

International Yearbook of Futurism Studies

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Günter Berghaus

Editorial

Futurism Studies in its canonical form has followed in the steps of Marinetti's concept of *Futurisme mondial*, according to which Futurism had its centre in Italy and possessed a large number of satellites around Europe and the rest of the globe. Consequently, authors of textbook histories of Futurism have focussed their attention on Milan, Rome and some other Italian centres, added a chapter or two on Russia, but have dedicated very little attention to developments in other parts of the world. Futurism Studies tends to see in Marinetti's movement the great root and mother of all subsequent avant-gardes and to classify all non-European variants as mere 'derivatives'.

Vol. 7 of the *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* is dedicated to one of these regions outside Europe, Latin America, and offers fourteen essays on Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela and the Caribbean. It demonstrates that the heuristic model of centre-periphery is rather misleading, as it ignores the originality and inventiveness of art and literature in the New World. Futurist tendencies in both Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries may have been, in part, 'influenced' by Italian Futurism, but they certainly did not 'derive' from it.

The shift towards modernity took place in Latin America more or less in parallel with the economic progress made in the underdeveloped countries of Europe. Italy and Russia are often described as having given birth to Futurism because, in comparison to the industrial powerhouses England, Germany and France, they were extremely backward countries. According to this narrative, Spain and Portugal occupied a semi-peripheral position and acted as mediators who channelled dominant cultural discourses from the centre nations into the former colonies.

Following independence, after three centuries of colonial rule, cultural discourses in the former Spanish and Portuguese colonies undertook a major shift. The revolt of the European avant-garde against academic art found much sympathy amongst Latin American artists, as they were engaged in a similar battle against the canonical discourses of colonial rule. One can therefore detect many parallels between the European and Latin American avant-garde movements.

In Europe, the avant-garde had a contradictory relationship to tradition. On the one hand, it rejected academic, classical and Realist art; on the other hand it was fascinated by 'primitive' traditions. In Latin America, the avant-garde sought to find alternatives to colonial art in either indigenous practices or the latest Modernist trends in Europe. And often it combined both. The result was a hybrid form of art and literature that showed many parallels to the European avant-garde, but also included other sources of inspiration. Given the large variety of indigenous

cultures on the American continent, it was only natural that many heterogeneous forms of Futurism emerged there.

The contributions in Yearbook 2017 seek to explore this plurality of Futurisms and the cultural traditions they were rooted in. The essays show the intertextual character of Latin American Futurisms, interpret works of literature and fine arts within their local setting, consider modes of production and consumption within each culture, explore the forms of interaction with other Latin American countries, as well as the cultural exchanges with the European centres. Thus, they locate Futurism within a multifaceted network of cultural exchange and unravel the rôle of Futurism in the complex interrelations between local and global cultures in Latin America. Although most essays are focussed on a particular country, in their aggregation they go beyond the conceptual divide between Luso- and Hispano-American Modernisms and reveal the dynamic dialogues as well as the multiple forms of cross-fertilization that existed between the two spheres in Latin America as well as their interrelations with the Italian avant-garde.

The avant-garde in search for a spatial and temporal ‘other’

Conventional accounts of the historical avant-garde often locate its beginning with the publication of *The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism* in 1909. Futurism, indeed, became an ‘archetypal’ representation of the notion of ‘the avant-garde’, of the attempt to storm the bastions of tradition and to map out alternative paths into the new century.

Although Futurism advocated a radical rupture with the past, its relation to tradition was more complex than meets the eye. Marinetti surely wanted to break with the academic art and literature he had encountered in his youth, but not necessarily with *all* traditions. As his novel *Mafarka* (1910) indicated, he positively embraced a repressed irrational substratum in human culture, a primitive ‘other’, which he found to be much more powerful and dynamic than bourgeois art. In Marinetti’s mind, the original and dynamic force of the collective unconscious had both a metaphorical shape and a geographical centre: Africa.¹

¹ Important studies of this subject are Blum: “Incorporating the Exotic”; Costa: “Nuovi Oresti e nuove Erinni in un’Africa mitica”; McKever: “Futurism’s African (A)temporalities”; Meazzi: “L’immagine del ‘negro’ e dell’Africa nella letteratura italiana: Salgari, Marinetti e Buzzati”; Mikkonen: “Artificial Africa in the European Avant-Garde: Marinetti and Tzara”; Strangis: *L’Africa negli scritti teorici e creativi di F. T. Marinetti*; Tomasello: “L’Africa nella letteratura italiana tra Ottocento e Novecento”; Tomasello: “L’emancipazione futurista dei popoli africani”; Tomasello: “Marinetti: L’Africa e la ‘folia del divenire’”; Tomasello: “Marinetti: Tra territorio del mito e l’es-

The Futurist painters had a different continent in mind when they reflected on primitivism: the *trecento* Siennese school centred on Giotto. However, the phrase “we are the Primitives of a new sensibility that has been utterly transformed”² did not make this reference explicit and could be applied to a variety of phenomena judged to be ‘primitive’.³ In his *Sillabario pittorico*, Boccioni concerned himself with historical predecessors of Futurism and considered the movement to be the apex of a long history.⁴ Therefore, the break with the past also meant a selective inheritance of the past. Although in the phrase, “Noi siamo i primitivi”, the ‘we’ and the ‘other’ are brought into congruence, the intellectual distance between the twentieth and the fourteenth centuries could not be bridged. Boccioni did not paint like Giotto. Unlike Carrà, who in 1914 studied Giotto and Paolo Uccello, dedicated two essays to them⁵ and sought to recuperate their aesthetics in a *pittura metafisica*, Boccioni’s novel concept of corporality and constructive formalism was guided by Cézanne. It is impossible to predict where this would have led him, had he not died in 1916. But it seems that he looked at his predecessors just as an explorer would have done when surveying a distant continent.

Marinetti applied the same idea to his survey of contemporary avant-garde movements. Just as Giotto and the *trecento* primitives had been forerunners of Futurism, Futurism itself served as a prototype to many others who followed: Orphism, Vorticism, Dadaism, Constructivism, Ultraism, etc.⁶ Thus, he fundamentally revised the concept he had expressed in the foundation manifesto: “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!”⁷ Far from wanting his movement to be considered “useless”, in the 1920s, Mari-

tetizzazione dell’Africa”; Viola: “Marinetti l’africano”; Wilson: “(Re)Creating Reality: Marinetti and Africa.”

2 Boccioni et al.: “Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto”, in Rainey, Poggi, and Wittman: *Futurism: An Anthology*, p. 67.

3 However, Severini linked the two very explicitly when he wrote: “I primitivi insomma, a cominciare da Giotto, hanno dovuto reinventare la pittura.” Severini: *Dal cubismo al classicismo*, p. 35. On the model function of *trecento* Italian art see also the chapter “Futurism and the Italian Primitives” in McKeever: *Futurism and the Past*, pp. 149–152.

4 Boccioni: “Sillabario pittorico: Per l’ignoranza italiana.”

5 See “Parlata su Giotto” and “Paolo Uccello costruttore.” In a letter to Papini, he put himself clearly into the *trecento* tradition: “Faccio ritorno a forme primitive, concrete, mi sento un Giotto dei miei tempi.” Carlo Carrà: Letter to Giovanni Papini of July 1915, in *Il carteggio Carrà – Papini: Da “Lacerba” al tempo di “Valori plastici”*, p. 61. On Carrà’s ‘primitivist turn’ see Fagiolo dell’Arco: *Carlo Carrà: Il primitivismo, 1915–1919*.

6 See Marinetti’s diagram reproduced in *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* 2 (2012), p. X.

7 Marinetti: “The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism”, pp. 15–16.

netti wanted Futurism to serve as an inspiration to following generations, who would not act in opposition to its predecessors but develop the ideas of *primo futurismo* further: “Not always does a generation stand in contrast to the generation that preceded it. Often two or three generations are dominated by the same spiritual concerns.”⁸

Futurism and indigenism

In this volume of the Yearbook, notions of ‘primitivism’ are often linked to traditions in the Americas that predate the arrival of European colonizers. Several contributions investigate how Latin American poets and editors used the inspiration received from Futurist and other avant-garde art movements in a manner that equally honoured indigenous traditions on the American continent. Artists with a *criollo* or *mestizo* background employed an ‘autochthonous’ platform from which to promote cultural innovation in line with a ‘New World’ or ‘American’ aesthetics. Giovanna Montenegro uses the example of the Chilean literary journal *Nguillatún* (1924) and the Peruvian *Boletín Titikaka* (1926–30) to exemplify how artists reclaimed an indigenous American identity and used indigenous languages for poetic experimentation resembling Futurist *parole in libertà*. Similarly, Ramiro Armas Austria discusses how protagonists of the Caribbean vanguard transformed the poetic canon through a manipulation of the phonetic properties of poetry. They recreated ways of speaking that were typical of black Haitians and thus creolized avant-garde poetry and absorbed the black heritage of the Caribbean. The poetic work of other authors condensed lexical and phonetic conventions, transfigured the causal principles of narration, and adopted rhythmic structures typical of Afro-Caribbean music.

Such a miscegenation of ‘high’ and ‘low’, local and international, avant-garde and vernacular had many parallels in Italian Futurism. Artists living in the industrialized North of Italy often perceived the underdeveloped *mezzogiorno* (the southern regions of Italy) as an internal ‘Other’. Artists in the cultural centres of the south regarded their less educated compatriots, especially in the hinterland, as natives who preserved indigenous traditions worthy of attention. Neapolitan Futurists, for example, engaged with the local carnival tradition of

⁸ “Non sempre una generazione sorge in contrasto con la generazione che l’ha preceduta. Spesso due o tre generazioni sono dominate dalle stesse preoccupazioni spirituali.” Incipit of an unspecified manifesto in Filippo Tommaso Marinetti Papers. New Haven/CT: General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. GEN MSS 130, Box 20, folder 1400.

Piedigrotta and used popular songs and the dialect of labourers in their poetry. Montenegro's 'muzhiks' and 'coolies' (see pp. 38–39 and 54) come to mind when we read in Guglielmo Peirce's autobiography how he and his colleagues were living in the popular quarters of Naples amongst pimps and prostitutes, thieves and drug dealers,⁹ and did not only create art that served as an 'isthmus' between lower and cultured classes, but also "promoted social justice for marginalized communities".¹⁰ Given the circumstances of Mussolini's dictatorship, the activities of the Union of Activist Destructivists and Circumvisionists in Naples were a highly difficult and dangerous affair.¹¹ There were also other cases in Sicily, such as Vann'Antò (Giovanni Antonio Di Giacomo), who wrote much poetry in his local dialect, or Giacomo Giardina, a shepherd and autodidact, whose literary production has been termed "futurismo selvaggio" by Antonio Lucio Giannone.¹² His indigenism was not much theorized upon in Futurist manifestos, but in his preface to Giacomo Giardina's *Quand'ero pecoraio*, Marinetti praised the Futurist goatherd's ability to

mix brilliantly renewed rural images with invented mechanical images [...] Like a king of Hollywood, Giacomo Giardina makes his breezy aromatic bushy adolescence as a shepherd run like a rapid film between rumorisms and geometric splendour, gradually and with increasing fury flowing fast onto the dazzling screen of an ocean-wide cinematography.¹³

Such recourse to the primitive was not unique to the Italian Futurists but could also be found amongst the Polish Futurists and was highlighted in their manifesto, *Prymitywiści do narodów świata i do polski* (Primitivists to the Nations of the World and to Poland, 1920). A similar rôle was played by so-called 'Scythianism' in Russia, an indigenous antiquity created out of Eurasian artefacts and promoted to the status of 'art'. On the one hand, the Russian Futurists sought to throw overboard the immediate past, while on the other hand they were attracted to the 'deep past'. At the same time as they sung the praise of auto-

⁹ See Peirce: *Pietà per i nostri carnefici*.

¹⁰ Montenegro: "Indigenismo and Futurism in Latin America: José Carlos Mariátegui and the Peruvian Avant-garde", p. 55.

¹¹ See Berghaus: *Futurism and Politics*, pp. 279–281. On their artistic production, see D'Ambrosio: *I Circumvisionisti: Un'avanguardia napoletana negli anni del fascismo*.

¹² Giannone: 'Il futurismo 'selvaggio' di Giacomo Giardina.'

¹³ "[...] mescola genialmente rinnovate immagini campestri con inventate immagini meccaniche. [...] Come un re di Hollywood, Giacomo Giardina fa correre la sua adolescenza cespugliosa aromatica e ventilata di pecoraio nella pellicola rapida fra rumorismi e splendori geometrici, via via col crescente furore di sfociare presto sullo schermo abbacinante della più oceanica sala cinematografica." Marinetti: " 'Quand'ero pecoraio' di Giacomo Giardina", p. 78.

mobiles and skyscrapers, they were also digging up archaeological artefacts and turning them into a cornerstone of their Modernist poetics.¹⁴

In fact, the Russian Futurists' search for alternative traditions rooted in an imagined Hylaea had an equivalent in the no less mythological Africa or Oceania embraced by the Expressionists, Dadaists and Surrealists. The primitive 'Other' of the historical avant-gardes could be located in the unconscious forces of the mind, in indigenous folk art traditions or in far-away continents. Neoprimitivism developed a new pictorial language that was rooted in traditional Russian art forms such as the icon and the *lubok* (popular print). Futurist artists adopted from earlier sources a cult of a primordial vitality, which in their view challenged aesthetic conventions and gave their works a sense of powerful immediacy.

There are various ways of studying this search for a temporal or geographical 'Other'. One is to look at the phenomena as an interplay between centre and periphery. Here, the artist forms a central fixpoint, the *kentron*, from where he reaches out to an alternative world, like the ancient philosopher who stuck a metaphorical cane into the ground and extended from it a rope to delineate the *periphereia*.¹⁵

This Greek concept of *kentrum* / *periphereia* determined Marinetti's thinking throughout his career and defined the relations between the Futurist headquarters and its outposts, be they located in the Italian provinces or in other parts of the world. For Marinetti, Italian Futurism was the bedrock of all other Futurisms and of the avant-garde movements that emerged after 1909. In a lecture given at the Sorbonne on 10 May 1924, he declared that "Futurism has existed in all innovators of the world [...] it is not a school like the journalists always wanted to believe, but a movement born in Italy",¹⁶ out of which all other historical avant-gardes sprung forth. He represented this graphically in the form of a

14 See Kunichika: "Primitivism and Scythianism in Russian Futurism"; Dmitrieva-Einhorn: "Skythen, Amazonen und Futuristen: Der Steppendiskurs der 1910–1920er Jahre und seine heutigen Implikationen"; Bobrinskaia: "'Skifstvo' v russkoi kulture nachala XX veka i skifskaja tema u russkikh futuristov." Apart from Scythianism, there were also various forms of folk-art serving as an inspiration to Neo-Primitivism.

15 Etymologically, the κέντρον (*kéntron*, lat. *centrum*), was a spike, spur, thorn or quill with a sharp point that could be used to draw a circle. On the circumference lies the περιφέρεια (*periféria*, lat. *periphēria*), a term also used to demoninate a region, territory and administrative unit of a State. In the history of urbanism, the periphery is the area on the border of the city walls, later the *anello circondario* or *circoscrizione*. From there one moved into the *extrarradio* or *banlieue*, or in a wider geographical sense into the *colonia*, a Latin translation of ἀποικία (*apoikíai*: outside the polis, i.e. a settlement far away from home).

16 "Il futurismo è esistito in tutti i novatori del mondo [...] il futurismo non è una scuola, come hanno voluto sempre crederi i giornalisti, è una corrente nata in Italia." Marinetti: "Il futurismo mondiale: Conferenza di Marinetti alla Sorbonna", p. 7.

tree. The trunk has the name FUTURISMO written on it. The different movements (listed in section 1) depict its branches, and the bottom (section 2) is like the soil from which they draw their nutrients.¹⁷ Therefore, in Marinetti's interpretation, they are all Futurists, in one way or another, and work towards a common goal:

All of these powerful spirits who collaborated with us, or in parallel with us in far-away countries, confess to the great religion of the New, against all returns and against all pessimism. These are actually Futurists! [...] All of you, declared Futurists or Futurists without knowing it, join your efforts with ours! We have but one common enemy: passéism.¹⁸

As readers of previous volumes of the *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* will have noticed, we are not following Marinetti's model. We have been highly critical of the concept of 'influence' and have refrained from seeing the multifaceted forms of Futurism as being a simple outgrowth of Marinetti's aesthetics. We are not judging heterodox forms of Futurism from a cardinal position, in which Marinetti functions as the arbiter of Futurist values. Instead, we seek to investigate ways in which Futurism was appropriated and transformed. Other art movements inspired by Futurism were open to other trends as well, thus moving freely between a variety of aesthetic concepts – not unlike, in fact, the *gruppi indipendenti futuristi* in Italy.

Although there was a tendency in Marinetti to behave like a messianic leader, it also needs to be stated that he never acted like a general who sought to keep close control on his remote garrisons, as some Russian *Budetliianin* intimated.¹⁹ In the Severini-Delmarle dispute, of July 1913, Marinetti made it absolutely clear that he did not consider himself to be a 'Pope of Futurism' but rather a leader

17 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti Papers. New Haven/CT: General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. GEN MSS 130 – 25 – 1331. The text is undated, but will be more or less contemporaneous with the speech given at the Sorbonne in 1924. Of the same date is also a leaflet that lists the same offshoots of Futurism and carries the title, "Ideologia del futurismo e dei movimenti che ne derivano". A later version of the same text is called "Movimenti d'avanguardia europei derivati dal futurismo italiano".

18 "Tous ces esprits puissants qui collaboraient avec nous, ou parallèlement loin de nous, manifestent la grande religion du nouveau, contre tous les retours et contre les pessimismes. Ce sont en réalité des futuristes ! [...] Vous tous, futuristes sans le savoir, ou futuristes déclarés, unissez donc vos efforts aux nôtres! N'avons-nous pas tous un ennemi commun: le Passéisme." Marinetti: "Le Futurisme mondial", p. 96.

19 The poets Velimir Khlebnikov and Benedikt Livshits saw humiliating overtones in Marinetti's visit to Russia in 1914. They accused the Russian followers of Marinetti of betraying Russian art and of placing "the noble neck of Asia under the yoke of Europe." See Khlebnikov and Livshits: "Na priezd Marinetti v Rossii", p. 250 and Brik: "My futuristy", p. 251.

of a ‘broad Church’ that could accommodate both dogmatists and dissidents.²⁰ This attitude made it easy for him to welcome artists with scarcely a Futurist trait in their œuvre to be listed in a directory of “futuristes sans le savoir”. The same welcoming attitude applied to Italian artists, especially in the 1920s, when Futurist groups proliferated all over the Peninsula and swelled the movement to an estimated number of one thousand members.²¹ It was simply impossible for Marinetti to keep a check on all of them, even if he had wanted to, or to control their activities from his H.Q. In fact, it is to his credit that he never attempted to impose a monolithic ideology on the movement and that he maintained amicable relationships even with those who professed rather heterodox aesthetics or operated under the label of ‘Independent Futurists’.

Latin American notions of Futurism

In 1909, news of Marinetti’s new Futurist school reached Latin America very quickly (Russian Futurism, in contrast, never reached the same level of popularity on the other side of the Atlantic). The main points of *The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism* were reprinted and translated in various periodicals, followed by other manifestos and reports on Futurist exhibitions and theatre performances. Futurist books crossed the Atlantic, and Marinetti was in epistolary contact with many artists and writers in the New World.

Nonetheless, the general level of information on Futurist aesthetics was not very high, and the movement tended to be described in simplistic, sensationalist and satirizing reports. Commentators picked up, in a rather random fashion, certain traits of Futurism and ignored others, thereby distorting its aesthetic agenda. Futurism began a ‘second life’ and became a label that was laden with negative connotations.

20 Félix Mac Delmarle denied Gino Severini (whom he called a “lesser chieftain of Futurism”) the right to enforce the rules of a “Futurist Party” and declared himself pleased not to belong to a regiment or sect with a code of behaviour and sacred hierarchies. Instead of prostrating himself before a Futurist directorate in Milan he wished to belong to “a broad and nonofficial Futurist movement, devoid of troop detachments or inner circles”, i.e., a Futurism “which is virgin territory, not belonging to anyone and accessible to all those who wish to develop their individuality freely; a Futurism, that is, which represents a united, sincere attempt to create a flourishing art in tune with our civilization.” Mac Delmarle: “Les Futuristes se mangent entre eux”, p. 558.

21 The number of “over one thousand” is given by Tullio Crali in Pocar: *Il mio fratello Sofronio*, p. 193, and is confirmed by the journal *Futurismo*, which reported on 15 October 1933 that “more than one thousand artists participate in the First National Exhibition of Futurism”.

Another reason for the partial and often distorting image of Futurism can be explained by the fact that many artists and writers derived their information from Paris. Tatiana Cescutti has offered an insightful picture of Parisian anti-Futurism in the 1910s and its deeper roots in anti-Italian prejudices.²² One can imagine the opinion-building process in a Latin American visitor when he or she established contacts with the French art scene. Esther Sánchez-Pardo offers a good example in this volume (see pp. 194–195) when she shows how Huidobro's critique of Futurism was expedited by the group of poets and painters he associated with in Paris after 1916: Pierre Reverdy, Paul Éluard, Blaise Cendrars, Guillaume Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Tristan Tzara, André Breton, etc. It is well known that this group defended Cubism as the great French force of innovation that was superior to the doctrines proclaimed by the Futurists, widely seen as impostors, pranksters and buffoons.²³ Marinetti's Futurism challenged the hegemonic position of the French avant-garde in the discourses on literary and artistic Modernism. The French avant-garde feared this competition from abroad and used every trick to defend itself, often drawing on racialist and chauvinist attitudes against the Italians.

The situation was not much different for Mário de Andrade, Tarsila do Amaral, Norah and Jorge Luis Borges, Diego Rivera and others, who after their return from Europe put a stamp on the image of Futurism amongst the Latin American avant-garde. As we move into the 1920s, other factors began to influence this (already tainted) image. Most artists discussed in the essays in this volume of the Yearbook possessed an image of Futurism that was based on the theoretical and practical orientation of *primo futurismo*. As Marinetti's concept of *arte-vita* shipwrecked in the years 1916–19, many intellectuals concluded that Futurism had run its course and was old-hat by the early 1920s. What seems to have passed unnoticed was the resurgence of Futurism in a new guise, with a new membership and a new aesthetics in the years 1920–25. A wealth of critical literature and insightful exhibition in the past 58 years²⁴ has investigated the oeuvre of hundreds of artists who passed unnoticed in Latin America. Futurism after 1920 was anything but dead

²² Cescutti: "French Responses to Futurism, 1909–1912."

²³ See the compilation of negative judgements in *Poésie* (Toulouse) 5:31–33 (Summer 1909), pp. 168–204, a summary of which can be found in Jannini: *La fortuna del futurismo in Francia*, pp. 219–221.

²⁴ The re-evaluation of second-phase Futurism was set off by Enrico Crispolti in 1958 with "Appunti sul problema del secondo futurismo nella cultura italiana fra le due guerre", followed by the monograph, *Il secondo futurismo torinese*, and the exhibition *Aspetti del secondo futurismo torinese*. Since then, dozens of books and exhibitions and hundreds of essays have investigated the new aesthetic developments in *secondo futurismo* in all major cities and regions of Italy.

but pursued new and innovative conceptions that were substantially different from the ideas of the movement's founding fathers.

In the 1920s, Marinetti was more interested in keeping the Futurist movement alive and making it an umbrella for Italian Modernism than creating a purist Futurist art. He admitted so many artists into the movement that he lost control over what was going on in various Italian cities. He travelled everywhere when they held exhibitions or mounted performances and must have been quite perplexed sometimes when he saw what sailed under the flag of Futurism. But he supported these artists and writers, even when they called themselves 'futuristi indipendenti'. Within this large cultural industry associated, in one way or another, with Futurism, we can find great, original talents mixing with mediocre, run-of-the-mill Modernists. This dilution of the former trademark 'Futurism' did not pass unnoticed outside Italy and reinforced the idea that Futurism was no longer up-to-date and had ceased to be a major player in contemporary artistic debates.

A third contributing factor for Futurism's declining reputation in Latin America was the advent of Fascism, co-founded by Marinetti in 1919. In 1920, when the Futurist faction in the *Fasci di Combattimento* was sidelined by Mussolini's followers, whom Marinetti considered 'reactionary' and unsupportable, he and many of his colleagues left the organization. Marinetti's subsequent relationship with Mussolini and Fascism was contorted, contradictory and remains to this day under-researched. A wealth of documents in the Central State Archive in Rome, and in particular in Mussolini's private archive, provide us with an insight into a development I should like to sketch out here briefly and then contrast with the impression that Latin American artists had of it.

Futurism and the Fascist establishment

Mussolini's seizure of power and the Fascist infiltration of cultural institutions led to an official endorsement of the conservative Novecento group and a sidelining of Futurism, culminating in the total exclusion of Futurist paintings from the Biennale of 1924. Marinetti railed against the régime, publicly and privately, but could not do much about it.²⁵ The Futurists were as welcome in the Fascist

²⁵ Marinetti disrupted the opening speech by Minister Gentile and accused the director of the Biennale of displaying an anti-Italian spirit. He was immediately seized by the security guards and taken to the police station. The next day, a rally of young artists in support of Marinetti took place in the piazza of San Marco. The whole episode is described in "La XIV Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte a Venezia inaugurata ieri alla presenza del Re." *Il popolo d'Italia*, 26 April 1924, and

temples of art “as dogs in a church”, Enzo Benedetto characterized their situation.²⁶ When Mussolini had consolidated his power, Marinetti was forced to re-think his position. He undertook a concerted effort to claim national status for Futurism at the First Futurist Congress in Milan and made Mussolini a peace offering: You will be the Duce in politics, I shall be the Duce in art and literature; I relinquish my aim to merge art and politics, proclaimed in countless manifestos, but in return I want Futurism to be declared ‘art of the State’. Marinetti had no success. Futurism was hardly ever mentioned in Mussolini’s speeches of 1924–26.

1924 was a turning point in Marinetti’s strategy towards Mussolini and the new government. He was looking for a compromise and found it in the formula “Fascism functions politically [...] Futurism operates in the unlimited domain of pure fantasy”.²⁷ Not everybody in the Futurist movement was in agreement with this tactic, as the Futurist Congress of 1924 showed. During the five hours of debate it transpired that the young and revolutionary forces within the movement were not willing to let Futurism be monopolized by members seeking an accord with Fascism. The radical Left intervened in the debates with contributions on “Futurism, Anarchism and the Massacre of the Emperor” (Giovanni Governato) or “Futurism and Communism” (Gino Soggetti). The rebellious, subversive and anarchical spirit of Futurism was still alive and expressed itself in invectives against Mussolini’s régime and the new members who swelled the ranks of the Fascist Party. The position of Futurism within the Fascist State was the topic of the final resolution, directed at Mussolini. It emphasized the movement’s artistic orientation and its renunciation of political engagement (“more than ever devoted to the ideas and art, far from politicking”), but also reminded Mussolini of his revolutionary heritage (“the marvellous spirit of 1919”).²⁸ He was exhorted to shun conservatism in the Giolittian mould and clericalism à la Don Sturzo. The Futurist Congress of 1924 was a clear sign that Marinetti was ready to enter into a dialogue with the Fascist régime and was keen to claim a prominent place within the artistic establishment. But his endeavour was not crowned with much success.

“L’arte della nuova Italia esclusa dalla XIV Biennale Veneziana: Vivace protesta di Marinetti alla presenza del Re.” *L’impero*, 29 April 1924. See also Marinetti’s letter of 24 April 1924 in Marinetti & Cangiullo: *Lettere (1910–1943)*, p. 149.

26 “Nelle manifestazioni d’arte [...] I futuristi erano graditi come cani in chiesa.” Benedetto: *Futurismo cento x 100*, p. 88.

27 “Il fascismo opera politicamente [...]. Il futurismo opera invece nei dominî infiniti della pura fantasia.” Marinetti: Preface to *Futurismo e fascismo* (1924), reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, 1st edn, p. 432.

28 “[...] più che mai devoti alle idee ed all’arte, lontani dal politicantismo”; “la meravigliosa anima diciannovista”. Marinetti: *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, 1st edn, p. 536.

Another nodal point was the *Onoranze a Marinetti* in March 1925, which signalled that Mussolini accepted Marinetti's renunciation of politics (i.e. the formula presented in the *Manifesto to the Fascist Government*) and allowed Futurism to survive during the Fascist era, albeit only in a marginalized capacity. There was a second attempt in 1926 to achieve official recognition by the régime: the debate on "L'arte fascista sarà l'arte futurista". Again, nothing came out of it. Marinetti's clandestine anti-Fascist activities that accompanied his official endorsement of the régime only came to an end in 1929 with his appointment as *accademico d'Italia*. From now on, he was formally affiliated with Mussolini's régime, and the period of *terzo futurismo* set in, politically conservative and in part reactionary, stylistically dominated by a *retour à l'ordre*, with only a few notable exceptions.

Futurism and Fascism misinterpreted in Latin America

I am sketching this development here to underline Marinetti's complex and often contradictory manoeuvres and to contrast them with the image that was conveyed to citizens in Latin America, both by anti-Fascist émigrés and by the expatriate community loyal to the régime. Several essays in this volume mention the campaign unleashed both in the press and on the streets against Marinetti during his 1926 visit to South America. In many cases, the moving forces behind this operation remained anonymous. However, these anti-Futurist sentiments were clearly shared by prominent intellectuals, as their writings and, in some cases, interviews demonstrate.

A typical and, to this day, highly influential representative of this anti-Futurist position was José Carlos Mariátegui, who had lived in Italy from 1919–1923 and therefore spoke with some authority on what he had observed in the country. He had been informed about Marinetti's involvement in the founding of the *Fasci di Combattimento* in Piazza San Sepolcro (23 March 1919) and assumed that when "Marinetti joined Fascism",²⁹ "the Italian Futurists joined Fascism".³⁰ That Marinetti and most Futurists left the *Fasci* in 1920 seems to have passed unnoticed by Mariátegui. He was of the view that Fascism could absorb Futurism because it had always been a harmless, histrionic phenomenon that never posed any danger to

²⁹ "Marinetti [...] se adhirió al movimiento fascista." Mariátegui: "Marinetti y el futurismo", in *Variedades* (Lima), 19 January 1924, reprinted in Mariátegui: *La escena contemporánea*, p. 188.

³⁰ "Los futuristas italianos se han adherido al fascismo." Mariátegui: "Arte, revolución y decadencia", in *Bolívar* (Madrid), 1 May 1930, reprinted in Mariátegui: *El artista y la época*, p. 19.

the ruling class.³¹ Mariátegui attached a certain historical significance to *primo futurismo*, but felt that under Fascism the movement relinquished its positive qualities and became a rearguard: “Fascism, having exploited its momentum and spirit, has forced Futurism to accept its reactionary principles, that is, to renege on itself theoretically and practically.”³² As an example of this *volte-face*, he discusses Carli and Settimelli’s embrace of a reactionary monarchism and their propagation of a pro-Fascist line in *L'impero*. He states:

Futurism has reneged, above all, on its anticlerical and iconoclastic past. Before, Futurism wanted to rid Italy of its museums and the Vatican. Now, the compromise with Fascism has made it abandon this desire. Fascism has united with the monarchy and the Church. All traditionalist forces, all passéists, by necessity and historically, tend to coalesce and join forces. Futurism thus becomes, paradoxically, passéist.³³

In reality, Mariátegui’s assessment could not be further from the truth. Settimelli published one of the most vitriolic attacks on Mussolini’s Vatican policy, *Svaticanamento* (Devaticanization, 1931). The brochure was immediately seized by the police and destroyed. He was expelled from the Fascist Party and the Syndicate of Journalists and was put on trial before the Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State. In *Edda contro Benito*, Settimelli states that he was sentenced to death.³⁴ Roberto Farinacci, the second most powerful man in the country after

31 “El fascismo lo ha digerido sin esfuerzo, lo que no acredita el poder digestivo del régimen de las camisas negras, sino la inocuidad fundamental de los futuristas. [...] El futurismo, en fin, estaba viciado originalmente por ese gusto de lo espectacular, ese abuso de lo histriónico – tan italianos, ciertamente, y ésta sería tal vez la excusa que una crítica honesta le podría conceder – que lo condenaban a una vida de proskenio, a un rol hechizo y ficticio de declamación. El hecho de que no se pueda hablar del futurismo sin emplear una terminología teatral, confirma este rasgo dominante de su carácter.” Mariátegui: “El balance del suprarrealismo”, in *Variedades* (19 February and 5 March 1930), reprinted in Mariátegui: *El artista y la época*, p. 46.

32 “El fascismo, después de haber explotado su impulso y su espíritu, ha obligado al futurismo a aceptar sus principios reaccionarios, esto es a renegarse a sí mismo teórica y prácticamente.” Mariátegui: “Nacionalismo y vanguardismo en la literatura y en el arte.” *Mundial* (Lima), 4 December 1924, reprinted in Mariátegui: *Peruanicemos al Perú*, pp. 72–73.

33 “El futurismo ha renegado, sobre todo, sus antecedentes anticlericales e iconoclastas. Antes, el futurismo quería extirpar de Italia los museos y el Vaticano. Ahora los compromisos del fascismo lo han hecho desistir de este anhelo. El Fascismo se ha mancomunado con la Monarquía y la Iglesia. Todas fuerzas tradicionalistas, todas las fuerzas del pasado, tienden necesaria e históricamente a confluir y juntarse. El futurismo se torna, así, paradójicamente pasadista.” Mariátegui: “Marinetti y el futurismo”, in *Variedades* (Lima), 19 January 1924, reprinted in Mariátegui: *La escena contemporánea*, p. 189.

34 “Avuto l’onore de essere condannato a morte dal regime perchè ribelle alle pazzie mussoliniane e alle idiozie staraciane.” Settimelli: *Edda contro Benito*, p. 10.

his appointment as secretary of the Fascist Party, wrote to Mussolini on 25 June 1933:

For years I have not cared about those gentlemen of *L'impero*, whom I judge to be fraudsters, blackmailers and abusers of the morality of Fascism. I did not say anything when Settimelli – again expelled from the Party and taken by you to court, for that well-known vulgar pamphlet, contrary to all applicable laws – was allowed to create and direct a newspaper. And I have even kept silent when the institutions of the régime have generously funded it.³⁵

But he was no longer willing to tolerate such behaviour. Farinacci stepped up the campaign against Settimelli and Carli and forced *L'impero* to close down in September 1933. Settimelli went through a drawn-out crisis, converted to Catholicism, but then started a new campaign against the régime. He was again condemned and this time banned into confinement on the island of Lipari “for having voiced, also from abroad, opinions in conflict with the orders of the régime”.³⁶

Mario Carli left Futurism already in the late 1910s and was sidelined by Mussolini in the course of various cleansing operations in the Fasci di Combattimento. In 1928, Carli wrote *Codice della vita fascista* (Codex of Fascist Life) and compiled in it a long list of anachronistic, traditionalist or reactionary attitudes of people who march under the banner of Fascism “but are in reality like a venereal disease, of which the Italians are still not showing any sign of wanting to get rid of”.³⁷ However, contrary to Settimelli, he realized that his attacks on a “fascismo conservatore e passatista” were no longer tolerated. To save his skin, he left Italy on a diplomatic ticket, effectively dedicating the rest of his life to writing erotic novels.

Of course, it was not Mariátegui's fault that he did not know anything about these events in Italy. Most Italians did not know about them either. But today, when Italian archives are offering ample opportunity for the study of documents that show the multifaceted forms of resistance, scholars investigating Futurism in Latin

35 “Io da anni non mi curo di quei signori dell'Impero, che io giudico truffatori, ricattatori, ed oltraggiatori della morale del fascismo. Quando Settimelli, ancora espulso dal Partito e denunciato da Te all'autorità giudiziaria, per quel famoso volgare opuscolo [i.e. *Svaticanamento*], contrariamente a tutte le disposizioni vigenti poté creare e dirigere un giornale, io non dissi parola. Ed io ho taciuto anche quando gli organi del Regime lo hanno generosamente finanziato.” Archivio Centrale dello Stato, *Segreteria Particolare del Duce, C.O.*, busta 40, fasc. 242/R, sf. 6. Quoted in Berghaus: *Futurism and Politics*, p. 265.

36 “[...] per avere assunto anche all'estero atteggiamenti in contrasto con le direttive del Regime.” Settimelli: *Il codice della vita energica*, p. XXVII.

37 “[...] una lue di cui ancora gl'italiani non accennano a liberarsi.” Carli: *Codice della vita fascista*, p. 9

America need to be aware that behind a façade of a Futurist support of Fascism entirely different battles were raging. Settimelli and Carli certainly were not simply ‘Fascist Futurists’; in fact, Settimelli wrote some extremely scathing essays against both Marinetti and Mussolini. If Mariátegui considered Settimelli and Carli’s career in the 1920s to be “an example of Futurism’s return to the past”, he can be excused, but it is not acceptable when scholars in the twenty-first century uncritically adopt the viewpoints propagated by their subjects of study, rather than investigate the matter further and take account of up-to-date scholarship.

Although Italy did not experience the same totalitarian repression as Nazi Germany, the prerequisites for professional survival were the same for artists in both countries: public endorsements and statements of loyalty to the régimes. However, such official proclamations were regularly foiled by clandestine activities of an anti-Fascist nature, and the secret police files on more than a hundred Futurists document this opposition to the oppressive régime. Of course, not all anti-Fascist artists had the courage to join the resistance. Many Futurists who had previously been engaged in anarchist, communist or socialist circles relinquished politics altogether and dedicated themselves to inconspicuous activities such as writing historical novels or painting landscapes. Such an option of somehow ‘muddling through’ under adverse circumstances characterized much of the artistic and literary scene in Italy in the 1920s and 30s:

The great majority of those individuals who were discontented [with Mussolini] found it expedient, indeed realistic, to adapt themselves to the changed circumstances of national life. Many simply withdrew into private life, compromising themselves minimally with the regime in carrying out the tasks required of them in their jobs or professions. They went through the necessary motions of acceptance in public but reverted to their habitual way of life behind closed doors or among their friends.³⁸

Marinetti’s shady manoeuvres during the Fascist era were not deciphered accurately in Latin America. His eulogies on his “caro amico Mussolini” were taken at face value, although in his diary he characterized the same man as “reactionary”, “authoritarian”, full of “aristocratic scorn for the masses”, “no great intellect” who “also aspires, I think, to riches”.³⁹ Latin American intellectuals in the 1920s did not have the documents at their disposal which we possess nowadays. It is

³⁸ Thompson: *State Control in Fascist Italy*, p. 32. The mechanism of daily compromise as the only means of survival in a State controlled by Action Squads, Militia, Tribunale Speciale and OVRA (Organizzazione per la Vigilanza e la Repressione dell’Antifascismo) have been well described in this study.

³⁹ Note of 4 December 1918 in Marinetti: *Taccuini*, p. 392. Translated in *Critical Writings*, pp. 285–286.

therefore not astonishing that they took a critical if not outspokenly hostile attitude to Marinetti when he visited South America in 1926. Added to which, they rightly perceived in his lectures and recitations a lack of new ideas. It therefore does not come as a surprise that they concluded that the ‘mother of all avant-gardes’ could no longer serve as a model. Thus, Latin American *vanguardismo* took off into new directions, nearly completely unaffected by the innovative developments in *secondo futurismo*.

Interrelated independences

As most essays in this volume show, the relationship between the Latin American and European avant-gardes was characterized by conflicts and misunderstandings, as well as productive cooperation and creative appropriation. Artists of the New World participated actively in worldwide trends, either by spending parts of their lives in Paris or Rome or Madrid or some other European capital, by publishing in international anthologies and journals or by putting their names to group manifestos. Yet, they also created something original that moved beyond the inspiration received. Their works simultaneously integrated and rejected the European models, thus opening up a fluid field of transformative processes and assimilation practices. A certain degree of association with Marinetti’s movement gave artists the prestige of belonging to an international avant-garde. But this did not mean that they wanted to be a Latin American appendix to a foreign art movement, whose leader was suspected of egotism and hegemonic arrogance. Rather, they pursued a questioning of canons and hierarchies on two levels: one directed against established canons at home, and one against practices imported from Europe. The result was a complex web of continuities and ruptures that produced multi-layered works of art and literature. All writers and painters discussed in this volume of the *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* pursued agendas that had roots in both Europe and the Americas. This opened up alternatives to or further developments from traditional and avant-garde practices.

Latin American artists took great care to accommodate to the specific socio-political conditions of their ‘emerging cultural fields’ (Bourdieu). They modified the appropriated aesthetics and ideologies to fit local settings. Harper Montgomery offers a typical example of this in her essay on Argentina (see p. 79):

Leftist politics and avant-garde artists sought to challenge the bourgeoisie, but not reject them outright. Latin avant-gardes were still, during the 1920s, broadly invested in the foundation of what Peter Bürger has called ‘institutions of art’, because such institutions were not yet strong enough to constitute viable targets, a scenario quite different from the anti-institutional posture assumed by avant-gardes in Europe.

In my view, the strength of many essays printed in this volume lies exactly in the fact that authors use their expert knowledge of the cultural dynamics in Latin American countries to assess how useful, irrelevant or even harmful⁴⁰ Futurist aesthetics were to artist and writers on the other side of the Atlantic. Concerted efforts undertaken by Latin American artists to escape colonial power structures, the bourgeois salon and the aesthetics of *modernismo* went hand in hand with attempts to establish new markets and to develop a new culture that could express their vision of a rapidly changing world. They discovered that their fight had many parallels with the battles fought by the historical avant-gardes in Europe. They therefore responded positively to Marinetti's exhortation "Join your efforts with ours! We have but one common enemy: passéism", but under conditions to be determined by them and not by their European allies.

The fourteen contributions in this volume are not the first attempt at investigating the fate of Futurism in Latin American countries, and their authors do not suggest that they offer any final and definite answers. There are still many questions left unanswered. From the many topics that need further investigations a few stand out, in my view:

- the circulation of Futurist manifestos, books, anthologies, reports on exhibitions and performances in the period 1909–1944
- the European travels of Latin American artists and writers, their points of contact with Futurism and other avant-garde movements, the experiences and encounters that influenced their attitude towards Futurism
- the impact of Russian Futurism in Latin American countries; investigations into the parallels between Latin American responses to Futurism and the reactions of Russian artists to Marinetti's visit to Moscow and Saint-Petersburg in 1914
- the fate of *secondo futurismo* in Latin America
- The feedback Marinetti received in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay in 1926
- Latin American responses to Italian art and culture under the Fascist régime, including a-Fascist, anti-Fascist and pro-Fascist voices within the Futurist movement

It is to be hoped that this volume of the *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* will prompt further debates and provide a fresh stimulus for additional research in these and other fields.

⁴⁰ Harmful in as much as an artist, to whom the label 'Futurist' had been applied, could experience derision or condemnation in the press. Some artists who, in principal, were open to Futurist ideas nevertheless rejected a wholesale import of its aesthetics, as it detracted from more urgent tasks of cultural renewal, or was unsuitable for the projects of regeneration underway in their country.

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Editors' Preface

The first, and partial, translations into Spanish of the Futurist manifesto appeared in Montevideo on 20 March 1909 in the newspaper *El día* and a day later, on 21 March 1909, in Buenos Aires in *El diario español*.¹ The second translation, barely a month after the publication of the *Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism* in *Le Figaro*, was undertaken by the Catalan Juan Más y Pi (1878–1916), a literary critic, writer and journalist of Anarchist tendencies who lived the major part of his life in Brazil and Argentina. On 5 April 1909, the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío (1867–1916) published another partial translation, accompanied by a brief summary entitled “Marinetti y el futurismo”, in the Argentine newspaper *La nación*.

The Portuguese-speaking population of the subcontinent had to wait considerably longer before they gained access to Marinetti's manifesto. On 5 June 1909, *A república* in Natal published parts of the text as “O futurismo” in a translation generally attributed to Manuel Dantas (1867–1924). And a few months later, on 30 December 1909, Almáquio Diniz (1880–1937), an eminent figure in the cultural milieu of Bahia, issued his translation of the manifesto in its totality under the title “Uma nova escola literária” in the *Jornal de notícias* of Salvador de Bahia.

It can be said that the hiatus between the immediate reception of Futurism and the eruption of the avant-garde in Latin America over a decade later was caused by a whole range of literary and cultural factors. *Modernismo*, a Symbolist-inclined literary movement born in the Spanish-speaking Americas to revolutionize poetic language, was a vital force in the years 1888 to 1916 and contained within itself the paradox of attempting both to Latin-Americanize the poetic language as a cultural good, and to insert itself within a sophisticated cosmopolitanism. This double act of Americanism/Cosmopolitanism was the foundational matrix of the Latin American avant-gardes. However, even more important was that *modernismo* knew how to renew itself, particularly during its second phase characterized by ruptures in form and content.

¹ In April 1909, Ramón Gómez de la Serna published a translation of the *Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism* in the Spanish literary magazine *Prometeo*, which spread the Futurist message through the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, Latin America actually preceded mainland Spain in its response to the Futurist message.

Futurism in Spanish-speaking Latin America

Enea Zaramella shows in her essay on the post-Revolutionary avant-garde in Mexico how the Futurist-influenced *estridentismo* movement wrought an urban imaginary that was expressed in a variety of media. She explores the ways in which the musical movement known as *Sonido 13* impacted on – and was influenced by – urban Mexico's sonic environments. Responses to the emergence of modern soundscapes, especially in the works of the poet Manuel Maples Arce and the composer Julián Carrillo, exemplify ways in which Futurist avant-garde techniques were combined with popular media and contributed to the project of nation-building in the wake of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920).

A crucial way in which the Spanish-American avant-garde shaped their multiple identities was through foregrounding indigenous traditions as a means toward a desired cultural and aesthetic hybridity. While the combination of the autochthonous and the futurist(ic) makes a seemingly strange brew, the indigenous actually affected the rooting of Futurism in New World places and the questioning of what Futurism meant, culturally and politically. In this sense, Spanish-American Futurism created an in-between space that straddled the 'first' and the 'developing' worlds, the colonial and the postcolonial, ultimately creating independent aesthetic and cultural identities.

The essay by **Giovanna Montenegro** puts into evidence how blending *indigenismo* and *futurismo* helped to conceive an autonomous New World cultural production by offering some case studies from Peru and Chile. She focusses on the Marxist José Carlos Mariátegui (1894–1930) and his magazine *Amauta* (1926–30), Gamaliel Churata's *Boletín Titikaka* (1926–29), the Chilean literary journal *Nguitlatún* (1924) and avant-garde poetry in Peru. She argues that Futurism became a means to the end of reclaiming indigenous culture and turning the autochthonous into a new cultural production that fitted with the Spanish-American in-between condition. While in some instances the curious marriage of indigenist traditions and Futurist aesthetics proved a felicitous one, in others it became incompatible.

Two important and inextricably related issues in the Spanish-American avant-garde were the development of a geographical identity and the inevitable negotiation of this identity with Europe. This is not to say that the Spanish-American avant-garde looked exclusively to European models to fashion its multiple and varied characteristics, but rather that the relations between Europe and the Americas remained fraught as a direct consequence of colonial and postcolonial circumstances. Just as with *modernismo*, the diverse avant-gardes of the Spanish-speaking Americas at once rebelled against and used European culture, transforming it to suit their particular needs, tastes and political and social agendas. Avant-garde self-fashioning involved a dialogue with the autochthonous – the

indigenous as well as the *criollo* – and led to a fusion of the European, Asian, African and other sources of cultural knowledge and creativity.

Harper Montgomery in “Futurist Confrontations and Other Modes of Registering Modernity: Buenos Aires, 1924–1926” explores how the popular, which may or may not intersect with the indigenous, combined with Futurism to create art, architecture and literature that reflected and promoted particular Latin-American identities. She explains how the interaction of the Argentine artists Norah Borges, Emilio Pettoruti and Xul Solar with Futurism was far more fraught with conflict. According to Montgomery, these relationships can be characterized as discordant, because the artists wanted to break with Europe so as to promote an independent cultural production that emphasized Argentine and New-World cultures (Pettoruti and Solar), and liberation from the gender norms imposed by traditional society on women (Borges).

Carlos Segoviano's essay “*Vida-Americana: An Intercontinental Avant-garde Magazine*” shows us that David Alfaro Siqueiros's complex engagement with Futurism served as a pre-history of this artist's life-long political commitment. His one-off periodical *Vida-Americana* (1921) resembled many Little Magazines published in Europe after the First World War. It demonstrated that, in many ways, Latin American artists (and in fact, artists from all over the world) were actively engaged in adapting and creating European Modernism. Carlos Segoviano considers Siqueiros's magazine, published in Barcelona with a European and Latin American readership in mind, as a typical product of the *rappel à l'ordre*, since it included both novel and traditional elements and addressed a cosmopolitan readership. It also gathered artists and writers from several countries, which loosely enacted Marinetti's pan-European and, eventually, global promotion of his Futurist movement. In a sense, the magazine can be understood as a transitional phase in Siqueiros's career, since the opening text functioned as a manifesto that evoked Marinetti's writings and called Latin American artists to action. At this point in time, however, Siqueiros had not yet elaborated an explicitly political programme; the artist would do so eventually, and Futurism's imprint remained throughout his career.

While the Futurist elements in *Vida-Americana* are quite evident, there are many other cases in which the traces of this movement in Latin America are far more difficult to identify. **Daniel Vidal's** essay on the reception of Futurism amongst the Uruguayan Anarchist community demonstrates how political factors precluded the movement's success in this country. As is well known, Futurism was initially tied to Italian anarcho-syndicalism, which Marinetti abandoned around the year 1911. The movement as a whole had great ideological diversity and included nationalists as well as socialists and, after 1919, also Communists and Fascists. After Mussolini's rise to power in 1922, many Futurists retained their

leftist convictions and were, in fact, anti-Fascists. However, this broad range of political tendencies within the movement itself was overshadowed by the Futurist headquarters' official alignment with the new government, prominently displayed in *Artistic Rights Championed by the Italian Futurists: A Manifesto to the Fascist Government* (1923). As Daniel Vidal shows, the Anarchists' response to and engagement with Futurism was rather lukewarm and guarded due to their opposition to right-wing politics, and to any prescriptive rules and regulations in the artistic field. Several of the articles analysed by Vidal demonstrate that despite the Anarchists' interest in Futurist tenets, such as Free Love and Free Verse, Uruguay's political situation complicated the movement's reception. The wide-ranging reforms instituted by José Batlle y Ordóñez (1856–1929) had pacified the population and even Anarchists began to support the government. Thus, Vidal's research, while seemingly finding few direct or important uses of Futurism, demonstrates how local contexts often problematized the movement's tenets. Vidal also shows that many Futurist ideas were perhaps lost in translation or misrepresented, possibly diluting, and at times, amplifying the movement's impact outside Europe. Vidal suggests that Marinetti's literary manifestos, which often included clear-cut demands and rules, clashed with the Anarchists' desire for freedom of expression. While it is true that Futurism was a relatively open-minded association of artists who practised a great diversity of styles, this did perhaps not always come across in their manifestos.

Leopoldo Lugones (1874–1938) was the leading exponent of *modernismo* in Argentina. He defended Free Verse, a technique that was championed in the first phase of Futurist poetry, but was superseded in 1912 by what Marinetti called 'parole in libertà' (Words-in-Freedom). This process of renewal internal to *modernismo* came to an end with the death of Rubén Darío in 1916. In "Martial Arts in Argentina: Futurism, Fascism and Leopoldo Lugones", **Justin Read** looks at a later phase in the poet's career and focusses on the spatial dimensions of Lugones's political and aesthetic views somehow contemporary to Marinetti's voyages to Argentina (1926 and 1936), as a more productive means to gauge the kinds of Fascism and Futurism ascribed to Lugones. For this purpose, Read analyses, among other writings, *Ante la doble amenaza* (Facing the Double Threat), one of Lugones's lectures delivered in 1923 at the Teatro Coliseo in Buenos Aires, which contains one of his earliest endorsements of Benito Mussolini and marks the convergence of Marinetti's aestheticization of warfare with Lugones's bellicose political stances.

The great technological advances since the nineteenth century caused Marinetti and his allies to take a particular interest in machines. Marinetti went as far as saying that the great reform programme he formulated in his *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* (destruction of syntax, abolition of punctuation, use of

mathematical signs, eradication of the lyrical 'I', untrammelled imagination, use of Words-in-Freedom) was inspired by a journey undertaken in an aeroplane.² In other texts he highlighted the impact of long-distance communication (telegraph) and modern mass media (illustrated magazines, cinema, radio) on Futurist art and literature.

The almost immediate arrival of Futurism in the southernmost country of South America corresponded to a trans-Atlantic exchange of new technologies and inventions, to which the avant-gardes attached themselves with fervour. The Caribbean occupied only a peripheral status with regard to the hegemonic culture of Europe and, since the Spanish conquest, had been accustomed to importing cultural goods, and in a number of cases exercised a retroactive influence. South-American intellectuals demonstrated quite early on an interest in the iconoclastic gestures of Futurism; however, it took more than a decade to transform theory into artistic practice, to eclectically harvest the Futurist seeds that had been dispersed throughout this period.

From early on, artists of the Caribbean saw in the cinematographic machine an instrument capable of producing a new type of artwork. However, the early national cinema of the Caribbean followed the standards of causal narration and offered little more than conventional, linear plots and one-dimensional characters. Paradoxically, it was in the written works of Caribbean vanguard writers that the anti-narrative principles of Futurist cinema took effect. By tracing the Futurist fascination for the 'deforming' products of the filmic machine in texts from the different strands in the Caribbean vanguard (*minorismo*, *postumismo*, *diepalismo*, *euforismo*, *noísmo*, etc.), **Ramiro Armas Austria** seeks to unravel the ways in which the '-isms' in Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic interpreted the avant-garde imperative of the New. He analyses an array of poems by José Z. Tallet, Luis Palés Matos and Rubén Suro, and musical performances by Alejo Carpentier, as works that distort the colonizing gaze with a 'look back' to a black legacy. Within the context of the rivalry between book and film, between traditional and new information technologies, the Caribbean vanguards created an irreverent art that was rooted in the phonetic and linguistic experimentation and the distorted imagery of the Futurists. At the same time it was grounded in sounds and images from the Taíno and African heritage. This fusion of the old with the

² "In an airplane, sitting on the fuel tank, my belly warmed by the head of the pilot, I realized the utter folly of the antique syntax we have inherited from Homer. A furious need to liberate words, dragging them free of the prison of the Latin sentence!" F.T. Marinetti: *Critical Writings*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006, p. 107.

new formed part of a search for a new identity and led to the creation of works that offered a highly irrational, polymorphous, sensorial experience.

The ‘-isms’ of the Latin American avant-garde found their true beginnings in the 1920s. The avant-garde in Argentina was the result of trans-Atlantic round-trip traffic. The Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro initially endorsed Rubén Darío’s criticism of Futurism in the essay, “Marinetti y el futurismo” (1909), but later adopted some of Marinetti’s revolutionary ideas, especially his hatred of the relics preserved in museums and old-fashioned literary fossils. Huidobro admired those Americans who dreamt of the future and had great faith in the continent’s potential for progress and development. In 1916, when he travelled to Buenos Aires to give an address, his ideas were baptized with the name of *creacionismo*. **Esther Sánchez-Pardo** in her essay, “Vicente Huidobro and William Carlos Williams: Hemispheric Connections, or How to Create Things with Words”, explains Vicente Huidobro’s work in terms of a break with accepted genealogies of *modernismo* in Central and South America. During his long stay in Paris, he encountered other art movements, especially Cubism and Surrealism, and engaged with their aesthetics. Yet, in the end, Huidobro’s search for a ‘purely’ created poetry meant that he had to go beyond the precepts of all other schools in order to develop his genuinely personal and original Creationist literature.

In 1916, en route to Paris, Huidobro passed through Madrid, where he came into contact with a group of writers with whom he would return to interact in 1918. That year witnessed the birth of *ultraísmo*, whose debt to *creacionismo* was widely acknowledged, although there was some internal dispute over the question of who influenced whom (Huidobro and Reverdy over *creacionismo*; Huidobro and Guillermo de Torre over *creacionismo* and *ultraísmo*). César Comet even thought that Rafael Cansinos-Asséns was the only one who understood how *creacionismo* gave form to *ultraísmo*.³

The Ultraists had adapted Futurist techniques such as the suppression of adjectives and adverbs and the abolition of the lyrical ‘I’, but they also incorporated devices from other avant-garde schools in order to reach their aim of ‘going beyond’ established cultural practices and renewing the evocative power of Spanish literature. Another Argentine living in Spain at that moment was Jorge Luis Borges. He attended the weekly soirées of the Ultraists at the Café Colonial in Madrid and contributed to the development of their literary concepts. After a three-year stay in Madrid, he returned to Argentina in 1921 and took with him Spanish *ultraísmo*, which in short order he fused with native elements.

3 See César A Comet: “Una época de arte puro.” *Cervantes* (April 1919): 86–91.

While the reception of Futurism in Latin America after the movement's launch in Paris was mostly lukewarm or sceptical, this did not preclude a productive appropriation of its revolutionary principles by several individuals and groups in the decades to come. Several essays in this volume analyse not only reactions to Futurism, but also the contexts that shaped the nature of this complex process of interaction. The absorption of Futurism in the Americas responded to local realities, most notably, to Latin American artists and intellectuals' desire to break with their respective nations' academic traditions, which were rooted in nineteenth-century aesthetics and had served the governments that had emerged after these nations had achieved their independence. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that news regarding Futurism often arrived in the Americas in an indirect manner. Of the nearly one-thousand Futurist manifestos only a few dozen reached the other side of the Atlantic. Consequently, the notions of Futurism circulating in Latin America were strongly mediated by intellectuals such as Jorge Luis Borges and Rubén Darío, who pursued with their pro- or anti-Futurist statements agendas of their own.

In many ways, the term 'Futurism' operated as a generic category and was often applied to modern works of art regardless of whether they were Futurist or not. In fact, the term 'Futurism' was often used simply as shorthand for 'modern art'. Thus, the label was conflated with novelty, modernity, technology and urban life. This simplistic view no doubt helped the movement to gain traction, but it also contributed an uneven success and to the rise of a notion of 'Futurism' that did not reflect the complexity and subtleties of Marinetti's aesthetic programme.

The influx of many Futurist manifestos and books as well as Marinetti's visits to Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay caused a wide range of responses amongst artists, writers and critics. These reactions give us some details regarding the reception of this movement, but they do not tell us the full story. We must also consider that Latin American artists living in Europe had direct and/or indirect contact with this movement, as this had also its effects in the New World.

The fate of Futurism in Brazil

The contributors to this edition of the *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* discussing the reach of Futurism in Brazil chose to highlight different echoes of F. T. Marinetti's visit in 1926. Some of the reactions were very much in line with those in other latitudes and included a great deal of incomprehension regarding the poetics and aesthetics of Futurism. However, the Brazilian responses carried a layer of criticism that was quintessentially Brazilian, as they stemmed from

issues pertaining to the legacy of class and racial inequality in that country, as well as to issues related to a search for a national identity that was taking place at that time.

Odile Cisneros offers in her essay “Futurism and Cubism in the Early Poetics of Mexican *estridentismo* and Brazilian *modernismo*” a contrasting study of developments in the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking hemispheres of the Americas. Both *estridentismo* and Brazilian *modernismo* gave especial attention to noise and machines, and urban settings became icons of modernity. Yet, Manuel Maples Arce’s early poetry and Mário de Andrade’s first manifestos point to tensions in their approach to Futurist aesthetics. Both exhibit the double dynamic of constructing modern figurations of the national as well as ‘nationalizing’ the modern trends arriving from Europe, especially Futurism, Cubism and Surrealism.

Vanessa Bortulucce’s essay “Futurist Manifestos and Programmatic Texts of Brazilian Modernism” analyses how the genre of the manifesto passed from Italy to Brazil and how the rhetoric of Futurism contributed to the affirmation of a Modernist school in Brazil. Studies such as these provide international researchers who may be less familiar with the multiplicity of manifestos in Brazil with tools that aid their understanding of the broad spectrum of forms and contents of this literary genre. Vice versa, Brazilian scholarship is provided with means to assess the international context of the theoretical debates in Brazilian Modernism. This demonstrates that the existence of an overseas original does not imply that Brazilians simply copied foreign models; in fact, Bortulucce’s examples clearly show that this was not the case.

Most contributions to the Brazilian section of this volume illustrate the great concern amongst Modernists that an association with Marinetti might also cause them to be associated with Fascism. That the situation in Italy was a great deal more complex than Latin American intellectuals were aware of is demonstrated in **Günter Berghaus**’s introduction to two interviews that Marinetti gave in Brazil in 1926 and in which he sought to ward off the suspicion that his visit to South America was a propaganda tour for Mussolini’s régime.

Given the widespread idea that Marinetti’s Futurism was the artistic branch of Fascism, it is understandable that Brazilian writers avoided being seen in public with him. However, as **Marcelo Moreschi**’s essay tells us, some artists, such as Flávio de Carvalho, nonetheless used the occasion of Marinetti’s visit to Brazil to delve further into Futurist theories. After interviewing Marinetti, Carvalho did indeed see in the Italian writer an archetypal representative of the Italian Peninsula, which Carvalho considered to be in a state of decay. Thus, he arrived at the conclusion that Fascism and Futurism were profoundly virile reactions against a decomposing society and culture, and not merely passing artistic phenomena.

Mirhiane Mendes de Abreu shows how the epithet 'Futurist' had been thrust upon Mário de Andrade in 1921 by Oswald de Andrade in an article for the *Jornal do comércio*. As his work progressed, Mário de Andrade was concerned that the public discussion of and controversy about Futurism could have a negative impact on his carefully crafted project of renewing the national identity and cultural self-image of Brazil. At the time of Marinetti's first visit to Brazil, he carefully shunned contact with the Italian who was denigrated in the press and met with suspicion in intellectual circles. Mário de Andrade's project involved a reclaiming of national archetypes associated with indigenous culture, and the establishment of a national language. All of this could be jeopardized if it came to be viewed as running under the banner of international Futurism. Oswald de Andrade's *antropofagia* became one of the most efficient cultural metaphors to empower a postcolonial art system. It was certainly the richest cultural framework that the Portuguese-speaking America devised to systematically shake off, or rather 'devour', the legacy of its former colonizer in the intellectual sphere, as well as to prepare intellectuals for a new type of interaction with Europe and the USA. The word 'Futurist', recognized in Brazil for its immediate ramifications with Italy and France, had the potential to put at risk the generation's search for a genuine and original Brazilian culture.

The specifically Brazilian form of the avant-garde that adopted the label *modernismo* should not be confused with the Symbolist-inclined *modernismo* mentioned at the outset of this preface. The Week of Modern Art in São Paulo (11–18 February 1922) marked the beginning of Brazilian Modernism. What complicates the matter is that, in the articles and letters of the time, the event and the works exhibited there were often referred to as 'Futurist'. The meanings of this epithet were very diverse, since at times it was linked to the aesthetics promoted by F. T. Marinetti and sometimes, vaguely, to anything pertaining to 'the future'. Futurism as a term and concept had become incorporated into the Brazilian cultural vocabulary in the course of the 1910s. In the article "Uma palestra de arte" (A Talk about Art), published in the newspaper *Correio paulistano* of 6 December 1920, Paulo Menotti del Picchia explained: "Futurism came to be defined as an innovative trend, beautiful and strong, topical and audacious, unfurling a flag that flutters in the breeze of a libertarian ideal in art, lightly touched by the respect for the past which at first it repelled." Such a broad definition of 'Futurism' could in fact serve as a synonym of 'Modernism' in 1920s Brazil, but there was still the danger that it might be linked to Marinetti and his school, widely seen as aberrant, foolish or degenerate.

A good testimony to the Modernists' efficacy in shedding the suspicion of being followers of Marinetti's school is the fact that, to this day, literary critics feel obliged to emphasize that Mário de Andrade and his companions were indeed

‘Modernists’ rather than ‘Futurists’. Much of the discussion on Futurism in Brazil is repeating an argument that was essentially devised by a group of writers who sought to defend their self-image as creative innovators within their own cultural environment. Studies like Abreu’s, which confront different moments in the cultural discourses of the 1920s and reflect on what the concepts came to mean in each of those moments, examine actual specific influences and borrowings, in terms of textual constructions and performative strategies, when discussing the presence of Futurism in Brazil.

Romulo Costa Mattos’s essay documents the impact which Marinetti’s visit to Morro da Favela had on the public perception of this landmark in the topography of Rio de Janeiro. The visit was not altogether unexpected, given that other foreign intellectuals and artists had climbed up that hill in search for things exotic. The feedback on Marinetti’s visit in the press demonstrates how the favela was both publicly demonized as the source of all evils and idealized as the dwelling of honest individuals, thus becoming a repository of either Brazilian vices or virtues. Irrespective of whether the shanty town was described as a stronghold of rogues or of innocent and naïve citizens, it was looked at as a mysterious and colourful place. By the time of Marinetti’s visit in 1926, Morro da Favela had become a national reference point that represented a certain Brazilianness, and Marinetti’s visit allowed for the public to see in it part of the national identity.

Marinetti and Futurism satirized in books and in the popular press

As in previous issues of the *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies*, this volume presents a number of caricatures of Futurism with some illuminating commentaries attached. Given the wealth of material of this nature that was published in Latin America, we decided to focus on some representative examples exclusively taken from this geographical zone. They are therefore complementary to the longer essays and extend the range of topics addressed in this yearbook. On the occasion of Marinetti’s first voyage to Argentina (7–28 June 1926), the rhetoric of the press, together with the reputation of the leader as a ‘franc-tireur’, transformed the avant-garde strategy of shocking the public. Between 15 May and 1 July, eighty-seven newspaper articles were written about his visit, thirty-eight of which appeared in *Crítica*, a sensationalist evening newspaper that printed 300,000 copies each day. *Crítica* had sent a correspondent to Brazil to cover the first stop of Marinetti’s South-American voyage, which was accompanied by both scandals and an out-and-out rejection of the visitor’s defence of Fascism. None of this happened in Argentina, since Marinetti quickly learned his lesson

and limited himself to giving lectures on literature, art, theatre, fashion, music, sports and his latest interest, Tactilism. The first of those lectures took place at the Teatro Coliseo in Buenos Aires and was the subject of a satirical illustration by the novelist and poet Ricardo Güiraldes. In his note on this drawing, **Claudio Palomares Salas** analyses this visual depiction as both a playful mockery of Futurism and as a Futurist work itself.

Hanno Ehrlicher discusses the reports on Marinetti's visit to Buenos Aires in the weekly illustrated magazine *Caras y caretas*. While, on the one hand, the editors were keen to depict their magazine as being up-to-date and in contact with famous personalities from around the world, on the other hand they also depicted Futurism as a formerly exciting but by now outdated movement. This also comes across in a colourful drawing by Eduardo Álvarez, which underlines Marinetti's status as a celebrity, yet also satirizes the writer's manner of recitation and the *parole in libertà* style of Italian Futurist literature. **Barbara Meazzi** focusses on Emilio Pettoruti's first exhibition in Buenos Aires in 1924, after his return from a long stay in Europe, where he had encountered Futurism and had adopted its painting techniques. This satirical comment on his exhibition at the Witcomb Gallery criticized the illegibility of Pettoruti's paintings and what was considered a 'degeneration of art', no doubt to defend Argentine culture against the modern fads in European art. Thus, in a veiled manner, this caricature shows how the South American continent was emancipating itself from its colonial heritage and was in the process of affirming its artistic independence from Europe.

Lynda Klich discusses Ramón Alva de la Canal's collage-painting *El Café de Nadie* (Nobody's Café, 1926) and shows that caricatures were an effective form of political critique in Mexico during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She also demonstrates that the *estridentistas* positively embraced mass culture in order to propagate their innovative concepts beyond the cultured élites. **Mariana Aguirre**'s account of a woodcut by Ramón Alva de la Canal of the muralist Diego Rivera, which served as an illustration for Xavier Icaza's *Magnavoz 1926: Un discurso mexicano*, analyses *estridentismo*'s fusion of Futurism's interest in noise and technology with local geography and pre-Hispanic culture. More importantly, it presents Diego Rivera as a national icon and thus demonstrates the elective affinities between *estridentismo* and muralism, often considered as polar opposites.

Matteo D'Ambrosio explores the meaning behind the frontispiece of a rare pamphlet, entitled *Marinetti, or The Futurist Unmasked* (1926), by the Argentine writer Lauro Montanari. It relates to the disturbances of Marinetti's lectures at the Casino Antártica in São Paulo and the Parquet Balnéario theatre in Santos and highlights the change in both Marinetti's international reputation and that of his movement. Montanari regarded Marinetti as a man of the past and shows his

grave in a moonlit city, engraved with a motto that is an equivalent to ‘In Memoriam’, with a dog relieving itself on the monument. **Romulo Mattos** comments on a caricature of Marinetti’s visit to Morro da Favela, which ridicules his positive – allegedly even idealizing – remarks on the virtues of a favela, a common attitude to be found amongst engagé intellectuals at the time. However, the group of intellectuals who published this cartoon in the magazine *Dom Quixote* distrusted any admiration of the favelas and criticized the Brazilian State for its neglect of the social inequality in the capital Rio de Janeiro. It could be argued that the rebuke of Marinetti’s exoticism was a predecessor of the reproach experienced by film director Marcel Camus, who was sharply attacked by Brazilian intellectuals for the way in which his 1959 *Black Orpheus* portrayed favela dwellers as a happy-go-lucky bunch with the best views of Rio de Janeiro – no matter that the director virtually introduced Bossa Nova to the wider world. **Annateresa Fabris** explains a caricature stemming from Marinetti’s train journey to São Paulo, in which he is satirized by the popular cartoon figure Juca Pato. She shows how Marinetti’s literary technique of Words-in-Freedom, the use of onomatopoeia, the recitations or the conceptual valuation of speed were all elements that shocked the Brazilian upper middle class.

Country and archive reports

This Yearbook contains one country report and two archive reports. In their account on Futurism in Mexico, **Elissa Rashkin and Carla Zurián** detail how *estridentista* artists and writers turned public fora and spaces, such as the radio and city architecture, into places of revolutionary avant-garde experimentation, polemical moves that proved to be one of the causes of Stridentism’s eventual erasure from the cultural scene. The two authors offer us a chronologically oriented overview of the rediscovery of *estridentismo* in various artistic media. Attached is a selective bibliography of major contributions to this still ongoing process of reconstruction.

The Ibero-American Institute in Berlin houses Europe’s largest specialized library of books, periodicals and archival material on Latin America, Spain, Portugal and the Caribbean. Because of its broadly based collection policy, it is not as well known amongst art historians and literary scholars as it ought to be. **Ulrike Mühlischlegel** offers us a valuable overview of the collection, with particular emphasis on those materials which experts in Futurism Studies and related fields (e.g. the Latin American avant-garde movements) might find useful in their research. In her archival report on the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia and the Residencia de Estudiantes, both in Madrid, **María Porras Sánchez**

identifies materials that may shed light on the coexistence of different aesthetics and cultural sources in Rafael Barradas's and Joaquín Torres-García's œuvre. Her report explores diverse sorts of documents and publications, manuscripts and art works connected with the two artists' collective development of *vibracionismo* (Vibrationism), a style that combined formal elements of Cubism and Futurism in an urban imagery, and their collaboration with avant-garde magazines such as *Arc-Voltaic* (Electric Arc, 1918) and *Un enemigo del poble* (An Enemy of the People, 1917–19). It examines in equal measure materials related to Torres-García's interest in architecture, which dovetailed with his early Catalanism and pan-Mediterranean identity.

Concluding remarks

The essays, caricatures and reports contained in this volume explore the fate of a heterogeneous Futurism within a complex network of transatlantic and inter-regional cultural exchange in the Americas. Perhaps the most salient circumstance affecting the Latin American understanding of Futurism – as well as other movements in art and literature – is *mestizaje*, the mixing of the native and foreign. This innate tendency towards a fusion of the indigenous, *criollo*-American, African, Asian and European transformed the familiar dichotomies of Modernism and the avant-garde: advance-guard/rearguard; futurist(ic)/passéist; local, regional or national/international and cosmopolitan.

It is appropriate that the authors of this volume address 'Latin American Futurism' in its specific national, regional and local context. Because context, particularly in light of Latin America's (post-)colonial situation, always already disrupts binaries that are all too easy to accept, thereby troubling our conceptualization of what is meant by the term 'avant-garde'.

The Latin American reception of Italian Futurism and of Marinetti's aesthetic theories was highly contingent on context and dependent on the altogether different social, political, cultural and economic circumstances in the countries examined in this volume: Argentina, Brazil, the Caribbeans, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. In fact, the 'Latin American' qualification changes the rules of the game with respect to Futurism, just as much as it would do with any other art movement of the period. 'Latin Americanness', far from being peripheral, constitutes a central and necessary element of conceiving a significant problem. While the impact of Futurism in Latin America has received less attention than that of Symbolism, Cubism and Surrealism, its effects on this region are indicative of how its countries adapted this movement to suit their needs. The celebration of modernity, speed, technology and novelty was certainly appealing, but other key

Futurist tenets precluded artists and writers from a fuller and more productive engagement with it.

Given Latin America's colonial legacy, Futurism's espousal of the cultural and political superiority of Italy by using a bellicose visual and written rhetoric could not be easily integrated. Although many Latin American artists and intellectuals blended Futurist and other foreign Modernist aesthetics with national, often indigenous, elements, they did not engage, for the most part, in imperialist discourses. Instead, they were interested in renewing their own culture and institutions while participating in a cosmopolitan dialogue with other American and European nations. Like the Futurists, they looked within and treated the indigenous traditions as a source of pride, but they did not channel them against other nations. Rather than argue for the supremacy of their culture, they wanted it to be seen as an equal to other traditions.

Futurism's influence in the Latin American cultural sphere was clearly acknowledged by Oswald de Andrade when he wrote, with regard to Brazil, that the work of the Futurist generation was tremendous and that it caused national literature to catch up on cultural developments in other parts of the world.⁴ Yet, the writer also emphasized that, once 'digested', the impulses received had to be transformed into new forms of expression that were "regional e puro em sua época" (regional and pure in our own time).⁵

In Brazil, as in other countries, relations with foreign cultural production remained on the agenda for the next century. For more than a hundred years now, Latin America has negotiated (and continues to negotiate) its postcolonial national identity. Looking back at the inspiration received from Futurism and understanding how and why this influence was eventually overcome may also offer a perspective on the contemporary world. Thus, our attempts at understanding the ramifications of Futurism in Latin America might also prove to be significant to a readership outside the academic field of Futurism Studies.

Finally, we would like to thank Günter Berghaus, General Editor, for his invaluable guidance and knowledge in preparing this volume.

⁴ See his *Manifesto of Brazilwood Poetry* (1924).

⁵ Ibid.

Section 1: Futurism in Latin America

Enea Zaramella

***Estridentismo* and *Sonido Trece*: The Avant-garde in Post-Revolutionary Mexico**

Abstract: The aftermath of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) saw the discussion around the nation’s cultural identity return to the political sphere. In the midst of a revived artistic fever, directed at an institutional level by José Vasconcelos, *estridentismo* (Stridentism) – the literary and artistic avant-garde movement founded by the poet Manuel Maples Arce – and *Sonido 13* – composer Julián Carrillo’s microtonal music theory – were not part of the official debate. This essay offers a reinterpretation of these artistic movements through a critical approach to the *zeitgeist* that dominated the avant-garde during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Thus, I relate the practices and theories of Carrillo and Maples Arce to international avant-garde figures and movements such as Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and Italian Futurism. Taking recourse to Luigi Russolo’s *suono-rumori* (sound-noises) and his avant-garde considerations on sounds in Nature, this essay sheds light on Stridentism’s and *Sonido 13*’s responses to the emergence of modern soundscapes. Thus, it re-evaluates the current critical and historical narratives by reintroducing these two often dismissed movements into the Mexican cultural panorama of the period.

Keywords: Mexican Revolution (1910–20), *estridentismo* (Stridentism), Julián Carrillo, *Sonido 13*, microtonal music, the Art of Noises, soundscapes.

Latin America has proved to be extremely fertile terrain for the development and circulation of European avant-garde trends. Native artists were inspired by the various bids for artistic innovation, while others vehemently rejected them. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the literary inheritance of *modernismo*,¹

¹ In order to differentiate it from the extended notion of European and North American Modernism, I use the Spanish term *modernismo* when referring to the Latin American artistic movement and literary production from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth, as elucidated by Aníbal González: “*Modernismo* was a literary movement of fundamental importance to Spanish America and Spain, which took place over a period of forty years at the turn of the nineteenth century, roughly from the 1880s to the 1920s. Not to be confused with the Brazilian *modernismo* of the 1920s, which corresponds to the European avant-garde or to English-language Modernism, Spanish American *modernismo* is widely regarded as

passed down from the likes of Rubén Darío (1867–1916), José Martí (1853–1895), Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera (1859–1895) or Julián del Casal (1863–1893), had already become a literary tradition which was proving hard to live up to. Latin American artists welcomed the spirit of the European vanguard movements and took inspiration from their European counterparts. In doing so, however, they also participated in the *zeitgeist* of rupture that was ubiquitous in the West during the first three decades of the twentieth century.²

As is often the case during the construction or re-construction of a nation, the official nationalist discourse – at once populist and cosmopolitan – conditioned Mexico's first forays into industrial capitalism, progress and modernity. One of the problems that the modern Mexican State had to face was the reconceptualization of the symbols of the Revolution and the establishment of cultural policies that could cultivate a collective imaginary suitable for the consolidation of a national identity. The key institutional figure from post-revolutionary Mexico was, undoubtedly, José Vasconcelos (1882–1959). As the head of the Mexican Secretariat of Public Education, Vasconcelos reformed the educational system in the years 1921 to 1924 and encouraged the creation of a new national art that didactically imparted a Mexican identity to the people, an identity rooted in rural tradition, indigenous narratives and the principles of the Revolution.

The folkloristic, rural and nationalist elements in Vasconcelos' official post-revolutionary Mexican art formed a dialectic relationship with the desire of Mexican artists to be *actual* or 'up-to-date' with the vogues and debates taking place in the rest of the world. Cosmopolitanism was therefore an active ingredient of the national *zeitgeist*, and it allows us to identify some of the in-between spaces where other forms of expression could spring up. The aim of this essay is to study several interstices within non-official cultural productions, such as *Estridentismo* (Stridentism) – the literary avant-garde movement founded by the poet Manuel Maples Arce (1898–1981) – and *Sonido 13* – composer Julián Car-

the first Spanish-language literary movement to have originated in the New World and to have become influential in the 'Mother Country,' Spain." González: *A Companion to Spanish American Modernismo*, p. 1. The bibliography on *modernismo* is extensive, but some recent studies, such as Roberto González Echevarría's *Modern Latin American Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (2012), Mariano Siskind's *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America* (2014) and Ericka Beckman's *Capital Fictions: The Literature of Latin America's Export Age* (2013), can provide insight into this literary movement.

² Being one of the last remnants of the Romantic tradition – "to a certain extent, the equivalent of French Parnassianism and Symbolism" (Paz: *Children of the Mire*, p. 88) – it is safe to say that *modernismo* served as a prelude to Latin American avant-garde movements during the first half of the twentieth century.

rillo's (1875–1965) microtonal music theory.³ Within official historical narratives, Stridentism and *Sonido 13* were generally disparaged as minor forms of artistic expression.⁴ The present investigation aims to highlight the central rôle these two movements had in the development of Mexico's modern identity, especially with respect to the burgeoning of a literary and musical sensibility stimulated by the country's raucous sonic environment.

The art of reverberation

Not long after its appearance in 1909, *The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism* was translated into Spanish and came ashore in Latin America, where it was published in several newspapers and literary magazines, often accompanied by annotations and commentaries by distinguished poets such as Rubén Darío, Vicente Huidobro (1893–1948) and Álvaro Armando Vasseur (1878–1969). The new doctrine written by Marinetti was received in Latin America with a fair amount of scepticism and irony, but it also sparked an undeniable interest in what the Old Continent could offer in terms of innovation. More importantly, it inspired local artists to take up some of these ideas and apply them to their cultural environment.

On the last day of 1921, Mexico City woke up to find the walls of its buildings all across the historical centre plastered with the manifesto *Actual no. 1: Hoja de vanguardia. Comprimido estridentista de Manuel Maples Arce* (Current No. 1: Vanguard Leaflet. Stridentist Prescription by Manuel Maples Arce; see Fig. 1).⁵ The isolated act of a young poet from the provinces initiated, with “the most daring and scandalous gesture in Mexican literature”,⁶ the country's first avant-garde

3 A common misinterpretation of Carrillo's *Sonido 13* is that he created a thirteen-tone music system. In fact, Carrillo named his microtonal music thus to underline that, thanks to his subdivisions of the tone, his theory goes beyond the common Western use of twelve tones.

4 Both Octavio Paz and Carlos Monsiváis' critiques of the Stridentist movement and Carlos Chávez and Jesús C. Romero's rejections of Carrillo's microtonal theory had significant impact on their wider critical reception. Disparaging attitudes towards Carrillo and Maples Arce meant they were practically forgotten beyond their own time. A renewed interest in these figures emerged only decades later, following Luis Mario Schneider's investigations into literary Stridentism in the 1970s, and Luca Conti's studies into Carrillo's controversial music in the late 1990s.

5 Maples Arce: *Actual no. 1*, reproduced in Schneider: *El estridentismo, o Una literatura de la estrategia*, pp. 268–269. All references to Maples Arce's manifesto come from Schneider's text, and all translations are mine.

6 Schneider: *El estridentismo, o Una literatura de la estrategia*, p. 42.

movement. Maple Arce's call was gradually heeded and a group began to form when he received samples of poetry from Arqueles Vela (1899–1977), Germán List Arzubide (1898–1998), Salvador Gallardo (1893–1981), Miguel Aguilón Guzmán (1898–1995) and Luis Quintanilla (1993–1978), using the pseudonym 'Kyn Taniya'. In addition, visual artists such as Diego Rivera (1886–1957), David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896–1974), Jean Charlot (1898–1979) and Fermín Revueltas (1901–1935) – the latter of whom edited the only three issues of the magazine *Irradiador* (1923) with Maples Arce – and the international photographers Edward Weston (1886–1958) and Tina Modotti (1896–1942) all collaborated in the burgeoning Stridentist project.⁷



Fig. 1. *Actual* no. 1: *Hoja de vanguardia. Comprimido estridentista de Manuel Maples Arce* (Current No. 1: Vanguard Leaflet. Stridentist Prescription by Manuel Maples Arce), December 1921.

⁷ For the complete list of artists who took part in the movement, see the works by Schneider and Elissa Rashkin listed in the bibliography.

As the name *Actual* suggested, Stridentism referred not so much to a movement but to the act of updating (*actualizar*, or bringing into the present) Mexican literature and art. Its emphasis was not on the future, but rather on present-day reality. The strategy behind *Actual* was borrowed from the advertising industry and its proclivity towards creating a visual impact: both the sites chosen to post the manifesto (next to other billboards, on the capital's street corners), and its format (fourteen programmatic points next to a lavish portrait of a dandyish Maples Arce) were meant to ensure the greatest possible exposure. The intention behind *Actual* was both ludic – it negated its own rules, as is demonstrated in the absurdly ironic mandate: “SE PROHIBE FIJAR ANUNCIOS” (‘FLYPOSTING PROHIBITED’) – and tragic, as Maples Arce announced Stridentism's death in the very act of giving birth to it, since the prohibition of flyposting invalidated the manifesto's very *raison d'être*. In the process, though, he also stopped the hands of time, paralyzing it in the ephemerality of the present. Moreover, the call for *actualismo* was made explicit in point XII of the manifesto:

No retrospección. No Futurismo. The entire world, there, calm, gloriously lit up in the stupendous apex of the present moment; observed in the wonder of an unmistakable and unique emotion, sensorially electrolyzed in the surpassist “I”, vertical on the meridian instant, always the same, and always renewed. Let us start *actualismo*.⁸

Stridentism was born with a proverbial bang. The term refers to a grating sound and, in a figurative sense, to a word, which “as a name, is already an image”, given that “it merges the adjectival quality with the substantive one.”⁹ The sound of machines, modes of transport, advertisements and innumerable other irksome noises – if we accept that the etymological Latin root of noise is nausea – were part of the new imaginary of modernity based on the mechanisms that defined it: petrol, aeroplanes, the radio, and so on. While Stridentism might ring with the ‘stridencies’ of the raucous modern environment, Elissa Rashkin has drawn attention to the lack of any kind of rigorous investigation into the genesis of the movement's name. She herself proffered Ramón del Valle-Inclán as one of Maples

⁸ “Nada de retrospección. Nada de futurismo. Todo el mundo, allí, quieto, iluminado maravillosamente en el vértice estupendo del minuto presente; atalayado en el prodigio de una emoción inconfundible y única y sensorialmente electrolizado en el ‘yo’ superatista, vertical sobre el instante meridiano, siempre el mismo, y renovado siempre. Hagamos *actualismo*.” Maples Arce: *Actual no. 1*, reproduced in Schneider: *El estridentismo, o Una literatura de la estrategia*, p. 273.

⁹ “Como nombre, [la palabra ‘estridentismo’] ya es una imagen [...] porque une a la calidad de sustantivo la de adjetivo.” Jitrik: “El estridentismo y la obra de Manuel Maples Arce”, p. 29.

Arce's possible references,¹⁰ while Rubén Gallo suggested that the young poet's inspiration might have been the cacophonies of Marinetti's book *Zang tumb tuuum: Adrianopoli ottobre 1912. Parole in libertà* (Zang Tumb Tumb: Adrianople, October 1912. Words-in-Freedom, 1914).¹¹ Given that both suggestions are plausible but unprovable, perhaps the most interesting aspect of their hypotheses is that both scholars take their cues from poetic creations, excluding extra-textual inspirations such as the emergence of Mexico's modern soundscape, the noises of the Revolution still imprinted on the collective memory, or a combination of the two, together with the presence of an evolving mass society.

If we understand Stridentism as a composite movement, the name chosen by Maples Arce not only brought together all of the above-mentioned factors, but, more importantly, it suggests that the human sensorial adjustment to the era of machines and electricity causes a "separation of the senses" and leads to a counteractive "industrial remapping of the body."¹² The Mexican poet synthesized the need to re-educate the senses, in particular our hearing, and went as far as to diagnose, in the manifesto's title, the *Comprimido estridentista* (Stridentist Prescription) as a quick fix for the ills of modern times.¹³

While Marinetti's name appears among the first lines of *Actual*, it was clear that Maples Arce's focus was not the same as that of the Italian author. Rather, the Mexican's approach can be better understood as an attempt to adapt some of the general ideas previously formulated by other avant-gardists.¹⁴ Notwithstanding Stridentism's rejection of the literary tradition and its fascination with machines, the main differences between the Italian and Mexican movements lay in their notion of the relationship between politics and aesthetics, in the way in which they conceived of a nationalist aesthetic and in the amount of poetic linguistic experimentation that they undertook.¹⁵ Maples Arce's action in 1921, like

10 Rashkin: *The Stridentist Movement in Mexico*, p. 23. Rashkin endorses Francisco Mora's suggestion that Maples Arce might have been inspired by the Ramón del Valle-Inclán's *Rosa de sanatorio* (Rose of the Infirmary, 1919), where the feverish chaos of a lunatic asylum is described as "Cubist, Futurist and strident".

11 Gallo: "Maples Arce, Marinetti and Khlebnikov: The Mexican Estridentistas in Dialogue with Italian and Russian Futurism", p. 311.

12 Cray: *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 19.

13 I previously translated *comprimido* in the manifesto as 'synopsis' in order to give a sense of Maples Arce's programmatic effort. However, the term can also mean 'compression', 'synthesis' or 'pill'.

14 Rashkin: *The Stridentist Movement in Mexico: The Avant-Garde and Cultural Change in the 1920s*, p. 23.

15 Gallo: "Maples Arce, Marinetti and Khlebnikov", p. 320.

Marinetti's in 1909, offered inspiration to other artists. The manifesto's explicitly call for a united effort ("Let's start *actualismo*") prompted the birth of an artistic movement.

Poetics of noise

Maples Arce's reliance and perception of the changes in modernity's sonic environment can be counterbalanced with some of the seminal ideas on music and noise pronounced by Luigi Russolo (1885–1947) in the manifesto, *L'arte dei rumori* (The Art of Noises, 1913), and in the 1916 book of the same name. It is likely that Russolo's manifesto circulated in Latin America alongside other Futurist manifestos, texts and books. The Italian's idea was to gather and regulate the use of a series of noises, or *suono-rumori*, to be effectively incorporated into musical compositions. Having stressed the urgent demand in the modern world for this kind of formalization, Russolo exemplified his argument by citing a letter that Marinetti had sent him, inspired by the noises of the First Balkan War.¹⁶ The orchestra of a great battlefield – as both Futurists defined the battle soundscape in their epistolary exchange – needed a certain kind of textual transposition, which was brought about through linguistic experimentation, onomatopoeia and the unconventional, scant use of punctuation marks. However, the musical adoption or transduction of this aesthetic experiment had to be imagined *ex novo*, or, rather, *ex machina*.

If music can be thought of as the organization of sound, Russolo's achievement was the systematization or musical organization of noises. Along with the proposals set out in *L'arte dei rumori*, Russolo constructed a series of instruments, the *intonarumori* (sound intoners), which were played in Milan for a first concert of sorts in 1914.¹⁷ Noisy, modern and distinctly cosmopolitan, Russolo's compositions were essentially an orchestration of noises from big cities, warfare and the mechanical world, which had never before been exploited in any kind of structured way for a musical ensemble. Russolo's compositions made an art out of

¹⁶ Russolo: *The Art of Noises*, p. 26. It must be noted that fragments of that correspondence also appeared in Marinetti's volume, *Zang tumb tuuum*. A phonographic recording of Marinetti reciting "La battaglia di Adrianopoli" is available on the CD *Musica futurista*, compiled by Daniele Lombardi (Fonit Cetra, 1986).

¹⁷ Russolo's *intonarumori* were presented for the first time at a Futurist serata in Modena (2 June 1913). For a detailed analysis of this event see Berghaus: *Italian Futurist Theatre*, pp. 118–122. On the concert at the Teatro Dal Verme (21 April 1914) see Berghaus: *Italian Futurist Theatre*, pp. 128–133.

noises from a modern urban world, which the public was daily exposed to outside the concert hall:

I remember that the performers that I employed for the first concert of noise instruments [*intonarumori*] in Milan had to confess this truth, with deep wonder. After the fourth or fifth rehearsal, *having developed the ear* and having grown accustomed to the pitched and variable noises produced by the noise instruments, they told me that they took great pleasure in following the noises of trams, automobiles, and so on, in the traffic outside. And they verified with amazement the variety of pitch they encountered in these noises. It was the noise instruments that deserved the credit for revealing these phenomena to them.¹⁸

For the Stridentist group, whose members were too young to have fought in the Mexican Revolution, childhood memories of the armed struggle were merely reverberating echoes of gunfire and the general cacophony of battle.¹⁹ Instead, the noises of the city became the main theme of their work:

Mis ojos deletrean la ciudad algebraica
entre las subversiones de los escaparates;

detrás de los tranvías se explican las
fachadas
y las alas del viento se rompen en los
cables

Siento íntegra toda instalación estética

lateral a las calles alambradas de ruido,
que quiebran sobre el piano sus manos
antisépticas,
y luego se recogen en un libro mullido.²⁰

My eyes spell out the algebraic city
between the subversions of the window
displays;
behind the trams façades explain
themselves
and the wind's wings snap on the
overhead cables

I feel the full aesthetic installation to be
intact
to one side of the streets fenced in by noise,
which break their antiseptic hands on the
piano,
and are then collected in a cushioned book.

There is no doubt that modernity constitutes the thematic focus of these verses: they rationally map out city, trams, electric cables and streets reverberating with noise. The Mexican poet and critic Rubén Bonifaz Nuño (1923–2013) contradicted all those critics who deprecated Maples Arce's lack of linguistic and typographical experimentation and argued that this poem "has, as the musical basis of its composition, the monotonous and archaic rhythm of the Alexandrine verse of

¹⁸ Russolo: *The Art of Noises*, p. 48.

¹⁹ In *A la orilla de este río* (1964), Maples Arce recounts his youth and his memories of the Revolution especially in the chapter "La Revolución es la Revolución", pp. 257–72.

²⁰ Maples Arce: "Andamios interiores" in Maples Arce: *Las semillas del tiempo*, p. 39.

the clerical minstrel”.²¹ Through this formal use of metre, he suggested, Maples Arce “was able to show that metrical schemes, as empty vessels, are capable of receiving individual content that distinguishes them, making them always original.”²² In other words, it seems that the changes in daily life, in which all the aforementioned ‘poetic’ images partake (the trams, the cables, etc.) interrupted an archaic and monotonous social order – one that epitomized the Mexico of that period through the use of the Alexandrine verse.²³ The daring inventiveness of Maples Arce’s poetry lay precisely in the tension created by the juxtaposition of form and content, both in the poem and the city within the poem: Futurist elements are uneasily conjoined with the classical Alexandrine metre. In contrast to Marinetti’s linguistic experimentations and onomatopoeias that typify the literary style of *parole in libertà* (Words-in-Freedom), Maples Arce used an ‘archaic’ poetic metre in an effort to bring a pre-modern order into step with a new content, which the younger generation of poets was so eager to embrace.

Noisy music: Julián Carrillo’s *Sonido 13*

Maples Arce’s ‘trademark’ phrase from *Actual* was “¡Chopin a la silla eléctrica!” (Chopin to the electric chair!). The poet was an avid reader of avant-garde literature, and it is no surprise that this slogan has often been understood as an echo of Marinetti’s bid to murder the moonlight.²⁴ From Paul Verlaine (1844–1896) and Victor Hugo (1802–1885) to Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) and Claude Debussy (1862–1918), the moonlight’s influence touched many of the nineteenth-century’s artistic muses. As an icon of the nostalgic sentiments dominating Romanticism, as well as the Symbolism and Parnassianism that were so important for the *modernista* poets, the moon and its beams reflects the stale weight of the past, which the Futurists and their campaign were keen to over-

21 “[*Andamios interiores*] tiene, como base musical de su composición, el ritmo arcaico y monótono del alejandrino del mester de clerecía.” Bonifaz Nuño: “Estudio preliminar”, p. 12.

22 “[...] pudo mostrar que los esquemas rítmicos, como formas vacías, son capaces de recibir contenidos individuales que los singularizan haciéndolos siempre originales de nuevo.” Ibid.

23 In Spanish, Alexandrine verse is constituted by fourteen syllables divided into two hemistiches (groups of six syllables). Alexandrine metre was introduced in the twelfth century by the Norman poet Alexandre de Bernay. After its extensive use during the Middle Ages in *Mester de clerecía* (‘Clergy’s Art’), it was revived in Romantic poetry and subsequently employed by *modernismo* poets and the Spanish Generation of ’98.

24 Marinetti: “Second Futurist Proclamation: Let’s Kill off the Moonlight.” *Critical Writings*, pp. 22–31.

come. However, given that Maples Arce was probably aware of Russolo's recent sonic experimentations and of the critical uproar they sparked, I would argue that his "Chopin to the electric chair!" refers more specifically to a rejection of the classical understanding of music – one which conceives of music as a succession of harmonic sounds. Chopin is not necessarily 'murdered', like Marinetti's moonlight is, but rather electrocuted, that is, bombarded by the currents of a strident modern soundscape.²⁵ Moving beyond Maples Arce's disapproval of the musical tradition of the nocturne,²⁶ Stridentism more generally asked what is to be done with a music 'in ruins'. If the existing musical system based on tonality did not have sufficient recourses to represent the new sonic reality, what kind of music did?

Sonido 13, the microtonal musical system theorized and practiced by the Mexican composer Julián Carrillo, differed from Russolo's understanding of a music generated by noises, and became the subject of a vigorous debate. In Mexico, in particular, few defended his system, whose intended function was to improve on the classic tonal system, essentially by dividing notes into microtones and thereby extending its range. Musicologists, musicians and composers of the time criticized and refuted what might otherwise have been considered an example of the tangible manifestation of modernity which many aspired to in the 1920s.

The reception of *Sonido 13* outside of Mexico was quite different, especially in the United States of America. From 1914 to 1918, Carrillo lived in New York, where he established and conducted the American Symphony Orchestra. After presenting his microtonal theory in Mexico and Cuba, he returned to New York in 1926 and composed *Sonata casi fantasía in 4th, 8th, and 16th tones*, premiered at Town Hall on 13 March 1926. This concert caught the attention of the composer and director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski (1882–1977), who

25 In pictorial terms, it is interesting to note the differences between Giacomo Balla (1871–1958) and Fermín Revueltas (1901–1935) on the interpretation of electricity. For example, if we compare the Italian's *Lampada ad arco* (The Arc Lamp), painted in 1911 in reference to Marinetti's *Uccidiamo il chiaro di luna*, with the Mexican's *Andamios exteriores* (Exterior Scaffoldings) painted in 1923 in reference to Maples Arce's *Andamios interiores* (Interior Scaffoldings), we could argue that, in the first case, the emphasis is on the effects of electricity – that is, a blinding light that obliterates the moon; while, in the second, the focus falls on the materiality of the electric current, symbolized by an innumerable number of wires. However, in both cases the focus is on the changing landscape introduced by a single element of modernity.

26 The term 'Nocturne' usually refers to piano compositions inspired by a calm, nightly atmosphere. It was a popular nineteenth-century piano form and its most prolific composer was Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849).

asked Carrillo to perform, under his direction, the *Concertino in 4th, 8th, and 16th Tones*, both in New York and Philadelphia. Other than gaining “a supporter of unquestionable weight for his microtonal cause”,²⁷ Carrillo received a number of positive reviews, for the most part in specialized journals. His professional relationship with Stokowski continued well into the 1930s; the director travelled to Mexico City to get a sense of the country’s musical scene, and once again, in 1931, to direct the pioneering microtonal music of the composer who, by now, had become his friend.

There is no doubt that Carrillo was entirely convinced that “*Sonido 13* will be the beginning and the end, and the starting point of a new musical generation that will arrive and transform everything.”²⁸ At times visionary, at others delusional, and never showing a modicum of modesty, Carrillo’s rhetoric did not help the reception of *Sonido 13*. Throughout his life, he revised, rewrote and introduced new scientific proofs in a series of texts which essentially recycled the same idea: that *Sonido 13* was an unprecedented musical revolution. More like a manifesto than a musical theory, *Sonido 13* was not dissimilar to the bombastic irreverence of Futurist manifestos that lambasted the institutionalized tradition: “The word ‘conservatory’ evokes, whether we want it to or not, the idea of the Museum, and for this reason, *Sonido 13*’s revolution will discard it, designating, instead, the Institute of Revolutionary Music, a place in which the lessons of our age will be given.”²⁹ Carrillo’s programme also included the invention of a new notation system and a periodical, *Sonido 13*, geared towards the propagation of his revolutionary theory of music. Had Carrillo not already been forty-six in 1921, his programmatic proposal of the ‘music of the future’ would have tallied neatly with the experimental avant-garde spirit and production of the time.³⁰

Carrillo and Russolo were clearly looking at music from different perspectives, but there was at least one joint theoretical element to their aesthetics and another practical one that linked the two. Firstly, when Russolo talks about the Art of Noises, he does not only refer to the latest variety of modern sounds in the city, or about the war, or the machines that so changed the soundscapes, but

27 “[...] un adepto de incuestionable peso para su causa microtonal.” Miranda: *Ecos, alientos y sonidos*, p. 183.

28 “El *Sonido13* será el principio del fin, y el punto de partida de una nueva generación musical que llegue a transformarlo todo.” Carrillo: *Teoría lógica de la música*, p. 5.

29 “La palabra conservatorio, despierta en nosotros, querer o no, la idea de Museo, y por tal causa, la Revolución del *Sonido13* la desechará para designar al Instituto músico-revolucionario donde se impartan las enseñanzas de nuestra época.” Ibid., p. 27.

30 Besides Alejandro Madrid’s expertise on Carrillo, Luca Conti provides useful insights on the life and works of the Mexican composer (see bibliography).

also focusses on a variety of sounds that can be found in Nature. This seemingly anti-Futurist inclination is significant, because it is closely related to kinetic perception, that is, to the life behind those noises. In his chapter “Rumori della natura e della vita: Timbri e ritmi” (The Noises of Nature and Life: Timbres and Rhythms), Russolo described the thunderclap, the wind and the pattering of rain, wondering, “And the different tiny noises – do you not remember the gurgle of a spring or brook?”³¹ In other words, the Futurist implicitly criticized the tonal music system because, once “the octave was divided into only twelve *equal* fractions and applied in the tempered scale”, a “considerable limitation of the number of practical sounds and a strange artificiality in those that were adopted.”³² Unsurprisingly, Russolo’s words seemed to resonate with the theoretical principle of enharmonic music outlined by Francesco Balilla Pratella (1880–1955) in *Futurist Music: Technical Manifesto* (1911):

Whereas chromatism only lets us take advantage of all the sounds contained in a scale that is divided into minor and major semitones, enharmony contemplates still more minute subdivisions of a tone; and hence it not only furnishes our renewed sensibilities with a maximum number of specifiable and combinable sounds, but also new and more varied relations among chords and timbres. But above all, *enharmony* makes possible enharmonic intervals that have natural and instinctive intonation and modulation, something unachievable within the present tempered system that we wish to overcome. We Futurists have long had a liking for these enharmonic intervals, which we hear in the false dissonance of an orchestra when the instruments play out of tune and in spontaneous popular songs that are sung without musical training.³³

More surprising, though, is that *Sonido 13*, despite its repeated claims of deference to a logical-scientific order, also justified the practical reclamation of the natural soundscape: “It must be said that, despite the hundreds and thousands of sounds that exist in Nature, musicians do not make use of them, and they prefer to resort to artificial intervals in their musical art.”³⁴ In both cases, Carrillo and Russolo

³¹ Russolo: *The Art of Noises*, p. 61.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³³ Balilla Pratella: “Futurist Music: Technical Manifesto”, in Rainey et. al.: *Futurism: An Anthology*, p. 81.

³⁴ “Necesario es decir, que no obstante existen miles y miles de sonidos en la naturaleza, los músicos no los aprovecharon, y prefirieron que el arte musical acudiera a intervalos artificiales.” Carrillo: *Teoría lógica de la música*, p. 45. Alejandro Madrid also reinforces this idea: “The sense of reverence that Carrillo felt toward Nature was a fundamental aspect of his microtonal crusade; Sonido 13 was an attempt to reflect, exult, and express ‘natural laws’ of acoustics through aesthetic means. [...] Carrillo conceived Sonido 13 as a rational system that would enable artist and listener to approach closer to a ‘proper’ experience of Nature. He saw himself not as someone

(as well as Balilla Pratella) refer to tonality as an artificial musical system that is unable to communicate the realities of modern life.

A second link between the work of the Italian and the Mexican composer lies in their experimental approach towards new musical instruments that could reproduce, chromatically, sounds and microtones. As early as 1913, Russolo developed, together with his assistant Ugo Piatti (1888–1953), an orchestra of noise instruments,³⁵ but we have to skip to 1949 before Carrillo patented his fifteen *pianos metamorfoseadores*, which were built nine years later in Germany. Just like Russolo's *intonarumori* were practical realizations of his concept of an Art of Noises, Carrillo's instruments put his theories into practice. However, these pianos were not essential for the staging of his microtonal compositions, which began long before these instruments were constructed.

There are other details in the above-cited passage from Carrillo that connect his microtonal theory to certain avant-garde notions of tonality. The first thing that stands out is his prediction that the orchestra of the future would bring about “a dismembering of timbres”.³⁶ For Carrillo, musical instruments were merely a means of producing sounds; the timbre was entirely dependent on “the form the air takes on being put into motion [when an instrument is played].”³⁷ Thus, Russolo's understanding of sound was not too far-removed from Carrillo's, in so far as, for the former, noise was produced by the motions of life: “Every manifestation of life is accompanied by noise.”³⁸ In this sense, the microtonal principle “will not deprive any noise of the characteristics of its timbre, but only increase its texture or reach”³⁹ until it achieves the same hypothetically infinite variety of sounds found in Nature. Lastly, it is worth pointing out that Carrillo understood his theory as extending far beyond music. He believed that it had the potential to encompass other artistic forms of expression, such as poetry and dance – an intriguing albeit inconsequential association, especially when we consider the broad disciplinary range of both Futurism and Stridentism. These movements'

who receives a revelation but rather as the restorer of the links between music as a system and music as a natural acoustic phenomenon; someone who would enable musicians a closer contemplation of the divinity through a musical system that 'reflects' the natural perfection of that divinity.” Madrid: *In Search of Julián Carrillo and Sonido 13*, p. 248.

35 Russolo: *The Art of Noises*, p. 75.

36 “Un desmembramiento de timbres.” Carrillo: *Sonido 13: Fundamento científico e histórico*, p. 6.

37 “[...] el timbre depende de la forma que toma el aire ambiente al ser puesto en movimiento.” *Ibid.*, p. 21.

38 Russolo: *The Art of Noises*, p. 27.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 29.