

Continental Interlude I: The Futurist Moment (1909–14)

Nothing did more to shape the concept of the “avant-garde” in twentieth-century culture than Futurism, the strange phenomenon – groping for words, cultural historians have typically labeled it a “movement” – that was unleashed by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti on February 20, 1909, when he published “The Founding and the Manifesto of Futurism” on the front page of the Parisian newspaper, *Le Figaro*. In subsequent decades Futurism became a paradigm for countless movements to come, some embodying the most vital currents among the twentieth-century arts (Vorticism, Dadaism, Surrealism, and the Internationale Situationiste). And already in the brief period that followed the first manifesto’s publication, especially in the years from 1912 to 1914, Futurism became the focal point for a vast debate that stretched across Europe and the United States, spanned the spectrum of the arts, and encompassed the gamut of forums for critical discussion. In England alone during these years, more than 500 articles concerning Futurism were published, a number that also reflects Futurism’s relentless expansion into nearly all the arts, including literature, music, the visual arts, architecture, drama, photography, film, dance, even fashion. Futurism had done something startling. It had revealed the power and potential of a novel type of intellectual formation: a small collectivity, buttressed by publicity and theatricality, that presented an array of cultural artifacts which were constructed in accordance with a coherent body of theoretical precepts, a set of axioms grounded not just in seemingly arbitrary aesthetic preferences, but in a systematic assessment of contemporary society. Futurism, in short, had irreversibly forged a fateful link between a theory of modernity and the project of the avant-garde. Still more, because Futurism would later be deeply involved with the genesis of Fascism, it would become the focal point for an immense and ongoing debate: in twentieth-century culture, Futurism has remained the litmus test for probing the relationship between art and power, aesthetics and politics.

F. T. Marinetti was born in 1876 in Alexandria, the son of a lawyer who specialized in commercial contracts and thrived in a city which was then a substantial center for trade. Marinetti was educated there at a French *collège*, a Jesuit institution, an experience which left him a predilection for writing in French which lasted into middle age. (As late as 1918 he would lapse into French in his diaries.) In 1894 Marinetti took up the study of law at the University

of Pavia, followed by a transfer to the University of Genoa, where he received his degree in 1899. His family, meanwhile, had moved to Milan, the commercial center of Italy and a city which had a strong heritage of links with France.

In March 1898 he published his first poem, in French “The Cup-Bearer” (“L’Échanson”), in the *Anthologie Revue*, a bilingual journal published in Milan. Marinetti soon became its “general secretary,” a position that enabled him to take up correspondence with poets in Paris. The same year another poem by him won a French literary prize and he journeyed to Paris to receive the award and engage in literary networking. Marinetti’s contributions to literary journals (all in French) multiplied at a prodigious rate. Three years later he published his first book, *The Conquest of the Stars* (*La Conquête des étoiles*), a long poem which recounts an apocalyptic war between the sea and the sky. The tempest, that great romantic topos, becomes a vast, lurid spectacle charged with elements of the macabre, and the demise of the stars dramatizes the withering of illusory ideals which the poet-narrator has long cherished. The poem was overtly allegorical, but its symbols reverberated beyond the bounds of its author’s intentions. Consider only the sea, ostensibly the masculine element which defeats the feminine stars. Marinetti never tired of pointing out the link between the Italian word for sea, *mare*, and the beginning of his own name, *Mar-inetti*. But since the poem is written in French and is so explicitly fraught with issues of gender, who can fail to note that the French word for ‘sea’ (*mer*) rhymes with the French word for ‘mother’ (*mère*)? Albeit unconsciously, Marinetti was developing one of his characteristic rhetorical strategies, pushing the terms of a received polarity to such extremes that they would collapse back into their antitheses. Male and female were not the only terms that would be turned inside out; his best works would put insistent pressure on the deepest principles of individuation, the ways we draw elementary distinctions between self and world, figure and ground, objects and their contexts. His writings are often fraught with rhetoric of extraordinary violence and charged with elements of the grotesque and macabre – in short, the trappings of literary decadence, but trappings so strained, so overworked that they deliberately cross over into the comic, producing an uncanny effect that oscillates between elation and horror.

When a young composer joined the Futurist movement in 1910, Marinetti advised him how to achieve success:

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In order to win over Paris and appear, in the eyes of all Europe, an absolute innovator, the most advanced of all, I urge you to get to work with all your heart, resolute on being bolder, crazier, more advanced, surprising, eccentric, incomprehensible, and grotesque than anybody else in music. I urge you to be a madman.

It was advice he never needed to give himself.

After launching Futurism with his manifesto in 1909, Marinetti gave a series of lectures in which he further explained his ideas, including one delivered in London in December 1910 (see 000–000). The same year he was approached by a group of young painters in Milan who wished to join the “movement,” which at this point consisted of himself alone. Marinetti decided to “launch” them on a colossal scale. They would have a show that would premiere in Paris, then tour the major capitals of Europe: first London, then Berlin, then other cities. When the exhibition opened in early 1912, accompanied by a flurry of manifestos, it provoked furious debate. The debate in Paris, inevitably, was duly noted by the press in London, where the second leg of the tour opened in March 1912 (see 000–000). Coming to London as it did, only 14 months after Roger Fry’s first Post-Impressionist exhibition had sparked such enormous controversy, the exhibition prompted media *furor*. When Marinetti gave a lecture at Bechstein Hall (now Wigmore Hall), it was analyzed by a lead editorial or leader in the *Times*. Marinetti visited London for further exhibitions and lectures three more times over the next two years, concluding with a performance of Futurist music in the Coliseum in June, 1914, at that time the largest music hall in London. By late 1913 his newest manifesto (“The Variety Theater,” see 000–000) was being published in English translation by the *Daily Mail*, then the newspaper with the largest circulation in the world.

Marinetti’s manifestos of 1912 and 1913 increasingly turned to the question of Futurism’s ramifications for literature, and these developments were dutifully followed by London literary journals. There can be little doubt that Imagism, often considered the very origin of Anglo-American literary modernism, arose in direct response to it.

The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 effectively put an end to Futurism’s influence in England. But its afterlife in Italy was quite another matter. From the moment that war broke out, Marinetti became a strident advocate of Italian intervention, and he was elated when Italy finally joined sides with France and Britain in 1915. He himself enrolled promptly, as did virtually all the Futurists. Many of their brightest talents (e.g., the painter Umberto Boccioni, the architect Antonio Sant’Elia) would be killed in the ensuing slaughter.

In 1917 Marinetti also had his first meeting with a dissident Socialist who had earlier broken with the Socialist party over the question of Italy’s potential intervention in

the war, Benito Mussolini. Mussolini, at this time, was an independent politician looking for a cause that would capture the political imagination of Italy in the aftermath of the war. In 1918, accompanied by Marinetti, he held the inaugural meeting of the Fascist Party in Milan, the city where he had lived for many years as editor of the Socialist newspaper *Avanti* (*Forward*). Only four years later, propelled by years of paramilitary violence and the threat of a coup d’état, Mussolini would be named prime minister of Italy, in October 1922. Marinetti, paradoxically, had left the party already in 1920, angered by its refusal to adopt a sufficiently anticlerical position as part of its platform.

In the years that followed, from 1922 until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Marinetti and the Futurists would occupy a strange, uneasy place within Fascist culture. They would be the recipients of a considerable amount of state patronage, with the Futurist style especially favored for projects in the visual arts and design which involved new technology, aviation, or other indices of modernity. At the same time, they were distrusted by many leaders within the Fascist regime, viewed as potential dissidents or even anarchists who had failed to make the transition from being outsiders to being members of a functioning government.

It should be noted here that Italian Fascism did not entail or otherwise advocate anti-Semitism. Indeed, Italian Jews joined the party in percentages which outstripped their relative weight within the population as a whole, and many occupied prominent places within the government and in local party chapters. But when Italy formally allied itself with Nazi Germany in 1936, anti-Semitism was quickly adopted as a prominent feature of government policy. Though Marinetti and others protested in private, and though Futurist journals were increasingly bereft of government support or even overtly repressed, the Futurists did not take a concerted public stance against the new government policies and for the most part acquiesced in their implementation.

Marinetti, it should also be noted, was a wealthy man who used his money to serve as a patron to the many artists and writers who joined his movement. After 1922, however, his wealth was seriously diminished, and Marinetti would allow the Futurist brand name (or the name of Marinetti’s publishing firm) to be attached to the work of anyone who could afford to pay for a book’s production costs.

Cultural historians remain sharply divided over the significance and the legacy of Futurism. Some underline the anarchist and utopian aspects of its early years, contrasting these sharply with the movement’s later involvement with Fascism; others argue that Futurism was “proto-Fascist,” an uncanny yet straightforward anticipation of the politics to come. Some view Futurist painting as work of dubious merit, and instead regard Futurism as a chapter in the history of the arts and their engagement with emerging

mass media, an episode in the ongoing saga of public relations or the culture of celebrity. Whatever Futurism was, its impact during the period 1909–14 was indelible in the memory of contemporaries in Italy, France, England, Germany, and Russia.

The Founding and the Manifesto of Futurism (Feb. 1909)

F. T. Marinetti

We had stayed up¹ all night – my friends and I – beneath mosque lamps hanging from the ceiling. Their brass domes were filigreed, starred like our souls; just as they were illuminated, again like our souls, by the imprisoned brilliance of an electric heart. On the opulent oriental rugs, we had crushed our ancestral lethargy, arguing all the way to the final frontiers of logic and blackening reams of paper with delirious writings.

Our chests swelled with immense pride, for we alone were still awake and upright at that hour, like magnificent lighthouses or forward sentries facing an army of enemy stars, eyeing us from their encampments in the sky. Alone with the stokers who bustle in front of the boilers' hellish fires in massive ships; alone with the black specters who grope before the red-hot bellies of locomotives launched on insane journeys; alone with drunkards who feel their way against the city walls, with the beating of uncertain wings.

Suddenly we jumped at the tremendous noise of the large double-decker trams which jolted along outside, shimmering with multicolored lights, like villages on holiday which the flooding Po suddenly strikes and uproots, dragging them all the way to the sea, over waterfalls and through gorges.

Then the silence grew more gloomy. But as we were listening to the attenuated murmur of prayers muttered by the old canal and the bones of ailing palaces creaking above their beards of damp moss, suddenly we heard the famished automobiles roaring beneath the windows.

"Let's go!" I said. "Let's go, my friends! Let's leave! At last mythology and the mystical ideal have been superseded. We are about to witness the birth of the Centaur,² and soon we shall see the first Angels fly! . . . We have to shake the doors of life to test their hinges and bolts! . . . Let's leave! Look! There, on the earth, the earliest dawn! Nothing can match the splendor of the sun's red sword, skirmishing for the first time with our thousand-year-old shadows."

We drew close to the three snorting beasts, tenderly stroking their swollen breasts. I stretched out on my car like a corpse in its coffin, but revived at once under the steering wheel, a guillotine blade that menaced my stomach.

The furious sweep of madness drove us outside ourselves and through the streets, deep and precipitous as the beds of spring torrents. Here and there a sickly lamplight, behind the glass of a window, taught us to despise the errant mathematics of our transitory eyes.

I screamed: "The scent, the scent alone is enough for our beasts!"

And like young lions we ran after Death, its black hide stained with pale crosses, running across the vast livid sky, alive and throbbing.

And yet we did not have an ideal Beloved who raised her sublime form all the way to the clouds, nor a cruel Queen to whom we could offer our corpses, twisted in the shape of Byzantine rings! Nothing to make us wish to die except our desire to free ourselves from the burden of our own courage!

And so we raced on, hurling watchdogs back against the doorways; they were flattened and curled beneath our scorching tires like shirt collars beneath a pressing iron. Death, domesticated, was greeting me at every turn, gracefully holding out a paw, or sometimes stretching out on the

First published on the front page of the Paris newspaper *Figaro* on February 20, 1909.

¹ *We stayed up* The verb translated here as "stayed up" can also mean "to watch over a dead man," as Catholics traditionally did, and so evoke a mythical motif of death and resurrection.

² *The birth of the Centaur* compare W. B. Yeats, "On a Picture of a Black Centaur by Edmund Dulac," p. 000. The centaur was a popular figure among late Symbolist poets and painters, uniting the animal and the human, the irrational and rational.

ground with a noise like that of grating jawbones, casting me velvety and tender looks from every puddle.

“Let’s break out of wisdom, as if out of a horrible shell; and let’s fling ourselves, like fruits swollen with pride, into the wind’s vast and contorted mouth. Let’s throw ourselves, like food, into the Unknown, not in desperation, but to fill up the deep wells of the Absurd.”

Scarcely had I said these words, when I spun my car around as frantically as a dog trying to bite its own tail, and there, suddenly, were two bicyclists right in front of me, cutting me off, wobbling like two lines of reasoning, equally persuasive and yet contradictory. Their stupid argument was being discussed right in my path . . . What a bore! Damn! . . . I stopped short, and to my disgust rolled over into a ditch, with my wheels in the air. . . .

Oh! Maternal ditch, nearly full of muddy water! Fair factory drain! I gulped down your bracing slime, which reminded me of the sacred black breast of my Sudanese nurse.³ . . . When I climbed out, a filthy and stinking rag, from underneath the capsized car, I felt my heart – deliciously – being slashed with the red-hot iron of joy!

A crowd of fishermen armed with hooks and naturalists stricken with gout formed a thronging circle around the prodigy. With patient and meticulous attention, they rigged up a derrick and enormous iron grapnels to fish out my car, stranded like a large shark. The car slowly emerged from the ditch, leaving behind in the depths its heavy chassis of good sense and its soft upholstery of comfort.

They thought it was dead, my beautiful shark, but one caress from me was enough to revive it, and there it was again, once more alive, running on its powerful fins.

And so, our faces covered with the good factory slime – a mix of metallic scum, useless sweat, heavenly soot – our arms bruised and bandaged, we have dictated our first intentions to all the *living* men of the earth:

The Manifesto of Futurism

1. We intend to sing to the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness.
2. Courage, boldness, and rebelliousness will be the essential elements of our poetry.
3. Up to now literature has exalted contemplative stillness [Eliot: still point], ecstasy, and sleep. We intend to exalt movement and aggression, feverish insomnia, the racer’s stride, the mortal leap, the slap and the punch.
4. We affirm that the beauty of the world has been enriched by a new form of beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car with a hood that glistens with large pipes resembling a serpent with explosive breath . . . a roaring automobile that rides on grape-shot – that is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*.⁴
5. We intend to hymn man at the steering wheel, the ideal axis of which intersects the earth, itself hurled ahead in its own race along the path of its orbit.
6. Henceforth poets must do their utmost, with ardor, splendor, and generosity, to increase the enthusiastic fervor of the primordial elements. [prodigality: Goethe; prodigious]
7. There is no beauty that does not consist of struggle. No work that lacks an aggressive character can be considered a masterpiece. Poetry must be conceived as a violent assault launched against unknown forces to reduce them to submission under man.
8. We stand on the last promontory of the centuries! . . . Why should we look back over our shoulders, when we intend to breach the mysterious doors of the Impossible? Time and space died yesterday. We already live in the absolute, for we have already created velocity which is eternal and omnipresent.
9. We intend to glorify war – the only hygiene of the world – militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of emancipators, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and contempt for woman.

³ *Sudanese nurse* On Marinetti’s background in Africa, see the Introduction, p. 000.

⁴ *Victory of Samothrace* is a Hellenistic statue that was found in 1863 by French archaeologists on the island of Samothrace, in

the Aegean Sea off the coast of Thrace; from then until the 1980s it was placed opposite the entrance of the Louvre, where it greeted the museum’s many visitors, and became a conventional figure of classical beauty.

10. We intend to destroy museums, libraries, academies of every sort, and to fight against moralism, feminism, and every utilitarian or opportunistic cowardice.
11. We shall sing the great masses shaken with work, pleasure, or rebellion: we shall sing the multicolored and polyphonic tidal waves of revolution in the modern metropolis; shall sing the vibrating nocturnal fervor of factories and shipyards burning under violent electrical moons; bloated railway stations that devour smoking serpents; factories hanging from the sky by the twisting threads of spiraling smoke; bridges like gigantic gymnasts who span rivers, flashing at the sun with the gleam of a knife; adventurous steamships that scent the horizon, locomotives with their swollen chest, pawing the tracks like massive steel horses bridled with pipes, and the oscillating flight of airplanes, whose propeller flaps at the wind like a flag and seems to applaud like a delirious crowd.

It is from Italy that we have flung this to the world, our manifesto of burning and overwhelming violence, with which we today establish "Futurism," for we intend to free this nation from its fetid cancer of professors, archaeologists, tour guides, and antiquarians.

For much too long Italy has been a flea market. We intend to liberate it from the countless museums that have covered it like so many cemeteries.

Museums: cemeteries! Identical, really, in the horrible promiscuity of so many bodies scarcely known to one another. Museums: public dormitories in which someone is put to sleep forever alongside others he hated or didn't know! Museums: absurd slaughterhouses for painters and sculptors who go on thrashing each other with blows of line and color along the disputed walls!

That once a year you might make a pilgrimage, much as one makes an annual visit to a graveyard . . . I'll grant you that. That once a year you can deposit a wreath of flowers in front of the *Mona Lisa*, I permit you that . . . But I cannot countenance the idea that our sorrows are daily shepherded on a tour through museums, or our weak courage, our pathological restlessness. Why would we wish to poison ourselves? Why wish to rot?

And what is there to see in an old painting besides the laborious distortion of the artist who tried to break through the insuperable barriers which blocked his desire to express fully his dream? . . . To admire an old painting is the same as pouring our sensibility into a funerary urn, instead of casting it forward into the distance in violent spurts of creation and action.

Do you wish to waste your best strength in this eternal and useless admiration of the past, an activity that will only leave you spent, diminished, crushed?

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

And so, let the glad arsonists with charred fingers come! Here they are! Here they are! . . . Go ahead! Set fire to the shelves of the libraries! . . . Turn aside the course of the canals to flood the museums! . . . Oh, the joy of seeing all the glorious old canvasses floating adrift on the waters, shredded and discolored! . . . Grasp your pickaxes, axes, and hammers, and tear down, pitilessly tear down the venerable cities!

The oldest of us is thirty: so we have at least a decade left to fulfill our task. When we are forty, others who are younger and stronger will throw us into the wastebasket, like useless manuscripts. – We want it to happen!

They will come against us, our successors; they will come from far away, from every direction, dancing to the winged cadence of their first songs, extending predatory claws, sniffing doglike at the doors of the academies for the good smell of our decaying minds, long since promised to the libraries' catacombs.

But we won't be there. . . . They will find us, at last – one wintry night – in an open field, beneath a sad roof drummed by monotonous rain, crouched beside our trembling airplanes and in the act of warming our hands by the dirty little fire made by the books we are writing today, flaming beneath the flight of our imaginings.

Panting with contempt and anxiety, they will storm around us, and all of them, exasperated by our lofty daring, will attempt to kill us, driven by a hatred all the more implacable because their hearts will be intoxicated with love and admiration for us.

In their eyes, strong and healthy Injustice will radiantly burst. – Art, in fact, can be nothing if not violence, cruelty, and injustice.

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

You raise objections? . . . Stop! Stop! We know them . . . We've understood! . . . The refined and mendacious mind tells us that we are the summation and continuation of our ancestors – maybe! Suppose it so! But what difference does it make? We don't want to listen! . . . Woe to anyone who repeats those infamous words to us!

Lift up your heads!

Standing erect on the summit of the world, we fling, yet once more, our challenge to the stars.⁵

Futurist Speech to the English (Dec. 1910)

F. T. Marinetti

[. . .]

And there, with a few picturesque abridgments, you have some of our more interesting ideas and actions.

I don't know whether this lively account has been able to give you a sense of what Futurism really is.

In any case, you have already grasped one part of our philosophical, political, and artistic conception, its method of adopting the cruelest form of sincerity and the boldest kind of violence.

I couldn't imagine a better way of giving you an exact idea of what we are than to tell you what we think of you.

I will express myself with complete candor, carefully refraining from paying you court in the style of cosmopolitan lecturers who crush their audiences with praise before cramming them full of banalities.

One of our young humorists has said that every good Futurist should be discourteous twenty times a day. So I will be discourteous with you, pluckily confessing to you all the ill that we think of the English, after having spoken much good of them. For as you well know, we love the indomitable and bellicose patriotism that sets you apart; we love the national pride that prompts

⁵ The manifesto's ending with the word "stars" echoes Dante's practice of ending each of the three main parts of the *Divine Comedy* with the same word.

Marinetti spoke at the Lyceum Club for Women, in London, in late December of 1910. (The club was founded in the late 1890s, one of several women's clubs established in reaction to the male-only clubs which predominated.) It marked the first time that Marinetti spoke about Futurism outside of Italy; his lecture was doubtless given in French, as were his other lectures in England during 1912–14, and it was probably an impromptu perform-

ance which drew on points already made in earlier manifestos. In early 1911 he published at least part of this lecture as "Discours futuristes aux Anglais" in *Le Futurisme* (Paris: E. Sansot), where it was followed by another essay titled "Ce déplorable Ruskin." In 1915, however, he oversaw a translation into Italian of *Le Futurisme*, which now acquired the title *Guerra sola igiene del mondo* (*War the only hygiene of the world*) (Milan: Edizioni di Poesia, 1915). In this new version, the first seven paragraphs from "Ce déplorable Ruskin" were added to the end of the "Futurist Speech to the English." This longer version of the speech is the one given here, with the 1915 additions plainly indicated.

your great muscularly courageous race; we love the generous and intelligent individualism that enables you to open your arms to individualists of every land, whether libertarians or anarchists.

But your broad love of liberty is not all we admire. What most sets you apart is that, amid so much pacifist nonsense and evangelical cowardice, you cherish an unbridled passion for struggle in all its forms, from boxing – simple, brutal, and rapid – to the monstrous roaring necks of the cannon on the decks of your dreadnoughts, crouched in their swivelling caves of steel, turning to scent the appetizing enemy squadrons in the distance.

You know perfectly well that there is nothing worse for a man's blood than the forgiveness of offenses; you know that prolonged peace, which has been fatal to the Latin races, is no less poisonous for the Anglo-Saxon races. . . . But I promised you discourtesies, and here they are:

To a degree you are the victims of your traditionalism and its medieval trappings, in which there persists a whiff of archives and a rattling of chains that hinder your precise and carefree forward march.

You will admit the oddness of this in a people of explorers and colonizers whose enormous ocean liners have obviously shrunk the world.

Most of all I reproach you for your maddening cult of aristocracy. No one admits to being a *bourgeois* in England: everyone despises his neighbor and calls *him* a bourgeois. You have an obsessive mania for being always *chic*. For love of the *chic* you renounce passionate action, violence of heart, exclamations, shouts, and even tears. The English want to be cold at any cost, everywhere, by the bedside of an adored person, in the face of death or at the prospect of happiness. For the love of *chic* you never discuss what you are doing, for one must always be light and airy in conversation. When the women leave after dinner, you chat a bit about politics, but not too much: it wouldn't be *chic!* . . .

Your writers have to be men of the world, for you can hardly imagine a novel whose action is set in high society. Try as you might to be modern, you still preserve an essentially medieval distinction between master and servant, grounded in an absurd adoration of wealth. It's one of your proverbs that a rich man never hangs in England. To that kind of thinking you add a no less absurd contempt for the poor. His intellectual efforts, even his genius, strike you as useless; and yet you have a great love for intelligence and culture, and no other people devours books the way that you do.

Still, it remains only a way of passing one's leisure hours.

You lack consuming intellectual passions, a sharp and adventurous taste for ideas, an impulse toward the unknowns of the imagination, a passion for the future, a thirst for revolution. You are horribly custom-bound. Isn't it true that you firmly believe firmly that the Puritans saved England, and that chastity is a nation's most important virtue?

Do you remember the dismal, ridiculous condemnation of Oscar Wilde, which Europe has never forgiven you for? Didn't all your newspapers cry out then that it was time to throw open every window, because the plague was over? . . .

Naturally, in such an atmosphere of habitual and hypocritical formality, your young women are skilled in the use of their naïve elegance to carry on the most audaciously lascivious games, to prepare themselves well for marriage: the intangible domain of the conjugal police.

As for your twenty-year-old young men, almost all of them are homosexuals for a time, which, after all, is absolutely respectable. This taste of theirs evolves through a kind of intensification of the *camaraderie* and friendship found in athletic sports in the years before they turn thirty, the time for work and good order, when they show their heels to Sodom in order to marry a young woman whose gown is shamelessly décolleté. Then they hasten to condemn the born invert severely, the counterfeit man, the half-woman who fails to conform.

Isn't it excessively formalistic of you to declare, as you do, that in order to know someone you must break bread with him, that is, have studied the way he eats? But how could you judge us, the Italians, from our way of eating when we always eat sloppily, our epigastric regions strangled by love or ambition?

To that one must add your obsessive desire to keep up appearances in all things, and a fussy mania for etiquette, masks, and folding screens of every sort, invented by prudishness and a conventional morality.

Yet I won't insist, but hasten on to speak about your greatest defect: a defect that you yourselves have bequeathed to Europe and that, in my opinion, is an obstacle to your marvelous practical instinct and your science of the rapid life.

I allude to your snobbery, whether it consists of a mad, exclusive cult of racial purity, in your aristocracy, or whether it creates a kind of religion out of fashion and transforms your illustrious tailors into so many high priests of lost religions.

I'm also referring to your dogmatic and imperious norms for good living and the Sacred Tables of *comme il faut*, in the light of which you neglect and abolish, with an astonishing light-heartedness, the fundamental worth of the individual, just as soon as he falls short of the supreme laws of snobbery.

All of this renders your existence singularly artificial, and makes you the most contradictory people on the planet; hence, all your intellectual maturity cannot save you from sometimes seeming a people in the process of formation.

You invented the love of hygiene, the adoration of muscles, a harsh taste for effort, all of which triumph in your beautiful sporting life.

But, unfortunately, you push your exaggerated cult of the body to the point of scorning ideas, and you care seriously only for physical pleasures. Platonic love is virtually absent among you – which is a good thing – but your love of succulent meals is excessive. And it's in the brutalizing religion of the table that you appease all your anxieties and all your worries! . . .

From your sensuality you extract a formidable serenity in the face of moral suffering. Very well! . . . Then you should stop giving so much importance to physical suffering!

You think yourselves very religious. It's pure illusion. You pay no attention to your inner lives, and your race lacks true mystical feeling! I congratulate you on this! But unfortunately you prefer to take refuge in Protestantism, *bonne-à-tout-faire* of your intelligence, which saves you the trouble of thinking freely, without fear and without hope, like a black banner among the shadows.

It's through intellectual laziness that you fall so often to your knees, and for love of a good conventional and puerile formalism.

No one loves the fleshly pleasures more than you, and yet you are the Europeans who pride themselves on their chastity! . . .

You love and generously welcome every revolutionary, but that doesn't hinder you from solemnly defending the principles of order! You adore the fine swift machines that skim the earth, sea, and clouds, yet you carefully preserve every last debris from the past!

After all, is this a defect? You shouldn't treat all my remarks as reproofs. . . . To contradict oneself is to live and you know how to contradict yourselves bravely.

But, besides, I know that you nurse a deep hatred for German clumsiness, and this is enough to absolve you completely.

[*Editor's note*: text from here on present only from 1915 edition onwards]

I have told you, in a synoptic way, what we think of England and the English.

Must I now hear the courteous reply that I already suspect is on your lips?

You surely want to stop my discourtesies by telling me how highly you think of Italy and the Italians. . . . Well: no, I don't want to listen.

The compliments you are about to pay could only sadden me, because what you love in our dear peninsula is exactly the object of our hatreds. Indeed, you crisscross Italy only to meticulously sniff out the traces of our oppressive past, and you are happy, insanely happy, if you have the good fortune to carry home some miserable stone that has been trodden by our ancestors.

When, when will you disembarass yourselves of the lymphatic ideology of that deplorable Ruskin, which I would like to cover with so much ridicule that you would never forget it?

With his morbid dream of primitive and rustic life, with his nostalgia for Homeric cheeses and legendary wool-winders, with his hatred for the machine, steam-power, and electricity, that maniac of antique simplicity is like a man who, after having reached full physical maturity, still wants to sleep in his cradle and feed himself at the breast of his decrepit old nurse in order to recover his thoughtless infancy.

Ruskin would certainly have applauded those passéist Venetians who wanted to rebuild the absurd bell-tower of San Marco,¹ as if a baby girl who has lost her grandmother were to be offered a little cloth and cardboard doll as a substitute.

Contempt for Woman (from Le Futurisme, 1911)
F. T. Marinetti

It is this hatred for the tyranny of love that we have we expressed with the laconic phrase: “contempt for woman.”¹

We feel contempt for woman conceived as the reservoir of love, woman-poison, woman as a tragic bibelot, fragile woman, obsessing and fatal, whose voice, heavy with destiny, and whose dreamy tresses reach out and mingle with the foliage of forests bathed in moonlight.

We feel contempt for horrible and staid Love that encumbers the march of man and prevents him from transcending his own humanity, from redoubling himself, from going beyond himself and becoming what we call *multiplied man*.²

We feel contempt for horrible and staid Love, immense tether with which the sun chains the courageous earth in its orbit, which would doubtless rather leap at random, run every starry risk.

We are convinced that Love – sentimentality and lust – is the least natural thing in the world. There is nothing natural except coitus, whose purpose is the perpetuation of the species.

Love–romantic, voluptuary obsession – is nothing but an invention of the poets, who gave it to humanity. And it will be the poets who will take it away from humanity.

The great tragi-comic experience of love will be soon be ended, having yielded no profit and inflicted incalculable harm. There has always been conflict and never collaboration between the two sexes, who have proved themselves unequal to the grand task. That it is why we Futurists are officially withdrawing love today, as one withdraws a manuscript from a publisher who has shown himself incapable of printing it decently.

In this campaign for liberation, our best allies are the suffragettes, because the more rights and powers they win for woman, the more will she be impoverished of love, and by so much will she cease to be a magnet for sentimental passion or an engine lust.

Carnal life will be reduced to the conservation of the species, and that will be so much gain for the growing stature of man.

As for the supposed inferiority of woman, we think that if her body and spirit had, for many generations past, been subjected to the same physical and spiritual education as man, it would perhaps be legitimate to speak of the equality of the sexes.

It is obvious, nevertheless, that in her actual state of intellectual and erotic slavery, woman finds herself wholly inferior in respect to character and intelligence and can therefore be only a mediocre legislative instrument.

For just this reason we most enthusiastically defend the rights of the suffragettes, at the same time that we regret their infantile enthusiasm for the miserable, ridiculous right to vote.³ For we are convinced that they will seize the right to vote with fervor, and thus involuntarily help us to

¹ *the absurd bell-tower of San Marco* the massive 324-foot tower, which dominates the center of Venice, collapsed in 1902; public sentiment dictated that it be rebuilt exactly as it was, rather than constructing a new one, and work was completed by 1912.

¹ “*contempt for woman*” The phrase occurs for the first time in point number 9 of “The Founding and the Manifesto of Futurism”; see p. 000.

² *multiplied man* The concept of a “multiplied sensibility” that was being created by advancing modernity is first raised in “Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto,” and elaborated in “Multi-

plied Man and the Reign of the Machine.” For these, see Lawrence Rainey et al. (eds.), *Futurism: A Reader and Visual Repertoire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 000–000.

³ *right to vote* By 1911 women had won the right to vote in national elections in New Zealand (1893), Australia (1902), and Finland (1906), with Norway soon to follow (1913). But in most Western countries enfranchisement took place after the First World War: Canada (1918), Germany, Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia (1919), the United States (1920), and Great Britain (1918 and 1928). In France and Italy, full enfranchisement occurred in 1945.

destroy that grand foolishness, made up of corruption and banality, to which Parliamentarianism is now reduced.

Parliamentarianism is exhausted almost everywhere. It accomplished a few good things: it created the illusory participation of the majority in government. I say *illusory* because it is clear that the people cannot be and never will be represented by spokesmen whom they do not know how to choose.

Consequently, the people have always remained estranged from the government. On the other hand, it is precisely to Parliamentarianism that the people owe their real existence.

The pride of the masses has been inflated by the elective system. The stature of the individual has been heightened by the idea of representation. But this idea has completely undermined the value of intelligence by immeasurably exaggerating the worth of eloquence. This state of affairs worsens day by day. Which is why I welcome with pleasure the aggressive entrance of women beneath the garrulous cupolas. Where else could we find a more explosive dynamite of disorder and corruption?

Nearly all the European parliaments are mere noisy chicken coops, cow stalls, or sewers.

Their essential principles are: 1) financial corruption and shrewdness in graft, to win a seat in parliament; 2) empty eloquence, grandiose falsification of ideas, triumph of high-sounding phrases, tom-tom of Negroes and windmill gestures.

These gross elements of Parliamentarianism give an absolute power to the hordes of lawyers.

You know perfectly well that lawyers are alike in every country. They are beings deeply attached to everything mean and futile . . . minds that see only the small daily fact, who are wholly unable to handle the great general ideas, to imagine the collisions and fusions of races or the blazing flight of the ideal over individuals and peoples. They are argument-merchants, mental prostitutes, boutiques for subtle ideas and chiseled syllogisms.

It is because of Parliamentarianism that a whole nation is at the mercy of these fabricators of justice who, given the ductile iron of the law, can scarcely manage to build a workable mouse-trap.

Then let us hasten to give women the vote.

And this, furthermore, is the final and absolutely logical conclusion of the idea of democracy and universal suffrage as it was conceived by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the other forebears of the French Revolution.

Let women, swift as lightning, hurry to make this great experiment in the total animalization of politics.

We who deeply despise politics are happy to abandon parliamentarianism to the spiteful claws of women; for it is precisely to them that the noble task of killing it for good has been reserved.

Oh! I'm not being in the least ironic; I'm speaking very seriously. Woman, as she has been shaped by our contemporary society, can only increase in splendor the principle of corruption which is intimately related to the principle of the vote.

Those who oppose the legitimate rights of the suffragettes do so for entirely personal reasons: they are tenaciously defending their own monopoly of harmful eloquence, which women won't hesitate to snatch away from them. Fundamentally, this bores us. We have very different mines to put under the ruins.

They tell us that a government composed of women or sustained by women would fatally drag us through the paths of pacifism and Tolstoyan cowardice into a definitive triumph of clericalism and moralistic hypocrisy . . .

Maybe! Probably! And I'm sorry! However, we will have the war of the sexes, inescapably prepared by the great agglomerations of the capital cities, by night life,⁴ and the stabilizing of workers' salaries.

Maybe some misogynistic humorists are already dreaming of a Saint Bartholomew's Night for women.⁵

⁴ *night life* the word that Marinetti uses in both the French and Italian versions of this essay is "noctambulism." The social phenomenon that he is pointing to is indeed "night life," but Marinetti uses "noctambulism" to identify it with a pathological condition of personality multiplication, a process that was held to be a common denominator that linked several similar conditions or ailments: hypnosis, somnambulism, hysteria, and shock.

⁵ *Saint Bartholomew's massacre* The slaughter of French Huguenots by Catholics in Paris on St. Bartholomew's day, August 24, 1572, ordered by Charles IX at the instigation of his mother, Catherine de' Medici. The event has become a byword for a bloodbath.

I know, you think that I am amusing myself by offering you more or less fantastic paradoxes.

Nothing is as paradoxical or fantastic as reality, and I suspect there's little reason to believe in the logical probabilities of history.

The history of peoples runs at hazard, in any and every direction, like a flighty young woman who can't remember what her parents taught her except on New Year's Day, or only when abandoned by her lover.

But unfortunately she is still too wise and not disorderly enough, this young history of the world. So the sooner women mix into it, the better, because the men are putrescent with millenarian wisdom.

These aren't paradoxes, I assure you, but gropings into the night of the future.

You will admit, for example, that the victory of feminism and especially the influence of women on politics will end by destroying the principle of the family. It could easily be proved: but already you're bristling, terrified, and ready to oppose me with ingenious arguments because you do not want the family touched at all.

"Every right, every liberty should be given to women," you cry, "but the family must be preserved!"

Allow me to smile just a bit skeptically and say to you that if the family should disappear, we could try to do without it. "We," I was just saying, but obviously I am mistaken: it will be our children – the children whom we will not have – they will know very well how to do without the family.

And I should, parenthetically, that we Futurists are such fighters that we won't have children, we who love the heroic instinct, we who sincerely want every masterpiece to be burned with the cadaver of its author, we who feel only repugnance at the idea of striving for immortality, for at bottom it's no more than the dream of minds vitiated by usury.

Beyond doubt, if modern woman dreams of winning her political rights, it is because without knowing it she is intimately sure of being, as a mother, as a wife, and as a lover, a closed circle, purely animal and absolutely devoid of usefulness.

You will certainly have watched the takeoff of a Blériot plane,⁶ the moment when it's still held back by its mechanics, amid the mighty buffets of air from the propeller's first spins.

Ah well: before so intoxicating a spectacle, I confess, we male Futurists have felt ourselves abruptly detached from women, who have suddenly become too earthly or, better yet, have become a mere symbol of the earth that we ought to abandon.

We have even dreamed of one day being able to create a mechanical son,⁷ the fruit of pure will, synthesis of all the laws that science is on the brink of discovering.

The Exhibitors to the Public (Feb. 1912)

Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Gino Severini

We may declare, without boasting, that the first Exhibition of Italian Futurist Painting, recently held in Paris and now brought to London,¹ is the most important exhibition of Italian painting which has hitherto been offered to the judgment of Europe.

⁶ *a Blériot plane* Louis Blériot (1872–1936) was an inventor and aviator who finally got into the air with the Blériot VI, tested in July 1907. On July 25, 1909, piloting the Blériot XII, he crossed the English Channel, a distance of 38 kilometers, in a flight that lasted just under 37 minutes. The feat won him instant celebrity and a prize of £1,000 offered by the London *Daily Mail*.

⁷ *to create a mechanical son* Mafarka, the hero of Marinetti's novel *Mafarka the Futurist* (1909), gives birth to his mechanical son Gazourmah, who leaves his wife Coloubbi and abandons the earth for space.

The text was drafted by Umberto Boccioni in the first days of October 1911, then submitted to the other four Futurist painters (Giacomo Balla, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, and Gino Severini) for their ratification. It was published in French in February 1912, together with the exhibition catalogue for "Les Peintres Futuristes Italiens" (The Exhibition of Italian Futurist Painting); an English translation appeared a month later when the same exhibition went to London, and it is that translation from 1912 which is reproduced here, retaining its British spelling.

¹ The Exhibition of Italian Futurist Painting was shown at the Gallerie Bernheim-Jeune in Paris from February 5 to 24, 1912, and at the Sackville Gallery in London from 1 to 20 March the same year.

For we are young and our art is violently revolutionary.

What we have attempted and accomplished, while attracting around us a large number of skillful imitators and as many plagiarists without talent, has placed us at the head of the European movement in painting by a road different from, yet, in a way, parallel with that followed by the Post-Impressionists, Synthetists and Cubists of France, led by their masters, Picasso, Braque, Derain, Metzinger, Le Fauconnier, Gleizes, Léger, Lhote, etc.²

While we admire the heroism of these painters of great worth, who have displayed a laudable contempt for artistic commercialism and a powerful hatred of academism, we feel ourselves and we declare our art to be absolutely opposed to their art.

They obstinately continue to paint objects motionless, frozen, and all the static aspects of Nature; they worship the traditionalism of Poussin, of Ingres, of Corot, ageing and petrifying their art with an obstinate attachment to the past, which to our eyes remains totally incomprehensible. We, on the contrary, with points of view pertaining essentially to the future, seek for a style of motion, a thing which has never been attempted before us.

Far from resting upon the examples of the Greeks and the Old Masters, we constantly extol individual intuition; our object is to determine completely new laws which may deliver painting from the wavering uncertainty in which it lingers.

Our desire, to give as far as possible to our pictures a solid construction, can never bear us back to any tradition whatsoever. Of that we are firmly convinced.

All the truths learnt in the schools or in the studios are abolished for us. Our hands are free enough and pure enough to start everything afresh.

It is indisputable that several of the aesthetic declarations of our French comrades display a sort of masked academism.

Is it not, indeed, a return to the Academy to declare that the subject, in painting, is of perfectly insignificant value?

We declare, on the contrary, that there can be no modern painting without the starting point of an absolutely modern sensation, and no one can contradict us when we state that *painting* and *sensation* are two inseparable words.

If our pictures are futurist, it is because they are the result of absolutely Futurist conceptions, ethical, aesthetic, political and social.

To paint from the posing model is an absurdity, and act of mental cowardice, even if the model be translated upon the picture in linear, spherical or cubic forms.

To lend an allegorical significance to an ordinary nude figure, deriving the meaning of the picture from the objects held by the model or from those which are arranged about him, is to our mind the evidence of a traditional and academic mentality.

This method, very similar to that employed by the Greeks, by Raphael, by Titian, by Veronese, must necessarily displease us.

² Between 1909 and 1914, Braque and Picasso carried out their pioneering explorations of visual language as a small collective of two, collaborating in an intense dialogue. For a detailed history of their work, see William Rubin (ed.), *Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999). The year 1911 saw the spread of Cubism into other circles. In the spring of that year, at the Salon des Indépendents, Albert Gleizes (1881–1953), together with Henri Le Fauconnier (1881–1946), whom he had met in 1909, and Jean Metzinger (1883–1956), whom he had met in 1910, exhibited with Robert Delaunay (1885–1941) and Fernand Léger (1881–1955) in a separate room, as self-styled “Cubists.” The same five exhibited

together again, this time joined by André Derain (1880–1954) and André Lhote (1885–1962), at the Salon d’Automne. Though Delaunay and Léger were independent and original artists who went on to produce important work of their own, the other five – Gleizes, Metzinger, Le Fauconnier, Derain, and Lhote – are generally considered mere imitators who contributed nothing new or essential to the Cubism of Picasso and Braque. In the autumn of 1911, at the time of the Salon D’Automne, Boccioni, Carrà, and Russolo went to Paris to get a first-hand view of Cubism, and through the offices of Luigi Severini, who resided in Paris, they were able to see the most recent of Braque and Picasso’s works, as well as those of their imitators.

While we repudiate Impressionism, we emphatically condemn the present reaction which, in order to kill Impressionism, brings back painting to old academic forms.

It is only possible to react against Impressionism, by surpassing it.

Nothing is more absurd than to fight it by adopting the pictorial laws which preceded it.

The points of contact which the quest of style may have with the so-called *classic art* do not concern us.

Others will seek, and will, no doubt, discover, these analogies which in any case cannot be looked upon as a return to methods, conceptions and values transmitted by classical painting.

A few examples will illustrate our theory.

We see no difference between one of those nude figures commonly called *artistic* and an anatomical plate. There is, on the other and, an enormous difference between one of these nude figures and our Futurist conception of the human body.

Perspective, such as it is understood by the majority of painters, has for us the very same value which they lend to an engineer's design.

The simultaneousness of states of mind in the work of art: that is the intoxicating aim of our art.³

Let us explain again by examples. In painting a person on a balcony, seen from inside the room, we do not limit the scene to what the square frame of the window renders visible; but we try to render the sum total of visual sensations which the person on the balcony has experienced; the sun-bathed throng in the street, the double row of houses which stretch to right and left, the beflowered balconies, etc.⁴ This implies the simultaneousness of the ambient, and, therefore, the dislocation and dismemberment of objects, the scattering and fusion of details, freed from accepted logic, and independent from one another.

In order to make the spectator live in the center of the picture, as we express it in our manifesto,⁵ the picture must be the synthesis of *what one remembers* and of *what one sees*.

You must render the invisible which stirs and lives beyond intervening obstacles, what we have on the right, on the left, and behind us, and not merely the small square of life artificially compressed, as it were, by the wings of a stage.

We have declared in our manifesto that what must be rendered is the *dynamic sensation*,⁶ that is to say, the particular rhythm of each object, its inclination, its movement, or, to put it more exactly, its interior force.

It is usual to consider the human being in its different aspects of motion or stillness, of joyous excitement or grave melancholy.

What is overlooked is that all inanimate objects display, by their lines, calmness or frenzy, sadness or gaiety. These various tendencies lend to the lines of which they are formed a sense and character of weighty stability or of aerial lightness.

Every object reveals by its lines how it would resolve itself were it to follow the tendencies of its forces.

This decomposition is not governed by fixed laws but it varies according to the characteristic personality of the object and the emotions of the onlooker.

Furthermore, every object influences its neighbor, not by reflections of light (the foundation of *Impressionistic primitivism*), but by a real competition of lines and by real conflicts of planes, following the emotional law which governs the picture (the foundation of *futurist primitivism*).

³ The concept of "simultaneousness," or "simultaneity" as it can also be translated, is introduced here for the first time.

⁴ This account plainly corresponds to Boccioni's painting, *The Street Enters the House* (1911). But the larger question of how Futurist theory relates to Futurist practice is one that has been intensely debated.

⁵ See "Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto," in Lawrence Rainey et al. (eds.), *Futurism: A Reader and Visual Repertoire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 000-000.

⁶ On the concept of dynamic sensation, see the text cited in n. 5.

With the desire to intensify the aesthetic emotions by blending, so to speak, the painted canvas with the soul of the spectator, we have declared that the latter “*must in future be placed in the center of the picture.*”⁷

He shall not be present at, but participate in the action. If we paint the phases of a riot, the crowd bustling with uplifted fists and the noisy onslaughts of cavalry are translated upon the canvas in sheaves of lines corresponding with all the conflicting forces following the general law of violence of the picture.

These *force-lines* must encircle and involve the spectator so that he will in a manner be forced to struggle himself with the persons in the picture.

All objects, in accordance with what the painter Boccioni happily terms *physical transcendentalism*, tend to the infinite by their *force-lines*, the continuity of which is measured by our intuition.

It is these *force-lines* that we must draw in order to lead back the work of art to true painting. We interpret nature by rendering these objects upon the canvas as the beginnings or the prolongations of the rhythms impressed upon our sensibility by these very objects.

After having, for instance, reproduced in a picture the right shoulder or the right ear of a figure, we deem it totally vain and useless to reproduce the left shoulder or the left ear. We do not draw sounds, but their vibrating intervals. We do not paint diseases, but their symptoms and their consequences.

We may further explain our idea by a comparison drawn from the evolution of music.

Not only have we radically abandoned the motive fully developed according to its determined end, therefore, artificial equilibrium, but we suddenly and purposely intersect each motive with one or more other motives of which we never give the full development but merely the initial, central, or final notes.

As you see, there is with us not merely variety, but chaos and clashing of rhythms, totally opposed to one another, which we nevertheless assemble into a new harmony.

We thus arrive at what we call the *painting of states of mind.*⁸

In the pictorial description of the various states of mind of a leave-taking, perpendicular lines, undulating and as it were worn out, clinging here and there to silhouettes of empty bodies, may well express languidness and discouragement.

Confused and trepidating lines, either straight or curved, mingled with the outlined hurried gestures of people calling one another, will express a sensation of chaotic excitement.

On the other hand, horizontal lines, fleeting, rapid and jerky, brutally cutting into half lost profiles of faces or crumbling and rebounding fragments of landscape, will give the tumultuous feelings of the persons going away.

It is practically impossible to express in words the essential values of painting.

The public must also be convinced that in order to understand aesthetic sensations to which one is not accustomed, it is necessary to forget entirely one's intellectual culture, not in order to *assimilate* the work of art, but to *deliver one's self up* to it heart and soul.

We are beginning a new epoch of painting.

We are sure henceforward of realizing conceptions of the highest importance and the most unquestionable originality. Others will follow who, with equal daring and determination, will conquer those summits of which we can only catch a glimpse. That is why we have proclaimed ourselves to be the *primitives of a completely renovated sensitiveness.*⁹

⁷ See Umberto Boccioni's paintings, *Riot at the Gallery* (1910) and *Charge of the Lancers* (1915), both in Rainey et al., *Futurism*, figs. 27, 39.

⁸ *States of Mind* is also the title for two series, each of three of paintings, that Boccioni did in 1911.

⁹ This is the antepenultimate sentence from “Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto”; see Rainey et al., *Futurism*, p. 000. The 1912 translation into English adopted here, is a more literal and less forceful rendering of it.

In several of the pictures which we are presenting to the public, vibration and motion endlessly multiply each object. We have thus justified our famous statement regarding the “*running horse which has not four legs, but twenty.*”¹⁰

One may remark, also, in our pictures, spots, lines, zones of color which do not correspond to any reality, but which in accordance with a law of our interior mathematics, musically prepare and enhance the emotion of the spectator.

We thus create a sort of emotive ambience, seeking by intuition the sympathies and the links which exist between the exterior (concrete) scene and the interior (abstract) emotion. Those lines, those spots, those zones of color, apparently illogical and meaningless, are the mysterious keys to our pictures.

We shall no doubt be taxed with an excessive desire to define and express in tangible form the subtleties which unite our abstract interior with the concrete exterior.

Yet, could we leave an unfettered liberty of understanding to the public which always sees as it has been taught to see, through eyes warped by routine?

We go our way, destroying each day in ourselves and in our pictures the realistic forms and the obvious details which have served us to construct a bridge of understanding between ourselves and the public. In order that the crowd may enjoy our marvelous spiritual world, of which it is ignorant, we give it the material sensation of that world.

We thus reply to the coarse and simplistic curiosity which surrounds us by the brutally realistic aspects of our primitivism.

Conclusion: Our futurist painting embodies three new conceptions of painting:

1. That which solves the question of volumes in a picture, as opposed to the liquefaction of objections favored by the vision of the Impressionists.
2. That which leads us to translate objects according to the *force lines* which distinguish them, and by which is obtained an absolutely new power of objective poetry.
3. That (the natural consequence of the other two) which would give the emotional ambience of a picture, the synthesis of the various abstract rhythms of very object, from which there springs a fount of pictorial lyricism hitherto unknown.

Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature (May 1912) F. T. Marinetti

Sitting astride the fuel tank of an airplane, my stomach warmed by the aviator's head,¹ I felt the ridiculous inanity of the old syntax inherited from Homer. A raging need to liberate words, dragging them out from the prison of the Latin period. Like all imbeciles, this period, naturally, has a prudent head, a stomach, two legs, and two flat feet: but it will never have two wings. Just enough to walk, take a short run, and come up short, panting!

This is what the swirling propeller told me as I sped along at two hundred meters above the powerful smokestacks of Milan:

¹⁰ An inexact quotation from “Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto”; see Rainey et al., *Futurism*, p. 000.

The “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature” was published as an independent leaflet in May 1912, and appeared as part of a book when it was used as the preface to *The Futurist Poets* (Milan: Edizioni di Poesia, 1912), the first collective anthology of poetry which Marinetti edited. The volume sold more than 20,000 copies. Accounts of the manifesto figured in contemporary newspapers: *L'Intransigeant* (Paris), July 7, 1912; *Dernière Heure* (Paris), July 18; *Paris-Journal*, July 18; *Le Temps* (Paris), July 24. A German translation was also published in *Der Sturm*, no. 133 (Oct. 1912).

¹ Marinetti describes his one and only experience of flight prior to 1912, which took place at the first international air meet at Brescia in September 1909. Marinetti was given a brief ride with the Peruvian aviator Jean Bielovucic, who flew a Voisin biplane with a 50-horsepower ENV engine. The propeller was located not at the front of the plane, but immediately behind the wings. (The airplane, in other words, was what contemporaries called a “pusher.”) Aft of the lower wing, at its rear, sat the engine that drove the propeller, with its fuel tank in mid-wing. Marinetti, then, would have sat just in front of the fuel tank, while the pilot would have been located just in front of him. Because the airplane was a “pusher,” pilot and passenger enjoyed an unimpeded view of the scene before and below them.

1. **It is imperative to destroy syntax and scatter one's nouns at random, just as they are born.**

2. **It is imperative to use verbs in the infinitive**, so that the verb can be elastically adapted to the noun and not be subordinated to the *I* of the writer who observes or imagines. Only the infinitive can give a sense of the continuity of life and the elasticity of the intuition that perceives it.

3. **Adjectives must be abolished**, so that the noun retains its essential color. The adjective, which by its nature tends to render shadings, is inconceivable within our dynamic vision, for it presupposes a pause, a meditation.

4. **Adverbs must be abolished**, old buckles strapping together two words. Adverbs give a sentence a tedious unity of tone.

5. **Every noun must have its double**, which is to say, every noun must be immediately followed by another noun, with no conjunction between them, to which it is related by analogy. Example: man–torpedo-boat, woman–bay, crowd–surf, piazza–funnel, door–faucet.

Just as aerial speed has multiplied our experience of the world, perception by analogy is becoming more natural for man. It is imperative to suppress words such as *like, as, so, and similar to*. Better yet, to merge the object directly into the image which it evokes, foreshortening the image to a single essential word.

6. **Abolish all punctuation**. With adjectives, adverbs, and conjunctions having been suppressed, naturally punctuation is also annihilated within the variable continuity of a *living* style that creates itself, without the absurd pauses of commas and periods. To accentuate certain movements and indicate their directions, mathematical signs will be used: $+ - \times : = >$, along with musical notations.

7. Until now writers have been restricted to immediate analogies. For example, they have compared an animal to man or to another animal, which is more or less the same thing as taking a photograph. (They've compared, for example, a fox terrier to a tiny thoroughbred. A more advanced writer might compare that same trembling terrier to a telegraph. I, instead, compare it to gurgling water. In this there is an **ever greater gradation of analogies**, affinities ever deeper and more solid, however remote).

Analogy is nothing other than the deep love that binds together things that are remote, seemingly diverse or inimical. The life of matter can be embraced only by an orchestral style, at once polychromatic, polyphonic, and polymorphous, by means of the most extensive analogies.

In my *Battle of Tripoli*,² when I have compared a trench bristling with bayonets to an orchestra, or a machine-gun to a fatal women, I have intuitively introduced a large part of the universe into a brief episode of African combat.

Images are not flowers to be chosen and gathered with parsimony, as Voltaire said.³ They constitute the very lifeblood of poetry. Poetry should be an uninterrupted flow of new images, without which it is merely anemia and green-sickness.

The vaster their affinities, the more images will retain their power to astound. One must – people say – spare the reader an excess of the marvelous.⁴ Bah! We should worry instead about the fatal corrosion of time, which destroys not just the expressive value of a masterpiece, but its power to astound. Too often stimulated to enthusiasm, haven't our old ears perhaps already destroyed

² Marinetti's book recounted his experiences (Oct–Nov., 1911) in the Italo-Turkish War during 1911–12, focusing on the siege of Tripoli, which Italian forces conquered swiftly on October 26, 1911, scarcely a month after war had been declared. It appeared in Italy in both a French edition issued by Marinetti's own firm, *La Bataille de Tripoli* (Milan: Edizioni futuriste di Poesia, 1912), and in an Italian translation, *La Battaglia di Tripoli* (Padua: Tipografia "Elzeviriana," 1912).

³ Voltaire: images are flowers to be collected with parsimony.

⁴ Aristotle's *Poetics* turned intelligible causation into the key notion that links together literary plot and the possibility of philosophical knowledge; doing so, he made the wonderful or the

marvelous (to *thaumaston*) into a perennially ambiguous aesthetic value that lies on the boundary between the explicable and the inexplicable. Debate about the marvelous has been a recurrent feature of Italian literary culture because the rediscovery of Aristotelian aesthetics in the Renaissance meant that the greatest work of Italian literature, Dante's *Commedia*, stood condemned for having an excess of the marvelous and not conforming to Aristotelian demand for intelligible causation; and the same issue recurred in the later Renaissance debates about the poets Ariosto and Boiardo, and yet again in those concerning Tasso. Marinetti's bias, evident in all his writings, is for a poetics of the marvelous.

Beethoven and Wagner? It is imperative, then, to abolish whatever in language has become a stereotyped image, a faded metaphor, and that means nearly everything.

8. **There are no categories of images**, noble or gross or popular, eccentric or natural. The intuition that perceives them has no preferences or *partis pris*. Therefore the analogical style is the absolute master of all matter and its intense life.

9. To render the successive movements of an object, it is imperative to render the *chain of analogies* which it evokes, each condensed and concentrated into one essential word.

Here is an expressive example of a chain of analogies, though still masked and weighed down beneath traditional syntax:

Ah yes! little machine gun, you are a fascinating woman, and sinister and divine, at the steering wheel of an invisible hundred-horse-power engine that roars with explosive impatience. Oh! surely you will soon leap into the circuit of death, to a shattering somersault or victory! . . . Do you wish me to compose madrigals full of grace and vivacity? At your pleasure, my dear . . . For me, you resemble a lawyer before the bar, whose tireless, eloquent tongue strikes to the heart of the surrounding listeners, who are deeply moved . . . You, at this moment, are like an omnipotent trephine that is boring deeply into the hard skull of the refractory night . . . And you are a rolling mill, an electric lathe, and what else? A great blowtorch that burns, chisels, and slowly melts the metallic tips of the final stars! . . . (*Battle of Tripoli*)⁵

In some cases it will be imperative to join images two by two, like those chained iron balls which can level a stand of trees in their flight.

To catch and gather whatever is most evanescent and ineffable in matter, it is imperative to shape **strict nets of images or analogies**, which will then be cast into the mysterious sea of phenomena. Except for the traditional festoons of its form, the following passage from my *Mafarka the Futurist* is an example of such a dense net of images:

All the bitter-sweetness of bygone youth rose in his throat, as the cheerful shouts of children in the playground rise up to their old teachers, while they lean out over seaside balconies, watching boats skim across the sea . . .⁶

And here are three more nets of images:

Around the well of Bumeliana, beneath the thick olive trees, three camels squatting comfortably in the sand gurgled with contentment, like rain pipes, mixing the *chack-chack* of their spitting with the steady thud of the steam pump that supplies water to the city. Shrieks and Futurist dissonances, in the deep orchestra of the trenches with their sensuous orifices and resonant cellars, amid the coming and going of bayonets, violin bows which the violet baton of twilight has inflamed with enthusiasm . . .

The orchestra conductor-sunset, with a sweeping gesture, gathers in the scattered flutes of the birds in the trees, and the grieving harps of the insects, and the sound of crushed stones. Suddenly he stops the tympanums of the mess-kits and crashing rifles, so as to let the muted instruments sing out over the orchestra, all the golden stars, erect, arms akimbo, on the grand stage of the sky. And here comes the diva of the performance . . . A neckline plunging to her breasts, the desert displays her immense bosom in curvaceous liquefaction, aglow with rouge beneath the cascading jewels of the monstrous night. (*Battle of Tripoli*)⁷

10. As every kind of order is inevitably a product of the cautious and circumspect mind, it is imperative to orchestrate images, distributing them with a **maximum of disorder**.

11. **Destroy the "I" in literature:** that is, all psychology. The sort of man who has been damaged by libraries and museums, subjected to a logic and wisdom of fear, is absolutely of no interest anymore. We must abolish him in literature and replace him once and for all with matter, whose essence must be seized by strokes of intuition, something which physicists and chemists can never achieve.

⁵ *La battaglia di Tripoli* (Padua: Tipografia "Elzeviriana," 1912), p. 000.

Diethel and Steve Cox (London: Middlesex University Press, 1999), ch. 10, "The Blacksmiths of Milmillah," p. 156.

⁶ Marinetti, *Mafarka the Futurist: An African Novel*, trans. Carol

⁷ *La battaglia di Tripoli*, p. 000.

To capture the breath, the sensibility, and the instincts of metals, stones, woods, and so on, through the medium of free objects and capricious motors. To substitute, for human psychology, now exhausted, **the lyrical obsession with matter.**

Be careful not to assign human sentiments to matter, but instead to divine its different governing impulses, its forces of compression, dilation, cohesion, disaggregation, its heaps of molecules massed together or its electrons whirling like turbines. There is no point in creating a drama of matter that has been humanized. It is the solidity of a steel plate which interests us as something in itself, with its incomprehensible and inhuman cohesion of molecules or electrons which can resist penetration by a howitzer. The heat of a piece of iron or wood leaves us more impassioned than the smile or tears of a woman.

We want literature to render the life of a motor, a new instinctive animal whose guiding principle we will recognize when we have come to know the instincts of the various forces that compose it.

Nothing, for a Futurist poet, is more interesting than the action of mechanical piano's keyboard.⁸ Film offers us the dance of an object that disintegrates and recomposes itself without human intervention. It offers us the backward sweep of a diver whose feet fly out the sea and bounce violently back on the springboard. Finally, it offers us the sight of a man driving at 200 kilometers per hour. All these represent the movements of matter which are beyond the laws of human intelligence, and hence of an essence which is more significant.

Three elements which literature has hitherto overlooked must now become prominent in it:

1. **Noise** (a manifestation of the dynamism of objects);
2. **Weight** (the capacity for flight in objects);
3. **Smell** (the capacity of objects to disperse themselves).

Take pains, for example, to render the landscape of odors that a dog perceives. Listen to engines and reproduce their speech.

Matter has always been contemplated by an *I* who is distanced, cold, too preoccupied with himself, full of pretensions to wisdom and human obsessions.

Man tends to befoul matter with his youthful joy or ageing sorrow – matter, which possesses an admirable continuity of impulse toward greater heat, greater movement, greater subdivision of itself. Matter is neither sad nor happy. Its essence is boldness, will, and absolute force. It wholly belongs to the divining poet who will know how to free himself of syntax which is traditional, burdensome, restrictive, and confined to the ground, armless and wingless because it is merely intelligent. Only the asyntactical poet with words set free will be able to penetrate the essence of matter and destroy the mute hostility that separates it from us.

The Latin period which has been used until now has been a pretentious gesture with which an overweening and myopic mind has tried to tame the multiform and mysterious life of matter. The Latin period has been stillborn.

Profound intuitions of life linked together one by one, word by word, according to their illogical surge – these will give us the general outlines for an **intuitive psychology of matter.** That is what was revealed to me from the heights of the airplane. Looking at objects from a new vantage point, no longer head on or from behind but straight down, foreshortened, I was able to break apart the old shackles of logic and the plumb lines of the old form of comprehension.

All of you, Futurist poets, who have loved and followed me until now, have been frenzied builders of images and bold explorers of analogies, just as I have. But the narrow nets of metaphor are, unfortunately, too weighted down by the plumb lines of logic. I urge you to make them lighter,

⁸ The player piano occupies a prominent role in many works of the period. In Joseph Conrad's novel *The Secret Agent*, it epitomizes an empty mechanism that results in the futile anarchism of the characters who frequent *The Sirenas*, a lower class restaurant

and beer hall; in the "Circe" episode of Joyce's *Ulysses*, it becomes a vehicle for language or music in itself, freed from human authority or control.

so that your immensified gesture can hurl them farther, cast them out over a vaster expanse of ocean.

Together we will discover what I call **the wireless imagination**.⁹ One day we will achieve an art that is still more essential, the day when we dare to suppress all the first terms of our analogies in order to render nothing other than an uninterrupted sequence of second terms. To achieve this, it will be necessary to forego with being understood. It isn't necessary to be understood. We have already dispensed with that privilege anyway even when we have written fragments of a Futurist sensibility by means of traditional and intellectual syntax.

Syntax has been a kind of abstract cipher which poets have used in order to inform the masses about the color, the musicality, the plasticity and architecture of the universe. It has been a sort of interpreter, a monotonous tour-guide. We must suppress this intermediary so that literature can directly enter into the universe and become one body with it.

My work sharply differs from anyone else's by virtue of its frightening power of analogy. Its inexhaustible wealth of images rivals the disorder of its illogical punctuation, and at the head of it all is the first Futurist manifesto, the synthesis of a hundred-horsepower engine racing at the most insane velocities over land.

Why should we still make use of four exasperated wheels that are boring, when we can break free of the ground once and for all? The liberation of words, unfolding wings of the imagination, the analogical synthesis of the earth embraced in a single view and gathered together whole in essential words.

They scream at us: "Your literature will not be beautiful! We'll no longer have a verbal symphony that is composed of harmonious rockings and tranquillizing cadences. "We understand that quite well! And how lucky! We, instead, make use of all the ugly sounds, the expressive screams of the violent life that surrounds us. **Let us boldly make "the ugly" in literature, and let us everywhere murder solemnity.** Go on! don't assume those grand priestly airs when listening to me. Every day we must spit upon the *Altar of Art*. We are entering the boundless domains of free intuition. After free verse, here at last are **words in freedom!**

There are no elements in this of either the absolute or the systematic. Genius has impetuous spurts and muddy torrents. Sometimes it requires analytical and explanatory languors. Nobody can renovate his own sensibility all at once. Dead cells are mixed together with live ones. Art is a need to destroy and disperse oneself, a great watering can of heroism that drowns the world. And don't forget: microbes are necessary for the health of the stomach and the intestines. Just so there is also a species of microbes that are necessary for the health of art – **art, which is a prolongation of the forest of our arteries**, prolongation which flows beyond the body and extends into the infinity of space and time.

Futurist Poets! I have taught you to hate libraries and museums, only in order to prepare you for the next step, **to hate intelligence**, reawakening in you divine intuition, the characteristic gift of the Latin races. By means of intuition we shall overcome the seeming irreducible divide which separates our human flesh from the metal of the motor.

After the reign of the animal, behold the beginning of the reign of the machine. Through growing familiarity and friendship with matter, which scientists can know only in its physical and chemical reactions, we are preparing the creation of the mechanical man with interchangeable parts. We will liberate man from the idea of death, and hence from death itself, the supreme definition of the logical mind.

⁹ The phrase "wireless imagination" translates the term *immaginazione senza fili*, which can be more literally translated as "imagination without strings," in which sense it refers to an imagination freed of the "plumb lines" or "strings" of logic, discussed in the preceding paragraph. But just as the word "wireless" – it was an abbreviation of "wireless telegraphy," the

early term for radio – in British usage became the everyday term for radio, so in Italian *senza fili* (literally: without wires) also became a common name for radio. "Wireless imagination," in short, is more suggestive of these multiple connotations than either "imagination without strings" or "radio imagination."

A Response to Objections (Aug. 1912)
F. T. Marinetti

I shall not reply to the jokes and countless ironic comments, but to the skeptical questions and important objections which have been directed by the European press against my “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature.”

1. Those who have correctly understood what I meant by “hate for the intelligence”¹ have wished to discern in that expression some influence from the philosophy of Bergson. But evidently they are not aware that my first epic poem, “The Conquest of the Stars” (published in 1902), contained these three verses from Dante on the first page, serving as an epigraph:

O insane labor of mortals,
How defective are *sylogisms*
Which *make men fold down their wings.*

(Paradiso, Canto 11)²

Or this thought from Edgar Allan Poe, who describes:

the poetic spirit – that faculty more sublime than any other, as we already know, – which, since truths of the greatest importance could not have been revealed to us except by means of that Analogy whose eloquence is irrefutable to the imagination, says nothing to weak and solitary reason. (Edgar Allan Poe, “The Colloquy of Monos and Una”)³

Long before Bergson, these two creative geniuses coincided with my own temperament in distinctly affirming their hate for creeping, weak, and solitary intelligence, and according all powers to the intuitive and divining imagination.

2. When I speak of intuition and intelligence, I do not intend to speak of two domains that are distinct and wholly separate. Every creative mind has experienced how, during the labor of creation, the intuitive and intellectual dimensions have been fused together.

It is impossible, therefore, to specify exactly the point where unconscious inspiration leaves off and lucid will begins. Sometimes the latter suddenly generates inspiration, and sometimes instead it accompanies it. After several hours of unremitting and painful work, the creative spirit is suddenly freed from the weight of all obstacles and becomes, in some way, the prey of strange spontaneity of conception and execution. That hand that writes seems to separate from the body and freely leave far behind the brain, which, having itself in some way become detached from the

The text was first published as an independent manifesto in August 1912. An account and an extract from it appeared in the Parisian newspaper *L'Intransigeant*, August 20, 1912, followed by another extract with some ironic comments the next day. Another account of it appeared in *Paris-Journal*, August 20, 1912. A German translation was published in *Der Sturm*, no. 150–1 (March 1913), accompanied by a brief essay about it, “Futuristische Worttechnik” (“Futurist Language Techniques”) by the great German writer Alexander Döblin.

¹ “Hate for the intelligence” appears in the penultimate paragraph of the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature”; see this edition, p. 000. The French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859–1941), in *Time and Free Will*, famously urged that our everyday notion that physical objects exist and occupy positions in the “empty homogeneous medium” of space had wrongly shaped our concept of time. Time is not, as we imagine it, an unbounded line composed of units or moments external to one another; nor is it a set of instants that can be specified in mathematical calculations. Such a view cannot account for the

transition from one state to another. Instead it is a continuous flow or stream, pure duration or continuity of movement, *durée*, to which we can best gain access through the consciousness of our own inner mental life.

² *epigraph* on Marinetti’s first book, *La Conquête des Étoiles* (Paris: Editions de La Plume, 1902). The italics in the quotation from Dante are added by Marinetti.

³ Edgar Allan Poe wrote the “Colloquy of Monos and Una” in 1841 and it appeared for the first time in his collection of *Tales* (1845). It was translated into French by Charles Baudelaire under the title “Colloque entre Monos et Una,” appearing first in the newspaper *Le Pays* (January 22, 23, 1855), then in the second of five volumes of translations which he made from Poe, *Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires par Edgar Poe* (1857). The story is a brief dialogue which takes place in the afterlife, with Monos explaining to Una his sensations and experience of death. Marinetti quotes from Monos’s defense of “the poetic intellect” over and against utilitarian reason, which issues in “system” and “abstraction.”

body and airborne, looks down from on high with terrible lucidity upon the unforeseen phrases emitted by the pen.

Does this domineering brain look passively on, or does it instead direct the leaps of fantasy that excite the hand? It is impossible to know. In such moments I have observed, from a physiological standpoint, little more than a great void in the stomach.

By *intuition*, I mean a state of mind almost entirely intuitive and unconscious. By *intelligence*, I mean a state of mind which is almost entirely intellective and a product of will.

3. The ideal kind of poetry which I dream of, which would be none other than the uninterrupted flow of the second terms of analogies, has nothing whatever to do with allegory. Allegory, in fact, is the succession of the second terms of several analogies that are all connected together *logically*. Sometimes, too, allegory can be the second term of an analogy which has been minutely developed and described.

On the contrary, I aspire to render the illogical succession, no longer explanatory but intuitive, of the second terms of many different analogies which are all disconnected and quite often opposed to one another.

4. All purebred stylists have easily been able to affirm that the adverb is not just a word that modifies a verb, adjective, or other adverb, but also a musical ligament that unites the different sounds of a sentence or period.

5. I believe it necessary to suppress the adjective and the adverb because they are simultaneously, and also on different occasions, many-colored festoons, draperies of subtle shading, pedestals, parapets and balustrades of the traditional period.

It is precisely through the deliberate use of the adjective and the adverb that writers give that melodious and monotonous rocking effect to the sentence, its moving and interrogative rise and its calming and gradual fall, like a wave on the beach. With an emotion that is always identical, the reader's spirit must momentarily hold its breath and tremble, beg to be calmed, until at last it can breathe freely again when the wave of words falls back, with a final punctuation of gravel and a last little echo.

The adjective and the adverb have a triple function, which is at once explanatory, decorative, and musical, by means of which they indicate the pace – light or heavy, slow or rapid – of the noun which is moving in the sentence. By turns, they are the noun's cudgel or its crutch. Their length and their weight govern the rhythm of a style which, necessarily, is always under guard, and they prevent it from reproducing the imagination's flight. For example: "A young and beautiful woman walks rapidly over the marble floor." The traditional mind hastens to explain that the woman is young and beautiful, even though the intuition always gives simply a beautiful movement. Later, the traditional mind announces that the woman is walking rapidly, and at last it adds that she is walking on a marble floor.

This purely explanatory procedure, imposed in advance of any arabesques, zigzags, or leaps of thought, no longer has any reason to exist. Whoever proceeds in just the opposite manner is almost certain not to deceive himself.

Further, it is undeniable that abolishing the adjective and the adverb will give back to the noun its value as something essential, total, and typical.

In addition, I have absolute faith in the feeling of horror that I experience when faced with a noun that strides forward yet is followed by its adjective, as if by some rag or puppy. Yes, sometimes the dog is held back on the leash of an elegant adverb. Sometimes the noun has an adjective in front and an adverb in back, like the two sign-boards of a sandwich man. But these too are unbearable spectacles.

6. For these reasons I have recourse to the abstract aridity of mathematical signs, which are used to render quantitative relations by epitomizing a longer explanation, without any fillers, and avoiding the dangerous mania for wasting time in all the crannies of the sentence, in the minute labors of the mosaic maker, the jeweler, or the shoeshine boy.

7. Words freed from punctuation will irradiate one another, magnetic waves intersecting one another according to the ceaseless dynamism of thought. A shorter or longer blank space will tell the reader what are the pauses or the brief naps of intuition. Capital letters will tell the reader which nouns synthesize a dominant analogy.
8. The destruction of the traditional period, the abolition of the adjective, the adverb, and punctuation, will necessarily bring about the collapse of that well-known type of harmonious style, with the result that the Futurist poet will finally use all the onomatopoeias, including the most cacophonous ones, which reproduce the countless noises of matter in motion.

All these elastic intuitions, with which I am supplementing my "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature," sprang to mind while I was creating my new Futurist work. Here is one of the more significant fragments from it:

Battle

Weight + Smell

Afternoon 3/4 flutes groans dog-days **boomboom** alarm Gargaresch bursting trembling march Tinkling/Ringing backpacks rifles hooves nails cannons manes wheels cartridge-boxes Jews pancakes bread-with-olive-oil sing-song shops whiffs cleaning eye-rheum stink cinnamon mold flux and reflux pepper quarrel filth turbine orange-trees-in-blossom filigree poverty dice chess cards jasmine + ground-nutmeg + rose arabesque mosaic carcass stings tapping machine guns = gravel + undertow + frogs Tinkling backpacks rifles cannons scrap-iron atmosphere = lead + lava + 300 stench + 50 perfumes pavement mattress debris horse-dung carcasses flick-flack to crowded together camels donkeys **boom-boom** sewer Souk-of-the-silversmiths maze silk azure galabieh purple oranges moucharabieh arches to dismount crossroads piazzetta teeming

tannery shoeshine-boy gandouras burnous swarming to sift to sweat polychromia envelopment excrescences wounds fox-holes debris demolition phenol lime lice-swarm Tinkling backpacks **tatatata** hooves nails cannons cartridge-boxes whippings uniform-cloth sheep-stench no-exit left-turn funnel right-turn crossroads chiaroscuro Turkish-bath fryings moss jonquils orange-blossoms nausea essence-of-rose trap ammonia claws excrements bits meat + 1000 flies dried-fruits carobs chick-peas pistachios nectarines banana-governments figs **boomboom**

billy-goat couscous-moldy aromas saffron tar egg-soaked dog-drenched jasmine opopanax sandal carnation to ripen intensity boiling to ferment tuberose To rot to scatter rage to die dissolve pieces crumbs dust heroism **Tatata** rifle-fire **pic pac pun pan pan** orange wool-fulvous machine-gun rattle leper-shelter sores forward Meat-soaked dirty smoothness hetarae Tinkling backpacks rifles cartridge-boxes wheels gasoline tobacco incense anise village ruin burnt amber jasmine houses guttings abandonment terracotta-jar **boom-boom** violets shadow-zone wells donkey ass cadaver collapse sex exhibition garlic bromines anise breeze fish fir-tree-new rosemary dashes palms sand cinnamon Sun gold scales even lead sky silk heat padding purple azure heat Sun = volcano + 3 - flags atmosphere precision corrida fury surgery lamps Scalpel-rays sparkle sheets desert clinic × 20000 arms 20000 feet 10000 eyes gun-sights scintillation wait operation sands ship-ovens Italians Arabs 3000 meters battalions heats orders pistons sweat mouths ovens

Lost forward-march oil **tatatata** ammonia > opopanax violets dung roses sands dazzle-of-mirrors everything to walk arithmetic footprints to obey irony enthusiasm

Buzzing to sew dunes pillows zigzags to mend feet heap screeching sand pointlessness machine-guns = gavel + undertow + frogs

Scouting parties: 200 meters loaded-to-the-brim forward-march Arteries swelling heat fermentation hair armpits drums tawiness blondness breaths + backpack 18 kilos forethought = sing-sing scrap-iron money-box softness: 3 shudders orders rocks anger enemy magnet

lightness glory Heroism Scouting-parties: 100 meters machine-guns rifle-fire eruption
 violins bras **tim tum tak tak tim tum** machine-guns **tataratarata**

Scouting-parties: 20 meters battalions-ants cavalry-frogs streets-puddles general-islet
 sand-revolution howitzers-platforms clouds-gridirons rifles-martyrs shrapnel-halos multiplication
 addition division howitzer-substraction grenade-erasure dripping draining landslide roadblock heap

Scouting parties: 3 meters mix-up to-fro stuck unstuck wound fire uprooting yards
 heap deposits flames panic blinding smashing to enter to exit to run Sugars Lives-rockets

hearts-gluttonies bayonets-forks to bite to chop to stink to dance to leap anger dogs-explosion
 howitzers-gymnasts flashes-trapeze explosion rose joy stomachs-watering-cans heads-footballs scatter-
 ing

Cannon 149-elephant limbs-cornacs issa-oh anger levy slowness heaviness center
 load infantry method monotony trainers distance grand-prize arc \times light **pang-boom-boom** sprig
 infinite Sea = laces-emeralds-freshness-elasticity-abandonment-softness dreadnought-steel-conci-
 sion-order Combat-flag (fields skies-white-hot blood) = Italy force Italian-pride
 brothers wives mother insomnia newsboys-scream glory domination coffee war-stories

Towers cannons-virility-muzzles-erection range-finder ecstasy **boom-boom** 3 seconds **boomboom**
 waves smiles laughter chik chack plaff pluff gloogloogloogloo play-hide-and-peek crystals virgins

flesh jewels pearls iodine salts bromides skirts gas liqueurs bubbles 3 seconds boom-boom officer
 whiteness range-finder cross fire ring-ring megaphone height-4-thousand-meters left-face stop

everybody halt troops-dismissed 7-degrees erection splendor pumping piercing immensity blue-
 woman deflowering doggedness hallways scream labyrinth mattresses sobs smashing down desert

bed precision range-finder monoplane gallery applause monoplane = balcony-rose-wheel-drum
 buzzing-fly > defeat-Arab ox bloodiness slaughter wounds refuge oasis humidity fan coolness -

siesta stripes germination effort dilation-vegetal I'll-be-more-green-tomorrow let's-stop-soaked
 save-this-drop-of-water you-have-to-left-yourself-3-centimeters-to-overcome-20-grams-of-sand-
 and-3000-grams-of-shadows milky-way-coconut-tree stars-coconuts milk to gush juice pleasure.

The Art of Noises: A Futurist Manifesto (Mar. 1913)

Luigi Russolo

Dear Balilla Pratella, great Futurist composer,

At the crowded Costanzi Theater in Rome, while I was listening to the orchestral performance of your overwhelming **Futurist music**,¹ together with my Futurist friends Marinetti, Boccioni, Carrà, Balla, Soffici, Papini, and Cavacchioli, there came to my mind the idea of a new art: the Art of Noises, a logical consequence of your marvelous innovations.

In older times life was completely silent. In the nineteenth century, with the invention of machines, Noise was born. Today, noise is triumphant and reigns supreme over the sensibility of men. For many centuries life went by in silence, or at most with muted sound. The loudest noises that interrupted this silence were neither intense, extended, nor varied. For if we set aside exceptional movements across the earth's surface, such as hurricanes, storms, avalanches, and waterfalls, nature is silent.

Amidst this scarcity of *noises*, the first *sounds* that men were able to extract from a hollow reed or a taut string were stupefying, something new and marvelous. Primitive peoples ascribed *sound* to the gods, deemed it sacred, and reserved it to the priests, who used it to enrich their rites with mystery. Thus was born the concept of sound as a thing in itself, distinct from life and independent of it, and from that resulted music, a fantastic world superimposed on the real one, an inviolable and sacred world. It is easy to understand how such a concept of music must have inevitably hindered its progress in comparison with the other arts. The Greeks themselves, adopting a musical theory which was mathematically systematized by Pythagoras and which permitted only a few consonant

¹ The concert of Pratella's *Futurist Music* was given on March 9, 1913, at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome.

intervals, limited the field of music considerably and rendered harmony, of which they remained ignorant, impossible.

The Middle Ages, with developments and modifications of the Greek tetrachord system,² with Gregorian chants and popular songs, enriched the art of music, but continued to consider sound only *in its unfolding in time*, a restricted concept that lasted for several centuries and can still be found in the extremely complicated polyphonies of Flemish contrapuntists. The *chord* did not exist; development of the different parts was not subordinated to the chord that these parts produced in their ensemble; and the conception of these parts was horizontal, not vertical. The desire, the search, and the taste for a simultaneous union of different sounds, i.e. for *the chord* (complex sound) arose only gradually, passing from perfect consonance with a few incidental dissonances to the complicated and persistent dissonances which characterize contemporary music.

At first the art of music sought and achieved purity, limpidity, and sweetness of sound; later it incorporated more diverse sounds, though it still took care to caress them with gentle harmonies. Today, growing ever more complicated, it is seeking those combinations of sounds that fall most dissonantly, strangely, and harshly on the ear. We are drawing ever closer to *noise-sound*.

This evolution of music is parallel to the multiplication of machines, which everywhere are collaborating with man. Not only amid the clamor of the metropolis, but also in the countryside, which until yesterday was normally silent, in our time the machine has created such a variety and such combinations of noises that pure sound, in its slowness and monotony, no longer arouses any feeling.

To excite and exalt our sensibilities, music has been developing toward extremely complex polyphony and the greatest possible variety of orchestral timbres, or colors, seeking out the most complex successions of dissonant chords, and preparing in a general way for the creation of **musical noise**. This evolution towards "noise-sound" was not possible before now. The ear of an eighteenth-century man could never have supported the dissonant intensity of certain chords produced by our orchestras (with three times as many performers as those of his day). Our ear instead takes pleasure in it, since it has already been trained by modern life, so teeming in different noises. Not, however, that it is full satisfied: instead it demands an ever greater range of acoustical emotions.

Musical sound, on the other hand, is too limited in the qualitative variety of timbres. The most complicated orchestras are reduced to four or five classes of instruments, differing in timbre: instruments played with the bow, plucked instruments, brass winds, wood winds, and percussion instruments. So that modern music founders within this tiny circle as it vainly attempts to create new kinds of timbre.

We must break out of this restricted circle of pure sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds.

Further, everyone will recognize that every sound carries with it a cluster of already familiar and stale associations which predispose the hearer to boredom, despite all the efforts of innovative musicians. We Futurists have all deeply loved and enjoyed the harmonies of the great masters. Beethoven and Wagner have stirred our hearts and nerves for many years. But now we are satiated with them, and we derive far more pleasure from ideally combining the noises of trams, internal-combustion engines, carriages, and noisy crowds than from rehearing, for example, the "Eroica" or the "Pastorale."³

We can hardly observe that enormous apparatus of forces represented by the modern orchestra without feeling deepest disappointment at its petty acoustic achievements.

Is anything more ridiculous than the sight of twenty men furiously bent on redoubling the meowing of a violin. Naturally all this will make the musico-maniacs scream and perhaps disturb the

² A tetrachord was a musical scale of four notes, bounded by the interval of a perfect fourth (an interval the size of two and one-half steps, such as from c to f). The descending tetrachord was the basic unit of analysis in Greek music, and scale systems were formed by joining successive tetrachords. Only the outer

notes of each tetrachord were fixed, while the position of the inner pitches determined the genus of the tetrachord.

³ *The Eroica* and *Pastorale* are popular names given to Beethoven's Symphonies No. 3 (1804) and No. 8 (1808).

somnolent atmosphere of our concert-halls. But let us go together, as Futurists, into one of these hospitals for anaemic sounds. Listen to it: the first bar wafts to your ear the boredom of the already-heard and gives you a foretaste of the boredom to follow in the next. Let us savor, from one bar to the next, two or three species of pure boredom, forever waiting for the extraordinary sensation that never comes. Meanwhile, one is struck by that repugnant mixture which is created by emotional monotony and the cretinous religious excitement of the listeners, Bhuddhistically intoxicated by the thousandth repetition of their spurious and snobbish ecstasy. Away! Let's be gone, since it won't be long before we can't refrain our desire to create at least one new musical reality by generously handing out sonorous slaps, stamping with both feet on violins, pianos, contrabasses, and groaning organs. Away!

It's no good objecting that noise is simply loud and disagreeable to the ear. It seems to me pointless to enumerate all the graceful and delicate noises that afford pleasant acoustic sensations.

To be convinced of their astonishing variety one need only think of the rumbling of thunder, the whistling of the wind, the roaring of a waterfall, the gurgling of a brook, the rustling of leaves, the clatter of a horse trotting into the distance, the rattling jolt of a cart over cobblestones, or the deep, solemn, and white breath of a city at night, or all the noises made by wild and domestic animals, or all those that can be made by the mouth of man, apart from speech or song.

Let us wander through a great modern city with our ears more alert than our eyes and we shall find pleasure in distinguishing the rushing of water, gas, or air in metal pipes, the purring of motors that breathe and pulsate with indisputable animality, the throbbing of valves, the pounding of pistons, the screeching of mechanical saws, the jolting of trams on their tracks, the cracking of whips, the flapping of curtains and flags. We shall amuse ourselves by creating mental orchestrations of the crashing down of metal shop shutters, the slamming of doors, the bustle and shuffling of crowds, the varied racket of stations, railroads, iron foundries, spinning mills, printing works, electrical power stations, and subways.

Nor should the latest noises of modern warfare be forgotten. Recently the poet Marinetti, in a letter written from the Bulgarian trenches surrounding Adrianople, described for me the orchestration of a large battle, rendered in marvelous words-in-freedom:

every 5 seconds siege-cannons to disembowel space with a chord Bam-Boooooomb mutiny of 500 in order to snap to break up to scatter to the infinite In the middle of those smashed Bam-Booomb range 50 square kilometers to bounce sweepings cuttings fists batteries in rapid fire Violence fierceness regularity this low weighty surging the strange madmen agitated taut from the battle Fury torment ears eyes nostrils open! straining! force! What pleasure to see to hear to smell everything taratatata of the machine guns squealing breathless under bites slaps track-track lashes pic-pac-pum-boom oddities leaps height 200 meters of the rifle-fire Down down in the pit of the orchestra puddles to splash oxen buffalos goadings carts pliff plaff horses getting stuck flic flac zing zang riiiiinse playing neighing ayingayingaying . . . pawing pinging 3 Bulgarian battalions marching kroook-kraaak (*lento double time*) Sciumi Maritza o Karvavena kroook-kraaak shout of officers to bang like brass plates pan over here paack over there chinck BOOOM chinck chack (*presto*) cha-cha-cha cha-chack up down there there around arms up attention on the head chack very nice! Blasts blasts blasts blasts blasts Blasts stage of the forts down there behind that smoke Shrkri Pasha communicates by telephone with 27 forts in Turkish in German hello! Ibrahim! Rudolph! hello! hello! actors roles echoes prompters stagehands comprised of smoke forests applause smell of hay mud dung I no longer feel my frozen feet odor of potassium nitrate smell of decay Tympanums flutes bass clarinets everywhere high low birds twittering beatitude shadows chirp-chirp-chirp breeze green flocks don-dan-don-din-bèèè Orchestra madmen to beat the orchestra musicians these badly beaten up to plaaaaay to plaaaaay Graaand clangings not to cancel to be precise reshaaaaaping them noises smaller minute-ute-ute wrecks of echoes in the theater size 300 square kilometers Maritza Tungia Rivers spread out Rodopi Mountains straight up heights box-seats gallery 2000 shrapnel to saw the air to explode white kerchiefs ful of gold Boom-Boomb 2000 grenades straining to rip out with tearing shocks of dark hair ZANG-BOOM-ZANG-BOOM-

BOOOOMB orchestra of the war noises to swell beneath a note of silence held in the high sky spherical balloon golden that surveys cannon-fire.⁴

We want to give pitches to these extraordinarily diverse sounds, regulating them harmonically and rhythmically. Giving pitches to noises doesn't mean depriving them of all the irregularity of tempo and intensity that characterize their movements and vibrations, but giving gradation or pitch to the strongest and predominant vibrations. Indeed, noise differs from sound only insofar as the vibrations that produce it are irregular and confused, both in tempo and intensity. Every noise has a note, sometimes even a chord, that predominates in the ensemble of irregular vibrations. Now, because of the predominating characteristic note, it is possible to "attune" it, or to assign a certain noise not just a single pitch but a variety of pitches, without losing its characteristic quality, but which I mean its timbre. Thus certain noises produced by rotary motion can offer an entire ascending or descending chromatic scale if the speed of the motion is increased or decreased.

Every manifestation of life is accompanied by noise. Noise is therefore familiar to our ears and has the power of immediately reminding us of life itself. But sound is alien to life, is always musical and a thing unto itself, an occasional and not an essential element, and it has become for our ears what a too familiar face is to our eyes. Noise, instead, comes to us in a confused and irregular way from the irregular confusion of life; it never reveals itself entirely to us and keeps innumerable surprises in reserve. We are convinced that by selecting, coordinating, and controlling noises we shall enrich mankind with a new and unexpected pleasure of the senses. Even though it is characteristic of noise to remind us brutally of life, **the art of noises must not be limited to an imitative reproduction.** It will achieve its greatest emotional power in acoustic pleasure in itself, which the artist's inspiration will evoke from combined noises.

These are the 6 families of noises in the Futurist orchestra, noises which we shall soon produce mechanically:

Rumbles	Whistles	Whispers	Screeches	Noises made	Voices of animals
Thundering	Hisses	Murmurs	Creaking	by percussion	and people;
Explosions	Snorts	Mutters	Rustles	on metals,	Shouts, Screams,
Crashes		Buzzes	Throbs	woods, skins	Groans, Howls,
Splashes		Gurgles	Crackles	stones, terracotta-	Wails, Laughs,
Booms			Scuffles		Wheezes, Sobs

In this we have included the most characteristic of the fundamental noises; the others are simply associations and combinations of these. **The rhythmic movements of a noise are infinite. There is always, as with a note, a predominant rhythm,** but around this there are many other secondary rhythms that can be perceived.

Conclusions

1. Futurist musicians must constantly enlarge and enrich the field of sound. This responds to a need in our sensibility. Indeed, we note that the most talented composers of today are tending to adopt the most complicated dissonances. As they move ever farther away from pure sound, they almost achieve *noise-sound*. This need and this tendency can be satisfied only *by adding and substituting noises for sounds*.
2. Futurist musicians must replace the limited variety of timbers offered by contemporary orchestral instruments with the infinite variety of the timbres of noises, reproduced by suitable mechanisms.

⁴ This passage became the opening paragraphs in "Bombardment," chapter 10 in Marinetti's *Zang Tumb Tuuum* (Milan: Edizioni di Poesia, 1914), his free-word account of the siege that Italy conducted against the city of Adrianopole, in Bulgaria, in October 1912. It was also Marinetti's most often recited piece

at declamations and performances; in March 1914 he gave a recitation of it at the Doré Gallery in London, with the painter Christopher Nevinston making supporting noises on a large drum.

3. The sensibility of the musician, liberated from facile and traditional rhythm, must find the way to enhance and renew itself in noises, for every noise offers a union of the most diverse rhythms, aside from its predominant one.
4. Since every noise has a **general predominating tone** among its irregular vibrations, a sufficiently wide variety of tones, semitones, and quarter-tones will be easily attained in constructing the instruments that imitate it.
5. The practical difficulties facing the construction of these instruments are not serious. Once the mechanical principle for producing a certain noise has been found, its pitch can be varied applying the general laws of acoustics. If the instrument has a rotary movement, for example, its speed will be increased or decreased; if it doesn't have a rotary movement, the size or tension of the parts will be varied.
6. It will not be through a succession of noises imitating those of life, but through a fantastic combination the varied timbres and rhythms that the new orchestra will achieve the newest and most complicated aural emotions. For that purpose every instrument will have to offer the possibility of varying its pitch, or will need a more or less extended range.
7. The variety of noises is infinite. If today when we have perhaps a thousand different machines, we can distinguish a thousand different noises, then tomorrow, as new machines multiply we shall be able to distinguish ten, twenty, or **thirty thousand different noises, not merely to be imitated, but to be combined as imagination dictates.**
8. We therefore invite young musicians of talent and audacity to listen continually and carefully to all noises in order to understand the various rhythms that go into their making, their principal tone, and their secondary ones. Then, by comparing their various timbres with those of sounds, they'll be persuaded how much more numerous are the former than the latter. This will not only give us an understanding of noises, but also a taste and a passion for them. Our multiplied sensibility, having already been conquered by the eyes of the Futurists, will at last have Futurist ears. In this way the motors and the machines of our industrial cities will one day be able to be consciously attuned, so that every factory will be made into an intoxicating orchestra of noises.

Dear Pratella, I submit these propositions to your Futurist genius and invite you to discuss them with me. I am not a musician, and therefore I don't have acoustical predilections or works that I have to defend. I am a Futurist painter who is using a much loved to art to project my determination to renew everything. Which is why, more daring than any professional musician could be, not worrying myself about my apparent incompetence and convinced that boldness possesses all rights and seizes all possibilities, I have been able to intuit the great renovation of music through the Art of noises.

Destruction of Syntax–Wireless Imagination–Words-in-Freedom (May 1913)

F. T. Marinetti

The Futurist sensibility

My "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" (May 11, 1912), in which I first invented *synthetic and essential lyricism*, *wireless imagination*, and *words-in-freedom*, is concerned exclusively with poetic inspiration.¹

Destruction of Syntax–Wireless Imagination–Words-in-Freedom (May 1913)

The text was first published as an independent leaflet in Italian in May 1913. It was read as a lecture by Marinetti in Paris at the Galerie La Boétie on June 22, 1913. A French translation was published shortly thereafter, and is discussed in articles in the Parisian newspaper *Gil-Blas*, July 7, 1913, the *Magazine de la revue des Français*, July 10, 1913, and *Paris-Journal*, July 10, 1913. An English translation, by Arundel del Re, was published

in what was then the leading journal of contemporary poetry in London, *Poetry and Drama* 1.3 (Sept. 1913): 266–76. It was prefaced by an account of Marinetti's activities written by Harold Monro, "Varia" (pp. 263–5), and followed by 30 pages of Futurist poetry in translation.

¹ For the "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature," see pp. 000–000. On the phrase "wireless imagination," see the "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature," note 9.

Philosophy, the exact sciences, politics, journalism, education, business, however much they may seek synthetic forms of expression, will still have to make use of syntax and punctuation. Indeed, I myself have to make use of them in order to advance the exposition of my concepts.

Futurism is based on the complete renewal of human sensibility which has been brought as an effect of science's great discoveries. Those people who today make use of the telegraph, the telephone, the gramophone, the train, the bicycle, the motorcycle, the automobile, the ocean liner, the dirigible, the airplane, the cinema, the great newspaper (the synthesis of a day in the world's life) are not aware of the decisive influence that these various forms of communication, transportation, and information have on their psyches.

An ordinary man, spending a day's time in the train, can be transported from a small town, dead, with empty squares in which the sun, the dust, and the wind disport themselves in silence, to a great capital bristling with lights, movement, and street cries. By means of the newspaper, the inhabitant of a mountain village can tremble with anxiety every day, following the Chinese in revolt, the suffragettes of London or New York, Doctor Carrel, or the heroic dogsleds of the polar explorers.² The pusillanimous and sedentary inhabitant of any provincial town can allow himself the inebriation of danger by going to the movies and watching a great hunt in the Congo. He can admire Japanese athletes, Negro boxers, inexhaustible American eccentrics, the most elegant and Parisian women by spending a franc to go to the variety theater. Then, tucked up in his bourgeois bed, he can enjoy the distant and costly voice of a Caruso or a Burzio.³

Having becoming commonplace, such possibilities fail to arouse the curiosity of superficial minds which remain as incapable of grasping their deeper significance as *the Arabs who watched with indifference the first airplanes in the skies above Tripoli*. Yet to an acute observer these possibilities are so many modifiers of our sensibility, because they have caused the following significant phenomena:

1. Acceleration of life, which today has a rapid rhythm. Physical, intellectual, and emotional equilibrium on the cord of velocity stretched between contradictory magnetisms. Multiple and simultaneous awarenesses within the same individual.
2. Dread of whatever is old and already known. Love of the new, the unexpected.
3. Dread of quiet living, love of danger and an attitude of daily heroism.
4. Destruction of a sense of *the beyond* and an increased valorization of the individual who wants to *vivre sa vie*, to use the phrase of Condillac.⁴
5. Human desires and ambitions multiplying and going beyond all limits.
6. An exact knowledge of everything inaccessible and unrealizable in each person.
7. Semi-equality of man and woman, and less inequality in their social rights.
8. Contempt for love (sentimentalism or lechery) produced by greater freedom and erotic ease among women and by universal exaggeration of female luxury. Let me explain: today's women

² Contemporary newspapers were filled with accounts of the Chinese Revolution (1911–12) and the ending of the Manchu dynasty in February, 1912. Similarly, contemporaries were fascinated by accounts of suffragette violence in London, such as breaking shop windows with hammers. Dr. Alexis Carrel (1873–1944), a French surgeon, was in the news because he received the 1912 Nobel Prize for Medicine for developing a method of suturing blood vessels, work which he had achieved at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in New York. Exploration of the South Pole was also much in the news. In 1908–9, Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton led a party to the Great Barrier, very close to the Pole. In January 1912 Scott and his party finally reached the Pole, only to discover that the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen had already been there a month

earlier. Scott's party, caught in a blizzard, died on their return journey.

³ Enrico Caruso (1873–1921) was a legendary Italian tenor and one of the first musicians to document his voice on gramophone recordings. Eugenia Burzio (1872–1922) was an Italian soprano. A violinist who turned to singing, she debuted in 1889 at Turin in *Cavalleria rusticana*. She made many appearances at *La Scala* in Milan, and during the years before the First World War was deemed one of the leading Italian sopranos. Her last appearance was in 1919.

⁴ Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715–80), French philosopher, is known chiefly as the leading advocate in France of the ideas of John Locke. The phrase that Marinetti cites could well have been said by almost anyone.

love luxury more than love. A visit to a great dressmaker's shop, escorted by a banker friend who is paunchy and gouty, but will pay the bill, has taken the place of some hot rendezvous with an adored young man. The element of mystery that was once found in love now resides in the selection of an amazing ensemble, latest model, preferably one which her friends don't yet have. Men no longer love a woman who is without *luxus*. The lover has lost all prestige, and Love has lost its absolute value. A complex question, one which I can only touch in passing.

9. Modification of patriotism, which has today become the heroic idealizations of a people's commercial, industrial, and artistic solidarity.
10. Modification of the conception of war, which has become the sanguinary and necessary test of the strength of a people.
11. The passion, art, idealism of Business. New financial sensibility.
12. Man multiplied by the machine.⁵ New mechanical sense, a fusion of instinct with the output of a motor and forces conquered.
13. The passion art and idealism of Sport. Idea and love of "the record."
14. The new tourist sensibility of ocean liners and grand hotels (annual synthesis of various races). Passion for the city. Negation of distances and solitary nostalgias. Derision for the "holy green silence" and the ineffable landscape.
15. The earth shrunk by speed. New sense of the world. Let me explain: men have successively conquered a sense of the house, the neighborhood in which they live, the city, the region, the continent. Today man possesses a sense of the world; he has only a modest need to know what his forebears have done, but a burning need to know what his contemporaries are doing in very part of the globe. Whence the necessity, for the individual, of communicating with all the peoples of the earth. Whence the need to feel oneself at the center, to be judge and motor of the infinite both explored and unexplored. A gigantic increase in the sense of humanity and an urgent need to coordinate at every moment our relations with all humanity.
16. Disgust for the curving line, the spiral, and the *tournoiement*. Love for the straight line and the tunnel. The habit of foreshortened views and visual syntheses created by the speed of trains and automobiles which look down over cities and country landscapes. Dread of slowness, minutiae, detailed analyses and explanations. Love of speed, abbreviation and synopsis. "Quick, tell me the whole story *in two words*."
17. Love of depth and essence in every mental activity.

So these are some of the elements of a new Futurist sensibility which have generated our pictorial dynamism, our antigraceful music devoid of rhythmic regularity, our Art of noises and Futurist words-in-freedom.

Words-in-freedom

Casting aside all stupid definitions and confusing professorial verbalisms, I declare that *lyricism* is the rarely found *faculty* of *intoxicating oneself with life* and *with oneself*. The faculty of changing into wine the muddy waters of the life that surround us and flow through us. The faculty of coloring the world with the unique colors of our changeable "I."

Now imagine that a friend of yours, gifted with this kind of lyrical faculty, should find himself in a zone of intense life (revolution, war, shipwreck, earthquake, etc.), and should come, immediately

⁵ See "Multiplied Man and the Reign of the Machine" in *Repertoire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. Lawrence Rainey et al. (eds.), *Futurism: A Reader and Visual* 000–000.

afterwards, to recount his impressions. Do you know what your lyrical friend will do while he is still shocked? . . .

He will begin by brutally destroying the syntax of his speech. He will not waste time in constructing periodic sentences. He could care less about punctuation or finding the right adjective. He disdains subtleties and shadings, and in haste he will assault your nerves with visual, auditory, olfactory sensations, just as their insistent pressure in him demands. The rush of steam-emotion will burst the steampipe of the sentence, the valves of punctuation, and the regular clamp of the adjective. Fistfuls of basic words without an conventional order. Only preoccupation of the narrator, to render all the vibrations of his "I."

Moreover, if this same narrator gifted with lyricism has a mind stocked with general ideas, he will involuntarily link his sensations to the entire universe as he has known and intuited it. And in order to render the exact weight and proportion of the life he has experienced, he will hurl immense networks of analogies across the world. And thus will he render the analogical ground of life, telegraphically, which is to say with the same economical rapidity that the telegraph imposes on war correspondents and journalists for their synoptic accounts. This need for laconicism not only responds to the laws of velocity that regulate us today, but also the age-old relations that the public and the poet have had. For between the poet and the public, in fact, the same kind of relations exist as between two old friends. They can speak to each other with a half-word, a gesture, a wink. That is why the imagination of the poet must weave together distant things *without connecting wires*, by means of essential *words-in-freedom*.

Death of free verse

Free verse once had countless regions for existing, but it is now destined to be replaced by words-in-freedom.

The evolution of poetry and human sensibility have shown us the two irremediable defects of free verse.

1. Free verse fatally impels the poet toward facile effects of sonorousness, predictable mirror-games, monotonous cadences, absurd chiming, and inescapable echo-play, internal and external.
2. Free verse artificially channels the current of lyrical emotion between the banks of syntax and the weirs of grammar. The free intuitive inspiration that directly addresses the intuition of the ideal reader finds itself imprisoned, or redistributed into so many glasses of purified water for the alimentation of restless, fussy minds.

When I speak of destroying the canals of syntax, I am being neither peremptory nor systematic. In the words-in-freedom of my unchained lyricism, there will still be traces here and there of regular syntax and even of true, logical periods. This inequality in the conciseness and freedom is inevitable and natural. Since poetry, in reality, is nothing more than a superior form of life, more concentrated and intense than the one we lead everyday, – it too is composed of elements that are hyper-alive and moribund.

We need not, therefore, worry too much over the latter. But at all costs we must avoid rhetoric and commonplaces expressed telegraphically.

The wireless imagination

By wireless imagination, I mean the absolute freedom of images or analogies, expressed with disconnected words, and without the connecting syntactical wires and without punctuation.

Until now writers have been restricted to immediate analogies. For example, they have compared an animal to man or to another animal, which is more or less the same thing as taking a photograph. (They've compared, for example, a fox terrier to a tiny thoroughbred. A more advanced writer might

compare that same trembling terrier to a telegraph. I, instead, compare it to gurgling water. In this there is an *ever greater gradation of analogies*, affinities ever deeper and more solid, however remote.) Analogy is nothing other than the deep love that binds together remote, seemingly diverse and hostile things. The life of matter can be embraced only by an orchestral style, at once polychromatic, polyphonic, and polymorphous, by means of the most extensive analogies. In my *Battle of Tripoli*, when I have compared a trench bristling with bayonets to an orchestra, or a machine-gun to a fatal woman, I have intuitively introduced a large part of the universe into a brief episode of African combat. Images are not flowers to be chosen and gathered with parsimony, as Voltaire said. They constitute the very lifeblood of poetry. Poetry should be an uninterrupted flow of new images, without which it is merely anemia and green-sickness. The vaster their affinities, the more images will retain their power (“Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature”)

Wireless imagination and words-in-freedom will transport us into the essence of matter. With the discovery of new analogies between things remote and apparently contradictory, we shall value them ever more intimately. Instead of *humanizing* animals, vegetables, and minerals (a bygone system) we will be able to *animalize*, *vegetize*, *mineralize*, *electrify*, or *liquefy* our style, making it live the very life of matter. For example, to render the life of a blade of grass, we might say: “I will be greener tomorrow.” But we words-in-freedom we might have: **Condensed Metaphors. – Telegraphic images. – Sums of vibrations. – Knots of thought. – Closed or open fans of movement. – Foreshortened analogies. – Color Balances. – The dimensions, weights, sizes and velocities of sensations. – The plunge of the essential word into the water of sensibility, without the concentric eddies produced by words. – Intuition’s moments of repose. – Movements in two, three, four, five different rhythms. – Analytical explanatory telegraph poles that sustain the cable of intuitive wires.**

*Death of the literary “I”
Matter and molecular life*

My “Technical Manifesto” inveighed against the obsession with the “I” that poets have described, sung, analyzed, and vomited forth until today. To rid ourselves of this obsessive “I,” we must abandon the habit of humanizing nature, attributing human preoccupations and emotions to animals, plants, waters, stones, and clouds. Instead we should express the infinite smallness that surrounds us, the imperceptible, the invisible, the agitation of atoms, Brownian movements,⁶ all the passionate hypothesis and all the dominions explored by high-powered microscopes. Let me explain: I want to introduce infinite molecular life into poetry not as a scientific document, but as an intuitive element. It should be mixed in with art works, with spectacles and dramas of what is infinitely grand, since the fusion of both constitutes the integral synthesis of life.

To help a bit the intuition of my ideal reader, I use *italics* for words-in-freedom that express infinite smallness and molecular life.

*Semaphoric adjective
Adjective-lighthouse or atmosphere-adjective*

Everywhere we tend to suppress a qualifying adjective, since it presupposes a halt in intuition, a too minute definition of the noun. That is not a categorical prohibition, but a tendency. What is necessary is it make use of the adjective as little as possible and to do so in a manner absolutely different from that which has prevailed until now. The adjective should be viewed as a railway signal or a semaphore of style, serving to regulate the impetus, the slowings and pauses of advancing analogies. As many as twenty of these semaphoric adjectives might be accumulated in this way.

What I call a semaphoric adjective, adjective-lighthouse, or atmosphere-adjective is an adjective separated from its noun and instead isolated in parentheses, which turns it into a sort of absolute noun, vaster and more powerful than a noun proper.

⁶ The Scottish scientist Robert Brown (1773–1858) published his discovery of Brownian movement, the natural continuous motion of minute particles in solution, in his pamphlet of 1828, *A Brief Account of Microscopical Observations*.

The semaphoric adjective or adjective-lighthouse, suspended above the ground in the glassy cage of parentheses, casts its whirling light into the distance all around.

The profile of this adjective crumbles, spreads abroad, illuminating, impregnating, and enveloping a whole zone of words-in-freedom. For example, I might the following adjectives between parenthesis amid a group of words-in-freedom describing a voyage by sea: (calm blue methodical habitual). It would not be just the sea which is *calm blue methodical habitual*, but the ship, its machinery, the passengers, whatever I might be doing and my very mind.

The verb in the infinitive

Here, too, my pronouncements are not categorical. I maintain, however, that the verb in the infinitive is indispensable to a violent and dynamic lyricism, for the infinitive is round like a wheel, and like a wheel it is adaptable to all the railway-cars that make up the train of analogies, so constituting the very speed of style.

The verb in the infinitive denies by its very existence the classical period and prevents the style from slowing or sitting down at any specific point. While the **verb in the infinitive is round** and mobile as a wheel, the other moods and tenses of the verb are triangular, square, or oval.

Onomatopoeia and mathematical signs

When I said that it is "necessary to spit on the *Altar of Art*," I was inciting Futurists to liberate lyricism from the solemn atmosphere of compunction and incense that one usually calls Art with a capital A. Art with a capital A is a form of intellectual clericalism. That is why I incited Futurists to destroy and mock the garlands, palms, aureoles, exquisite frames, mantles and stoles, the whole historical wardrobe of romantic bric-a-brac that have comprised so much of all poetry until now. I urged instead a swift, brutal and immediate lyricism, one that would appear to all our predecessors as antipoetic, a telegraphic lyricism that would have nothing of the bookish about it, but as much as possible of the flavor of life. Whence the bold introduction of onomatopoeic harmonies to render all the sounds and noises of modern life, even the most cacophonous.

Onomatopoeia, which can help to vivify lyricism with raw and brutal elements of reality, has been used (from Aristophanes to Pascoli) rather timidly used in poetry.⁽¹²⁾ But we Futurists call for an audacious and ongoing use of onomatopoeia. It need not be systematic. For example, my "Adrianople Siege–Orchestra" and my "Battle Weight + Odor" required many onomatopoeic harmonies.⁷ Always for the purpose of rendering a maximum quantity of vibrations and a deeper synthesis of life, we abolish all stylistic connectors, all the shiny buckles with which traditional poets have linked images to the period. Instead we employ very brief or anonymous mathematical and musical, and between parentheses we place indications such as (fast) (faster) (slower) (two-beat time), to control the speed of the style. These parentheses can even cut into a word or an onomatopoeic harmony.

Typographical revolution

I have initiated a typographical revolution directed against the bestial, nauseating sort of book that contains passéist poetry or verse à la D'Annunzio⁸ – handmade paper that imitates models of the seventeenth century, festooned with helmets, Minervas, Apollos, decorative capitals in red ink with loops and squiggles, vegetables, mythological ribbons from missals, epigraphs, and Roman

⁷ "Adrianople Siege–Orchestra" was an independent poem which became the first half of chapter 10, "Bombardment," in Marinetti's book *Zang Tumb Tuuum*. It is quoted in its entirety by Luigi Russolo in "the Art of Noises"; see pp. 000–000. "Battle Weight + Smell" is quoted in its entirety by Marinetti in "A Response to Objections," pp. 000–000.

⁸ The Italian poet and novelist Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938), a controversial Italian writer, did indeed have a love for fine book-making in the art-nouveau style.

numerals. The book must be the Futurist expression of Futurist thought. Not only that. My revolution is directed against the so-called typographical harmony of the page, which is contrary to the flux and reflux, the leaps and bursts of style that run through the page itself. For that reason we will use, in the very same page, *three or four different colors of ink*, and as many as 20 different typographical fonts if necessary. For example: *italics* for a series of swift or similar sensations, *boldface* for violent onomatopoeias, etc. The typographical revolution and the multicolored variety in the letters will mean that I can double the expressive force of words.

I oppose the decorative and precious aesthetic of Mallarmé and his search for the exotic word, the unique and irreplaceable, elegant, suggestive, exquisite adjective. I have no wish to suggest an idea of sensation by means of passéist graces and affectations: I want to seize them brutally and fling them in the reader's face.

I also oppose Mallarmé's static ideal.⁹ The typographic revolution that I've proposed will enable me to imprint words (words already free, dynamic, torpedoing forward) every velocity of the stars, clouds, airplanes, trains, waves, explosives, drops of seafoam, molecules, and atoms.

And so I shall realize the fourth principle contained in my "First Manifesto of Futurism" (February 20, 1909): "We affirm that the beauty of the world has been enriched by a new form of beauty: the beauty of speed."¹⁰

Multilineal lyricism

In addition, I have also devised *multilineal lyricism*, with which I am able to obtain that lyrical simultaneity which has obsessed Futurist painters, and by means of which I am convinced that we can achieve the most complex lyrical simultaneities.

On several parallel lines, a poet will launch several chains of colors, sounds, odors, noises, weights, densities, analogies. One line, for example, might be olfactory, another musical, another pictorial.

Let us imagine that one chain of sensations and pictorial analogies dominates several other chains of sensations and analogies: in that case it will be printed in a heavier typeface than the one used in the second or third lines (the one containing, for example, a chain of sensations and musical analogies; the other, a chain of sensations and olfactory analogies).

Given a page containing many groups of sensations and analogies, with each group composed of, say, three or four lines, then the first line of each group might be formed of pictorial sensations and analogies (printed in heavier typeface) and the same sort of chain would continue (always in heavier typeface) in the first line of each of the other groups.

The chain of musical sensations and analogies (second line), though less important than visual sensations and analogies (first line), yet more important than the olfactory sensations and analogies (third line), might be printed in a typeface lighter than that of the first line, but heavier than that of the third.

Free expressive orthography

The historical necessity of free expressive orthography is demonstrated by the successive revolutions that continuously freed the lyrical powers of the human race from shackles and rules.

1. Poets, in fact, began by channeling their lyric intoxication in a series of equal breaths, with accents, echoes, assonances, or rhymes at pre-established intervals (**traditional metrics**), then varied these different breaths, measured by the lungs of preceding poets, with a certain freedom.

⁹ Stéphane Mallarmé's (1842–98) book *Un Cou de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (*A Throw of the Dice will Never Abolish Chance*) (1897) used special typographical features that might be thought

to anticipate some of Marinetti's proposals here, a charge that he is attempting to forestall.

¹⁰ See "The Founding and the Manifesto of Futurism," p. 000.

2. Later, poets came to feel that differing moments of their lyrical intoxication required commensurate breath of various and unexpected lengths, with absolute freedom of accentuation. Thus they arrived at **free verse**, yet still preserved the syntactic order of words so that their lyrical intoxication could flow down to the listeners by the logical channel of syntax.
3. Today we no longer want lyrical intoxication to order words in syntactic order before launching them forth with the breaths that we have invented, and hence we have *words-in-freedom*. Further, our lyrical intoxication must be free to deform and reshape words, cutting them, lengthening them, reinforcing their centers or their extremities, increasing or diminishing the number of vowels and consonants. Thus we will have the *new orthography* which I call *free expressive*. This instinctive deformation of words corresponds to our natural tendency to use onomatopoeia. It matters little if a word, having been deformed, becomes ambiguous. For it will be wedded with onomatopoeic harmonies, synopses of noises, and these will enable us to swiftly reach an *onomatopoeic psychic* harmony, the sonorous but abstract expression of an emotion of pure thought. It may be objected that **words-in-freedom** or the wireless imagination require a special declamation, or else they will remain incomprehensible. Though I am not greatly worried about being understood by the masses, I will reply by noting that Futurist declaimers are rapidly increasing and further, that any greatly admired traditional poem has also required a special declamation in order to be fully savored.

The Variety Theater (Sept. 1913)

F. T. Marinetti

We have a deep distaste for the contemporary theater (verse, prose, and musical), because it oscillates stupidly between historical reconstruction (pastiche or plagiarism) and a photographic reproduction of everyday life; petty, slow, analytic, and diluted theater that is worthy, at best, of the age of the oil lamp.

FUTURISM EXALTS THE VARIETY THEATER because:

1. The Variety Theater, born as we are from electricity, is fortunate in having no traditions, no guiding lights, no dogmas, and in being nurtured with the swift pace of contemporary events.
2. The Variety Theater is absolutely practical, for it proposes to distract and amuse the public with comic effects, erotic stimulation, or imaginative astonishment.¹
3. The authors, actors, and stage technicians of the Variety Theater have only one reason for existing and succeeding: incessantly to invent new means of astonishment. Whence the absolute impossibility of standing still or repeating oneself; whence the persistent competition of minds and muscles in order to break the various records of agility, speed, force, complication, and elegance.
4. The Variety Theater is unique today in making use of film, which enriches it with an incalculable number of visions and spectacles that couldn't otherwise be performed (battles, riots, horse races, automobile and airplane meets, travels, transatlantic steamers, the recesses of the city, of the countryside, of the oceans and the skies).
5. The Variety Theater, being a profitable shop-window for countless creative efforts, naturally generates what I call the *Futurist marvelous*, a product of modern machinism. Here are some of

The text was published as an independent leaflet in September 1913. It was published again in *Lacerba*, 1(19) (Oct. 1, 1913). A somewhat shortened version, with nine paragraphs lopped off, appeared in an anonymous English translation in the *Daily Mail* on Nov. 21, 1913, with the title of "The Meaning of the Music Hall." (The *Daily Mail* was then the largest mass-circulation newspaper in the world.) A different translation into English, this one by D. Neville Lees, was published under the title "Futurism and the Theatre: A Futurist Manifesto by Marinetti,"

in *The Mask: A Quarterly Journal of the Art of the Theatre*, 6(3) (Jan. 1914): 188–93. The new translation also omitted several paragraphs.

¹ The phrase "imaginative astonishment" gives only a limited sense of the powerful state of shock that Marinetti characterizes with the expression *stupore immaginativo*, literally "imaginative stupor." Marinetti is transforming medical discussions of shock and trauma into the foundation for an aesthetics of shock.

the elements of this *marvelous*: 1. powerful caricatures; 2. abysses of the ridiculous; 3. improbable and delightful ironies; 4. comprehensive, definitive symbols; 5. cascades of uncontrollable humor; 6. deep analogies between the human, animal, vegetable, and mechanical worlds; 7. flashes of revelatory cynicism; 8. plots involving witticisms, puns, and conundrums that aerate the intelligence; 9. the entire gamut of laughter and smiles, to relax one's nerves; 10. the entire gamut of stupidity, imbecility, mindlessness, and absurdity, which imperceptibly push intelligence to the edge of insanity; 11. all the new productions of light, sound, noise, and language, with their mysterious and inexplicable extensions into the most unexplored regions of our sensibility; 12. a mass of current events dispatched within two minutes ("and now let's glance at the Balkans": King Nicholas, Enver-bey, Daneff, Venizelos, belly-slaps and fist-fights between Serbs and Bulgarians, a chorus number, and everything vanishes);² 13. satirical educational pantomimes; 14. caricatures of suffering and nostalgia, deeply impressed into the spectators' sensibility by means of gestures that exasperate with their spasmodic, hesitant, and weary slowness; weighty terms made ridiculous by comic gestures, bizarre disguises, mutilated words, smirks, pratfalls.

6. The Variety Theater in our time is the crucible in which the elements of a new emerging sensibility are seething. In it one can trace the ironic decomposition of all the outworn prototypes of the Beautiful, the Grand, the Solemn, the Religious, the Ferocious, the Seductive, and the Frightful, and the abstract elaboration of the new prototypes that will succeed them.

The Variety Theater, therefore, is the synthesis of everything that humanity up till now has refined within its nervous system in order to amuse itself by laughing at material or moral suffering; and it is the seething fusion of all the laughter and all the smiles, all the guffaws, all the contortions, all the smirks of the humanity to come. The joy that will shake men in the next century, their poetry, their painting, their philosophy, the leaps of their architecture – all can be tasted in the Variety Theater of today.

7. Among the forms of contemporary spectacle, the Variety Theater is the most hygienic by virtue of the dynamism of its forms and colors (simultaneous movements of the jugglers, ballerinas, gymnasts, colorful riding masters, spiral cyclones of dancers spinning on the points of their feet). With its swift, overpowering dance rhythms, the Variety theater forcibly drags the slowest souls out of their torpor and forces them to run and jump.
8. The Variety Theater is the only spectacle that make us of audience collaboration. The audience is not static like a stupid voyeur, but joins noisily in the action, singing along with songs, accompanying the orchestra, communicating with the actors by speaking up at will or engaging in bizarre dialogues. The actors even bicker clownishly with the musicians.

The Variety Theater uses the smoke of cigars and cigarettes to merge the atmosphere of the audience with that of the stage. And since the audience collaborates in this way with the actors' imaginations, the action develops simultaneously on the stage, in the boxes, and in the orchestra. And then it continues beyond the performance, among the battalions of fans and the sugared dandies at the stage door fighting over the starring lady; a double victory at the end; a chic dinner and bed.

² Throughout the period 1912–13, international diplomacy was preoccupied by the Balkan question. The Ottoman Empire or Turkey still controlled large amounts of territory across the Balkan peninsula, including what is now northern Greece (the area around Salonika), Macedonia, and Kosovo. But given Turkey's weakness, it was only a matter of time before the region's various peoples, incited by different powers, would rise in revolt. In October 1912, just at the moment when Turkey was concluding peace with Italy over the Italo-Turkish war (1911–12), the four countries of the Balkan League (Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, and Bulgaria) declared war against Turkey,

sparking the First Balkan War. Bulgaria laid siege to Adrianople, a battle chronicled in Marinetti's *Zang Tumb Tuum*, while Greece took the city of Salonika. On December 3 an armistice was declared, and a peace conference called. But in January 1913, Enver Bey (also known as Enver Pasa, 1881–1922) led a coup d'état in Turkey, and the new government refused to accept the peace conditions. A settlement was finally reached in May 1913. But in June 1913, the Second Balkan War broke out, this time among the countries which had formerly been allies against Turkey. Greece and Serbia formed an alliance against Bulgaria, which they promptly defeated. Peace was signed in August 1913.

9. The Variety Theater is a school of sincerity for males because it exalts their rapacious instincts and snatches away from woman all the veils, all the phrases, all the sighs, all the romantic sobs that mask and deform her. Instead, it throws into relief all of woman's marvelous animal qualities, her power to grasp, seduce, betray, and resist.
10. The Variety Theater is a school of heroism in its stress on winning various records for difficulty and overcoming previous efforts, which gives the stage a strong and healthy atmosphere of danger. (For example, somersaults, looping the loop on bicycles, in cars, on horseback.)
11. The Variety Theater is a school of subtlety, complication, and cerebral synthesis because of its clowns, magicians, mind readers, brilliant calculators, character actors, imitators and parodists, its musical jugglers and eccentric Americans, its fantastic pregnancies that give birth to unexpected objects and mechanisms.
12. The Variety Theater is the only school that can give advice to adolescents and talented young people, because it briefly and incisively explains the most abstruse problems and complicated political events. Example: a year ago, at the Folies-Bergère, two dancers acted out the meandering discussions between Cambon and Kiderlen-Wächter on the question of Morocco and the Congo,³ with a revealing symbolic dance that equaled at least three years of study in foreign policy. Facing the audience, their arms entwined, glued together, they kept making mutual territorial concessions, jumping back and forth, to the right and to the left, never separating, both of them keeping their sight fixed on their goal, which was to become ever more entangled. They gave an unrivaled rendering of diplomacy, of extreme courtesy, skillful vacillation, ferocity, diffidence, persistence, and pettiness.

In addition, the Variety Theater luminously explains the laws that dominate life:

- a) the necessity of complications and differing rhythms;
 - b) the inevitability of lies and contradictions (e.g. English *danseuses* with two faces: peaceful shepherd and terrible soldier);
 - c) the omnipotence of a methodical will-power that modifies human powers [*forze*];
 - d) syntheses of speed + transformations (example: Fregoli).
13. The Variety Theater systematically disparages ideal love and its romantic obsessions by endlessly repeating the nostalgic languors of passion with the monotonous and automatic regularity of a daily job. It strangely mechanizes feelings; it disparages and hygienically tramples down the obsession with carnal possession; and it reduces lust to the natural function of coitus, stripping it of all mystery, depressing anxiety, anti-hygienic idealism. The Variety Theater, instead, communicates a sense of and a taste for facile, light, and ironic loves. Café-concert performances, given in the open air on the casino terraces, offer an amusing war between the spasmodic moonlight, tormented with endless desperation, and the electric light that sparkles violently over the false jewelry, the painted flesh, the colorful petticoats, the spangles, and the blood-red color of lipstick. Naturally it is the energetic electric light that triumphs, the moonlight that is defeated.
 14. The Variety Theater is naturally anti-academic, primitive, and ingenuous, and hence more significant for the improvised character of its experiments and the simplicity of its means. (Example: the systematic tour of the stage that the *chanteuses* make, like caged animals, at the end of every refrain.)

³ Jules Cambon (1845–1935) was a French diplomat and ambassador to Germany from 1907 to 1914, and in 1911 he negotiated with the German diplomat Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter (1852–1912) over the Agadir crisis. In 1911 France had occupied the Moroccan cities of Rabat and Fès. Kiderlen demanded compensation for Germany and, to back up his demands, dispatched the German gunboat *Panther* to Agadir.

Kiderlen refused conciliatory offers and demanded the whole of the French Congo in return for a free hand for France in Morocco. Cambon rejected that demand. In November, they finally agreed that Germany would receive two strips of territory from the French Congo and France would establish a protectorate over Morocco.

15. The Variety Theater is destroying the Solemn, the Sacred, the Serious, the Sublime of Art with a capital A. It is helping along the Futurist destruction of immortal masterpieces by plagiarizing and parodying them, by making them seem commonplace in stripping them of their solemnity and presenting them as if they were just another turn or attraction. Hence we give our unconditional approval to the execution of *Parsifal* in 40 minutes, which is now in rehearsal in a great London music-hall.
16. The Variety Theater is destroying all our conceptions of perspective, proportion, time and space. (Example: a little doorway and gate that are 30 centimeters in height, isolated in the middle of the stage, which eccentric American comedians open and close with solemnity as they repeatedly enter and exit it, as though they couldn't do otherwise.)
17. The Variety Theater offers us all the records achieved until now: the greatest speed and the finest gymnastics and acrobatics of the Japanese, the greatest muscular frenzy of the Negroes, the highest examples of animal intelligence (trained horses, elephants, seals, dogs, birds), the finest melodic inspiration of the Gulf of Naples and the Russian steppes, the keenest Parisian wit, the greatest competitive force of different races (wrestling and boxing), the greatest anatomical monstrosity, the greatest female beauty.
18. While contemporary theater exalts the inner life, professorial meditation, the library, the museum, monotonous crises of conscience, stupid analyses of feelings – and in short, that filthy thing and filthy word *psychology*; the Variety theater exalts action, heroism, life in the open air, dexterity, the authority of instinct and intuition. To psychology it opposes what I call *body-madness* [*fisicofollia*].
19. Finally, the Variety Theater offers all nations that don't have a single great capital city (like Italy) a brilliant résumé of Paris, considered as the unique magnetic center of luxury and ultra-refined pleasure.

*Futurism wants to transform the variety theater into a theater
of astonishment, record-setting, and body-madness*

1. Every trace of logic in Variety Theater performances must be destroyed, while their luxuriousness must be grotesquely exaggerated, their contrasts multiplied, and on the stage their improbable and absurd dimensions must reign supreme. (Example: Require the *chanteuses* to dye their décolletage, their arms, and especially their hair, in all the colors hitherto neglected as means of seduction. Green hair, purple arms, blue décolletage, an orange chignon, etc. Interrupt a song and break into a revolutionary speech. Sprinkle over a romance some insults and profanity, etc.)
2. Prevent any set of traditions from being established in the Variety Theater. Therefore fight to abolish the stupid Parisian *Revue*s, as tedious as Greek tragedy with their *Compère* and *Commère* who play the part of the ancient chorus, and their parade of political personalities and events, punctuated by witticisms, which possess a tiresome logic and connectedness. The Variety Theater mustn't be a more or less humorous newspaper, as it is, unfortunately, today.
3. Introduce surprise and the need to move among the spectators of the orchestra, the boxes, and the balcony. Some random suggestions: spread a strong glue on some of the seats, so that the male or female spectator will remain stuck to the seat and make everyone laugh (the damaged dinner jacket or toilette will be paid for at the door). – Sell the same ticket to ten people: resulting in traffic jams, bickering, and wrangling. – Give free tickets to men and women who are notoriously unbalanced, irritable, or eccentric and likely to provoke an uproar with obscene gestures, pinching women, or other freakishness. Sprinkle the seats with dusts that provoke itching, sneezing, etc.
4. Systematically prostitute all of classical art on the stage, for example by performing all Greek, French, and Italian tragedies in a single evening, all highly condensed and mixed up. Put life

into the works of Beethoven, Wagner, Bach, Bellini, and Chopin by inserting Neapolitan songs into them. – Put on stage, side by side, Zacconi, Eleonora Duse, Felix Mayol, Sarah Bernhardt, and Fregoli.⁴ – Perform a Beethoven symphony in reverse, starting from the last note – Condense all of Shakespeare into a single act. – Ditto for all the most venerated actors. – Have actors tied in sacks up to their necks recite Hugo's *Ernani*.⁵ Soap the floorboards of the stage to cause amusing pratfalls at the most tragic moments.

5. In every way encourage the *type* of the American eccentric, the effects of exciting grotesquerie which he achieves, the frightening dynamism, the crude jokes, the acts of enormous brutality, the trick weskits and trousers as deep as a ship's hold, out of which, along with a thousand different things, will come the great Futurist hilarity that must make the face of the world young again.

Because, and don't forget it, we Futurists are YOUNG ARTILLERYMEN ON A TOOT, as we proclaimed in our manifesto, "Let's murder the Moonlight," fire + fire + light against the moonlight and war every evening against the ageing firmaments great cities to blaze with electric signs

Immense face of a Negro (30 meters high + 150 meters high atop the building = 180 meters) golden eye to open to close to open to close height 3 meters **SMOKE SMOKE MANOLI SMOKE MANOLI CIGARETTES**

woman in blouse (50 meters high + 120 meters atop the house = 170 meters) bust to stretch to relax violet pink lilac blue foam made up of electric lights in a champagne glass (30 meters high) to sparkle to evaporate within a shadowy mouth electric signs to dim to die out beneath a dark tenacious hand to be reborn to continue to extend into night the effort of the day human courage + madness never to die to stop to fall asleep electric signs = formation and dissolution of minerals and vegetables center of the earth

circulation of blood in the iron faces of the Futurist houses to pulse to turn purple (joy anger up up still more now stronger yet) the moment that pessimistic negative sentimental nostalgic shadows besiege the city a brilliant reawakening of the streets that channel the smoky swarm of workers during the day two horses (30 meters high) to role a golden ball with their hooves

MONA LISA PURGATIVE WATERS

cross cross of **trrr trrrrr** Elevated **trrrr trrrr** overhead **trombboooobooobooone** whiiiiiiiistles ambulance-sirens and fire trucks transformation of the streets into splendid hallways to guide to push logical necessity the masses toward trepidation + laughter + uproar of Music-hall

FOLIE-BERGERE EMPIRE CREAM-ECLIPSE red red red

turquoise turquoise violet tubes of mercury huge eel-letters of gold purple diamond Futurist defiance to the weepy nights defeat of the stars warmth enthusiasm faith conviction will-power penetration of an electric sign in the house across the street **yellow slaps** for the gouty man dozing off in bibliophile slippers 3 mirrors watch him the sign sinks into 3 red-goooolden abysses to open to close to open to close depths of 3-thousand meters horror to leave to leave soon hat stick staircase taximeter pushings **zu zuoou** here we are dazzle of the promenade solemnity of the panther-cocottes in their tropics of light music fat and warm smell of music hall gaiety = tireless ventilator of the world's Futurist brain.

⁴ Ernesto Zacconi (1857–1948) was an Italian actor notable for his performance in modern works such as Ibsen's *Ghosts*. In 1899 he starred opposite Eleonora Duse in D'Annunzio's play, *La Gioconda*, and again in 1901 in his *Città morta*. Eleonora Duse (1858–1924) was the most famous Italian actress of her time. In 1897 she played the lead role in D'Annunzio's *Il sogno di un mattino di primavera* (*The Dream of a Spring Morning*). Their notorious love affair and collaboration continued till 1904 and covered the period of her most celebrated performances. She retired from the stage in 1909. Félix Mayol (1872–1941) was a French singer who performed in café-concerto and music hall. He debuted in Paris in 1895 at the Concert Parisien, and was ranked among the greatest performers of French song between 1895 and 1920. Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923) was the most celebrated

French actress of her time. She began her career at the Comédie Française in Paris, playing chiefly tragic roles. By 1899 she owned her own theater, the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, where she continued to perform a wide range of works. Leopoldo Fregoli (1867–1936) was a comic actor who performed "transformations," rapidly changing from one character to another, many of them parodies of the period's recognizable types of people; his little company toured throughout the world, but the height of his success was his 1910 stay in Paris.

⁵ *Hernani* was a romantic historical drama by Victor Hugo first presented in 1830; it became the prototype of romantic drama, with audacious plot and setting, and a theatrical magnificence of verse.