

The Florentine Vanguard of *Lacerba* and *Portugal Futurista*: Affinities and Differences / *A vanguarda florentina de Lacerba e Portugal Futurista: afinidades e divergências*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to highlight the features of the Italian Futurism, especially the Florentine Futurism of the Italian literary magazine *Lacerba*, that are found, *mutatis mutandis*, in *Portugal Futurista*, considered the most complete propagandist manifesto of Futurism in Portugal. The Portuguese magazine clearly shows that the Portuguese had a deep knowledge of Italian Futurism texts, as the texts of *Portugal Futurista* were written in large part through the extrapolation and re-elaboration of contents developed in and from *Lacerba*, already divulged in all the major European countries.

KEYWORDS: Portuguese futurism; Portugal Futurista; Italian futurism; Lacerba

RESUMO

O objetivo do artigo é evidenciar os elementos do futurismo italiano, em particular do futurismo florentino da revista Lacerba, encontrados, mutatis mutandis, em Portugal Futurista, que se pode considerar o manifesto propagandista mais completo do futurismo em Portugal. A revista portuguesa denota claramente um conhecimento profundo, por parte dos portugueses, do futurismo italiano, visto que os textos de Portugal Futurista foram realizados, em boa parte, por extrapolação e reelaboração de conteúdos desenvolvidos sobretudo na revista Lacerba e, a partir dela, já divulgados e conhecidos em todos os grandes países europeus.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Futurismo português; Portugal futurista; Futurismo italiano; Lacerba

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The aim of this article is to highlight the features of the Italian and Florentine Futurism of the Italian literary magazine *Lacerba* that are found, *mutatis mutandis*, in *Portugal Futurista*. But why *Lacerba* if there were so many literary magazines of the time? First, because *Lacerba* is one of the most important Futurist literary magazines of all time – as Alessandro del Puppo advocates (2000, p.9) when he asserts that:

for intensity of presence, fortune, variety of reception; for controversy, wealth and dispersiveness of proposals, vocabulary and arguments, the texts and the images of *Lacerba* qualify it as one of the leading vanguard literary magazines in Europe alongside the French *Les Soirées de Paris*, the German *Der Sturm* and the *Blaue Reiter's* almanac, the English *Blast*.¹

Then, because the only issue of *Portugal Futurista*, which can be considered the most complete propagandist manifesto of futurism in Portugal, clearly shows a deep knowledge of Italian Futurism texts,² as the texts of *Portugal Futurista* were written in large part through the extrapolation and re-elaboration of contents developed in and from *Lacerba*, already divulged in all the major European countries. Not to mention that it is precisely the group that gravitates around *Lacerba*, at the end of 1913, or rather, on December 12th, that promotes a performance at the Teatro Verdi in Florence, which has gone down in history as *Battaglia di Firenze*. This text, shortly quoted in issue 24 of *Lacerba* three days later, is very similar to the summary of the Portuguese performance organized by José de Almada Negreiros and Santa-Rita Pintor at the Teatro República in Lisbon, on Saturday, April 14, 1917, the day “of the tumultuous presentation of Futurism to the Portuguese” (ALMADA NEGREIROS, 1981, p.35).³ It was published in the single

¹ In original: “Per intensità di presenza, fortuna, varietà di ricezione; per tono polemico, ricchezza e dispersività di proposte, lessico e argomenti, i testi e le immagini della rivista la qualificano come una delle principali pubblicazioni d'avanguardia in Europa, a fianco della francese *Les Soirées de Paris*, della tedesca *Der Sturm* e dell'almanacco del *Blaue Reiter*, dell'inglese *Blast*.”

² On the recognition of Italian Futurism as a vanguard that served as reference, in one form or another, to all the avant-garde movements that followed it, see the article by Rita Marnoto, when she states: “The fact that it is the first historical vanguard promoted this projection through substantially differentiated latitudes and longitudes, which implies very different literary, cultural and artistic substrates, in a proposal of global renewal of customs and life experiences. The vastness of this articulation of factors, with their variables, can not fail to be directly proportional to the multiplicity of results of their reception” [In original: “O próprio facto de se tratar da primeira vanguarda histórica potenciou essa projecção por latitudes e longitudes substancialmente diferenciadas, o que implica substratos literários, culturais e artísticos muito vários, numa proposta de renovação global de costumes e experiências de vida. A vastidão dessa articulação de factores, com as suas variáveis, não pode deixar de ser directamente proporcional à multiplicidade dos resultados decorrentes da sua recepção”] (MARNOTO, 2009, p.62)].

³ In original: “Da tumultuosa apresentação do futurismo ao povo português.”

issue of *Portugal Futurista*. As we shall see, if, on the one hand, comparing the texts of the two literary magazines makes us appreciate the obvious material and conceptual affinities that objectively exist, on the other, it shows us how much distance there is between the two literary magazines not only in temporal terms – from two to four years, out of which at least three when Europe was in the vortex of war – but also in terms of cultural and social impact, representing, in the case of *Portugal Futurista*, themes and texts that caused a tumult among the “right-thinking” of European capitals, but a few years earlier, a world not yet disturbed by the fury of Futurism and not yet infected by the disease of war.

Lacerba, as Andrea Galli explains in his blog *Letteratura Tattile* (2017), is first a biweekly and then weekly literary magazine, publishing from January 1, 1913 to May 22, 1915, with a total of 69 issues. The literary magazine recaptures the title of the fourteenth century poem by Cecco d'Ascoli – *L'acerba* - inserting the verse: “Here we do not sing like frogs,”⁴ in which there is a clear reference to the acrid taste of a fruit that is not mature yet and the plea for a warrior tone and to the sacred animal to the Goddess of the Hunt. The Florentine writers are Ardengo Soffici, Giovanni Papini, Aldo Palazzeschi, and Italo Tavolato. They are joined by members of the first nucleus of the Futurist movement: the founder Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the painters Umberto Boccioni and Carlo Carrà, and the painter and musician Luigi Russolo (1885-1947). In addition, the poets Camillo Sbarbaro, Dino Campana and Corrado Govoni collaborated with *Lacerba*. Among the foreign authors are Guillaume Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Theodor Daubler, Henri Des Pruniaux, Christophe Nevinson, Rémy de Gourmont, Hélène d'Oettingen. Drawings and pictures by Soffici, Boccioni, Carrà, Picasso, Archipenko, Férat, Galante, Gerebzoza, Cézanne, Rosai, Severini, Zanini as well as architectural drawings of Sant'Elia, musical pages of Balilla Pratella and Russolo, translations of Mallarmé, Lautreamont, Kraus, and Nietzsche are published. Therefore, the most significant names in the Italian and European Futurist literary scene of those years parade in *Lacerba*: even the young Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888-1970) publishes his first poems. When World War I breaks out and Italy declares its neutrality, *Lacerba* moves from the previously expressed political unconformity to a strong political enthusiasm of intervention and affirms that, from this issue, the magazine will become just political and will resume the theoretical and artistic

⁴ In original: “Qui non si canta alla maniera delle rane.”

activity only when the war is over. But already in 1915, with the return of Aldo Palazzeschi, literature and art return to their pages, along with political articles. The literary magazine stops publishing on May 22, 1915, two days before Italy's entry into the War, and, not by chance, the latest Papini's editorial bears the title *Abbiamo vinto!*

As stated in the opening of this article, *Lacerba* goes down in history because the Futurist performance of its promoters at the Verdi Theater in Florence on December 12, 1913 was considered spectacular, although the Futurists had already staged numerous performances of this type in Italian theaters and the public knew what to expect. The Futuristic performances begin in 1909 and the first is considered the performance that took place in the Chiarella Theater of Turin on March 8, 1909. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti is the organizer and supporter: he entertains the spectators with poetry declamation and Futuristic manifestos or musical spectacles, provoking and, at the same time, spreading Futurist ideas. Often provocation is desired: the first seats were assigned to angry people or the same seat was assigned to more than one person. In general, the evening sessions end with the intervention of the police that empty the theater and arrest the organizers. As one of the programmatic points of the Futurists is to infiltrate into the *passatist* consensus to destroy it, and as the theater, at the beginning of the twentieth century, is the bourgeois symbol of the passive consumption of culture, not only does the theater become the privileged place of Futuristic communication, but it is also used in a completely new way,⁵ similar to that found in the Portuguese performance organized by Almada Negreiros and Santa-Rita Pintor in the Teatro Republica, in April of 1917. Communication is direct: Futurists do not read or recite their theses as pure texts, but they act freely on stage as they speak, thus provoking reactions in viewers and giving life to a new form of action-art that results from real, often even spontaneous acts and audience interaction and that replaces the traditional means of expression with dynamism, movement and aggression in a methodological and formal way. Marinetti defines this new strategy: "Get into the streets, get into the theaters and throw your punches in the artistic fight!" (2010, p.201).⁶ As to the Florentine performance, according to Soffici (1955, p.38), there were between 2,000 and 7,000 spectators at the Verdi Theater, and

⁵ In this regard, see the manifesto *La voluttà d'essere fischiati* of 1911.

⁶ In original: "Scendere nelle vie, dar l'assalto ai teatri e introdurre il pugno nella lotta artistica!". On the development of the futurist's first art-action, see also the contribution of Ann-Katrin Günzel (2006).

when futurists appeared on stage around 9:30 pm, “hell” would break loose.⁷ As we read in the synthetic summary, the performance is presented as the combat of two antagonistic groups: on the one hand, futurists armed with courage, brazenness, new ideas and original poetry and, on the other, about 5,000 enemies with potatoes, carrots, onions and apples, electric lamps, trunks, and horns. While the Futurists - according to *Lacerba* - feel a great joy, the enemies can only complain about fatigue, hoarseness, money spending, and they flee. The Florentine poet Giovanni Papini reads his manifesto entitled *Contro Firenze passatista*, in which he declares that Florence is “the least Futuristic city in the world [...] one of the most verminous tombs of art” (PAPINI, 1958, p.180).⁸ He summons and invites the Florentines not to be a great museum for tourists, but to live in the present and the future, to throw the *passatists* and the Dantists into the river Arno in order to be able to create, at last, a cosmopolitan city different from the museological and medieval Florence. To do this, he says, one must have the courage to rid oneself of the seemingly grandiose inheritance, which in fact is only a mortal burden that damages the soul (PAPINI, 1958, p.183). With this proclamation of contempt, Papini unleashes a storm of indignation, because the public reacts furiously to this offense by a Florentine to his native land: they shout and whistle, blow whistles and horns, rattle with rattles and throw all possible and imaginable objects, along with the usual greenery, at the stage. Despite the progress of the performance, the program continues. A rotten egg is hurled at Carrà while he speaks about his work on the painting of perfumes, Soffici completes his clarification on Futuristic painting, and Boccioni lectures on plastic dynamism.⁹

At the end, the police climb on the stage and end the Florentine performance. Until the following morning, Futurists celebrate their success at the Café Giubbe Rosse in Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II (now Piazza Repubblica).¹⁰ In the press, however, there is

⁷ According to Alberto Viviani (1983, p.66): “Right after the curtain was opened and the futurists appeared on stage there was a bestial and terrifying noise” (In original: “Dopo che il sipario si alzò e i futuristi furono saliti sul palco, ci fu un rumore bestiale e terrificante”). *La Nazione* (Firenze 13.12.1913) speaks of about 2,000 spectators while the futurists increase the number to 5,000, as we read in *Lacerba* (*Grande serata futurista* 15.12.1913) and in *Le serate futuriste* by Francesco Cangiullo (1961, p.102). The *Corriere della Sera*, in the article entitled *Serata di baccano a Firenze*, speaks of up to 7,000 people: “Some stages were occupied by more than twenty people” (In original: “Alcuni furono occupati da più di venti persone”). Unfortunately the archive of the Verdi Theater was destroyed by the Arno River alluvium in 1966 and there are no more documents on the futuristic performance.

⁸ In original: “Meno futurista del mondo [...] una delle tombe più verminose dell’arte.”

⁹ On the subject, see the contribution of Theodor Däubler (1919).

¹⁰ Next, Marinetti will define the Florentine performance as “bestial and harmful in all respects” (In original: “bestiale e nocivo da tutti i punti di vista”) because of the exaggerated tumult and he will refuse to organize

very little news about the Florentine performance. The reason, however, justifies the silence: on the same night Leonardo da Vinci's painting *La Gioconda*, stolen from the Louvre in Paris two years before, was hidden in an antique shop in Borgo Ognissanti - the *passatist* painting became the main topic of the local press the next day.

What about Portugal? What happens in Portugal during those years? We can say that, finally, the futuristic virus affects Portugal too: it was imported almost entirely by the Portuguese who live in Paris: Mário de Sá-Carneiro,¹¹ but especially Santa-Rita Pintor and Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso. In fact, we can say that Futurism in Portugal comes from Paris, since the simple invitation issued by Marinetti a few years before to the world and, therefore, also to Portugal was almost unnoticed. We are in the year 1909. The *Diário dos Açores* - which is also an important newspaper, but always a newspaper of the islands lost in the Atlantic, given that the largest newspapers in Lisbon seem not to care much - publishes, shortly after *Le Figaro*, the translation of the first manifesto of Marinetti, the famous one related to the "slap" and the "punch" and the "race car." The effect of the publication was null.¹² Sometime later, other journalistic chronicles about Parisian exhibitions of the Italian Futurist painters try to awaken the Portuguese intellectuals again. Again, there is no appreciable effect. Now we are in 1915. Marinetti is honored by the beautiful Moscow and St. Petersburg world and vexed by the Cubofuturists, or at least by some of them headed by Chlebnikov. Futurism arrives in the Sea of Japan, and finally the Lusitanians say something Futuristic: in *Orpheu 1* there is a composition of Álvaro de Campos titled *Ode Triunfal*; in truth, *Ode Triunfal* has only the Futuristic body, but

another demonstration in Florence, as one reads in a letter to Papini dated December 16, 1913 (BERGHAUS, 1998, p.127).

¹¹ Although Mário de Sá Carneiro shows some interest in Cubism - admiring especially Max Jacob and Picasso - and Futurism, in fact he always shows some skepticism, some reserve regarding this movement due to, on the one hand, a mixture of attraction/repulsion in relation to Santa-Rita Pintor, a declared apostle of the movement, and, on the other, a more forced and fashionable adhesion that is attributed to the futuristic spirit, as it can be deduced from various letters sent to Fernando Pessoa.

¹² Regarding the discordant opinions of the Portuguese press about the first futurist texts, the reflections of Gianluca Mitraglia are interesting. In fact, we can read that if the reaction of Xavier de Carvalho, in the article entitled *A new school of poetry - Futurism* published in the *Jornal de Notícias* of Porto on February 26, 1909, "clearly reveals that he despised Marinetti's ideas. [...] the journalist ends the article by raising the suspicion that it was nothing but some kind of carnivalesque *blague* or prank, bearing in mind that the publication coincided with the Carnival period" (MIRAGLIA, 2011, p.238). The reaction of journalist Luís Francisco Bicudo, the author of a second article published in the *Diário dos Açores* on August 5, 1909, shows, on the contrary, "a great deal of interest in the avant-gard movement. His conviction that this is a literary and cultural phenomenon of remarkable significance leads him to write a long, well documented article and provide his readers with exhaustive information about his and her charismatic leader" (MIRAGLIA, 2011, p.238).

not the soul – though Mário de Sá-Carneiro hails it as “Futurist’s masterpiece” (SÁ-CARNEIRO, 2001, p.108)¹³ – since the verbal redundancy of large factory light bulbs, cogwheels, gears, reinforced concrete, furious engines, machine guns, airplanes, submarines and metropolitans unfolds in an emotional landscape that is not authentically Futuristic. Futurism does not rest with reflections of feelings, whether they are of pride or longing, because it simply never rests, never stands still. And such a strange adhesion and (translated and reconverted) *détourné* to the vanguard of the moment – “in the hands of Fernando Pessoa until Futurism is transformed,”¹⁴ as Ugo Serani recalls quoting the words of Luciana Stegagno Picchio (SERANI, 2006, p.11) – is reaffirmed in a letter to the *Diário de Notícias* of June 4, 1915, in which Álvaro de Campos states that it is more correct to speak of intersectionism and sensationism than of Futurism;¹⁵ to Futurism, he announces, however, issue 2 of *Orpheu* will be dedicated. In *Orpheu* 2 of June 1915, which has the caption “Special collaboration of Futurist Santa-Rita Pintor,” there are four of his works, the *Ode Marítima* of Álvaro de Campos and two poems of Mário de Sá-Carneiro under the title of *Poemas sem Suporte. Manucure*, one of the two, can be objectively considered a tribute to the theory of words in freedom and the anarchic-typographic style of futurists, but also in this case, “how authentically Futuristic?” In *Manucure* we find the exaltation of the “Futuristic beauty” and of the “New,” which are nevertheless always seen with multi-prospective and therefore intersectional looks: “And everything, everything is so conducted in space/Through innumerable intersections of

¹³ In the original: “Obra-prima do Futurismo.” It is the letter dated June 20, 1914, written in Paris.

¹⁴ In the original: “Nelle mani di Fernando Pessoa persino il Futurismo si trasforma.”

¹⁵ In fact, the above mentioned letter reads: “To speak of Futurism, either in relation to *Orpheu* number 1 or in connection with the book of Mr. Sá-Carneiro, it is the craziest thing you can imagine. No futurist would swallow *Orpheu*. *Orpheu* would be, for a futurist, a lamentable display of an obscurantist and reactionary spirit. The main attitude of Futurism is Absolute Objectivity, the elimination of art, everything that is soul, that is feeling, emotion, lyricism, subjectivity in short. Futurism is dynamic and analytical *par excellence*. Now if there is something typical of Intersectionism (such is the name of the Portuguese movement) it is the excessive subjectivity, the maximized synthesis, the exaggeration of the static attitude. “Static drama” is the title of a play in the first issue of *Orpheu* by Mr.. Fernando Pessoa. And boredom, dreaming, abstraction are the usual attitudes of my fellow poets in that brilliant literary magazine.” [In original: “Falar em futurismo, quer a propósito do 1º nº *Orpheu* quer a propósito do livro do sr. Sá-Carneiro, é a coisa mais disparatada que se pode imaginar. Nenhum futurista tragaria o *Orpheu*. O *Orpheu* seria, para um futurista, uma lamentável demonstração de espírito obscurantista e reaccionário. A atitude principal do futurismo é a Objectividade Absoluta, a eliminação, da arte, de tudo quanto é *alma*, quanto é sentimento, emoção, lirismo, subjectividade em suma. O futurismo é dinâmico e analítico por excelência. Ora se há coisa que [seja] típica do Interseccionismo (tal é o nome do movimento português) é a subjectividade excessiva, a síntese levada ao máximo, o exagero da atitude *estática*. «Drama estático», mesmo, se intitula uma peça, inserta no 1.º número do *Orpheu*, do sr. Fernando Pessoa. E o tédio, o sonho, a abstracção são as atitudes usuais dos poetas meus colegas naquela brilhante revista”].

planes/Multiple, free, slippery” (SÁ-CARNEIRO, 2010, p.42);¹⁶ “My futuristic eyes, my cubist eyes, my intersecting eyes” (SÁ-CARNEIRO, 2010, p.45).¹⁷ And although the style is Futuristic – with adequate collages from news headlines and trademarks and with even transhuman results in the manner of Kručěnych¹⁸ – once again the suspicion arises that it is more of an exercise in style or an aesthetic delight, more of sensationism and intersectionism than a strong adhesion to the Futuristic spirit. Similarly, the *Ode Marítima* by Álvaro de Campos is very wistful in the image of the painful sweetness of solitude, distance and departures, of the interior emptiness and, as such, quite little Futuristic.

Finally, in the last issue of *Orpheu*, the only authentic Futurist seems to be Santa-Rita Pintor, although he does not contribute with any articles of his own and he limits his collaboration to the presentation of four pictures: *Abstracção Congénita Intuitiva (Matéria Força)*, reproduced on page 10 of *Portugal Futurista* and defined in the French article by Raul Leal as “the integral realization of all the Futuristic theories on Life!” (1981, p.13),¹⁹ *Orfeu nos Infernos, Perspectiva Dinâmica de um Quadro de Acordar and Cabeça = Linha Força Complementarismo Orgânico*. Santa-Rita Pintor, who returns from Paris in September of 1914 and brings with him Futurism and the venerability of publishing in Marinetti’s works and manifestos, soon finds a Futuristically enthusiastic companion in José de Almada Negreiros (1893-1970), who defines himself the “Futurist poet of *Orpheu* and everything” (2014, p.11)²⁰ With the *Anti-Dantas Manifesto* of 1915 and the typical verbal rage of Futurists, he throws himself against one of the most bourgeois intellectual of the time, Júlio Dantas, who is not the only critical voice, gives himself the luxury of defining *Orpheus*’s writers as brainless people. It is the most violent and *ad personam* controversy of the group of writers of *Orpheu*. The objective, however, is to attack, reaching Júlio Dantas, the entire literary class linked to the Portuguese tradition. This is what happens more or less in Papini’s intervention in the Verdi Theater on the night of December 12, 1913 when, in attacking the past and tradition, Papini wishes

¹⁶ In original: “E tudo, tudo assim me é conduzido no espaço/ Por inúmeras intersecções de planos/Múltiplos, livres, resvalantes.”

¹⁷ In original: “Meus olhos futuristas, meus olhos cubistas, meus olhos interseccionistas.”

¹⁸ “Numerical beauty ... new typographic sensibility ... New onomotopaic sympathy ... pure alphabetic beauty: Uu-um ... kess-kress ... vliiim ... tlin ... blong ... flong ... flak ... Pâ-am-pam! Pam ... pam ... pum ... pum ... Hurray!” (In the original: “Beleza Numérica [...] nova sensibilidade tipográfica [...] Nova simpatia onomotopaica [...] beleza alfabética pura: Uu-um... kess-kress... vliiim... tlin... blong... flong... flak... Pâ-am-pam! Pam... pam... pum... pum... Hurrah!”) (SÁ-CARNEIRO, 2010, p.49).

¹⁹ In the original: “A realização integral de todas as teorias futuristas sobre a Vida!”

²⁰ In the original: “Poeta d’*Orpheu* futurista e tudo.”

to actually attack the faculty of the Florentine University of the time, who are internationally renowned for their classical, historical, philological and papyrological studies. But above all, the writers of *Lacerba* do not care about the Dantists, whose greatest exponent, Guido Mazzoni, a student of Carducci, is the secretary of the Academy of Crusca and cofounder of the Dantesque Society. It is a double defect in the eyes of the Futurists because Mazzoni is a dantist and affiliated with Crusca! Besides, he has the unforgivable defect of being a good poet, obviously in a late romantic style. To make this grudge evident, read what the bilious Papini writes, always in 1913, when recounting the fifth edition of *Poesie* by Mazzoni:²¹

Senator Mazzoni seems to me to be one of those agile little birds that fly free through the house: they sing badly, shit constantly and always walk around you when you do not feel like listening to them or seeing them. Deep down, they do not bother much, but are unable, one time or another, not to step on them or crush them. This homunculus representative of the Florentine and university literature and of Crusca has been stuck in my throat for so long! (p.3).²²

But the decisive year for Portuguese Futurism is 1917. On April 14 the Teatro República in Lisbon presents the 1st Futurist Conference, during which Almada Negreiros, dressed in a mechanic's suit, recites, in the Futurist fashion, his Futurist Ultimatum to the Portuguese Generations of the 20th Century. On that occasion, Santa Rita Pintor is also present. Always in 1917, Almada Negreiros publishes *K4, O Quadrado Azul*, a work edited together with the important Portuguese avant-garde painter Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso, who is also a Parisian artist, who in 1916 displays a large exhibition entitled *Abstraccionismo* in Porto. Then, in November 1917, the first issue of the literary magazine *Portugal Futurista* comes out. It appears and soon disappears, for it is

²¹ History, which is a good judge, would punish our Futurist when, at the outbreak of the Great War, he was reformed. He, who always intervened, was left at home, while Guido Mazzoni, over sixty years old, enlisted in the Alpine, to replace the son, prisoner of the Austrians. The same situation that Papini creates in Florence when attacking Guido Mazzoni, who is also a Senator and who represents an excellent target both cultural and political, due to the "scandal" that is wanted to be created, is found in Portugal with Almada Negreiros' attack against Júlio Dantas. That Mazzoni is an eminent Dantist, attributing to his specialization the nickname of Almada Negreiros' adversary, is only an accidental event, although often, in the history of literature, particular homonyms and homophones are not so casual.

²² In original: "Il senatore Mazzoni mi somiglia a un di quei passerotti agevolini che girano liberi per la casa: cantan male, cacano ogni momento e ti son sempre attorno anche quando non avresti voglia né di sentirli né di vederli. Non danno, in fondo, gran noia, ma non si può fare a meno, una volta o l'altra, di pestarli o di spiaccicarli. È tanto tempo che ce l'ho sullo stomaco, questo omiciattolo rappresentativo della letteratura universitaria, cruscante e fiorentina!"

immediately seized by the police. And it seems that the motive, apart from the social danger and the subversive potential of Futurist words and ideas, should be sought in the *Ultimatum* of Álvaro de Campos. But in truth, in this case too, as Ugo Serani says in his introduction to *Ultimatum and altre esclamazioni* (2006, p.56), Álvaro de Campos's manifesto, while following the aggressive stylistic outline of the Futurist manifestos, does it with a different climax, a climax that is descending, that goes from the vertical and scandalous invective to the nostalgic splash down in the Atlantic, looking at the Infinite. Remember that Marinetti, on the contrary, concludes his by throwing the challenge to the stars. Remember also that 1917 is a difficult year for the young Portuguese Republic, troubled with internal conflicts, attempts of revolt and coups d'état. In addition, Portugal is faced with the Great War together with the Allies: in February 1917 the first Portuguese contingent is in the front line in Flanders and the war's censorship begins in March of 1916 after the declaration of war by Germany. Álvaro de Campos' *Ultimatum* contains "dangerous" attacks to the Allies and to Portugal too, considered unpatriotic by the democratic regime, which a few days later will fall under the coup of Sidónio Pais.

In short, *Portugal Futurista* comes to light in a politically and socially complicated time. The literary magazine, conceived and organized essentially by Almada Negreiros and Santa-Rita Pintor, who appears only in a photograph in checkered clown clothes, publishes, besides Álvaro de Campos' *Ultimatum*, many quotations taken from various Italian futurist manifestoes, including excerpts of manifestos already published in *Lacerba*,²³ the monologue *Saltimbancos – Contrastes Simultâneos* by Almada Negreiros, essays on Santa-Rita's art written by José Rebelo de Bettencourt and Raul Leal, some poems of Apollinaire and Mário de Sá-Carneiro, who in the meantime committed suicide in Paris, and the reproduction of the program, on page 35 of the First Futurist Conference which includes the *Ultimatum às Gerações Portuguesas do Século XX, o Manifesto Futurista da Luxúria* by Valentine de Saint-Point and Marinetti's manifesto *Music Hall*.

²³ This is the case, for example, of the *Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista*, published by the Futurist editions of *Poetry* in May 1912, but repropounded in *Lacerba* in 1914; of the *Distruzione della sintassi - Immaginazione senza fili - Parole in libertà*, which brings together the manifesto *L'immaginazione senza fili e le parole in libertà*, of 11 May 1913, and its integration *Dopo il verso libero le parole in libertà* of November 15, 1913, appearing in *Lacerba* in January of 1914; of *Lo splendore geometrico e meccanico e la sensibilità numerica. Manifesto futurista*, whose first part is published in Italian in issue 6 of *Lacerba* on March 15, 1914 with the title *Lo splendore geometrico e meccanico nelle parole in libertà* and the second part in the following issue of *Lacerba*, therefore, in iss. 7 on April 1, 1914, with the title *Onomatopée astratte e sensibilità numerica*.

Unfortunately, the early disappearance of Santa-Rita Pintor in 1918, the death of Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso a few months later, and the departure of Almada Negreiros to Paris the following year make the “nascent” Portuguese Futurism, in 1918, an ended experience. In Lisbon there remains the obscure loneliness of Pessoa, who in devising heteronyms, fictions, letters never sent to directors of newspapers, translations never published, in theorizing the need to a multiple subject and even plotting the sensational (and false) disappearance of the English occultist Aleister Crowley in *Boca do Inferno*, anticipates issues and practices of a situationalist, not to say Blissettian, intonation.

Moreover, it is worth remembering that most of the European Futurists in 1917 are engaged in other things. Focusing on Marinetti’s group, they are gathered in a Company of explorers-cyclists and sent to the front. Some have fallen or are preparing to fall into battle (for example, Umberto Boccioni); others have already moved away from the movement and are pursuing a personal way of “normalization,” such as Papini, who, treated for asthma and kept at a distance from that conflict to which he had strongly committed himself, approaches Christianity. We can say that the outbreak of the Great War constitutes a line of separation, a kind of cleavage from which it descends to the most horrible of realities. In this kind of descent into Hell, the ideas crystallize, and - something terrible for a Futurist - lose their expansive energy to implode in a kind of return to the order, where each manifestation of art ceases to be rebellious and returns to be an expression of pure survival. Ungaretti’s *locutio*, for example, has nothing to do with futuristic “words in freedom” although the poet (a compatriot of Marinetti - both are born in Alexandria of Egypt) shared the same interest in Futurism along with many other young contemporaries and has supported interventionism. In the first year of war on the Italian front (1915) many texts of Futurist inspiration flourish, among which is the famous “Futuristic tablets,” the point of arrival of Marinetti’s synthesis between visual and literary arts. But they are sketches that do not change the tendency – they become stronger as the massacre becomes more tragic – of a return to a more traditional expression and more in tune with the reality they face. The only one to remain immune to this new sensibility is Marinetti, who, in his role as propaganda officer (a true “free batter” of the Supreme Commando), travels quickly behind the lines in a powerful armored car (he refuses to be a cyclist) and, from time to time, he composes in his own way. *L’Italia futurista*, a literary magazine that comes to light in June of 1916 (Corra and Settimelli are

the directors) and whose title is given by Teolinda Gersão as a hypothetic model of *Portugal Futurista* (1981, p.XXXIII), has nothing to do with *Lacerba*: the texts do not have a certain literary level and the magazine focuses on political nationalism and, of course, on supporting the war effort. It is as if Futurism in Italy has already died: it continues only in the visual arts and its post-war “resurrection.” Along with the fascist movement, it will propagate its existence (now “academic” with Marinetti consigned to the desired place of President of the Academy of Italy) for two decades, but without artistic developments of any value. This short digression is only to show that the “nascent” Portuguese Futurism, in relation to the Futurist movement, historically pays for a very serious chronological delay – as Luciana Stegagno Picchio (2004, p.109) states, “Marinetti’s encounter with Portuguese futurists is late, very late. It comes when the true name of Futurism has lost its revolutionary value and acquires, in Portugal and elsewhere, different and negative connotations.”²⁴ It is worth mentioning that the absence of an authentic cohesive group such as the one that is headed by Marinetti gives the movement a more disseminating than innovative and creative nature and the aspect that it is an expression of individual manifestations rather than an authentic movement.²⁵ The previous experience of *Orpheu’s* group, a modernist but never truly futuristic literary magazine was not enough – much less was the small group that was developed around *Portugal Futurista*.²⁶

²⁴ In original: “L’incontro di Marinetti coi futuristi portoghesi avviene tardi, molto tardi. Avviene quando il nome stesso di Futurismo ha perduto ormai il suo valore rivoluzionario e si è caricato, in Portogallo come altrove, di ben diverse e negative connotazioni.”

²⁵ Silva Pereira writes: “Futurism in Portugal would be limited to two or three names, hence its fragility as a group. [...] there is no real dynamic group in Portugal, unlike in Italy (and similar to England). There is no collective manifesto, for example, in Portuguese Futurism, which would only make sense if there was indeed a group” (In original: “O Futurismo em Portugal estaria circunscrito a dois ou três nomes, daqui se deprendendo a sua fragilidade como grupo. [...] não existe em Portugal uma verdadeira dinâmica de grupo, ao contrário do que acontece em Itália (e à semelhança do que acontece em Inglaterra). Não existe, por exemplo, no Futurismo português, nenhum manifesto colectivo, que só faria sentido se de facto existisse um grupo”) (SILVA PEREIRA, 1998, p.119).

²⁶ We should remember the “Futuristic” texts published in 1916-1917 in the newspaper *O Herald* of Faro, where they were collected in an edition organized by Nuno Júdice in 1981. As we can read in Alberto Pimenta’s review (1983, p.103), “Most of these texts are located in an area of influence much more marked by the style of Mário de Sá-Carneiro than by Futurism. [...] It is an interesting example of what in the jargon of today would be called cultural ‘decentralization’” [In original: “A maioria destes textos situa-se numa área de influência muito mais marcada pelo estilo de Mário de Sá-Carneiro que pelo Futurismo propriamente dito. [...] é um exemplo interessante daquilo a que no *jargon* de hoje se chamaria ‘descentralização’ cultural”] (PIMENTA, 1983, p.103).

Let us turn to the “tumultuous presentation of Futurism to the Portuguese” (ALMADA NEGREIROS, 1981, p.35),²⁷ which, from the lexicon used by Almada Negreiros, appears as the re-presentation of an event, such as the Florentine, that, four years earlier, caused fury. It is mainly thanks to the readiness and cunning with which Marinetti and his large group divulged it. As stated before, during the turbulent performance of December 12, 1913 at the Teatro Verdi in Florence, Giovanni Papini shouts against passatism, tradition and even tourism, especially anglophile, and initiatives to support it. In the audience, whoever listens to it, it is precisely the top Florentine bourgeoisie that boasted:

Florence is ashamed, next to Rome and Venice, to be one of those cities that do not live with the independent work of its living citizens, but with the indecent and mendicant exploitation of the genius of the parents and the curiosity of the foreigners. [...] And as foreigners see antiquity, they try to give Florence the earliest possible appearance. The old houses are scraped to show the stones; the walls of the churches are scraped to display the old frescoes; scrape the earth to show the tombstones and tombs. And as if that were not enough, fourteenth-century houses were built again, like the famous houses of Dante, which are the greatest offense to the memory of that poor poet who lacked some good qualities. [...] In a city like this, which is completely full, sick and poor of passatism, there was a need for a storm of futurism that reminded these people, who live only off and in the fourteenth century, that we are in 1913 and that the future is more true and greater than the past. [...] If we have the power to suppress the scenarios that make us stubbornly old-fashioned, to throw into the Arno the teachers, the museum porters, the scholars, the Dantists, the Crusca, and the other disgusting passatists who have a nest here, Florence will no longer be the graceful medieval city, the goal of the snobs of the world, and become a great European city (1958, p.181).²⁸

²⁷ In original: “tumultuosa apresentação do futurismo ao povo português.”

²⁸ In original: “Firenze ha la vergogna, insieme a Roma e a Venezia, d'essere una di quelle città che non vivono col lavoro indipendente dei loro cittadini vivi, ma con lo sfruttamento indecente e pitocco del genio dei padri e della curiosità dei forestieri. [...] E siccome i forestieri vengono a vedere l'antichità, si cerca di ridare a Firenze l'aspetto più antico che sia possibile. Si grattano le vecchie case per far tornare fuori le pietre; si grattano i muri delle chiese per far tornare fuori i vecchi affreschi; si gratta la terra per tirar fuori lapidi e tombe. E quasi non bastasse si rifabbricano di sana pianta le case nello stile del Trecento - come quelle famose case di Dante che sono il più grande oltraggio alla memoria di quel povero poeta che non mancava di qualche buona qualità. [...] In una città come questa ch'è tutta intrisa, malata e marcia di passatismo c'era bisogno di una ventata di futurismo che ricordasse a questa gente, che vive soltanto di trecento e sul trecento, che siamo nell'anno 1913 e che l'avvenire è più vero e più grande del passato. [...] Se avremo la forza di buttare giù gli scenari pietosi del nostro ostinato vecchiume, [...] di buttare in Arno i professori, i portieri di museo, gli eruditi, i dantisti, i cruscanti e gli altri schifosi passatisti che hanno qui il nido, Firenze non sarà più la graziosa città medievale meta di tutti gli snobs del mondo ma diventerà una grande città europea.”

In the Ultimatum of the *First Futurist Conference* of Almada we find the same central themes: radical cut with the past and tradition – “dispensing absolutely with all the past ages” (ALMADA NEGREIROS, 1981, p.36)²⁹ –, glorifying Futuristic virtues: intensity, strength, dynamism, audacity, manly youth optimism – “dispense with the old ones [...] and throw yourselves independent for the sublime brutality of life” (ALMADA NEGREIROS, 1981, p.36)³⁰ – apology for war, defined by Marinetti as the only hygiene of the people, which Almada considers a “great experience”, and positive ultra-realism, “the test of fire that separates the strong from the weak” (ALMADA NEGREIROS, 1981, pp.36-38).³¹ Futurist is also the arrogance with which Almada stands as the sole holder of reason and truth that he wants to forcefully impose, calling the “constructive generation” to which he belongs into action, the arrogance with which he demands the creation of a homeland that deserves him. In much the same terms as Papini, Almada defines the Portuguese people as decadent, condemning them without hesitation or ambiguity: “The Portuguese, like all decadents, know only passive feelings: resignation, fatalism, indolence, fear from danger, servility, and even inversion” (ALMADA NEGREIROS, 1981, p.37).³² It is interesting to notice his instance on the concept of passivity, which includes other characteristics, obviously negative in his eyes, such as weakness, indifference, absence of hatred, *saudade* (feeling national synthesis), unconsciousness, the lack of confidence in oneself. One of Papini’s Malthusian texts, published in 1914, always for *Lacerba* editions, has the same tone: “It is Florence that thing / where everything knows mold / everything lives in the wiggle” (1958, p.182).³³ It is worth remembering that the Malthusians are short poems often used by the Florentine avant-garde of *Lacerba*, in rhymed eight-syllable verses, the last of which is acute. The name derives from Thomas Robert Malthus, whose demographic theory centered on excessive population development and birth control. In this case, reference is made to the practice of *coitus interruptus*, just as the verse is interrupted. There is an evident analogy with *A Lei de Malthus da Sensibilidade*, proclaimed in the *Ultimatum* of Álvaro de Campos in his intervention in *Portugal Futurista*, although we do not know if Pessoa’s

²⁹ In original: “Prescindindo em absoluto de todas as épocas passadas.”

³⁰ In original: “Dispensai os velhos...e atirai-vos independentes prá sublime brutalidade da vida.”

³¹ In original: “A prova do fogo que separa os fortes dos fracos.”

³² In original: “O português, como todos os decadentes, só conhece os sentimentos passivos: a resignação, o fatalismo, a indolência, o medo do perigo, o servilismo e até a inversão.”

³³ In original: “È Firenze quella cosa/dove tutto sa di muffa/tutto vive nella truffa.”

heteronym was inspired by the Florentine Futurists. Returning to *Futurist Ultimatum*, the future image he proposes is of a cosmopolitan, elitist people, capable of insulting danger, desiring glory, adventure, intensity, pride, lust, strength, intelligence, the glorification of the winners, the awakening of “the spontaneously genial brain of the Latin race” (ALMADA NEGREIROS, 1981, p.38).³⁴

The debt of Almada Negreiros to the Futurists of *Lacerba* is more concrete as regards the title of his very long text *Saltimbancos. Simultaneous Contrasts*. Often used by *Lacerba* poets, from the celebrated self-portrait in verses *Chi sono?* by Aldo Palazzeschi, the metaphor of the *saltimbanco* connotes an unconventional and rebellious artist:

I am then ... what?
I put a lens
in front of my heart
to show it to people.
Who am I?
The *saltimbanco* of my soul (2002, p.457).³⁵

Continuing the comparative analysis of the texts present in *Portugal Futurista* with so many contributions from the group of writers and collaborators of *Lacerba*, the eye falls on the *Manifesto Futurista da Luxúria*, by M.me Valentine de Saint Point. The same concepts somewhat developed in the *Manifesto* are extensively treated by Italo Tavolato, a literary and art critic, among the founders of *Lacerba*, in his *Contro la morale sessuale* published in Florence by Vallecchi publishing house in 1913. This text, with the intention of subverting the precepts of bourgeois morality, is accompanied by many others, on the same subject, that appeared directly in the Florentine literary magazine.

The Florentine Futurists not only theoretically agree with Tavolato, but also put principles into practice, along with their partners and friends. Remember the long stay (1906-1916) of Mina Loy in Florence. She is the celebrated and beautiful American modernist, a lover of Marinetti and Papini, to whom his verses in *Love songs* are dedicated. The poet and novelist Sibilla Aleramo was even better known by the vast public, being a true icon of the first Italian feminism. She was the first lover of poet

³⁴ In original: “Cérebro espontaneamente genial da raça latina.”

³⁵ In original: “Son dunque...che cosa?/Io metto una lente/davanti al mio core/per farlo vedere alla gente./Chi sono?/Il saltimbanco dell'anima mia.”

Vincenzo Cardarelli and then of several components of the pleasant group of *Lacerba* writers. She ended up having the famous and stormy affair with Dino Campana, a friend-enemy of Soffici, Papini, among others.

In the only issue of *Portugal Futurista*, *Manifesto Futurista da Luxúria* is followed by *O Music-Hall, Manifesto Futurista de Marinetti publicado pelo DAILY-MAIL de 21 de Novembro de 1913*. This is evidently the translation into Portuguese of a translation of the Italian text into English, because Marinetti's text has the Italian title *Il teatro di Varietà. Manifesto Futurista*. It is published in *Lacerba* in issue 19 on October 1, 1913, almost two months before the date of the publication in *Portugal Futurista*. The presence of this text, among many others – perhaps more significant than Almada could have published, is probably due to the fact that the *music hall* expresses a series of Futuristic principles that Almada wants to divulge, such as simultaneity, the factor of surprise, the creation of the wonderful Futurism through new technical resources, the taste for caricature, for the mixture of genres, from the sublime to the vulgar to the indecent, for the fusion between art and life, that of anti-aesthetics, and so on. It is not appropriate to forget Almada's interest in shows, especially in dance, an interest that the initial text of the literary journal gives us a later testimony. *Portugal Futurista*'s opening article on Russian ballets is a more immediate derivation: ballets are directed, as it is well known, by Djagilev, a Russian businessman who makes them famous internationally. Perhaps by the impulse of Djagilev, Marinetti inaugurated, in July of 1917, the *Manifesto della danza futurista*, publishing it in *Le Figaro*. Scenographies of the shows are commissioned to avant-garde painters, futurists (like Giacomo Balla) or close to Futurism (like Picasso), with songs by famous composers (Stravinski, Debussy, etc.). The synergy between Futurism and Russian ballet is already consolidated when Almada Negreiros announces his arrival and premieres in Lisbon.

Here the question arises as to what the direct source of Almada Negreiros and his collaborators is, not only in regard to this text, but also to others that we could mention in these notes. The proof that the Florentine magazine *Lacerba* arrived in Paris on time and that it was not only read but also examined with great interest by avant-garde artists, is given to us by a painting not of any artist, but of Pablo Picasso, whose work is introduced in Italy precisely by Ardengo Soffici in the first issue of *Lacerba*. Soffici's interest in Cubism and Picasso will receive the homage of the Spanish painter in the work

Pipa, bicchiere, bottiglia di Vieux Marc (and Lacerba), an extraordinary collage, now preserved in Venice in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, in which the frontispiece of Florentine literary journal of January 1, 1914 is. The technique of the *papier collé* elaborated by Picasso in 1912 next to Braque, as paper cuts, conceived as objective and recognizable compositive elements and pasted at the base of the work, is manifested here with the use of the page of the avant-garde magazine from which stands the frontispiece with the recognizable Etruscan characters, a piece of wallpaper next to it, paper cutouts simulating a table and some objects on top, a bottle, a pipe, a guitar, chosen for tridimensionality. But it is not the only collage in which the leaves of *Lacerba* are used. This is just one example of how important *Lacerba* is in those years and how much it inspires the artists of its time so that they make it protagonist of its artistic productions. Taking this into account, with the assiduous attendance of Santa-Rita Pintor and Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso in the Parisian artistic environment, it is almost certain that the *Lacerba* specimens came into contact with the Portuguese intellectuals (entirely or by stretches) already in the French capital. The postal service, in the years that interest us, was (it may seem strange) much faster and more punctual than it is now. An order from Florence arrived in Paris in 72 hours. It is true, therefore, that *Lacerba* was regularly delivered to friends and sympathizers (among whom, of course, Braque and Picasso) who at the time were in Paris. Thus, it went from Florence to Paris and from Paris to Lisbon, thanks to the writers who lived in the City of Light.

In conclusion, the experience of *Portugal Futurista* and, more generally, of Portuguese Futurism can be defined as a series of intense and fleeting manifestations even though it shows to be more geared towards divulgation than properly towards creation and innovation. It is intense because despite the socially and historically unpromising moment and the evident chronological delay in relation to the spread of the movement in the rest of Europe, it nevertheless manages to give life to a group of personalities with excellent artistic talents who, basically in a single year, in 1917, tried and succeeded in creating, joining and disseminating futuristic ideas, themes and texts. It is fleeting because Futurism in Portugal is actually born in 1917, but in 1918 it is already dead. These are the two main reasons: the first is chronological – *Portugal Futurista* uses rather Futuristic themes, but in 1917 they were more well known throughout Europe and many of them, as it was shown, were created and developed in the pages of *Lacerba*. The second is causal

– the premature death of two of its main promoters (Santa-Rita Pintor and Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso) and, as Nuno Júdice says in his pages in the facsimile edition of *Portugal Futurista* of 1981, we should not forget “the oblivion of the most – those who named it (Carlos Porfírio and S. Ferreira) and those who followed it (Bettencourt-Rebelo), and finally the adventurers that in *Portugal Futurista* found their fleeting apotheosis” (JÚDICE, 1981, p.XIII).³⁶

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³⁶ In original: “O esquecimento dos demais – daqueles que deram o nome (Carlos Porfírio e S. Ferreira) e que secundaram (Bettencourt-Rebelo), enfim, dos figurantes de uma aventura que no *Portugal Futurista* encontrou a sua fugaz apoteose.”

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Received June 12,2017

Accepted November 25,2017