

Fernando Pessoa

My dear Marinetti:

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I have not written you earlier because politics, which I have now almost altogether set aside, and also lust have left me almost no time to fulfil other duties and enjoy other pleasures. But, at any rate, here I am. I was already acquainted with some of the manifestos which you have sent me, and for which I thank you very much. Besides this, I had also read Boccioni's fine book on futurist painting and sculpture. I am therefore not altogether ignorant in the matter of futurism; I am even to a certain extent on your side.

I think, however, that futurism ought to develop very much and to abandon its extreme exclusivism. It seems to me that your idea of history is too little futurist, and that you figure to yourselves a far too regular historic development. In evolution we do not find a regularly ascending line; on the contrary, development takes place in a violent and cataclysmic manner, in which gains are achieved only through fundamental losses. And all this occurs in a very labyrinthic manner which produces vertigo: here you have real futurism in history. Social values are scattered almost haphazard over times and places, and what there is of progress appears only through the loss of something which must be produced anew that the Infinite may at last be established. In the Infinite, which is the supreme futurist aspiration, all values should be realised without the possibility of the loss of any of them. If there be losses in evolution, even through manifest gains, let those losses be but momentary. In no other way can the Infinite emerge, since nothing must be lacking to it.

Pre-war modern civilisation, which conceived futurism, possesses new elements which were hitherto unknown. But, on the other hand, it no longer possesses elements, social values, which are as important as its own ones. Something has been gained, but through several losses. Modern civilisation has acquired new aspects of Existence, but it has lost other aspects. It is therefore necessary that the Future should be the supreme synthesis of all that has been lost and of all that exists still, so that it may engender the Infinite, to which nothing is ever lacking, from which no single aspect of Existence is absent. It

is this definitive state of Life which must be prepared that we may infinitize ourselves for ever.

The Infinite, since it is continuous, is a multiplicity-one, and therefore the civilisation which can be identified with it must not be divided into several peoples, for it must be but one people, the perfect synthesis of all the peoples of the Universe. In this synthesis, nothing must be missing; then all the scattered aspects of Existence, which are the divers peoples and individuals, small worlds of universal impressions, will rule together in the Infinite which will mingle them with each other, without the sacrifice of any of them. In this way, each individual and each people should develop itself as much as possible, and yet their purpose should not be individual or nationalistic, since it must rather act (?) that nothing may be lost before the establishment of the synthesis-Infinity, to which nothing is lacking. If a people were to be sacrificed, that would mean that a multitudinary aspect of Existence would be lost for ever; and for this reason I seek nationalism with a purely ultra-nationalist purpose: synthesis is a total to which nothing is lacking. Now it is not only in space that we must take into consideration the different peoples and civilisations, the several scattered aspects of infinite Existence; we must consider them also through all times, throughout all lost history. Many things have disappeared, and they must emerge again, rejuvenated and infinitized: in each element of the Infinite all the other elements are included, and this because the Infinite is continuous, is pure Unity all through the fact of being Multiplicity.

If modern civilisation has a spirit of Inexpression, of essential Void (Vacuum), which is the basis (essence) of your "music-hall sensibility", the Middle Ages, for instance, know how to live splendidly the spirit of Supernatural which must be made to reappear. Yet in the Middle Ages this spirit is imperfect, because it is not excessive, as it will be when it is combined with the spirit of Void (Vacuum) which is the essence of our civilisation. Infinity-Void, God-Void, this is what must be sought. Through this supernatural, astral Void the forms, the phantoms of Existence, altogether real and altogether false and in an altogether labyrinthic manner glide essentially in Vertigo in each other; each supposes all the others, and creates them in itself, and *qua* itself, by the excess of its nature, as I shortly make evident, and then each exists but labyrinthically by the others and for the others, that is to say, they all exist only relatively some to the others. The Relative is not the simple Nothingness, and yet it has the spirit of Nothingness all the while it expresses (throughout the fact of its expressing) a creative act, an altogether animic act (an act of pure existence), that which manifests itself

(shows itself) in things in their conceiving, in their creating other things, which therefore exist only by them and for them, in fine, only relatively to them. In this way, Life, which is a relativist phantomogeny where there is but Indecision (?), where there is but Vertigo, impregnates itself with Void as well as with Absolute, which is pure Existence, pure creative animism, as I shall shortly make quite evident.

This Astral Void, this altogether animic Void-Infinity, this Void-Phantom in Vertigo (in labyrinthizing-Vertigo) is as awful as it is sublime, being the pure Essence of Life. It expresses the absolute creative power (it is the absolutely infinitely creative act expressed in pure relativity), it is the pure, the divine Animic-Creating, so pure that there is no question of an animism creator of a being, but of an animism in itself, purely in abstract: it is because there is no longer being in this animism that we have a pure void in this pure act of animic existence; and it is this that sublimates awfully (?) the essence of Life, that essence, as sublime as it is awful, of infinite Void-Phantom in Vertigo.

If we have here a creative power, we have here doubtless [ly] the spirit of God, the Holy Spirit (Ghost) of Death which is the essence of the whole World! And I refer to Death because we naturally conceive Death as an altogether abstract life, full of spiritual darkness, and of an altogether animized infinite void: animism and void are indeed the things proper to Death.

It is therefore a new Religion and a new Church which I wish to (?) announce (?), and both one and the other have a distinctly futuristic character. The rule of the Void in a pure spirit of Relative-Creating, the Indecision-Vertigo of all, the pure gliding (?) of forms-phantoms which are lost each in another in an altogether labyrinthic manner, in a manner distinctly vertigic, all this is markedly futuristic. And it is a glory for Futurism that Religion itself can profit by its doctrines.

The Paracletian Church, whose foundation God commands me to announce, is an essentially Futuristic Church! Let us then raise the bloody flag of Revolt against the rotten carcass of the Vatican!

Like you, I condemn simple rationalism; yet my opinion is that we must go beyond it. Now to go beyond it, and thus to attain the Infinite, we must traverse it first. The simple intuition, or rather the simple immediate impression of things, is not enough. We must know, understand, feel altogether purely the intimate (inner) reason of things, et how they are engendered (produced). It is true that Futurism seeks in relativity, that is, in what it calls physical transcendentalism, the creative reason of impressions, but it seeks only their

physical, outer, superficial and empirical reason, and not their metaphysical, intimate, deep abysmic one! It is only the senses that seek that one, while the metaphysical reason of things is found (out) by pure thought in an altogether emotional purity. I can foresee your objection: "But it is thought itself which we absolutely condemn". I am not of that opinion; I wish only that thought may transcend itself and attain the supreme state of Vertigo! You are on this side of thought (on the near side of thought); I prefer its pure other side. (. . .)

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