent more space to Futurist women than previous journals. Not only did the founding group had a woman within its ranks, Maria Ginanni, who was the wife of Arnaldo Ginna; the magazine, in addition to Ginanni's works, published poems by lesser known Futurists such as Rosa Rosà and Enif Robert.

Perhaps the biggest impact of *L'Italia futurista* on Futurism occurred at the journal's end. The last issue, dated February 1918, featured Marinetti's "Manifesto del partito politico futurista." The manifesto was promoted and circulated within the circles of *L'Italia futurista* and the Arditi. The manifesto illustrated Marinetti conflicting political views, which included a nationalist agenda on one hand and socialist policies on the other. The manifesto shared similar sentiments that Marinetti had developed within Futurist art such as anticlericalism, anti-traditionalism, and foreign occupation; however, the leader stipulated that the political and aesthetic movements were different. Even though Futurism always embraced politics, the political changed that Marinetti and his followers envisioned could only be realized through a political coalition that could work within the current system. The Futurists' political agenda included: abolishment of the senate, nationalization of lands of religious and official authorities of mismanaged and

uncultivated lands, equal representation in Parliament of industrialists, agrarians, engineers, and businessmen. Their social agenda stressed the devaluation of marriage for easy divorce, compulsory education, abolishment of classical education, and modernizing Italy through a works project.

Conceptualizing one's own political party represented a shift in the political strategy between Marinetti and the *L'Italia futurista* group. Marinetti had returned from the war in August where he met with Carli and Settimelli in Rome. The leader of Futurism wanted to consolidate his relationship between the Futurists and the Arditi, and from this meeting, the Futurist Political Party became a reality as well as a journal dedicated to the Arditi. In the aftermath of the Rome meeting with Carli and Settimelli from *L'Italia futurista*, Carli returned to Florence to help Agnoletti start a local chapter called *Fascio Politico Futurista*. In addition to the members of *L'Italia futurista*, there was also participation from Rosai from *Lacerba* and Enrico Rocca from *Il Popolo d'Italia*.<sup>84</sup> The group quickly joined forces with the veteran's group *Associazione Nazionale dei Combattenti* to become the *Fascio Fiorentino di Combattimento* that functioned as an extension of the national *Fasci di Combattimento*.<sup>85</sup> This stage of Futurism marks the first steps in colliding and allying with Mussolini. The *Fasci di Combattimento* was founded on March 23, 1919 in Milan, and it marked the official association between the *Arditi* and the Futurists. Based on Marinetti's diary and official government documents, Berghaus concludes that Mussolini was a better politician but needed the political clout that Marinetti had gained

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<sup>84</sup> Mussolini founded the journal *Il popolo d'Italia* after having resigned from *Avanti* and kicked out of the Socialist party for his interventionist position in WWI. Mussolini uses the journal to gain influence over the combatants returning from the war. Enrico Rocca worked alongside Mussolini as an editor of the journal.

<sup>85</sup> The *Fasci di combattimento* was one of many groups that saw the Futurist alongside ex-combatants. Groups such as the *Associazione fra gli arditi d'Italia*, *Gli Arditi*, *Fasci Politici Futuristi*, and *Fascio Politico futurista*, *Fascio fiorentino futurista* consisted mainly of Futurists and Arditi, and many times members participated in multiples groups.

from the ex-combatants. The two political figures were vying for the same constituency group with the ex-combatants.<sup>86</sup> The Fascist coalition, in part, developed from the relationship that Marinetti had built around *L'Italian futurista*, but Mussolini focused on creating an alliance between the industrialists and the more conservative wing of the *Fasci di Combattimento* (Berghaus *Politics* 118). In this regard, the young Florentine poets in their efforts in *L'Italia futurista* helped Marinetti to give the political aspect of Futurism a distinct voice that was separated from aesthetics. Moreover, the main leaders in the group, Carli and Settimelli, established various *fasci* or local branches of the political movement while also establishing another journal *Roma futurista*<sup>87</sup> that became the organ of the Futurist Political Party and the *Arditi*.

### **From *Orpheu* to *Portugal Futurista***

The literary journals *Poesia*, *Lacerba*, and *L'Italia Futurista* highlight the collaborative relationships in print media that allowed Marinetti to sell his cultural and political agenda. In this final section, I would like to introduce another Futurist journal that fell outside the axis of Italian literary magazines but yet still carried an impact on spreading Futurist ideas and politics. The birth of *Portugal futurista* (1917) began through the literary journal *Orpheu* (1915) that introduced the seeds of Futurism in Portugal. *Portugal Futurista* aligned itself to the literary

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<sup>86</sup> Berghaus describes Mussolini as a “ruthless and opportunist careerist” who had been expelled from the Socialist party and dropped as editor of *Avanti*, Mussolini used Marinetti to revive his political standing with the Leftist and intransigent interventionist forces by turning to the Fasci di Combattimento, which was on full display in *Il popolo d'Italia*, where he published sympathizing articles on the Arditi (118).

<sup>87</sup> Initially, the magazine was called *Roma Futurista: Giornale Per Tutti Gli Arditi* and was later changed to *Roma Futurista: Giornale del Partito Politico Futurista* before it became just *Roma futurista*.

organs of Futurism by name alone, and it went on to adapt Marinetti's poetics to a Portuguese context. In his diary, Santa Rita Pintor claims that he personally translated Futurist manifestos in Portuguese for Marinetti. However, nothing is known about this encounter, and Marinetti seems to never mention of a formal relationship with the Portuguese Futurists. Marinetti did not arrive in Portugal until his Lisbon conference in 1932, which did not produce a lasting relationship between the two sides. In fact, Marinetti's lecture was received as a little too late. Moreover, the movement had already lost much of its appeal by 1930, and its relationship with Fascism had negatively impacted its image. *Portugal futurista*, in particular, showcased a number of Marinetti's works in translation and proved once again the sentiments expressed in *Futurismo nel mondo* that Futurism carried an international impact in part because the movement was quite malleable and had acquired a certain level of notoriety.

*Portugal Futurista* would have not existed without the first modernist journal *Orpheu*. The journal contained the first signs that Marinetti's ideas had taken root in Portugal in what is best characterized as the pre-Futurist phase of Portuguese modernism. Therefore, it is important to highlight *Orpheu* and its contribution to the creation *Portugal Futurista*. As scholars have noted, *Orpheu* was the first modernist journal in Portugal, known for showcasing the works of Fernando Pessoa, Mário Sá-Carneiro, Guilherme de Santa-Rita, and José de Almada Negreiros, all of whom became affiliated with Portuguese Futurism.

*Orpheu* represented a break from the Saudistas, a group led by Teixeira de Pascoaes<sup>88</sup>, who wanted to take Portugal back its lyrical tradition. *Saudosismo*, according to Pessoa, subordinated art with patriotism and religion, and the poetic form also relied on metaphysics and blended

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<sup>88</sup> Before starting his own movement *saudosismo*, Pascoaes was affiliated with the literary movement *Renascença Portuguesa*, serving as editor *A águia*, which functioned as the organ of the movement.

paganism and Christianity. Unlike Pessoa's Sensationism, *saudosismo* adhered to a specific doctrine and aesthetic vision rather than giving value to all aesthetic doctrines (Pessoa and Pizarro 316). In a similar fashion, *Orpheu* did break away from the past and embraced the European experimentalism occurring in other cities such as Paris, London, and Berlin; however, the name *Orpheu* also indicated a strong relationship with past tradition, echoing the Greek myth of Orpheus, which takes poetry back to its origins of song and the harmonious mixture of poetic and word music. Paula Morão has suggested that the idea to juxtapose Greek mythology with innovation indicated that the *Orpheu* project wanted to return poetry to its ancestral roots where the poet acted as a craftsman who must be knowledgeable of his past in order to competently practice his skill. The mediation between past and present manifests itself by relying on classical forms such as the sonnet, the ode, and the elegy conflated with themes of speed, industry, and the machine (Morão 12). *Orpheu* represented a crossroad in Portuguese poetry, which did not promote a specific kind of poetics, but rather featured a number of Portuguese and European modernist movements.<sup>89</sup>

The major literary trends presented in the pages of *Orpheu* included Paulism, Intersectionism, Sensationism, and Futurism. For instance, Ângelo de Lima's work, "Poemas Inéditos," was representative of the Paulist movement that sought to create a poetry that was both objective and subjective, and through the materialization of the spirit and the spirituality of nature gave way to a vague, subtle, and complex poetry (Pizarro 27).<sup>90</sup> The Intersectionist poem by Pessoa "Chuva Oblíqua" incorporated elements of Paulism and literary cubism with the goal of intersecting

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<sup>89</sup> Initially *Orpheu* was titled *A Europa* to communicate the desire by the Portuguese to be in harmony with modern artistic movements of Europe and the rest of the world.

<sup>90</sup> Paulism was originally taken from 'paül', meaning bog or marshes. Negreiros states that the inspiration of the name came from André Gide's *Paludes* (1895), a satire about "l'histoire d'un marais." See Negreiros, *Orpheu 1915-1965*, p.11.

different planes and sensations. The movement resembled Marinetti's concept of simultaneity as well as the sensorial focus of words-in-freedom that Marinetti spoke when referring to the "Futurist sensibility". Moreover, there is the Vertigism of Raul Leal in "Atelier", which promoted a sort of spiritualism that viewed the external world as part of a psychological phenomenon (Leal 18). One of the most influential movements to appear in *Orpheu* was Sensationism, a complex literary movement that Pessoa and Sà-Carneiro developed together. Sensationism was based on the idea that a poet or artist could embody multiple states of mind even if they are not lived with sincerity. Pizarro situates Pessoa's heteronymity or polypersonality within the philosophical ideas of Sensationism, which contributed to Pessoa's alter ego Álvaro de Campos, the heteronym most associated with the Futurist movement (35).

Campos is considered the most modernist alter ego created by Pessoa, and without his work, Pessoa would have been a less cosmopolitan and innovative. Campos, born in the small coastal town of Tavira in the south of Portugal, often confronted existential themes such as the meaning of life, death, and Portugal's position in the larger continent of Europe while also providing biographical and personal information of the heteronym's life. For instance, the poet studied mechanical engineering in Glasgow and then eventually settled on naval engineering. Campos exhibits a psychosis that is in part derived from depression and his reliance on nicotine and hallucinogens. Out of over fifty heteronyms, Campos represents the most complex alter ego being the only one that develops a relationship with Pessoa the poet. Furthermore, Campos' poetry evolves in ways that Pessoa's other heteronyms do not. The alter ego wrote a review of Pessoa's *O Marinheiro* in which he criticized the writer for his unenthusiastic style of writing

stating that *O Marinheiro* makes “the most agile and astute sleepy.”<sup>91</sup> Darlene Sadlier argues that Campos started his literary career much in the style of Pessoa himself writing sonnets in a classical vein but gravitated towards the machine aesthetic in later writings, which became a prominent theme after his trip to the Orient. In this phase of Campos’ work, Sadlier even suggests that Campos become an intermediary between Pessoa and his most admired poet Walt Whitman. The American poet and Campos wrote about homoerotic experiences and articulated modernity through the technological advances that were occurring in navigation (106). However, I would add that Campos’ machine aesthetic brings his work closer to Futurism, as especially seen in the poem “Opiáro.” Instead of valorizing the automobile, he focuses on the steamship, gears, mechanisms, and the steering wheel tying Portuguese modernity to the Age of Discovery. He employs a violent language in tone and in subject matter as he expresses enthusiasm for guns, cannons, submarines, airplanes while articulating the novelties of modernity through words-in-freedom. In the overarching years of *Orpheu* and *Portugal Futurista*, Futurism lasted from 1915-1917. In the three issues of *Orpheu*, scholars point to several works that conveyed a strong Futurist influence. The works by Campos such as “Ode Marítima” and “Ode Triunfal,” “Cena do Ódio” by Negreiros, and “Manucure” by Sá-Carneiro.<sup>92</sup>

The experimentation that took place in *Orpheu* embodied Portuguese modernism. According to Pessoa, this meant that the true modernist movement of Portugal was Sensationism. The poet

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<sup>91</sup> The review that Campos published was entitled “Depois de Ler o Seu Drama Estático ‘O Marinheiro’ em ‘Orpheu I’”. *O Marinheiro* was Pessoa’s only play that he published; however, it was first rejected by editor Álvaro Pinto and officially marked Pessoa’s departure from the movement Renascença Portuguesa and its organ *A Águia*. Campos, in his essay, criticized the vague symbolist language of Pessoa’s drama. The play represented a common motif of Pessoa: the difficulty in distinguishing between reality and dream and between real and unreal. There is no evidence that Campos’ critique was influenced by Pinto’s rejection. However, the dialogue between Pessoa and Campos regarding *O Marinheiro* represents the Pessoa’s break with Symbolism and his beginning works with the Orpheu group.

<sup>92</sup> *Orpheu* ceased publication after the second issue when Sá-Carneiro’s father decided not to further financial the venture. The third issue was only published in 1983 when the proofs had been located.

claimed that the modernist attitude could only be one that accepted all possible literary trends regardless of whether they were inspired by the past, present, or future (Pessoa and Pizarro 183-85). Furthermore, *Orpheu* represented the first time where literary content was paired with graphics, incorporating several drawings from the Futurist painter Guilherme Santa Rita Pintor. Even though *Orpheu* only lasted a couple of issues, I tend to disagree with Dix's assessment that the magazine was a failure because it did not stipulate a clear program (157). The journal exhibited a number of Futurist works that can be considered as the pre-Futurist stage of Portuguese Futurism. The other literary trends that were presented in *Orpheu* did not become popular movements, and most of them were created by Pessoa himself. However, the Sensationist approach of the journal was indicative of Portuguese identity at the turn of the century. Being a country on the periphery of Europe, it was not surprising that Portugal was also culturally and economically behind. *Orpheu*, in this sense, is in search of modernity as well as a Portuguese identity, and these elements were essential components in adopting Italian Futurism in *Portugal Futurista*.

Once the third issue of *Orpheu* did not materialize, the next Futurist venture took place in the periodical *O Heraldo* where many members of *Orpheu* as well as new names contributed to the journal's supplement "Gente Nova" dedicated to Futurism in 1916. After several issues of "Gente Nova," a second supplement appeared under the name "Futurismo" in 1917. Both continued to illustrate Futurist poetry until the last edition on August 29, 1917. Even though scholars rarely recognize the supplement, *O Heraldo* represented one of the most important contributions to the Futurist movement in Portugal. Unlike the poetic works in *Orpheu*, the supplement was dedicated solely to Futurist poetry in the Portuguese language, and it was produced by poets in Algarve region of Portugal. Furthermore, they sponsored a Futurist



exhibition, announced the creation of the “Lisbon Futurist Committee,” headed by Negreiros and Pintor, and promoted the forthcoming magazine *Portugal Futurista*. Júdice sums up the impact of the Faro group as one of the three phrases of Portuguese modernism, which fell between *Orpheu* and *Portugal Futurista*. More importantly, the Futurist poems in *O Heraldo* demonstrated that the cultural environment in Portugal was not solely dictated by the political and economic influence of Lisbon. Faro emerged as another cultural center of exchange and showing that Futurism was diffused throughout the country (Júdice *Poesia* 7-16).

The first and only issue of *Portugal futurista* was published in November 17, 1917 in what many scholars considered the pinnacle of Futurism in Portugal. *Portugal futurista* demonstrated a progression of the Futurist ideas that first appeared in *Orpheu*. The seriousness of the magazine and its dedication to Futurist principles can be dictated in name along, inserting itself into the Futurist brand after literary magazines such as *L'Italia futurista* and *Roma futurista*. The participants of the magazine included familiar names such as Pintor, Álvaro de Campos, and Negreiros but also introduced new Futurists such as Raul Leal, José Pacheco, and Ruy Coelho. Visually, *Portugal Futurista* mirrored other avant-garde magazines in that it combined literature with visual arts in a way that was superior to *Orpheu*. For example, Campos' use of *parole-in-libertà* in “Ultimatum” and the reproductions of paintings by Souza-Cardoso and Pintor gave the magazine a similar appeal to *Blast*, demonstrating that the magazine was aware of modernist aesthetics in typography. One of the main differences between *Orpheu* and *Portugal futurista* was that the later embraced wholeheartedly the Futurist aesthetic and aggressive tone. Instead of focusing on the classical forms of poetry, the journal relied more on the manifesto form to present Futurist ideas. There are several manifestos some of which are translated or republished such as Valentine de Saint Point's “Futurist Manifesto of Lust,” Marinetti's manifesto on

Futurist painting, Negreiros' manifesto "Bailados Russos" where Negreiros criticizes the Portuguese public for not being aware of the artistic movements in Europe. *Portugal futurista* demonstrates how close the Portuguese Futurists modelled their movement after Marinetti's campaign in Italy. The refusal to adhere to the moral standards and customs of the bourgeoisie, the rejection of traditionalism, and promotion of a Portuguese nationalism were characteristic of Italian Futurism. Moreover, the Portuguese poets published several works by Marinetti in the French and Portuguese language, thus diffusing the Italian vein of Futurism throughout Portugal, a point that Marnoto acknowledges in Futurism's arrival in Brazil and India.

The Futurist literary journal, much like the theater, functioned as part of the Futurist repertoire, which represented a combination of activities that worked together to promote and expand Futurism. The journals functioned in specific ways that increased participation within the movement, advanced the aesthetic principles of Futurism, and pushed the political agenda of cultural renewal. *Poesia*, in particular, established a network of contacts that consisted of journalists, editors, established artists, and newly discovered artists that participated in the Futurist movement. This network of individuals behaved as patronage system, which implied an economic windfall to those who participated. *Poesia* created the symbolic capital that Marinetti and others would rely on throughout the Futurist movement. As Futurism became a larger entity, journals such as *Lacerba* and *L'Italia futurista* could focus their energies in supporting specific pieces of the Futurist agenda such as its interventionist stance or the poetic invention words-in-freedom. The young poets of *L'Italia futurista* used the magazine to consolidate political support amongst the ex-combatants, and the members went on to establish local *fasci* for the Futurist Political Party. Even though Marinetti in *Futurismo nel mondo* credits the

international success of Futurism to its aesthetic and political arguments; however, *Portugal futurista*, demonstrates exactly how these ideas were diffused and assimilated outside of Italy.

Overall, the Futurist magazine has to be viewed for more than its literary content but rather how the journal represented part of the structural and organizational apparatus that sustained the movement.

## CONCLUSION

Marinetti introduced his new movement to the world on February 20, 1909 in an international setting, on the front pages of *Le Figaro*. He had been developing his movement as far back as 1907, and it was largely relegated to the field of aesthetics, namely poetry. The movement quickly morphed into a cultural/political campaign that took advantage of art to promote the Futurist agenda. The Futurist agenda was not monolithic; it appealed to various segments of the population that included poets and the cultural elite, the youth, ex-combatants, nationalists, interventionists, etc.

As I have argued, it is my belief that Futurism was modelled after social movements. With the rise of parliamentary politics in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, social movements such as the workers' movements in Belgium in the 1890s and the Chartist movement in Great Britain became more prevalent. According to Tilly, these movements highlighted a changing set of dynamics related to political and collective action. Tilly states that there was an increasingly strong connection between contention and national politics, as demonstrated by the rise of demonstrations, street fights, and strikes. Furthermore, movements consistently drew on local and regional cultures such as songs, symbols, slogans, costumes, and labels that made a movement's claims legible to local audiences. Marinetti used a variety of these methods of mobilization such as demonstrations, chants, songs, declamations, the manifesto, and the distribution of informational material. One has to remember that Marinetti was a trained lawyer at the height of democracy in Europe where politicians and citizens were trying to understand the new political system. Marinetti's studies in parliamentary politics undoubtedly gave

Futurism an understandable crowd psychology. According Nye, crowd psychology started as a response to understand the contentious and political gatherings that were taking place as a result of parliamentary politics. The methods of collective and political action became more sophisticated to wield the necessary political power for representation, and this was a point that Marinetti understood very well. Marinetti's background in politics, media, and entrepreneurship, coupled with his interests in the arts, revolutionized the methods of social mobilization. One of the unique facets of Futurism was that it integrated art as a tool of propaganda and social mobilization in what Elull would call orthopraxy. To my knowledge, there was no social movement up until that time that integrated art to extent of the Futurists to wage a political campaign.

A prime example of how art and propaganda came together under Futurism to exert political change is through the Futurist campaign of intervention. Marinetti was known to have supported every war during the time of Futurism, from the colonial wars, to WWI, and to WWII. The tools that the Futurists used are the ones that I have concentrated on in this study: the manifesto, the theatrical space, and the literary journal. War was always used as a symbol and goal of the Futurist agenda, characterized as "the sole cleanser of the world" stated in the "Founding Manifesto." War brought destruction, violence, and elimination of antiquated structures that held a nation back, which Marinetti often equated it to the image of an uprooted tree. War also created national unity, bringing very different segments of the population together under one goal and one identity. Lastly, the spoils of war were to bring national legitimacy and economic power.

The Futurists campaigned on war intervention soon after the launch of Futurism, and it extended beyond the use of the foundational manifesto. We can point to the "First Futurist Political Manifesto," published first in 1909 as a flier and large poster during the General

Elections of March 7 and 14, and the addendum to the manifesto was published in 1915.

Marinetti assumes credit for having spurred a nationalist movement in Italy stating:

In the *First Manifesto of Futurism*, published in *Le Figaro* on February 20, 1909, which is to say about two years before the foundation of Italian Nationalist Association and three or so years before the Libyan War, we proclaimed ourselves to be Futurist Nationalists, by which we meant antitraditionalists (Berghaus, *Critical* 49).<sup>93</sup>

Many of the manifestos that Marinetti published focused on political questions, and they distributed them not only at elections as fliers or posters but also bombarded their audiences with Futurist manifestos at their theatrical events, exhibitions, and in impromptu performances that took place in the streets, universities, and opera houses.

In terms of the Futurists' own theatrical events, Marinetti mentions how influential his *serate* were in reviving irredentist sentiments that galvanized the audience against Austria.

We ended our second Futurist *serata* (at the Teatro Lirico in Milan, on February 15, 1910) with the cry: "Long live war, the sole cleanser of the world! Long live Asinari di Bernezzo! Down with Austria!"

These cries, hurled at an audience of four thousand and echoed by a great number of students, earned us—in that moment of pacifism and indifference---a storm of jeering whistles, the insults and smears of the conventionalists (49).

By writing the addendum in 1915, Marinetti is able to associate his efforts between 1909 – 1910 to resurrect the irredentist movement as the main catalyst for Italy's entry into the war in 1915 against Austria. Just as Tilly sees that social movements during this time identify with local and regional symbols, the Futurist *serate*, especially in the northern cities in Italy, irredentism was the centerpiece of the *serata*'s program where those messages of nationalism, patriotism took on a powerful meaning. The theatrical space, of course, was very important to the diffusion of the

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<sup>93</sup> The actual piece that is found in Berghaus, *Critical Writings*, was published in 1915 with an added introductory text that referred to some of the initial Futurist activities and ending with republishing "The First Futurist Political Manifesto."

movement's political and cultural goals as it brought people *en masse* across different social classes, age groups, and educational backgrounds.

In discussing the Futurist literary journal, the Futurist war agenda was greatly amplified by the work of *Lacerba* and *L'Italia futurista*. These two journals embraced wholeheartedly the Futurist political agenda more so than Marinetti's *Poesia*. Together, the journals created a forum that explored the possibilities, realities, and consequences of the war. *Lacerba* was dedicated to getting Italy into the war, publishing political tracts and works of art such as *parole-in-libertà* and the *dipinti paroliberi* (free-word pictures) such as Carrà's *Festa patriottica (Patriotic Festival)* that presented an aviator, the spinning propellers with their centrifugal force, and with the words *aviator*, *audacia* (audacity), *battere il record* (beat the record), *eliche perforanti* (perforating propellers), and *Italia*. Christine Poggi has stated that Carrà's work:

...evokes the fusion of nationalist and irredentist sentiments within the context of a popular festival or patriotic demonstration. Although composed of dynamically dispersed fragments, this collage presents a highly unified, centrally organized whole, suggesting both pictorially and verbally that Italian unity would not be complete until Trieste and other "unredeemed" territories were recovered from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The inclusion of Italy's tricolor flag and of amplified phrases such as "Eevviivaaa il rèèè" (Long live the king), "Evvivaa l'esercito" (Long live the army), and "Trieste Italiana" (Italian Trieste) makes Carrà's nationalist and militarist message clear (41).

*Lacerba* became a very popular news source for its constituents regarding the war; but more importantly, the journal demonstrated the possibilities between Futurist art and propaganda in how the Futurists used art to speak to a series of symbols, history, identities that were used to promote intervention. This close relationship between art and interventionism continued in *L'Italia futurista* publishing more manifestos, collages, and free-word poems. However, *L'Italia futurista* was able to glorify and humanize the war effort by publishing first-hand accounts of the

war that stemmed from a relationship between the Futurist and the *Arditi*. In this respect, one can say that the Futurists acted as a lobby group for war intervention, and it was only the combination of the manifesto, theatrical space, and literary journal that gave this particular campaign a tangible result. This is only one example of the many different metanarratives that we see within Futurism. The position and role of the artist is another theme that appealed artists and intellectuals.

Another aspect of Futurism that is quite revealing is how the movement internationalized and became an alternative for many other countries. This study was not designed with the intention to delve into the minute details of each Futurist movement mentioned. However, I wanted to include examples of other Futurist movements to demonstrate how Marinetti's dialectic as well as his methods of divulgation were implemented in other Futurist movements. In this sense, the internationalization of Futurism, in my view, was aided because Marinetti created a brand for his movement. Joe Marconi states in *The Brand Marketing Book: Managing and Extending the Value of Your Brand* that the marketer must know what the public wants (XIII). Futurism was the only art movement in the early twentieth century that aligned itself with a social program that sought to change psychologically and physiologically the individual; and moreover, it was tied to nationalism. The nationalist aspect that pervaded Futurism coincided with a time in Europe that was centered on industrialization and modernization. As countries searched for resources and markets, it was necessary to weld a collective identity to support the imperialistic efforts, namely war, that countries used to bring about industrialization and modernization. For this reason, the concept of cultural trauma proposed by Jeffrey Alexander offers a plausible thesis to why the Futurist message, which rested on nationalism, resonated in different countries. As I have discussed in the manifesto chapter, Futurism served to correct the failures of the *Risorgimento*



and establish a unified Italian identity. In Portugal, Futurism was juxtaposed with the national embarrassment of the British Ultimatum. Futurism appealed to Catalonia given the previous suppression of Catalan language and culture, and Russia sought Futurism after the devastation of the Russo-Japanese War and then later paired it with the Bolshevik revolution. Nationalism and questions of national identity were some of the most popular political themes during the turn of the century, and Marinetti proved to be in tuned to the political environment.

Marconi also states how important it is important to diversify one's product (XIV). Time after time, Marinetti extends Futurism into other realms in what I believe was an attempt to keep Futurism relevant and fresh. As previously stated, Rainey viewed the Futurists' foray into painting and theater as a way to recaptured the lost interest in Futurism after its initial launch, which started as literary movement. Marinetti suspended all theatrical activities during the autumn of 1913 to dedicate more time to creating artistic works because many critics had denounced the Futurists for creating more manifestos than works of art. The break from the *serate* gave way to the presentation of Russolo's *intonarumori* and a couple of manifestos dedicated to Futurist music during the *serata* in Modena. (Berghaus, *Theatre* 118). In addition, in the mid-teens, the Futurists produced a great portion of their political work, which coincided with their efforts of bringing Italy into the war. The Futurists through their works influenced architecture, sculpture, fashion, cinema, radio, advertisement, etc. The idea that Marinetti continued to reinvent and apply Futurist themes to other field reflected his keen business sense as an entrepreneur. Even in the "Founding Manifesto," Marinetti states that Futurism would not last more than ten years at which point the younger generation would throw them into the trash. Many scholars have interpreted this statement as part of the generational politics that Marinetti uses within Futurism; however, the projected ephemeralness of Futurism has a lot to do with the

dynamics of capitalism. Marinetti anticipated a short life span for Futurism because ultimately newer and more creative movements would emerge that would captivate the audience's attention. Nowadays, in the world of business, one calls this phenomena planned obsolescence where the product either stops functioning or becomes unfashionable after a set period of time (*Economist*). Ford Motor Company implemented planned obsolescence when it introduced yearly models to its automobiles. The goal was to create a committed customer, one that would continue to follow the company and purchase its products and services. Planned obsolescence or rather the creation of new models was design to combat market saturation and to boost sales. In this sense, Rainey's assumption that Futurism was able to gain ground because it consistently invaded new mediums aligns the movement within normal business and marketing practices. The avant-garde landscape was a very competitive market, and the application of Futurism in other parts of society only helped to maintain Futurism's novelty and interest with a public that was now focused on consumption.

In addition to diversifying Futurism, Marinetti was also conscious of the impact that certain labels and words would bring to his movement. Before Marinetti settled on the name Futurism, he debated whether to call his new movement *Dinamismo* or *Elettricismo*. This would not be the last time in which Marinetti showed a preoccupation for language and its potential to speak to the public. In Marinetti's letter to Futurist Gino Severini regarding *l'arte di far manifesti*, Perloff has noted that the leader of Futurism was very involved in crafting the titles, subtitles, and language of works written by other Futurists to ensure what Marinetti called "*de la violence et la précision*."

This was to create what was essentially a new literary genre, a genre that might meet the needs of a mass audience even as, paradoxically, it insisted on the avant-garde, the esoteric, the antibourgeois (Perloff 81).

Marinetti put the same effort into choosing the right name his new movement. Brand names, according to Marconi, should say something about the product and provide the consumer with some kind of image (6). Having chosen “Futurism,” Marinetti put forth a name that was not too specific such as Naturalism, Symbolism, and Unanimism that would run the risk of restricting the movement. Futurism, on the other hand, was general enough to be applied across different fields but still communicated the overarching themes of modernization, technology, sciences by evoking the word “future,” which also made it easily adaptable to other historical contexts. Moreover, on a psychological level, the term “Futurism” can appeal to optimism biases where people are more inclined to feel optimistic about the future than the past, which is to say, who would not be interested in having a better future. The effectiveness of the brand name and what Futurism entailed is further highlighted by poets and scholars alike, who have applied the term “Futurism” to describe other movements such as Zenitism, Sensacionismo, Ultraísmo, etc.<sup>94</sup>

The way in which Marinetti sold Futurism highlights one of the most influential aspects of the movement. Futurism was posited between art and politics, and it demonstrated that the social movement thrust of Futurism was created and exported in the sphere of commodification. The communicative strategies of the Futurists worked together to create a sustain campaign of claim making, but they also promoted methods of diffusion, networks, and a broad appeal across diverse segments of the population. The aesthetic aspect, whose goal was designed to close the gap between art and life, provided the visual, theatrical, and auditory content that propagandized their own movement. The implication, here, is that social movements should be viewed as any

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<sup>94</sup> Marconi remarks that “some brands are so powerful that they become the generic names of product categories (4).”

other commodity that must compete and become legitimized in the public space against other commodities.

The recent social movement, Occupy Wall Street (OWS), represented a failure in achieving tangible results. The movement started on September 11, 2011 when a small group of people were protesting outside of Zuccotti Park, which ignited a national and global conversation about the ruling class of elites and the relationship between corporate and political power. The slogan “99 Percent Versus the 1 Percent” articulated the emotions felt by the American public. At most, OWS shaped the political conversation around money in politics, economic growth, and political corruption. Jerry Ashton’s article, “5 Things ‘Mad Men’ Can Learn From Occupy Wall Street and 3 Tips Madison Avenue Can Offer OWS in Return,” written in the *Huffington Post*, produces a few interesting points on the failure of OWS to sell their message.

The interview focuses around David Everett-Carlson, an advertising executive that has worked for some of the top ad agencies in the world and CEO of his own ad agency. Everett-Carlson spent his career in mass communications, branding, and international marketing. His insight and critique on OWS echoes the communicative and political strategies of the Futurists.

In the following excerpt of Ashton’s interview, one sees that OWS failed to sell its message from a communications point of view:

**Targeting and Editing.** “OWS needs to deliver specific messages to specific audiences,” David says. “Campaign finance reform” is a good example. At an agency, you will come up with 100 ideas to sell an idea. The trick is to understand the audience and to pare those ideas down to five great ones—then execute the hell out of them.

**Reach and Frequency.** “How many people can you hit, and how often?” This classic model will work for Occupy as surely as it does for Madison Avenue. “Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you’ve told them.” It took Occupy some time to get on point with the 99%, but once they did, it was a matter of

reach and frequency. “Now,” David continues, “It’s time to build on that message and get out there, over and over and over again.”

**Stop thinking about the problem.** “Rather,” David advises, “think about the solutions. Einstein advocated ‘imaging’ solutions. Ad agencies tend to be ‘big idea’-oriented, sometimes a little ‘pie in the sky’—but that’s a good thing—something Occupy could learn from.” (Ashton, *HuffPost*)

As I conclude this study on the mechanisms that allowed Futurism to spread and become an international movement, Everett-Carlson pinpoints the exact strengths of Futurism, techniques that have always been part of the field of communications and marketing. Marinetti, in crafting Futurism, proposed a set of ideas that were supposed to solve Italy’s stagnant position in the world economy. The solutions ranged from war, irredentism, embracing technology and modernity while art represented the means through which Marinetti articulated his vision for Italy. The bombardment effect that Everett-Carlson suggests was part of the Futurist strategy. Marinetti was called the “*Caffeina d’Europa*” because of his relentless efforts to popularize Futurism. Not only did he saturate all points of information from literary journals, to newspapers, to books, to pamphlets, to manifestos, to theater, to cinema, and to radio, he also went on an international tour or lecture series to promote Futurism in England, Portugal, Russia, and Brazil to name a few. The symbols of war, the machine, and beauty of violence remained important elements throughout the movement. If one analyzes the totality of Marinetti’s work, many of his writings become repetitive but highlight message discipline where he rarely deviated from his Futurist dialectic.

My analysis of the Futurist manifesto demonstrates that the movement created specific messages for specific groups of people. Futurism was an artistic movement that campaigned on aesthetic freedom. Futurism gave artists the space to experiment with new techniques and theories that were not part of the mainstream. However, the networks and organs of Futurism

that were established greatly benefitted young artists who did not have the name recognition but wanted to make a living in the marketplace with their avant-garde work. Marinetti also appealed to the nationalist sentiment in Italy, creating a message of cultural rejuvenation. Moreover, he attracted many youth to the movement as he addressed their concerns about the role they will play in a new Italy.

In the midst of all this, Marinetti was still able to revolutionize the methods of social mobilization. The Futurist manifesto was not only a political document. It was carefully crafted to effectively promote the Futurist agenda. The Futurist manifesto integrated aesthetics as well as theatricalization with public declamations. The Futurists transformed bourgeois theater into a highly politicized space through the destruction of the fourth. The theatrical space had always been a form of entertainment and even propaganda; however, Marinetti integrated agitation propaganda with his *serate*, which transformed the inherent, propagandistic qualities of theater into action. Lastly, the literary journal that supported Futurism foreshadowed a relationship that is prevalent now within society between media and politics. In many ways, Marinetti was able to control the media and the message of his movement because individual journals were dedicated to promoting the Futurist cause; however, the antics and declamatory rhetoric gave plenty of fodder for newspapers that were looking to fill the papers. Marinetti's greatest asset as a salesman was the fact he understood how to control the media similarly to a present-day Trump where outlandish remarks or actions places you on the news cycle, which is ultimately what one desires in order to market an idea or product. As we begin to study in depth the impact of Futurism, we will see that the movement had a global impact. Futurism was created during the rise of advertising, when psychology and sociology was paired with the visual arts. This combination transformed the political campaign that Tilly uses to characterize social movements

in the twentieth century, and it provides insight into the dynamics of social movements as products of consumption.

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