

Futurism and the Past

**Temporalities, avant-gardism and tradition in
Italian art and its histories**

1909-1919

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in collaboration with the

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Abstract

This thesis re-evaluates Italian Futurist art's relationship with the past, focusing on the years 1909-1919. This aspect of the movement is fundamental to its complex identity, yet has not received prolonged scholarly attention.

In order to reconsider Futurism's temporality this thesis focuses on the fine art practice and theoretical writings of Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo and Gino Severini, and also the writings of the movement's leader F.T. Marinetti, plus the Florentine Futurists Giovanni Papini and Ardengo Soffici. The historiography of Futurism, which both produces the reductive *antipassatista* model of the movement and highlights the presence of formal similarities between the Italian artistic tradition and Futurism, is also interrogated.

The first part of this thesis argues that the Futurist temporality is more nuanced than the widely accepted model of adoration of the future and repudiation of the past, and that it is related to the conflicting notions of time present in the decade in question. Using the Futurists' concept of time to analyse their relationships with the past, present and future, it argues that the present is the most important temporal mode for Futurism, but that the past and future are part of this present.

This thesis approaches Futurism's relationship with Italy's artistic past in tandem with its interrogation of its temporality. This requires a consideration of the temporality of art history, the temporal orientation of avant-gardism and the connotations of tradition and appropriation in art historical practice in order to produce a spiralling art historical model in which returns to the past can be forms of progress.

In the second part of this thesis, these possible appropriations of the Italian artistic tradition from Magna Graecia to Giovanni Battista Tiepolo are surveyed, using the reception of earlier art historical periods in early twentieth century Italy to consider how and why the Futurists could have appropriated them. The Futurists' continuation of the recent past of Italian and French art from Italian unification up to the launch of Futurism is also addressed, noting the *antipassatismo* of these precedents to show that the Futurist relationship with the past, as reconstructed in this thesis, was not *sui generis*.

The aim of this thesis is to bring together Futurism's rhetoric about the past, understanding of time, and relationship with art history in order to offer a more nuanced understanding of the movement's *antipassatismo*.

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Plate 16

1. Medardo Rosso's installation at the Salon d'Automne, Paris, 1904. Anonymous photographer.
2. Michelangelo, *Medici Madonna*, 1531, marble, h. 226 cm, Cappella dei Principi, Basilica di San Lorenzo, Florence.
3. Medardo Rosso, *The Flesh of Others (Carne altrui)*, 1883-1884, wax, 41 x 36 x 15 cm, MART- Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Rovereto.
4. Umberto Boccioni, *Antigraceful (Antigrazioso)*, 1912-13, plaster, h. 58 cm, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome.
5. Medardo Rosso in his studio, 1882 or 1883. Photograph by the artist.
6. Medardo Rosso, *Impressions of the Boulevard: Woman with a Veil (Impressions de Boulevard: La femme à la voilette)*, 1893, 60 x 59 x 25 cm, Estorick Collection, London.
7. Medardo Rosso, *The Porter (La portinaia)*, 1883. Photograph by the artist (?).

Plate 17

1. Umberto Boccioni, *Mourning (Il lutto)*, 1910, 105 x 134.6 cm, private collection.
2. Gaetano Previati, *The Marys at the Foot of the Cross (Le Marie ai piedi della Croce)*, 1897, oil on canvas, 125 x 171 cm, private collection.
3. Mosè Bianchi, *Paolo and Francesca (Paolo e Francesca)*, c. 1877, oil on panel, 47 x 59 cm, Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan.
4. Galileo Chini, *Tiepolo, fifth section (detail)*, 1909, Italian Pavilion, Venice.
5. Giovanni Segantini, *The Punishment of the Bad Mothers (Il castigo delle cattive madri)*, 1894, oil on canvas, 120 x 225 cm, Kunshistorisches Museum, Neue Galerie in der Stallburg, Vienna.
6. Giovanni Segantini, *Pagan Goddess (Dea pagana)*, oil on canvas and burnished gold, oval 185 x 160 cm, totale 220 x 144 cm, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan.
7. Umberto Boccioni, *The Dream – Paolo and Francesca (Il sogno - Paolo e Francesca)*, 1908-9, oil on canvas, 140 x 130 cm, private collection, Milan.
8. Mosè Bianchi, *Paolo and Francesca from Rimini (Paolo e Francesco da Rimini)*, c. 1888, watercolour and gold on paper, 64.5 x 85.5 cm, Civica Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan.
9. Gaetano Previati, *Paolo and Francesca (Paolo e Francesca)*, 1909, oil on canvas, 230 x 230 cm, Civica Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Ferrara.
10. Umberto Boccioni, *The Betrothed (I fidanzati)*, 1908, pencil on paper, 25.1 x 32.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
11. Gaetano Previati, *Paolo and Francesca (Paolo e Francesca)*, 1887, oil on canvas, 98 x 227 cm, Pinacoteca dell'Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.
12. Gaetano Previati, *The Dream (Il sogno)*, 1912, oil on canvas, 226 x 166 cm, private collection.

Plate 18

1. Umberto Boccioni, *Portrait of the Musician Busoni (Ritratto del maestro Busoni)*, 1916, oil on canvas, 176 x 121 cm, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome.
2. Umberto Boccioni, *Mountainous Landscape (Paesaggio montuoso)*, oil on canvas, 33 x 55 cm, Collezione Mattioli, Milan.
3. Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1892-95, oil on canvas, 73 x 92 cm, Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia.
4. Umberto Boccioni, *Portrait of Mrs Busoni (Ritratto della signora Busoni)*, oil on canvas, 38 x 46.5 cm, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan.
5. Umberto Boccioni, *Man with Pipe (Uomo con pipa)*, 1916, watercolour, private collection, Milan.
6. Paul Cézanne, *Man with Pipe (L'homme à la pipe)*, 1892-5, oil on canvas, 73 x 60 cm, The Courtauld Gallery, London.
7. Umberto Boccioni, *Portrait of Gerda Busoni (Ritratto della Gerda Busoni)*, oil on canvas, 55 x 74 cm, private collection, Verona.

Plate 19

1. Teke, People's Republic of Congo, Wood, 37.5cm high, Collection Louise and Michael Leiris, Paris.
2. Carlo Carrà, *Portrait of Remy de Gourmont (Ritratto di Remy de Gourmont)*, 1916, pencil, 30.4 x 19cm, private collection, Milan.
3. Mask, Fang, Gabon, Painted wood, h. 70cm, Musée de l'Homme, Paris.

4. Carlo Carrà, *Portrait of Russolo (Ritratto di Russolo)*, 1913, ink, 27 x 18 cm, private collection, Florence.
5. Umberto Boccioni, *Dynamism of a Man's Head (Dinamismo di una testa d'uomo)*, 1915, tempera and collage on canvas, 30 x 30 cm, Museo del Novecento, Milan.
6. Carlo Carrà, *Composition (Composizione)*, 1915, Tempera on cardboard, 41 x 31cm, The Pushkin Museum, Moscow.
7. Pablo Picasso, *Self-Portrait*, 1907, oil on canvas, 54 x 46 cm, National Gallery, Prague.
8. Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.K. Version)*, 1911-12, oil on canvas, 243.9 x 233.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
9. Carlo Carrà, *Portrait of Boccioni (Ritratto di Boccioni)*, 1913, ink, 27 x 19 cm, Estorick Collection, London.
10. Umberto Boccioni, *Antigraceful (L'antigrazioso)*, 1912, oil on canvas, 80 x 80 cm, private collection.

Collaborative element

This thesis is the outcome of an Arts and Humanities Research Council Collaborative Doctoral Award, with Kingston University and the Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art as the collaborative partners. Given the visual nature of part II of this thesis it was decided early on that these ideas could be well-presented in an exhibition in order to bring this research to a wider audience and offer me curatorial experience. For reasons outlined below the exhibition takes a 'virtual' online format. Curating the virtual exhibition, designing its layout, and writing the interpretative texts for the exhibition has informed the structure and writing of this thesis and the exhibition has been an integral part of this project. Thinking about grouping the objects as rooms in an exhibition, rather than figures in a publication, has informed the mode of presenting the figures in this thesis. The virtual exhibition stands as a secondary part of my doctoral submission.

I chose to focus on chapter four as this is the most visually communicable section, and one well-suited to introducing the subject of Futurist art's appropriation of the past to a general audience. The five sections in the chapter transpose into five rooms, which focus on the major comparisons from the chapter to convey the key themes of this research: the formal similarities between Futurist works and those of the Italian artistic tradition; the possibility and historical context of the Futurists having familiarity with the works in question; and the consequences of these appropriations for the Futurist relationship with the past.

Due to the nature of the works of art included in this chapter, including frescoes, sculptural complexes and architecture, a traditional exhibition of this material would not have been possible. I proposed the idea of a virtual exhibition, taking the form of a website, in order to overcome this logistical issue, but it also offered the possibility of allowing visitors to jump between rooms, making the connections across the otherwise largely chronological arrangement of works which this thesis highlights. Presenting the exhibition digitally also increased its accessibility, allowing it to be disseminated around the world. Basing the exhibition online rather than in a museum space is also fitting for Futurism, a movement which (as this thesis discusses at length) claimed to repudiate museums and adored the wireless transfer of information provided by the technology of its time. This has been the Estorick Collection's first virtual exhibition and its impact will be monitored in terms of its success in bringing Estorick and AHRC-supported research to the public alongside their gallery exhibition programme.

The exhibition is online from October 2012 to September 2013. Please visit:

www.futurismandthepast.com

Introduction

Come on! Set fire to the library shelves!
Turn aside the canals to flood the museums!...
Oh, the joy of seeing old canvases bobbing adrift
on those waters, discoloured and shredded!...
Take up your pickaxes, your axes and hammers
And wreck, wreck the venerable cities, pitilessly!
F.T. Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909)¹

It is this image - the Futurists as iconoclastic destroyers of Italy's artistic heritage - that has prevailed in characterisations of the movement for the last century. Marinetti's call to "destroy museums, libraries and academies" made its official debut on the front page of the French daily *Le Figaro* on 20 February 1909. Within a year artists had been attracted to the cause. The 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' (1910), addressed "To the young artists of Italy!", followed Marinetti's iconoclastic lead:

We will fight with all our might the fanatical, senseless and snobbish religion of the past, a religion encouraged by the vicious existence of museums. We rebel against that spineless worshipping of old canvases, old statues and old bric-a-brac, against the enthusiasm for everything which is filthy and worm-ridden and corroded by time, and we judge unjust and criminal, the habitual disdain for everything that is young, new, pulsating with life. [...]

Away then with hired restorers of antiquated incrustations. Away with affected archaeologists with their chronic necrophilia! Down with the critics, those complacent pimps! Down with gouty academics and drunken, ignorant professors!²

Today, Futurist canvases hang in museums, their theoretical texts and papers are conserved in archives, their art and theory is discussed by professors in countless books on library shelves; Futurism is art history. This is one of the essential ironies of Futurism studies, the other is the gap between Futurist artistic practice and rhetoric. Scholars identify connections between paintings and prose, matching up practice and theory as if Futurist artworks served only as illustrations to the manifestos. While the Futurist artists, particularly Umberto Boccioni, are praised for their skill and innovation, it is often noted that the audacity of the Futurist manifestos is not translated into their fine art practice. The Futurists, whose

¹ F.T. Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Umbro Apollonio (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), pp. 19-24 (p. 23).

² "Noi vogliamo combattere accanitamente la religione fanatica, incosciente e snobistica del passato, alimentata dall'esistenza nefasta dei musei. Ci ribelliamo alla supina ammirazione delle vecchie tele, delle vecchie statue, degli oggetti vecchi e all'entusiasmo per tutto ciò che è tarlato, sudicio, corrosivo dal tempo, e giudichiamo ingiusto, delittuoso, l'abituale disdegno per tutto ciò che è giovane, nuovo e palpitante di vita. [...] Via, dunque, restauratori prezzolati di vecchie croste! Via archeologi affetti di necrofilia cronica! Via, critici, compiacenti lenoni! Via, accademie gottose, professori ubriaconi e ignoranti!" Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini, 'Manifesto dei pittori futuristi' (1910), reprinted in *Manifesti del futurismo*, ed. by Viviana Birolli (Milan: Abscondita, 2008), pp. 27-29 (pp. 27-28). I here refer to the original Italian rather than the published English translation, in which the word 'enthusiasm' is excluded, with repercussions pertinent to this thesis. This quote and its translation are discussed at length in chapter two.

manifestos ensured that their voices would be heard long after their deaths, are given the benefit of the doubt by scholars, and their contradictory relationship with the past remains, at the time of writing, one of the final unresolved paradoxes of Italian Futurism. This thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by nuancing Futurist art's relationship with the past, art history and the Italian artistic tradition through a critical re-reading of its temporality and appropriation of visual sources.

The aim of this research is to review the inconsistencies found in the dogmatic repudiation of the past in Futurist art and theory, present also in the historiography of the movement. Many of the Futurist appropriations of pre-1909 art and theory discussed in this thesis have been identified by the same scholarship which condenses the movement down to *antipassatismo*. The formal comparisons are often made without empirical research or ideological reappraisal to support them, a limitation which this thesis aims to rectify. In order to revise the Futurist relationship with the past this research will also address the temporalities of Futurism and the history of art, considering how philosophies of time and history affect Futurism's self-comprehension and the production of art historical narrative, with particular reference in both cases to the notions of the avant-gardism, tradition and appropriation.

The beginning of this research in autumn 2008 coincided with the 100 year anniversary of F.T. Marinetti's car crash, Italian Futurism's point of conception.³ The retrospective attention given to the movement in the 2009 centenary of Marinetti's 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' forms the present from which this research assesses the relationship with the past held by a movement which is, from our contemporary perspective, the past. As suggested above, there has been surprisingly little engagement with the irony of the recent retrospection on Futurism. The centenary was celebrated with many publications and conferences, all of which were valuable additions to the field, but essentially the return to Futurism was initiated by the anniversary, rather than any major scholarly development.⁴ This research is both a result of this revived interest in Futurism and a response to it; most

³ Marinetti's earliest thoughts about the manifesto were in fact composed in July, before the car crash, as, arguably, were mine about this thesis. The centenary celebrations used both the October conception and February birth; this staggered initiation of Futurism leads into the unclear temporality of a movement which is so often given a clear date of birth.

⁴ The difference between the century as an arbitrary length of time based on the importance of one hundred in the decimal mathematical system, and a year as a natural, solar, time construction, and will be further explored in chapter two.

crucially it represents the only in-depth investigation of Futurist art's relationship with the past to come out of this period of retrospection.

The historian of Futurism must be self-aware; Futurism claimed no relationship with the past, and yet is itself now the past and likewise it claimed no relationship with art history. Futurism has become part of an art historical narrative, its precedents and antecedents duly noted, in spite of its claim to be unprecedented and its demand that it should be destroyed in the future. As such, art history is the subject as well as the discipline of this thesis. The visual connections between artworks, the source-hunting that Norman Bryson calls "art history in its professional and obsessive mode," and the construction of stories around those connections form one of art history's major outcomes.⁵ This thesis hunts sources for Futurism and builds stories to justify them, but simultaneously critiques existing visual connections and art histories, and those I am producing myself. I see such a critically-aware, self-aware, self-critical approach to art history, which dissects the discipline's temporal peculiarities and historical epistemology and focuses on paradoxes without claiming to resolve them, as one of the most tenable avenues available for those trained in the so-called 'new' art history but dubious of the concept of novelty.⁶

This introductory chapter will outline the scope, academic context, methodology and structure of this research. These are all mutually dependent, the structure is dictated by the scope and methodology; the scope of the research prescribes that of the academic context, and vice versa. Such interrelations, while a key methodological tool, preclude a simple linear narrative structure in this introduction, and so back and forward referencing will be rife. Such issues in this chapter constitute a microcosm of the problems of linearity and interconnection found in part II. As will become clear, such difficulties are deliberately presented in the structure of this thesis in order to illuminate points made about the temporality of art history.

The breadth of the Futurist oeuvre requires that this research is concerned with a specific Futurism, and specific aspects of the past. The Futurism in question is the fine art and

⁵ Norman Bryson, *Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 7.

⁶ The fortieth anniversary of John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* and the thirtieth anniversary of Block and Middlesex Polytechnic's conference 'The New Art History?' has instigated some questioning of whether we are today 'after' the New Art History. The contributions to a recent conference at the University of Birmingham 'After the New Art History' suggested that beyond the world of publishing house marketing, new art history was not cohesive enough a position for current scholars to position ourselves 'after' it.

theoretical writings of the signatories of the 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' – Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo and Gino Severini –, the movement's leader F.T. Marinetti, and the so-called Florentine Futurists, Giovanni Papini and Ardengo Soffici, during the decade 1909 to 1919.⁷ The past in question is made up of two strands, which I will address individually and intertwine: the first is the philosophical past, that is, the Futurist understanding of time, the past and history; the second is the art historical past of the Italian artistic tradition, that is, the theory and practice of artists working before the launch of Futurism.

Literature review

This research is best positioned in the field of Futurism studies, which sits at a junction between the disciplines of cultural studies, Italian (and Hispanic and Slavonic) studies, art, design and architectural history, the histories of theatre and music, and comparative literature. It has been established over the last two decades, culminating in the explosion of exhibitions, conferences and other Futurist happenings around the 2009 centenary, with its continuing growth charted by the *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies*.⁸ As is evidenced throughout this overview of the historiography of Futurism, this thesis, although written in English and thus forming part of the Anglophone scholarship on the movement, responds to Italian language scholarship on Futurism as much as English. This research also responds to and forms part of the field of avant-garde and modernist studies, which is also interdisciplinary, formed primarily of art and design history, comparative literature, and the history of ideas.

Reviewing the existing literature on Futurism summarizes the foundations upon which this work builds and identifies the epistemological void this research fills. In this introduction the literature review focuses on Futurism studies, but literature regarding other important fields will be considered elsewhere in the thesis where it is more pertinent. Firstly, the philosophies of time and history which form an important theoretical basis for this research will be summarised separately throughout the first two chapters, as they require more focused

⁷ The first seven to ten years of Futurism are known as 'heroic Futurism' and in Italian *il primo futurismo*, often awkwardly translated as 'first Futurism', the specifics of which I will come to discuss; the use of this Italian phrase will be common in the following literature review.

⁸ The establishment of international and transdisciplinary Futurism Studies, and my discussion of it here, owe much to the yearbook's editor Günter Berghaus.

attention. Secondly, the relevant aspects of avant-garde studies will be considered in chapter three, where the nature of the concept is re-evaluated in terms of Futurism; however, a brief overview will be given here in order to position this research. Thirdly, the formal comparisons made between Futurist art and that of the Italian tradition present in the historiography of Futurism will be fully reviewed in part II.

This research responds to revisionist trends in both Futurism studies and avant-garde studies. The former seeks to readdress over-simplified ideas about Futurism by exploring its paradoxes; the latter seeks to pluralise ideas of the avant-garde by rejecting the application of a monolithic avant-garde framework, which takes Paris as its standard, to other sites of avant-garde artistic activity. Within the former the paradox of Futurism's relationship with the past is yet to be tackled, and in the latter the Italian case has not been addressed. This literature review does not offer an exhaustive bibliography of texts on Futurism,⁹ but addresses literature relevant to my methodology and my focus on the art and theory of Italian *primo futurismo*.

In order to address the revisionist trend in Futurism scholarship, I must first outline how the canonical concept of Futurism was produced, prior to its revision. I consider the historiography of Futurism to have taken place in two (not always clearly distinct) phases, the first fifty years and the second fifty. In the former, it is possible to trace the redemption or recovery of a movement with political affiliations that tended to see it excluded from the canon of European modernism. In the latter, the acceptable face of Futurism produced in the previous five decades was questioned and revised. The tide seems to have turned around 1960 in response to the exhibitions organised to mark the fiftieth anniversaries of Marinetti's and the Futurist artists' first manifestos. This turning point is marked in Italian language studies of Futurism by the publication of the *Archivi del futurismo* and in Anglophone studies by the Museum of Modern Art exhibition dedicated to the movement.¹⁰

Italian and Anglophone Futurism studies 1909-1960

During its own lifetime, first Futurism received both good and bad press throughout the world. Marinetti's infamous marketing skills ensured that the movement, himself, the

⁹ Günter Berghaus's forthcoming *Bibliographic Handbook of Futurism* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), will offer such a thorough bibliographic reference.

¹⁰ Maria Drudi Gambillo and Teresa Fiori, eds, *Archivi del futurismo*, 2 vols (Rome: De Luca, 1958). Joshua Taylor, *Futurism* (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company Ltd., 1961).

manifestos, as well as the artists and sometimes the artworks too, travelled far beyond the Italian peninsula. Reviews and interpretations of Futurism and its artistic output were mixed. However, first Futurism's critical fortunes did not fare well after the First World War and the rise of Fascism, particularly due to a tendency to assimilate Futurism to Fascism. This inaccurate equation led to an extended period of Futurism being excluded or downplayed in the histories of modernism and the avant-garde, and little research being undertaken by both Anglophone and Italian scholars, who did not wish to be associated with Fascism after World War Two. Other avant-garde movements tended to be left-wing, thus leading anomalous Futurism to be written out or banished to the periphery of art historical canons, its Fascist connotations being the worst of its many objectionable statements.

However, during the interwar period and after the Second World War, references to the movement can be found in both Anglophone and Italian surveys of art history, particularly those focusing on modern art, although especially in Anglophone surveys, it is given little credit. The redemption of Futurism is particularly apparent when focusing on MoMA's relationship with the movement. The inclusion of Futurism in Alfred H. Barr's *Cubism and Abstract Art* (1936) put it on the modernist map, which Barr gave form in his diagram of modern art produced for his book's cover.¹¹ However, this diagram, and the entry on Futurism, cast it as an offshoot of Cubism, which contributed only to the creation of Dadaism. Barr's description of the movement as proto-Fascist is a prime example of the tendency mentioned above. By 1949 and the exhibition and accompanying book *Twentieth Century Italian Art*, Futurism had improved in Barr's estimation, both aesthetically and politically, as he claims that the movement was not Fascist, but essentially anarchistic.¹² The treatment of Futurism in this catalogue set a much continued precedent of dealing primarily with the formal aspects of the movement, rather than its socio-political activities, and by considering the movement to end with the First World War. The translation of the Futurist manifestos highlighted their importance in Futurist aesthetics, and allowed the Futurists to explain their ideas to Anglophone readers in their own words. Barr, and the other curator of this exhibition, James Thrall Soby (who in 1946 wrote an article on Boccioni and De

¹¹ Alfred H. Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936).

¹² Barr's statement "fundamentally, Futurism was anarchic, not Fascist" confuses anarchic and anarchistic, the latter being the antonym of Fascism, and thus Barr's implied meaning. Alfred H. Barr and James Thrall Soby, *Twentieth-Century Italian Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1949), p. 16.

Chirico¹³) served as Chairman and Vice-President respectively of Museum Collections at MoMA in the late 1940s, when the museum, or rather the Rockefellers, acquired a number of early Futurist masterpieces.

The interest in Futurism shown by American collectors of this period is demonstrated in the 1960 exhibition in Milan and Rome of modern Italian works held in United States collections.¹⁴ In his catalogue essay Soby proudly claims that it was his and Barr's *Twentieth Century Italian Art* exhibition that triggered the interest in Futurism, and the other movements addressed, amongst American collectors. The importance of Futurist masterpieces being held in prestigious American museums should not be underestimated in any consideration of the changing interpretations and historiography of Futurism. Nor should it be forgotten that the works now considered canonical from the early years of the movement are those on public display, rather than those held in the many private collections which house Futurist works.

In 1961, Futurism's autonomy as a modern art movement was sealed by the exhibition *Futurism* at MoMA.¹⁵ The curator and author of the catalogue, Joshua C. Taylor, followed Barr's lead by addressing pre-war Futurism, focusing on the formal characteristics of the artworks and their relationship to the manifestos and contemporary painting in Paris, and avoiding the political question altogether. It should be noted that the lack of engagement with the politics of the movement was part of a wider art historical trend of formalism before the rise of the social history of art, but the separation of Futurist art from its politics was instigated by Marinetti himself in the 'Manifesto of the Italian Futurist Political Party' (1918): "The futurist political party that we are founding today [...] will be entirely separate from the futurist art movement;"¹⁶ the relationship between Futurist art and politics will be returned to shortly.

These American histories of Futurism are also indicative of the developing appreciation of the movement in Italy before the fiftieth anniversary. As in Anglophone studies, focus was

¹³ James Thrall Soby, 'Italy: Two Movements, Two Paintings' in *Contemporary Painters* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1948), pp. 104-114. This article was originally published in the *Magazine of Art*, February 1946.

¹⁴ Museum of Modern Art, *Arte Italiana del XX Secolo da collezioni Americane: la mostra, promossa e studiata dal Museum of Modern Art, New York* (Milan: Silvana, 1960).

¹⁵ Taylor, *Futurism*.

¹⁶ "Il partito politico futurista che noi fondiamo oggi [...] sarà nettamente distinto dal movimento artistico futurista." F.T. Marinetti, 'Manifesto del partito futurista italiano (1918)' reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, ed. by Luciano De Maria (Milan: Mondadori, 2005), pp. 153-8 (p. 158).

placed on *il cinque*, the five signatories of the first manifesto; the formal qualities of the movement were emphasised, the political aspects played down, and connections with other European avant-gardes were used to stress the importance of Futurism within wider artistic trends. Futurist paintings by *il cinque* were included in the 25th Venice Biennale in 1950; this exhibition paralleled the idea seen in America that the movement ended with the beginning of Metaphysical painting.¹⁷ The publication of the *Archivi del futurismo* edited by Maria Drudi Gambillo and Teresa Fiori in 1958 and the official 1959 exhibition of Futurism in Rome's Palazzo Barberini both supported a resurgence in studies of Futurism, the former making many previously unpublished documents about early Futurism available.¹⁸ Drudi Gambillo returned to this project in 1961 to produce *Dopo Boccioni: dipinti e documenti futuristi dal 1915 al 1919* extending beyond Boccioni's death and up to the end of the First World War.¹⁹ Antonio Gramsci's opinion on Futurism, that it "completely lost its character after the war," divided the revolutionary *primo futurismo* from its later manifestation politically, as well as in terms of its protagonists and practices.²⁰ *Secondo futurismo* was not, however, completely excluded from Italian historiography as both Vincenzo Costantini's 1934 *Pittura Italiana contemporanea: dalla fine dell'800 ad oggi* and Raffaele Carrieri's 1950 *Pittura e Scultura d'avanguardia-1890-1950-in Italia* (translated into English five years later) discussed the activities of Futurist in the 1920s and 30s.²¹ Also noteworthy of this period of Italian scholarship on Futurism is Pierre Francastel's appraisal of the movement for the 30th Venice Biennale in 1960, which, Enrico Crispolti complained, was not supportive of Futurism.²² Francastel's work did not question the movement's political allegiances, but suggested that it had failed to correctly predict the future, as no artist could. Noting the slippage between Futurist doctrine and practice became central to the revisions of Futurism which took place over the subsequent fifty years.

¹⁷ Biennale di Venezia, *XXV Biennale di Venezia. Catalogo* (Venice: Biennale di Venezia, 1950).

¹⁸ Drudi Gambillo and Fiori, eds, *Archivi del futurismo*. Giorgio Castelfranco, Maria Drudi Gambillo, Jacopo Recupero, and Aldo Palazzeschi, *Il Futurismo* (Rome: De Luca, 1959).

¹⁹ Maria Drudi Gambillo, *Dopo Boccioni: Dipinti e documenti futuristi dal 1915 al 1919* (Rome: Studio d'arte contemporanea, 1961).

²⁰ Antonio Gramsci, '[A Letter to Trotsky on Futurism]', reprinted in *Selections from Cultural Writings*, ed. by David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, trans. by William Boelhower (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985), pp. 32-52 (p. 52).

²¹ Vincenzo Costantini, *Pittura Italiana Contemporanea: dalla fine dell'800 ad oggi* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1934). Raffaele Carrieri, *Pittura e Scultura d'avanguardia-1890-1950-in Italia* (Milan: Edizioni della conchiglia, 1950). Raffaele Carrieri, *Avant-Garde Painting and Sculpture (1890-1955) in Italy* (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Domus, 1955).

²² Pierre Francastel, *Il Futurismo e il suo tempo* (Venice: Biennale di Venezia, 1960). Enrico Crispolti, 'Il Futurismo alla Biennale 1960', *Storia e critica del futurismo*, 2nd edn (Rome: Laterza, 1987), pp. 104-108.

Aldo Palazzeschi, in his essay in the catalogue of the 1959 Palazzo Barberini exhibition, concluded that “And if, in the end, after fifty years have passed, reason and testimonials are not yet sufficient for forming a clear judgement on Futurism, it means that in fifty years we will talk about it again;”²³ the years between fiftieth anniversary of Futurism and the centenary have seen the clear picture analysed and questioned in both Anglophone and Italian language studies.

Italian and Anglophone Futurism studies 1960-2012

The seminal English language textbook on early Futurist art, still regularly referenced today, is Marianne W. Martin’s *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915* (1968).²⁴ Martin, continuing the tendency to cut off Futurist activity with Italy’s entry into the war, considered the genesis of the movement by addressing Italian art movements almost unknown in English language scholarship. Martin also made direct comparisons between the Futurist manifestos and artworks, building on Barr’s legacy of translating passages from the manifestos into English, as translations were not yet published.²⁵ This trait is also found in Jane Rye’s *Futurism* (1973) which focuses on the visual arts, briefly acknowledging Futurist architecture, music, politics and the impact outside Italy.²⁶ Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla’s *Futurism* (1977) goes further in surveying the movement’s diversity and wide range of media.²⁷

Martin highlights the importance of the American scholar Rosa Trillo Clough in the development of her work and I agree that Clough’s treatment of Futurism was exceptionally nuanced. Clough’s 1942 doctoral dissertation *Looking Back at Futurism* was published on completion, with a revised edition appearing in 1961 under the title *Futurism: The Story of a Modern Art Movement*.²⁸ Importantly, Clough included Futurist art after Boccioni’s death in 1916 and addressed Futurist literature and theatre, architecture and music, and the movement’s politics. She also considered Futurism’s historiography, including its critical reception after the First World War and summarizing in English key early Italian texts. Much

²³ “E se, infine, cinquant’anni trascorsi, ragioni e testimonianze non saranno ancora sufficienti per formulare un giudizio sereno sopra il Futurismo, vuol dire che fra altri cinquanta ne riparleremo.” Aldo Palazzeschi, catalogue essay, in *Il Futurismo*, p. 18.

²⁴ Marianne W. Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-15* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

²⁵ The first official translations were F.T. Marinetti, *Marinetti: Selected Writings*, ed. by R. W. Flint (London: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972). Umbro Apollonio, ed. *Futurist Manifestos* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973).

²⁶ Jane Rye, *Futurism* (London: Studio Vista, 1972).

²⁷ Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla, *Futurism*, reprint (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978).

²⁸ Rosa Trillo Clough, *Looking Back at Futurism* (New York: Cocce Press, 1942). Rosa Trillo Clough, *Futurism: The Story of a Modern Art Movement* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1961).

of the 1961 edition was included in the 1942 thesis; Clough's work is thus quite different to the story of Futurism produced, particularly in the United States, in this period. Many of the unusual inclusions in Clough's book reappear in the revisions made in the last fifty years of Futurism scholarship.

There have been two main themes to this revision, the expansion of the movement and the exploration of its paradoxes. The former has taken place in three strands, geographically, temporally and in its media, including Futurists throughout Italy and around the world, those working in the interwar period and up to, and even beyond, Marinetti's death, and those using a wider range of artistic media, including dance, food, interior design, furniture, textiles, ceramics, scenography, photography and cinema. These strands are all intertwined, as expansion of each of these fields necessitated the expansion of the others. For example, Fortunato Depero is now considered a quintessential Futurist but he was based in Rovereto and New York during the interwar period, and he worked in graphic, interior, scenographic and textile design. The geographical widening of Futurism has, in recent years, been supported by art galleries across Italy, keen to ally their local artists to a phenomenon which has increased in international acclaim. This has been supported by research on Futurism in as diverse areas of Italy as the Veneto, Naples, Calabria and Sicily.²⁹ Increased interest in the Florentine Futurists Soffici, Palazzeschi and Primo Conti has also led to a more sustained focus on the artists and writers of this milieu, and the *riviste* *Leonardo*, *La Voce*, and *Lacerba*. Many Italian scholars of Futurism have considered the Florentines, and Walter L. Adamson has led the Anglophone field.³⁰ Maurizio Calvesi and Vanni Schewiller's exhibition *Futurismo a Firenze: 1910-1920* at the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in 1984, and the catalogue featuring essays by Massimo Carrà and Silvia Porto, stressed the importance not only of the

²⁹ Willard Bohn, *The Other Futurism: Futurist Activity in Venice, Padua, and Verona* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004). Luciano Caruso, *Futurismo a Napoli, 1933-1935: documenti inediti* (Naples: Colonnese, 1977). Luciano Caruso and Francesco Cangiullo, *Francesco Cangiullo e il Futurismo a Napoli* (Florence: S.P. E.S.-Salimbeni, 1979). Matteo D'Ambrosio, *Futurismo a Napoli: indagini e documenti* (Napoli: Liguori, 1995). Matteo D'Ambrosio, *Marinetti e il Futurismo a Napoli* (Rome: Edizioni de Luca, 1996). Rodolfo Alcaro, Vittorio Cappelli, and Franco Dionesalvi, *Futurismo Calabrese: poesie, tavole parolibere, sintesi teatrali* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1997). Vittorio Cappelli and Luciano Caruso, *Calabria Futurista: documenti, immagini, opere* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1997). Santi Correnti, *Il Futurismo in Sicilia e la poetessa catanese Adele Gloria* (Catania: C.U.E.C.M., 1990). Nicolo D'Alessandro, *Pittura in Sicilia: dal Futurismo al Postmoderno: situazioni* (Palermo: Ginestra, 1991). Giuseppe Miligi and Umberto Carpi, *Prefuturismo e primo futurismo in Sicilia (1900-1918)* (Messina: Sicania, 1989). Anna Maria Ruta, *Futurismo in Sicilia* (Milan: Silvana, 2005). Anna Maria Ruta, *Il Futurismo in Sicilia: per una storia dell'avanguardia letteraria* (Marina di Patti, Messina: Pungitopo, 1991). Claudia Salari, *Sicilia Futurista* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1986). Dario Tomasello, *Oltre il futurismo: Percorsi delle avanguardie in Sicilia* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2000).

³⁰ Walter L. Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

relationship between the city and Milanese Futurism, but also its home-grown Futurist activity, particularly Soffici, Conti, and Arnaldo Ginna.³¹ Futurism as an international movement has also been appraised in connection to its Italian roots. This was particularly evident in two major exhibitions of the 1980s, *Futurism and the International Avant-Garde* curated by Anne D'Harnoncourt at the Philadelphia Museum of Fine Arts in 1980, and Pontus Hultén's *Futurismo & Futurismi* at the Palazzo Grassi in Venice in 1986.³² In the same year, Marjorie Perloff took the expansion of Futurism to an even higher level, by considering it not as a specific movement, but as a characteristic of avant-garde culture.³³

Giovanni Lista and Enrico Crispolti have been the major figures of this three-faceted expansion. Lista has particularly contributed to research on Futurist photography and cinema. With Ada Masoero he curated the 2009 Futurism exhibition at the Palazzo Reale in Milan which demonstrated the breadth of Futurist media.³⁴ Lista's work has often been translated into English, increasing the impact of his research on the Anglophone as well as Italian research community, and wider public. Crispolti's most important of many contributions to the field has been his research into so-called second Futurism, the continuation of the movement after the First World War. He has extended the time frame of Futurism up to the death of Marinetti in 1944, and has also supported the expansion of media of Futurist artistic output.³⁵ Unsurprisingly Lista and Crispolti have particularly focused on Balla (as well as Marinetti) the only member of *il cinque* to continue with the movement after the First World War, and to do so in such a wide variety of media.³⁶ Lista, in

³¹ Fabrizio Bagatti, Gloria Manghetti, and Silvia Porto, eds, *Futurismo a Firenze, 1910-1920* (Florence: Sansoni, 1984).

³² Anne D'Harnoncourt et al, *Futurism and the International Avant-Garde* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1980). Pontus Hultén, ed., *Futurismo & Futurismi* (Milan: Bompiani, 1986). The catalogue of the latter was also translated into English, and contains reproductions a broad variety of international artistic output.

³³ Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

³⁴ Giovanni Lista, *Futurism and Photography* (London: Merrell, Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, 2000). Giovanni Lista and Ada Masoero, *Futurismo 1909-2009: velocità arte azione* (Milan: Skira, 2009).

³⁵ Enrico Crispolti and Ezio Gribaudo, *Il secondo Futurismo, Torino, 1923-1938: Fillia, Mino Rosso, Diulgheroff, Oriani, Alimandi, Costa* (Turin: Fratelli Pozzo, 1961). Enrico Crispolti and Franco Sborgi, *Futurismo: i grandi temi: 1909-1944* (Milan: Edizioni Gabriele Mazzotta, 1997).

³⁶ Giovanni Lista, *Balla* (Modena: Galleria Fonte d'Abisso, 1982). Giovanni Lista and Ada Masoero, *Balla Pittura Balla Scultura* (Milan: Silvana, 2008). Giovanni Lista, Paolo Baldacci, and Livia Velani, eds, *Balla: la modernità futurista* (Milan: Skira, 2008). Enrico Crispolti and Maria Drudi Gambillo, *Giacomo Balla* (Galleria d'Arte Moderna: Turin, 1963). Enrico Crispolti, *Balla* (Rome: Editalia, 1975). Enrico Crispolti, *Casa Balla e Il Futurismo a Roma* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 1989).

a recent publication, has gone as far as coining the term *neofuturismo* for Balla's work after the Second World War, that is, after the death of Marinetti.³⁷

As mentioned above, histories of Futurism before the 1970s tended to end during the First World War, as beyond this point, the divorce of Futurist art from politics, which had encouraged scholarly and public re-engagement with it on a purely aesthetic level, was no longer tenable. The extension of Futurism through the interwar years and up to Marinetti's death, that is, into Italy's Fascist period, has taken place partly due to the critical distance of time, but also thanks to more sustained scholarly research on Futurism's politics. This is one of two paradoxes of Futurism which have instigated revisionist approaches, to which my research, I would propose, is a contribution to a third. In Luciano De Maria's introduction to Marinetti's collected writings, first published in 1968, he states "The examination of Futurism is the examination of its contradictions: the task of the historian is in-depth analysis, without prejudice" and many scholars have taken this approach forwards.³⁸ This idea is drawn directly from Marinetti's own, that "to contradict oneself is to live."³⁹

Futurism's political allegiance was certainly contradictory: it demonstrated anarchist credentials, particularly in its formative years, but is now remembered for its association with Fascism, which was far from clear cut. In line with the development of art history over the last five decades, the formalist approach to Futurist art has been replaced with more concern for its social and political contexts, and more scholars have engaged with the political aspects of the movement. Marinetti's relationship with politics has been investigated far more than that of the artists, and since James Joll's 'F.T. Marinetti: Futurism and Fascism' (1960) there has been a tendency to equate Marinetti's politics with those of all the Futurists.⁴⁰ Christiana J. Taylor's *Futurism: Politics, Painting and Performance* (1974), attempted a reconciliation of Futurist art with the movement's political aspects, and

³⁷ Giovanni Lista and Elena Gigli, *Giacomo Balla: futurismo e neofuturismo* (Milan: Mudima, 2009).

³⁸ "L'esame del Futurismo è l'esame delle sue contraddizioni: il compito che s'impone allo storico è quello di analizzare in profondità, senza prevenzioni." Luciano De Maria, 'Introduzione', in F.T. Marinetti, *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, p. XLVII. This trend is also noted by Cinzia Sartini Blum, *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), p. 1.

³⁹ "Contraddirsi è vivere" F.T. Marinetti, 'Discorso Futurista agli Inglesi, pronunciato al Lyceum Club di Londra' (1910), reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, pp. 280-6 (p. 285).

⁴⁰ James Joll, 'F.T. Marinetti: Futurism and Fascism', in *Intellectuals in Politics: three biographical essays* (London: Weidenfeld, 1960), pp. 133-184.

introduces some consideration of Boccioni's Socialism.⁴¹ Taylor also broaches the idea, still accepted today by many, that Marinetti aligned Futurism with the Fascist state more to ensure its survival and dominance as an artistic movement than for political reasons; notably Marinetti's ambiguous relationship with Mussolini and the Fascist party settled after 1922 when uncertainty over Fascism's power ceased. In 1980 Lista emphasised the importance of many Futurists' left-wing roots.⁴² Politics was also put under the spotlight at a conference held in collaboration with the aforementioned *Futurismo & Futurismi* exhibition in 1986; the American and Italian scholars who came together for this event produced a book which demonstrates a desire to closely interrogate existing ideas about Futurism's politics.⁴³ Despite this work and Taylor's study, Anne Bowler, in 1991 still critiqued the lack of engagement with *primo futurismo* politics and the equation of Futurism and Fascism.⁴⁴

The much-needed comprehensive and revisionist study of Futurist, not just Marinettian, politics was provided in 1996 by Günter Berghaus's *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909-44*, which stresses the heterogeneity of its political leanings.⁴⁵ Berghaus used archival documents to build a picture of what were diverse, ever-changing and flexible approaches to politics. In the same year, two articles regarding Futurism and politics from other fresh perspectives were published; Estera Milman considered how the formalist reintroduction of Futurism into the modern art canon, discussed earlier, led to its adoption by left-wing neo-avant-gardes, such as Fluxus in the 1970s,⁴⁶ while Lista and Scott Sheridan discussed the Futurist revolution as a fulfilment of the activist ideals of the Risorgimento, and the *italianità* of Futurist political attitudes and activities.⁴⁷ Debates about Futurist politics continue as their contradictory nature is unlikely to be resolved.

⁴¹ Christiana J. Taylor, *Futurism: politics, painting and performance* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1979).

⁴² Giovanni Lista, *Arte e Politica: il futurismo di sinistra in Italia* (Milan: Mudima, 1980).

⁴³ Renzo De Felice and George L. Mosse, *Futurismo, cultura e politica* (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988).

⁴⁴ Anne Bowler, 'Politics as Art: Italian Futurism and Fascism', *Theory and Society*, 20 (1991), 763–794.

⁴⁵ Günter Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909-44* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1996). Walter L. Adamson's books and articles on Italian politics during the Fascist period have also contributed to the deeper understanding of this period.

⁴⁶ Estera Milman, 'Futurism as a Submerged Paradigm for Artistic Activism and Practical Anarchism', *South Central Review*, 13 (1996), 157–179.

⁴⁷ Giovanni Lista and Scott Sheridan, 'The Activist Model; or, the Avant-Garde as Italian Invention', *South Central Review*, 13 (1996), 13–34.

Another contradiction of Futurism is the role of women in the movement, which has been the subject of a number of studies since the 1970s. The 'Founding and Manifesto' contains the infamous phrase "scorn for woman"⁴⁸ but even in the movement's early years there were a number of female Futurists, including Valentine de Saint-Point, the author of the 'Manifesto of Futurist Woman' (1912) and the experimental writer Mina Loy.⁴⁹ When considering Futurism as an international movement, the number of women involved grows greater.⁵⁰ With regards to Italian female Futurists, much attention has been paid to Marinetti's wife, the poet Benedetta Cappa.⁵¹ Since Claudia Salaris's groundbreaking publication, a number of scholars have brought these women, who were particularly numerous in *secondo futurismo*, from the periphery towards the centre of the movement.⁵² Lucia Re's research has secured a prominent role on the current academic agenda for studies on Futurist women.⁵³ As well as emphasising the role of these female artists and writers in Futurism, studies have sought to nuance Marinetti's scorn for woman by considering it as a scorn for the existing stereotype of feminine behaviour, rather than for woman per se, and questioning the opportunism of his support for suffrage and divorce. Scholars have also reappraised some Futurist and Marinettian texts from the perspective of gender and queer studies, addressing their

⁴⁸ Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 22.

⁴⁹ Valentine de Saint-Point, 'Manifesto della Donna Futurista' (1912), reprinted in *Manifesti del futurismo*, pp. 46-50.

⁵⁰ This is most notable with Russian Cubo-Futurism, whose protagonists include Natalia Goncharova, Liubov Popova, and Olga Rozanova.

⁵¹ Monographs on Benedetta include: Cinzia Sartini Blum, *La Futurista: Benedetta Cappa Marinetti* (Philadelphia, PA: Goldie Paley Gallery, Moore College of Art and Design, 1998). Franca Zoccoli, *Benedetta Cappa Marinetti: l'incantesimo della luce* (Milan: Selene, 2000).

⁵² Texts in this field include: Claudia Salaris, *Le Futuriste: donne e letteratura d'avanguardia in Italia (1909-1944)* (Rome: Edizioni delle donne, 1982). Lea Vergine, *L'altra metà dell'avanguardia 1910-1940: pittrici e scultrici nei movimenti dell'avanguardia storiche* (Milan: Mazzotta, 1990). Blum, *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power*. Mirella Bentivoglio, *The Women Artists of Italian Futurism: Almost Lost to History* (New York: Midmarch, 1997). Paola Sica, 'Maria Ginanni: Futurist Woman and Visual Writer', *Italica*, 79 (2002), 339-352. Silvia Contarini, *La Femme Futuriste: mythes, modèles, et représentations de la femme dans la théorie et la littérature futuristes* (Paris: Presses universitaires de Paris 10, 2006). Cecilia Bello Minciocchi, ed., *Spirale di dolcezza+Serpe di fascino. Scrittrici Futuriste, Antologia* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2007). Giancarlo Carpi, ed., *Futuriste. Letteratura. Arte. Vita*. (Rome: Castelveccchi, 2009). Paola Sica, 'Regenerating Life and Art: Futurism, Florentine Women, Irma Valeria', *Annali D'italianistica*, 27 (2009), 175-186.

⁵³ Lucia Re, 'Futurism and Feminism', *Annali d'Italianistica*, 7 (1989), 253-272; 'Valentine De Saint-Point, Ricciotto Canudo, FT Marinetti: Eroticism, Violence and Feminism from Prewar Paris to Colonial Cairo', *Quaderni D'italianistica*, 24 (2003), 37-69; 'Maria Ginanni Vs. FT Marinetti: Women, Speed, and War in Futurist Italy', *Annali d'Italianistica: A Century of Futurism, 1909 to 2009*, 27 (2009), 111-112; 'Mina Loy and the Quest for a Futurist Feminist Woman', *European Legacy*, 14 (2009), 799-819.

homoerotic as well as misogynistic tendencies.⁵⁴ The reappraisal of the role of women in Futurism is rarely incorporated into general texts on the movement.

Futurism and the past in Italian and Anglophone scholarship

My research contributes to the strand of revisionism in Futurism studies which engages with the paradoxes inherent in Futurism's theory and practice by close-reading the slippages between these two, in combination with empirical research and theoretical awareness, in order to nuance the reductive concept of Futurism, particularly the equation of Futurism with Marinettism, constructed in the mid twentieth century. I argue that there is an absence of literature questioning the contradictions around Futurism's *antipassatismo* because this central tenet of the movement has been the one secure given around which other revisions can be made.⁵⁵ Despite this lack, my research draws on a number existing areas of Futurism scholarship. Firstly there is the tendency to see Futurism as a continuation of late nineteenth-century Italian art movements, common in Italian language historiography, rare in Anglophone. This is related to the literary parallel which links Marinetti's poetics to French Symbolism, and other schools, to which I will return shortly. Secondly, there is existing research on Futurism's use of contemporary ideas about time, particularly those of Henri Bergson. Thirdly, there is the tendency to make analogies between Futurism, both the rhetoric of its theory and the formal aspects of its practice, and the Italian artistic tradition. I return to this tendency in part II and expand on the concern with time and Bergson chapter one. For the most part, all three tendencies in scholarship lack the overt questioning of Futurism's *antipassatismo*, implicit in all these ideas, which forms the core of this research; there are, however, some exceptions.

In their introduction to the special edition of *The European Legacy* which marked the Futurist manifesto's centenary, Pierpaolo Antonello and Marja Härmänmaa highlighted Futurism's paradoxical positioning between 'Tradition and Modernity': "from the inception of the movement, the oxymoronic tension between its concrete political strategy, utopian and futuristic projections, and its inextricable dependency on tradition, emerged as a visible

⁵⁴ Emma K. Van Ness, '(No) Queer Futurism: Prostitutes, Pink Poets, and Politics in Italy from 1913-1918', *Carte Italiane*, 2 (2010), 169-186.

⁵⁵ In the absence of an English translation for *passatismo* and *antipassatismo*, the use of the French *passéisme* being the accepted usage in English, this thesis uses the Italian throughout.

trademark of Futurism.”⁵⁶ They consider this unsolvable impasse to be related to Futurism’s avant-gardism, a tract I develop further in chapter three. The special edition of the journal that their article introduces considers Futurism in terms of the past in a number of fields; highlighting the entrenched conservatism in Futurism’s interest in the mechanization of the body and their perception of women, and considering how the Futurists engaged with two of the foremost Italian traditions, food and music.⁵⁷ These articles introduce localized incidents of Futurism occupying an awkward position between tradition and modernity, but wider questions of the consequences of Futurism’s engagement with the past are not addressed.

Another very recent addition to the reconsideration of Futurism’s relationship with the past is Luciano Chessa’s study on Luigi Russolo and the occult, which argues the importance of occultism for Russolo and for Futurism in general, previously overlooked due to the uncritical acceptance of Futurist *antipassatista* rhetoric. As will be addressed at length in chapter four, Chessa attributes great import to Leonardo da Vinci as a source for Russolo’s occultism and musical experiments, claiming that devotion to Leonardo was shared with other Futurists, but had to be kept private to maintain the *antipassatista* reputation.⁵⁸

A recent doctoral thesis has also addressed the temporality of Italian Modernism 1916-1925. Jennifer Ruth Bethke considers Futurism and Neoclassicism together in order to demonstrate that the relationship between past and present in Italy during the interwar period was unresolved. Bethke writes:

Marinetti’s call to “flood the museums” was rhetorical bombast: he knew which buttons to push to evoke the ire of his Italian readers. The Futurist slander of the Italian tradition was also at times used for shock value – hatred of the past was often tossed off as a stock phrase, an easy way to signal one’s anti-bourgeois, rebellious spirit of negation.⁵⁹

This refers back to Rosa Trillo Clough’s questioning of Futurism’s *antipassatismo*, which has rarely been revisited between her 1942 thesis and that of Bethke 63 years later. Stressing Marinetti’s auto-contradictory nature, demonstrated by his nationalism which is anti-Italian, and his role in the Accademia d’Italia despite his anti-academy rhetoric, Clough states:

⁵⁶ Pierpaolo Antonello and Marja Härmänmaa, ‘Future Imperfect: Italian Futurism Between Tradition and Modernity’, *The European Legacy*, 14 (2009), 777-784 (p. 778).

⁵⁷ Enrico Cesaretti, ‘Recipes for the Future: Traces of Past Utopias in The Futurist Cookbook’, *The European Legacy*, 14 (2009), 841-856; Katia Pizzi, ‘Dancing and Flying the Body Mechanical: Five Visions for the New Civilisation’, *The European Legacy*, 14 (2009), 785-798; Christine Poggi, ‘The Futurist Noise Machine’, *The European Legacy*, 14 (2009), 821-840.

⁵⁸ Luciano Chessa, *Luigi Russolo, Futurist: Noise, Visual Arts, and the Occult* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2012), particularly chapters 9 and 10.

⁵⁹ Jennifer Ruth Bethke, ‘From Futurism to Neoclassicism: Temporality in Italian Modernism, 1916-1925,’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2005), p. 2.

It is obviously impossible to suppose that Marinetti meant all he said to be taken literally. He knew as well as we do that the repudiation of the Past signifies the death of the Present; that the stream of History cannot, at pleasure, be dammed or diverted; that wholesale destruction is just as senseless as indiscriminate conservation.⁶⁰

In the same work, both in the 1942 and 1961 versions, Clough dedicates a chapter to Francesco Flora's *Dal Romanticismo al futurismo* (1925), and I argue that this text led Clough to conclude that Marinetti's *antipassatismo* should not be taken seriously. Flora's study, published just 16 years after the 'Founding and Manifesto' (during *secondo futurismo*), argues that it is *passatismo* rather than the past itself which Futurism revolts against. This concept forms part of the foundations of my research and Flora's study will be returned to throughout. Flora also stressed the continuity between Marinetti's work before and after 1909 by referring to the 1905 play *Re Baldoria* as Futurist.⁶¹

The continuity highlighted by Flora's work begins a long-lasting strand of research about Futurism which connects to its immediate literary and artistic precursors in Italy and France, both rhetorically and formally. There have been, however, far more substantial appraisals of Marinetti's pre-Futurism than of the Futurist artists prior to 1909; treatments of Marinetti's relationship continuation of his immediate forebears have led to re-appraisals of Futurism which overturn the accepted reading of the movement as a rupture.⁶² On the other hand, scholars who accept Marinetti's aversion to his immediate predecessors have noted his later interest in 'classic' Italian literature, such as Dante, Leopardi and Pirandello.⁶³

Futurism's artistic predecessors have become a standard, albeit brief, inclusion in Anglophone survey works on the movement, including those by Martin and Tisdall and Bozzolla.⁶⁴ Martin's book also includes a number of comparisons of Futurist art to that of the Italian tradition, which were important in inspiring this research. However, Martin's transhistorical comparisons tend to be made on a formalist basis with little interrogation of

⁶⁰ Clough, *Futurism: The Story of a Modern Art Movement*, p. 12.

⁶¹ "Non contro il passato, ma contro il passatismo"; "Re Baldoria è un'opera assolutamente Futurista. È la caricatura del Passatismo." Francesco Flora, *Dal Romanticismo al futurismo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1925), pp. 72, 171.

⁶² On Marinetti's relationship with his immediate predecessors see Günter Berghaus, *The Genesis of Futurism: Marinetti's early career and writings 1899-1909* (Leeds: Society for Italian Studies, 1995). See also Pär Bergman, "Modernolatria" Et "simultaneità": *Recherches sur deux tendances dans l'avant-garde littéraire en Italie et en France à la veille de la première guerre mondiale* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1962), particularly pp. 37-47. On the consequences of this continuity for Futurism see Romano Luperini, 'Marinetti et la Tradition', in *Vitalité et Contradictions de l'avant garde*, ed. by Sandro Briosi and Henk Hillenaar (Paris: Librairie José Coti, 1988), pp. 17-26.

⁶³ Matteo D'Ambrosio, *Le 'Commemorazioni in Avanti' di F.T. Marinetti: Futurismo e critica letteraria* (Naples: Liguori, 1999).

⁶⁴ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-15*. Tisdall and Bozzolla, *Futurism*.

possible motivations for such appropriations or consideration of the consequences for Futurist rhetoric. Therefore, this research will repeatedly draw on Martin, testing the empirical basis of her comparisons and reassessing their impact on Futurist ideology.

In Italian language scholarship there have been many considerations of the Futurist artists' pre-Futurist works; the 'pre-Futurism' of Balla and Boccioni has been addressed in exhibitions and catalogues, by Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco in 1970 and Calvesi in 1983 respectively.⁶⁵ Balla in particular, due to his relatively successful career as a Divisionist painter before becoming FuturBalla, has received such treatments. This continuity has been made particularly clear in *Giuseppe Pellizza e Giacomo Balla: dal divisionismo al futurismo* and Flora's Dal....al futurismo model has been repeated in *Dal Simbolismo al futurismo, Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo*.⁶⁶ In order to highlight Boccioni's autonomy from Marinetti, attention has been drawn to a passage in Boccioni's diary on 14th March 1907 in which he demonstrates Futurist interests *ante litteram* by expressing a desire to reject the old and paint the new, specifically the industrial city.⁶⁷

However, these narratives contradict the prevalent tendency which positions Futurism at the beginning of histories. My point here is to stress that it is possible to read it as a conclusion, rather than an introduction. The greater awareness of the Macchiaioli, Scapigliati and Divisionisti amongst Italian art historians has led to more consideration being given to their relationships with the Futurist movement. When exhibited and studied outside of Italy, these artists are often introduced in the guise as setting a precedent for Futurism, as seen in the 2008 *Radical Light* exhibition at the National Gallery, London.⁶⁸ This is more than a convenient way of introducing the public to their work, as their rhetoric, if not always their subjects and techniques, is often similar to Futurism's, particularly in reference to the relationship with the past, as will be fully surveyed in chapter five.

⁶⁵ Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco, *Balla pre-futurista* (Rome: Mario Bulzoni, 1970). Maurizio Calvesi, *Boccioni prefuturista* (Milan: Electa, 1983).

⁶⁶ Bruno Romani, *Dal Simbolismo al futurismo* (Florence: Remo Sandron, 1969). Flavio Caroli and Ada Masoero, *Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo* (Milan: Skira, 2001).

⁶⁷ "Sento che voglio dipingere il nuovo, il frutto del nostro tempo industriale. Sono nauseato di vecchi muri, di vecchi palazzi, di vecchi motivi di reminiscenze; voglio avere sott'occhio la vita di oggi. I campi, la quiete, le casette, il bosco, i visi rossi e forti, le membra dei lavoratori, i cavalli stanchi ecc. tutto questo emporio di sentimentalismo moderno mi hanno stancato. Anzi, tutta l'arte moderna mi pare vecchia. Voglio del nuovo, dell'espressivo, del formidabile! Vorrei cancellare tutti i valori che conosco che conosco e che sto perdendo di vista, per rifare, ricostruire su nuove basi! Tutto il passato, meravigliosamente grande, m'opprime io voglio del nuovo!" Umberto Boccioni, '[14th March 1907]', reprinted in *Diari*, ed. by Gabriella Di Milia (Milan: Abscondita, 2003), pp. 14-15 (p. 14).

⁶⁸ Simonetta Fraquelli, Giovanna Ginex, Vivien Greene, and Aurora Scotti Tosini, *Radical Light: Italy's Divisionist Painters 1891-1910* (London: National Gallery, 2008).

The concept of Futurism having a 'pre-history' was first created by Guido Ballo in his 1960 *Preistoria del futurismo*. Like Flora, Ballo insisted on the continuity between art before and after the 1909 manifesto, and criticised other scholars for their blindness to Futurism before 1909, particularly the *Archivi del futurismo*'s omission of any art or theoretical writings before that date.⁶⁹ The same year, Crispolti denied the claim that no scholars had concerned themselves with Futurism's prehistory,⁷⁰ but Ballo remains the most committed proponent of the idea of continuity in the genesis of Futurism, and as will be seen, one of the few to combine this with temporal questions.

The temporal discussion common to all scholarship on Futurism is the acceptance of the influence of Henri Bergson's philosophy on the Futurist artists, particularly Boccioni, mentioned in most texts on the movement. The seminal study of this relationship is Brian Petrie's 'Boccioni and Bergson' (1974), which describes Boccioni's familiarity with Bergson's work, as evidenced in his notebooks, and highlights where in the artist's art and theory this interest was manifest.⁷¹ This relationship has been further endorsed by Mark Antliff's work on Bergson's importance to the European avant-gardes.⁷² However, I would argue that Antliff's work attributes too extensive a philosophical understanding of Bergson to the Futurist artists. In chapter one I will demonstrate that the Futurists had divergent, ambivalent and inconsistent approaches to the temporal question, which can be attributed to more varied sources than a wholesale adoption of Bergsonian thought.

Enrico Cesaretti's essay 'Back to the Future: Temporal Ambivalences in F.T. Marinetti's Writings' is perhaps the clearest precedent for my research;⁷³ it considers ideas of time in the context of Marinetti's literary oeuvre, but does not expand such ideas to the visual artists. By close-reading Marinetti's Futurist texts, including many of the manifestos I will address in part I, Cesaretti's essay looks to disassemble Stephen Kern's neat summary of the Futurist repudiation of the past and muddy Guido Gugliemi's distinction between a synchronic avant-

⁶⁹ Guido Ballo, *Preistoria del futurismo: corso monografico di storia dell'arte*, Accademia di Brera, 1959-60 (Milan: Maestri, 1960). Guido Ballo, *Futurismo Italiano: prefuturismo, futurismo storico, arte futurista applicata, futurismo tra il '20 e il '30* (Modena: Galleria Fonte d'Abisso edizioni, 1986).

⁷⁰ Crispolti, 'Il Futurismo alla Biennale 1960', in *Storia e critica del futurismo*, p. 106.

⁷¹ Brian Petrie, 'Boccioni and Bergson', *The Burlington Magazine*, 116 (1974), 140-147.

⁷² Mark Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993). See also by the same author 'Bergson and Cubism: A Reassessment', *Art Journal*, 47 (1988), 341-349 and 'The Fourth Dimension and Futurism: A Politicized Space', *Art Bulletin*, 82 (2000), 720-733.

⁷³ Enrico Cesaretti, 'Back to the Future: Temporal Ambivalences in F.T. Marinetti's Writings', in *Italian Modernism: Italian Culture Between Decadentism and Avant-Garde*, ed. by Luca Somigli and Mario Moroni (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 243-266.

garde and a diachronic modernism,⁷⁴ ideas which will be returned to. The hypothesis presented is that Marinetti's temporality was not solely negative with regards to time and the past. In fact, the ambivalence in Marinetti's statements about time can be considered in terms of the Bergsonian division of time into the intellectual and the instinctual; a division which will be fully addressed in chapter one. The result of this temporal ambivalence is that Futurism, or at least Marinetti's Futurism, cannot be described as synchronic, due to its engagement with time, leading to consequences for the movement's position with regards to avant-gardism and modernism, returned to in chapter three.

In summary, my research's questioning of the Futurism's *antipassatismo* rhetoric, its interest in the continuities between Futurism and its forebears, and its awareness of the philosophy of time and the peculiarities of its temporalities all have precedents in Anglophone and Italian language historiographies of Futurism. However, the conjunction of these ideas in a prolonged study is yet to be completed, and so this research makes an original contribution within the subfields of Futurism studies concerned with revising ideas of the movement through its contradictions, and engaging with its temporalities.

Methodology and structure

My approach to this project is informed by the abovementioned literature and other methodologies within the history of art. Before discussing my approach to the material in question, I would like to return to the scope outlined at the start of this introduction in the light of the existing literature and support it with methodological justifications.

I have selected the decade 1909 to 1919 primarily due to Marinetti's statement in 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' that the Futurists have "at least a decade" to complete their work, as at the age of forty they should be thrown "into the wastebasket."⁷⁵ However, this cannot be taken as a sharply lineated timeframe; Marinetti claims that they have at least a decade because the oldest of them is thirty but Marinetti was 33 when this manifesto was published in *Le Figaro* and Balla (yet to be involved) was 38. Moreover, Futurism continued on in ever-mutating forms until, arguably, Marinetti's death. This decade, therefore, serves both as the temporality initially indicated by Marinetti (and not revised by the Futurist

⁷⁴ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (London: Harvard University Press, 2003). Guido Guglielmi, *La parola del testo: letteratura come storia* (Bologna: Mulino, 1993).

⁷⁵ Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 23.

artists), and a reminder of the paradoxical nature of many of their temporal statements. I do not pose 1909-1919 as an answer to the question of when was first Futurism, which scholars unanimously start with publication of the 'Founding and Manifesto' in *Le Figaro* on 20 February 1909⁷⁶ and disparately close with either the rise of Metaphysical Art (around 1915), Italy's entry into the First World War (May 1915),⁷⁷ Boccioni's death (August 1916), the rise of Fascism (March 1919) or Marinetti's wish for Futurism to become the aesthetic arm of the Fascist state (1923).⁷⁸ Such end-points suggest that first Futurism either reached a teleological resolution or received a blow from which it could not recover. This study will address the decade between the first manifesto and the *Great National Futurist Exhibition* which toured Milan, Genoa and Florence in spring 1919, in order to survey the developing relationship with time and history in the temporal period outlined by Marinetti as that to which Futurism belonged. This decade can be considered as a synchronic Futurist moment, a present to differentiate from the past, and a diachronic arc including changes in the relationship with the past in the oeuvres of the artists addressed.

The decision to close this research in the year when Benito Mussolini founded the *Fasci italiani del combattimento* is taken not through a desire to divorce Futurism as art from Futurism as politics, an action criticised in the literature review. In order to analyse Futurism's relationship with the past rather than Fascism's, I here aim to keep them separate by focusing on pre-1919 Futurism. The movements' relationships with the past arguably cross-pollinated through shared nationalist rhetoric before 1919, but are far harder to divide as Fascism's hegemony increased and Marinetti fluctuated wildly in his political stance. The Fascist preoccupation with Ancient Rome is well-known, but its overall approaches to art and history were varied, and were particularly ambiguous in the formative years around 1919.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ As mentioned previously the first drafts of the manifesto were begun in July 1908. It was, in fact, first published in full in Bologna in the *Gazzetta dell'Emilia* on 5th February 1909, but the *Le Figaro* appearance is considered Futurism's official birthday. For a full list of the manifesto's publications and press reaction prior to *Le Figaro* see Giovanni Lista, 'Genesis and Analysis of Marinetti's *Manifesto of Futurism*, 1908-1909', in *Futurism*, ed. by Didier Ottinger (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), pp. 78-83 (particularly p. 80).

⁷⁷ In addition to the aforementioned works by Barr and Martin this practice continued in the 2009 centenary exhibition which toured the Centre Georges-Pompidou, Paris, the Scuderie del Quirinale, Rome, and Tate Modern, London. Notably Perloff saw futurism with a small f as a short-lived synchronic moment, which could not be continued after World War I. Perloff, *The Futurist Moment*, pp. xxxv-xxxix.

⁷⁸ As will be discussed in chapter 3, Adamson associates this 1923 end date with the end of Futurism's avant-gardism. Walter L. Adamson, 'How Avant-Gardes End—and Begin: Italian Futurism in Historical Perspective', *New Literary History*, 41 (2011), 855-874.

⁷⁹ Claudia Lazzaro and Roger J. Crum, eds, *Donatello among the Blackshirts: History and Modernity in the Visual Culture of Fascist Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

It has elsewhere been noted that during second Futurism the *antipassatismo* which defined early Futurism was less pronounced, or even absent.⁸⁰ The lack of iconoclastic rhetoric in this later period was accompanied by a return to the subjects of sentiment and nostalgic memory in Futurist texts, and change and modernity were treated with ambivalence.⁸¹ While the development of Futurism's relationship with the past after 1919 is of great interest to the full story of Futurism's temporality, as manifest in Marinetti's election to the Italian Academy in 1928, the analogy between Baroque and Rococo *di sotto in su* painting and Futurist *aeropittura*, the spiritual aspects of second Futurism, and the posthumous bronze casts of Boccioni's sculptures commissioned by Marinetti, the aim of this research is to consider Futurism as constructed in its early theoretical writings, hence the use of Marinetti's own 1919 deadline.

This research focuses on the canonical artists of *primo futurismo* - the five signatories of the 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' – Balla, Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo and Severini. The selection of the most established Futurist artists, rather than the more peripheral figures whose distance from Marinetti could have allowed a less dogmatic approach to Futurism's *antipassatismo*, is deliberate. These are the artists who openly subscribed to, and themselves scripted, the *antipassatista* declarations which this research close-reads. Moreover, the quantity of research on this core group of Futurists allows this thesis's combination of analysis of existing readings on the relationship with the past from the canon of Futurist historiography, with new research into the artists' relationships with the past. These artists' styles, and relationships with the past, are all quite distinct, and will be treated accordingly in this research. Although Marinetti obviously serves as the founder and primary theorist of Futurism, I avoid the tendency to homogenise Futurism under solely his ideas; his poetic agenda should not be confused with the painters' aesthetic agenda. This inclination to equate all Futurism with Marinetti was first identified and opposed by Palazzeschi, Papini and Soffici in a *Lacerba* article in 1915, in which they claim that they, the Florentines alongside Milanese Futurists, are in fact the true Futurists, as opposed to Marinettists.⁸² I will expand

⁸⁰ Cesaretti, 'Back to the Future: Temporal Ambivalences in F.T. Marinetti's Writings', in *Italian Modernism*, ed. by Somigli and Moroni, pp. 243-266 (p. 246). Blum, *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power*, p. 126.

⁸¹ Blum, *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power*, pp. 127, 137-140.

⁸² Aldo Palazzeschi, Giovanni Papini, Ardengo Soffici, 'Marinettismo e Futurismo', *Lacerba*, III, n. 7, 14 February 1915, pp. 49-50. The equation of Marinetti with Futurism continues, as manifest in one of the

upon this discussion in chapter two but suffice here to say that including the Florentines encourages heterogeneity within Futurism. As with Marinetti, the Florentines are not the central focus of this research, but their writings aid the re-evaluation of Futurism's relationship with the past.

This research necessarily positions the Futurist avant-gardism in relation to the Parisian model, as a means of demonstrating both their relationship and independence, especially with regards to their *antipassatismo*. As stated in the literature review, the geographic field of Futurism studies is vastly increasing but this research is restricted to Italian Futurism, as Marinetti and the artists closely bind *antipassatismo* and *italianità*. Moreover, the dominance of Italy in the art historical canon, one of the key motivators of the existence of Futurism, gives great scope to the analysis of Futurism's relationship with the Italian past.

It is necessary at this juncture to pause and consider the word 'Italian'. Italy first became a fully unified nation in 1861 after the Risorgimento. This period of 'resurgence' saw King Vittorio Emanuele II, Camillo Cavour and Giuseppe Garibaldi take power from various foreign rulers through a range of means, from Cavour's shrewd political dealings to Garibaldi's famous liberation missions. While this created the nation-state of Italy, the peninsula as a land mass has been known as Italia since Ancient Rome. However, as is often noted about Italy, even up to the 1960s, and in some cases even up to today, its citizens tend to identify themselves more with their town or region than with the nation as a whole. I use two approaches, based on Futurist writings, to resolve this difficulty in attributing *italianità*. The Futurists refer to people and things from before unification as Italian and so I accept Italian as a geographic term, referring to the whole peninsula, including artworks created, unearthed, or displayed there. The second sense of Italian is stylistic; Severini called El Greco, Ribera, Rembrandt, Delacroix, and "the most advanced painters of our day from Cézanne to the Cubists"⁸³ part of the Italian tradition and Boccioni claimed that, stylistically, Cézanne was Italian,⁸⁴ hence my consideration of art produced outside Italy in order to apply a wide lens to this study of the relationship between Futurism and an 'Italian' tradition.

centenary exhibitions and publications: Luigi Sansone, ed., *F.T. Marinetti = Futurismo* (Milan: F. Motta, 2009).

⁸³ Gino Severini, 'Introduction to *The Futurist Painter Severini exhibits his latest works*, Marlborough Gallery, London, April 1913', reprinted in *Archivi del futurismo*, ed. by Drudi Gambillo and Fiori, I, 113-115 (p. 114).

⁸⁴ "Cézanne è tutto italiano antico" Umberto Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, ed. by Zeno Birolli (Milan: Abscondita, 2006 [1914]), p. 71. This is considered at length in chapter 5.5.

The primary sources for this research are visual and textual, the practice and theory produced by the identified artists and writers during the aforementioned decade. By working with both published materials, often edited by Marinetti, and those not for publication, I hope to establish a stronger empirical foundation for the heterogeneity of relationships with the past that I argue existed amongst the Futurists. The same approach is taken for visual sources, as sketches and works carried out before the launch of Futurism offer information on the artists working practices, and the effect Futurism (and Marinetti) had upon these. By working with manifestos in their original Italian (or French when appropriate) I avoid using translations coloured by an uncritical acceptance of Futurism's repudiation of the past.⁸⁵ However, I do cite published English versions when my translation from the original language does not differ.

With regards to temporality, my focus is on the visual and textual works produced 1909 and 1919, but as a necessity works outside this era must be considered. The Futurists' works from before 1909 will be considered so as to demonstrate continuity between their art before and after the launch of Futurism, with attention paid to their claim that they had no past; these works are as much of the past, that is, before the Futurist present, as the older works considered in this thesis. Boccioni's diaries from 1907 and 1908 offer further insight into his relationship with the past in his formative years. Carrà and Severini's autobiographies may be coloured by hindsight, but even so aid our comprehension of at least how Futurism looked back on its relationship with the past. The Futurists' relationship with the past, both in the sense of the philosophies of time and history, and as art history, needs to be placed in the field of possible positions to be taken during this Futurist moment. Therefore, sources demonstrating ideas held about the philosophies of time and history and the history of art in this period are another key source, as are journals, books and exhibitions written in the early twentieth century. I am concerned with the historiography of Futurism and so Anglophone and Italian language art historical literature on the movement is also analysed.

Having outlined the material to be considered, I now turn to my approach to it. The methodology of this thesis is reflected in its structure, and I will here explicate the two in tandem. The two halves of the thesis are not separate entities methodologically or structurally, they are mutually informing and mutually justifying. However, within each part

⁸⁵ See page 1 n. 2 of this introduction for an example of this.

a different methodology dominates, and it is the juxtaposition of these which forms my overarching methodology. This is a work in the disciplines of the histories of art and ideas, and a work about these histories, although necessarily the history of art dominates. The juxtaposition is informed by Peter Osborne's notion that a period of time's understanding of time is essential to understanding that period.⁸⁶

The first part of the thesis juxtaposes the history of ideas and the history of art, arguing that the Futurists' temporality was central to their project and that their understanding of time evident in their rhetorical and aesthetic approaches to speed and simultaneity should be read in conjunction with their *antipassatismo* and their attitudes to the past, present and future, avant-gardism and tradition. Each chapter looks to re-evaluate the relationship with the temporal modes in question through close-reading of Futurist texts and images, in conjunction with other contemporary sources from science, philosophy, society and the arts, in order to contextualise the position taken by Futurism and empirically support ideological comparisons made. I avoid both the tendencies to impute similarities to zeitgeist or to attribute in-depth and consistent philosophical ideas to the Futurists. Much as the Futurists used theoretical ideas to justify their own, this research, and particularly the first part of this thesis, draws on critical theory and philosophy in as much depth as is appropriate in each case to aid thinking around various ideas raised. As such, in addition to the early twentieth-century history of the ideas of time and history, this research also draws upon more contemporary (to my present) ideas to inform the discussions. While I do not claim that the work of later theorists in any way affected the Futurists, my discussions of temporality make clear that contemporary theory does affect my reading of Futurism, and, moreover, these more recent ideas often retrospectively elucidate those found in Futurism. This research does not apply a single, specific critical lens, but uses many in order to aid the attempt to synthesise the formal similarities with the past in Futurist art and their rhetoric of *antipassatismo*.

In chapter one, which considers the Futurist relationship with time as a whole, the future and the present, I argue that a close-reading of Futurist rhetoric and artistic output shows that the focus of their interest was in fact on the present, rather than the future. This is supported both by their tendency to paint their present rather than their future, and the claim that the

⁸⁶ Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-garde* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 1.

futurity evident in their manifestos is one based on present action. Considering phenomenological approaches to time, particularly Bergson's and Husserl's, I argue that the Futurists' temporality did not conceive time as distinct moments, but a flux of past, present and future. It was, however, possible for there to be a *futurista* present and a *passatista* one. The former was Futurism's obsession, the latter, chapter two argues, its nemesis.

Husserl's distinction of retention and recollection allows this relationship with the past, or rather the *passatista* present to be nuanced further since the active recollection of the past, which this chapter associates with history, is distinct from the natural retention of memory which is necessary for the experience of speed and movement. In chapter two I also address Futurism's conceptualization of history and art history, looking at how Boccioni in particular periodizes art history in order to reconsider his notion of the shape of history, relating his art historical model to the precedents of Giorgio Vasari and Roberto Longhi.

This consideration of the relationship between the past of art history and the present of art practice is developed in the third chapter. By focusing on the relationship between past and present created by avant-gardism, which relies upon both evolution and revolution and as such continues the cyclical theme considered in chapter two, I avoid the reductive equation of *antipassatismo* and avant-gardism and establish the importance of the past for avant-gardism and for Futurism. Considering avant-gardism as a tradition of the new leads to a reassessment of the temporality of tradition, drawing on Walter Benjamin, Martin Heidegger and T.S. Eliot to emphasise the transformative rather than conservative power of temporal transition from past to present. Appropriation is then considered as a potentially subversive mode of interacting with the past, which could be used by avant-gardists to simultaneously position themselves as an evolution and a revolution from an artistic past; this reading supports the possible appropriations of the Italian artistic tradition identified in the second part of this thesis.

The second half of this thesis is divided into two chapters which relate to the ideas of remembrance and recollection, *passato prossimo* and *passato remoto*, explored in chapter one. The post-Risorgimento Italy of the Futurists' lifetimes, their lived pasts, addressed in chapter five, is divided from their relationship to anything which happened before, which falls into the category of history, addressed in chapter four. These temporal pockets are then further divided into sections addressing art historical periods as recognised by the Futurists

themselves, that is, periods they refer to and position themselves against. Any unevenness in the length of these sections is indicative in the unevenness of Futurism's relationship with the periods in question.

These sections are not divided by the calendrical periodization of Italian art historical convention, the *trecento*, *quattrocento*, *cinquecento*, etc, because the Futurists tended to use descriptive, typological time periods, to be discussed in chapter two, eras which represent a certain character. In chapter four these are Classical art, Byzantine art, the Italian Primitives, the High Renaissance and the Baroque; the temporal implications of many of these names is fully recognised in these sections. The characterization of each period and the artists assigned to it are based on the reception of that period in early twentieth century Italy. In chapter five I consider artists according to the movement they were associated with, that is the *Macchiaioli*, *Scapigliati* and *Divisionisti* in Italy and the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists in Paris. Addressing art in Paris in this chapter enables further contextualisation of the *antipassatismo* of Futurism and its Italian precedents and highlights where the Futurist interest in the Italian tradition came filtered via French art. Medardo Rosso, Paul Cézanne and Pablo Picasso are addressed individually; in the case of Rosso this is due to the difficulty of associating him with a movement and his individual importance for Futurism, for Cézanne and Picasso this allows me to focus on a specific aspect of their reception in Italy and relate them to Primitivism in the last stage of this thesis which draws together a number of earlier strands.

While each period case study is necessarily composed distinctly in line with the individuality of the relationship Futurism has with that period, the chapters and sections composing Part II of the thesis have similar approaches. Each section addresses Futurism's relationship with the period as a whole, demonstrated in their manifestos and other texts, and relates this to wider ideas about the period in question and its contemporary reception amongst artists, critics and historians. Doing so removes the gloss of homogeneity of art history implied when referring to Futurism's self-identification as against the past as a whole. However, the chapters require somewhat different methodologies when addressing possible appropriations and the 'motive and opportunity' for these because, as I argue, the Futurist artists had different overarching relationships with recent and distant pasts.

In the chapter addressing the *passato remoto* I focus on formal comparisons between Futurist art and its historic predecessors, surveying those made in existing scholarship and suggesting my own, but I undermine the autonomy of formalism by insisting that formal comparisons are justified with empirical research into the possibility of the Futurists having the necessary awareness of the source work, the opportunity to appropriate. This involves research into the provenance of objects and history of institutions to highlight the temporality of each object considered, that is, the conditions of its display in the Futurist decade in question. Moreover, it necessitates consideration of each object's temporality in the sense of whether it is considered innovative or *passatista* by artists, art historians and the wider public at this time. This contributes to the motivations I propose, which suggest why an appropriation of the work, artist and/or period in question could have been in keeping with Futurist ideology.

Given the Futurists' open admiration of their predecessors in Milan and Paris (and to a lesser extent Florence) from the 1860s onwards, the need to trace opportunities and consider motives is reduced in chapter five. However, empirical justifications and ideological considerations are still required. Addressing the exhibitions in which the Futurists could have seen works by these predecessors leads on to discussion of the anti-academic practices and rhetoric of these movements. The comparison of Futurist manifestos and texts to previous artists' statements is the main activity of this chapter, but the anti-academic and by association *antipassatista* ideals subscribed to in those texts are considered in the context of their practical steps to exclude the academy by creating alternative spaces for sales and exhibitions and the development of the 'dealer-critic system' in Italy.⁸⁷ I do not present an in-depth analysis of changing exhibition and market practices in post-Risorgimento Italy, but considering this in relation to *antipassatista* rhetoric serves to highlight the ways in which their *antipassatismo* set precedents for Futurism rather than accept these predecessors as avant-gardes *ante litteram*, as well as develop another strand of continuity through the galleries and organizations which exhibited Futurism.

The use of a chronological approach in this half of the thesis, despite the non-linear ideas of time presented in the first half, is in order to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of chronology

⁸⁷ Harrison C. White and Cynthia A. White, *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993 [1965]).

in explaining the interrelated temporalities of the art historical material considered. Chronology is further interrupted in the figures for this thesis which are presented in simultaneous bursts of imagery, resembling Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*. As will be discussed in chapter three, I do not present a Warburgian story of survivals, but his mode of presenting imagery to create an art history without words which attests to continuity is highly appropriate for this study. This practice brings together the two halves of this thesis which discuss the same works in different ways, emphasises the visual similarities discussed in the second half and encourages the groups of images to be thought of as synchronic, rather than diachronic, coeval, rather than causal. As such the themes produced by this presentation of images complement key themes in this research: temporality, memory and the narration of history.

In summary, this research does not ask whether the Futurists failed to fulfil their own *antipassatismo* in their art, instead it considers what their *antipassatismo* was, given the inconsistency between the received idea and many aspects of their practice. Approaching art history with a wide temporal lens, that is, looking at the full canon of Italian art history from the perspective of its reception in Italy between 1909 and 1919 allows connections to be made which are discouraged by Anglophone art history's tight period specializations. In this respect, as well as in its usage of Italian language historiography and original translations of source material, this thesis can be seen as part of an Italian art historical tradition which arguably began with Longhi's 'short-circuit'⁸⁸ between different periods in Italian art.

This thesis juxtaposes different methodologies and borrows from different disciplines to produce a method which encourages a fresh perspective. Combining close-reading of texts and images, empirical, contextual and theoretical research and drawing upon the history of ideas, philosophy, history and critical theory both to resolve ideas and instigate new directions of thought, these methodologies are seen as tools, which are selected as appropriate to draw out crucial aspects of the argument herein.

⁸⁸ "Longhi's entire art-historical corpus is based on a short-circuit between ancient and modern art." Maria Grazia Messina, 'Roberto Longhi and Modern Art. Ravenna', *The Burlington Magazine*, 145 (2003), 538-539 (p. 538).

Such an approach is related to a self-awareness of art historical practice. Producing research that argues the opposite of the majority of existing scholarship, itself not factually flawed, highlights the difficulty in establishing truth in historical writing. The creation of art historical narrative is dependent on cross-temporal visual connections being sought out. As highlighted earlier, art history thrives on the presence or absence of these connections and the major trends of rupture and continuity which produce a continuous yet neatly divisible canon. Connecting art objects is a fundamental activity of art history, which has led to the existing links made between Futurism and the Italian tradition. The activity of the second part of this thesis is equally as representative of this art historical desire for continuity, even when considering artists who claimed complete originality. Futurism therefore makes a particularly interesting case study with regards to the temporality of art history.

Part I Past Philosophic

If the future does not exist then the past does not exist
Umberto Boccioni, unpublished manuscript (c. 1910)¹

Futurism was inherently temporal: Marinetti's rejection of Dynamism and Electricism as names for his movement, as well as his equation of Futurism with *antipassatismo* demonstrate a temporal fixation. This fixation was echoed by the Futurist artists, receiving limited, but fruitful, scholarly attention. Even the most reductive interpretations of Futurism, in which the movement is described as for the future and against the past, demonstrate that time was at its very core. Luca Somigli's nuanced article on space and modernity in Marinetti's early Futurist writings acknowledges the importance of time; I quote Somigli at length as his vocabulary introduces a number of ideas that echo throughout this and the following chapters.

From the beginning, Marinetti constructs the cultural project of the movement around the question of time: time as history, time as cultural tradition, time, in other words, as an emplotment of past events or as a narrative which does not only attempt to provide meaning and coherence to the experiences of the past but which also serves as a project for the future, a blueprint for the ways things should be. Time thus becomes one of the primary targets of the Futurist program. As is well known, Marinetti reserved his most scathing sarcasm, his harshest words for everything that bore the scent of history: few words in the Futurist vocabulary pack as much contempt as *passatismo*, love for the past, and its related adjective, *passatista*.²

It is central to my argument that Futurism's understanding of time as a whole is connected to its relationship with the past. How the Futurists perceived the passing of time on a small scale, that is, the passing of seconds, minutes and hours, which supported their obsession with speed and movement, is rarely taken into account when considering Futurism's attitude towards time on a large scale, that is, the past, present and future. This first section of the thesis addresses the Futurists' temporalities on both a small and large scale by close-reading Futurist texts and images and relating them to relevant ideas of time current in the decade 1909 to 1919. As stated in the introduction chapters one and two also fulfil Osborne's dictum that the comprehension of a period of time should not be separated from the understanding of time within that period.³

¹ Umberto Boccioni, unpaginated manuscript. These papers are held in the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Boccioni papers 1899-1986, Barcode 33125008273969, Accession 880380, Box 3. Folder 21.

² Luca Somigli, 'On the Threshold: Space and Modernity in Marinetti's Early Manifestoes and *Tavole Parolibere*', *Rivista di studi italiani*, 17 (1999), 250-274 (p. 253).

³ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p. 1.

Chapter 1: Futurism and presentism

This chapter introduces the importance of time to Futurism, commencing with a consideration of the semantics which govern the understanding and critical discussion of it, a necessary preface to this chapter's analysis of the language of Futurism's temporality. By close-reading Futurist manifestos in the light of a more nuanced idea of the future and the present, I go on to argue that Futurism's temporality is not one of pure futurism,⁴ but of presentism. The chapter then addresses Futurism's ambivalent relationship with contemporary ideas of time, focusing first on the clock-time of industrialization and how its effects are evident in Futurist art and then on Einstein's questioning of clock-time, reflected in the temporal statements of Marinetti's manifestos. Futurism's ambivalent temporality is then considered with reference to photography and chronophotography. Finally, this chapter addresses the phenomenological time of Henri Bergson and Edmund Husserl, how motion and memory are depicted in Futurist painting, and the role of the past in the present, leading on to the next chapter.

Italian time

Time plays an essential role in the human condition; extant traces of the earliest humans demonstrate an awareness of change, and so it can be inferred that some comprehension of time is common to all humanity.⁵ Its ubiquity has made it an often returned to subject for philosophy; changes in the philosophy of time have often run parallel to developments in science and technology. Therefore time, or rather its comprehension, while appearing universal, is in fact historically, geographically and culturally specific. The specificity of the temporalities of pre-World War One Europe, the primary focus of this chapter, has been most thoroughly investigated in Kern's *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, which argues that the nature of time as a whole, as well as relations with the past, present and future were being rewritten in this period.⁶

⁴ Capitalization is used throughout this thesis to distinguish the general temporality futurism from the specific art movement Futurism. However, the Futurists, many scholars and the Italian language use a lowercase f and this has not been altered in quotations, any confusion raised by this is signposted.

⁵ G.J. Whitrow, *Time in History: The Evolution of Our General Awareness of Time and Temporal Perspective* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 21-23.

⁶ Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*.

Before considering the ideas of time contemporary to the Futurists, it is necessary to be self-aware that my temporality is both historically and geographically distant from theirs. It is helpful here to briefly consider the different perceptions of Italian and Anglo-American time. This is an area ripe for research; in the absence of an authoritative text on the subject, there are some useful widely accepted tropes, which are well-illustrated by cinema. In general Italians see Anglo-American time as more hurried, more ordered, more precise, and Anglo-Americans see Italian time as quite the opposite. In *Avanti!* (1972)⁷ a successful American businessman travels to the island of Ischia to retrieve his deceased father's body, but finds his strict timescale impaired by long Italian lunch breaks, Sunday rest, and a general lack of hurrying. By contrast, the UK and US are represented in Italian cinema as places of speed and rush, as evident in scenes of New York in *My Name is Tanino* (2002);⁸ even the Sicilian émigrés who have been living in the United States have adopted the hurried manner of their new home. The Futurist rejection of the *dolce far niente* attitude in favour of Anglo-American speed and efficiency is one cause of Marinetti being accused of Americanization. This issue of the Italian national temporality will be returned to at the end of this thesis, when I compare it to an African temporality.

Sociological differences in temporality are arguably related to linguistic differences. As this thesis works with more than one language, this issue is particularly pertinent. Verb tenses and temporal words, such as 'before', 'after', and 'during', make it possible to describe events on a temporal axis. Indo-European languages distinguish past, present and future, but others can be quite different.⁹ An (albeit disputed) extreme case in point is Benjamin Lee Whorf's description of Hopi language as containing no words, expressions or grammatical forms relating to time, past, present or future, or duration at all.¹⁰ Given that this thesis is an Anglophone work about an Italophone (and sometimes Francophone) movement, it deals with a family of languages and their associated temporal constructions, and their diversities should not be ignored. It should also be noted that the German philosophy discussed in this thesis has been read in English translation, and any German-language specifics are identified

⁷ *Avanti!*, dir. by Billy Wilder (United Artists, 1972).

⁸ *My Name Is Tanino*, dir. by Paolo Virzi (Medusa Distribuzione, 2003). I thank Monica Streifer for bringing the relevance of this film to my attention.

⁹ For example in Hebrew, an action can either be incomplete or perfected; while in English the future lies before us, in Hebrew it comes after us. Whitrow, *Time in History*, p. 13.

¹⁰ Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, ed. by John B. Carroll (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1956), pp. 57-58.

as necessary. However, given the important role of Italian and English in this research, I will briefly summarize the relevant temporal linguistic differences between the two languages. The use of temporal words and constructions is similar between the two languages, but the use of the word 'time', and the syntax of the past, present and future does differ. The following semantic analysis enables reconsideration of Futurism's temporality as expressed in its language.

Despite their orthographic similarity, 'time' has a Germanic origin, and is a synonym of 'tide', and *tempo* comes from the Latin *tempus*, translated to English as 'time'. While for the most part *tempo* translates directly into English as time (although the word is also used for the English 'weather'), when in English the word time denotes an occasion or a specific hour, Italian uses *volta* and *ora* (hour).¹¹ My use of original Italian and French texts (French is much like the Italian in the above example) is, *inter alia*, in order to overcome the overuse of the word 'time' in English for translations of other concepts than time at large.

The Italian *tempo* also translates as 'tense' and a key consideration for this thesis is the difference between two of the past tenses: the *passato prossimo* compound past (I have written) and the *passato remoto* historic past (I wrote). The regional diversity of the Italian language and its changing use over time invalidate universal statements about the different usages of these tenses. This causes considerable difficulty in reading meaning into the choice of tense made by the Futurists in their writings. However, for the purposes of structuring this thesis, and considering different relationships with the past, I take the current received correct usage of the two tenses. The *passato prossimo* is a spoken and written tense used for the recent past; the *passato remoto* is a primarily written tense used for a more distant past. While theories have abounded about the temporal distance necessary to make an event distant, rather than recent past, it is today considered that the relevance of the event to the present is the main factor.¹² The fact that this distance is a psychological factor, rather than a measurable unit of hours, days, months or years, is suggestive of the difference between the perception of time and its measurement.

¹¹ An example: 'What time is it?' 'For the last time, it is 1pm, lunchtime!' would be 'Che ora è?' 'Per l'ultima volta, è l'una, l'ora di pranzo!'

¹² A good example is 'he/she was born', which is said in the *passato prossimo* – *è nato* for someone still living, or in the *passato remoto* – *nacque*, for someone now deceased. Anna Laura Lepschy and Giulio Lepschy, *The Italian Language Today*, 2nd edn (London: Hutchinson, 1988), pp. 228-229.

With regards to the words 'past', 'present' and 'future', *passato* and *presente* both share the same noun and adjective definitions as the English words, but the Italian equivalent of 'future' is a little more complex, as *futuro* and *avvenire* are synonyms. Both can refer to things to come and can be used in the adjective sense (although *futuro* is more common); *futuro* is used for the verb tense and *avvenire* is also used as a verb meaning to happen or occur. Etymologically the difference is that future and *futuro* comes from the Latin *futurus*, about to be, and *avvenire* comes from the Latin *advenire*, to come. In the work of Jacques Derrida the difference between the French *le futur* and *l'avenir* is that the former is the predictable future that is expected and the latter is the unpredictable future that is not expected.¹³ Given the etymology of these words it becomes evident that *futuro* is projected from the now and *avvenire* comes from the future towards the now, hence its unpredictability. This is of course relevant to Marinetti's choice of name for his movement, because, as I argue, he constructs the movement as happening in the present and creating the future.

In order to begin the interrogation of Futurism's relationship with the future, present and past in this part of the thesis, the focus of this chapter now turns to Futurism's relationship with the *futuro* and *avvenire*. The aim is to emphasise that while the future may initially appear to be the primary concern of the Futurists, the present and the past have far more important roles.

Futurism and futurism

Other than the specific movement of Futurism, 'futurist' can be used to describe both a profession and an attitude. Futurism as a profession is based on the analysis of possible futures in order to offer strategic technological, economic, sociological foresight to organizations and individuals. Its rise can be charted over the last fifty years, with the formation World Future Society in the 1960s, which brought together specialists from various fields, from utopian literature to town planners, organised conferences and published the journal *The Futurist*.¹⁴ This society and publication show no direct links with

¹³ It should not be forgotten the regularity with which Marinetti wrote in French, and that this was the language in which the most disseminated version of 'The Founding and Manifesto' was published. David Couzens Hoy, *The Time of Our Lives: A Critical History of Temporality* (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 2009), p. 142.

¹⁴ Edward Cornish, 'How the Futurist Was Born', *The Futurist*, (January – February 2007), 50-56.

its Italian namesake. The professional futurist considers how to act in the present in order to produce the best results in the future, and this attitude can be found in a more general sense. To be futurist in attitude means to prioritise the future over the present and past. This does not necessarily mean complete negation of these other temporal modes, but their subservience to the future, i.e. the past serves to demonstrate that change over time is possible, and the present is where action can move us towards the future.

In order to reassess Futurism's futurism, I consider Marinetti's 'Electrical War (A Futurist Vision-Hypothesis)' from *War, The World's Only Hygiene* in relation to other futurisms, those of H.G. Wells, Charles Darwin and Italian precedents and contemporaries who used the epithet *futurismo* or *avvenirismo*. In so doing the importance of the present in the relationship with the future becomes evident. This section of the chapter is weighted towards Marinetti's writings as the artists write very little about the future, which supports my hypothesis that the future is not the movement's dominant temporal mode.

The Futurists did not attempt to predict beyond the decade they delineated as their time of action – hence Marinetti's demand that they be thrown into the wastebasket in ten years, and the idea that cities should be rebuilt by every generation found in Antonio Sant'Elia's 1914 'Manifesto of Futurist Architecture.'¹⁵ In 1915 Marinetti claimed "We are Futurists of *tomorrow*, not *the day after tomorrow*."¹⁶ Like professional futurists, they were interested in the latest technology and how it affected human experience. Futurist painting techniques, drawn from Divisionism and Cubism, were based upon recent optical science and the Futurist aesthetic is dominated by the speed brought about by technology, the dominance of aeroplanes, radio and cinema in later Futurist activities is evidence of this. However, in this first decade of Futurism, the main concern was existing science and technology, not that of however many years hence.

Marinetti's 'Electrical War (A Futurist Vision-Hypothesis)' is the text most interested in what the future will actually be like, but it is written very much in the language of its present. Marinetti may "envy the men who will be born on my beautiful peninsula in a hundred years" who live "behind walls of iron and glass," "write in books of nickel no thicker than three

¹⁵ "EVERY GENERATION MUST BUILD ITS OWN CITY." Antonio Sant'Elia, 'Manifesto of Futurist Architecture' (1914), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 160-172 (p. 172). This is considered to be a Marinettian addition to the original Sant'Elia text.

¹⁶ "Siamo futuristi di domani e non di posdomani" F.T. Marinetti, '1915 In quest'anno futurista' reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, pp. 328-336 (p. 331).

centimetres [...] containing one hundred thousand pages” and use “wireless telephones,” a description which really resonates with contemporary architecture, computing and telecommunications, but the ‘Vision-Hypothesis’ is dominated by the machines of Marinetti’s present, motorcars, trains and planes.¹⁷ Marinetti’s Italy of “steel elephants”¹⁸ is a lot less alien to his present than the world of Eloi and Morlocks the Time Traveller encounters in Wells’s *The Time Machine*, first published in 1895. As Maria Teresa Chialant has identified, there is a good chance that Marinetti would have been familiar with Wells’s work, probably in French or Italian translation, before meeting Wells himself in London in 1914 at a banquet in the hall of the Poetry Society, which Marinetti claims was held in honour of the Italian Futurists.¹⁹ It is also likely that the science fiction of Jules Verne would have been known to the Futurists, as it was available in Italy from the 1860s, and had played a role in the development of Italian science fiction by authors such as Paolo Mantegazza and Emilio Salgari, whose works predate Futurism.²⁰

Wells’s novel highlights the role of Darwinism and the idea of progress in conceptions of the future.²¹ Mantegazza, better known for his career as a pathologist and an anthropologist (Italy’s first ever chair of the discipline) than his science-fiction writing, was an early advocate of Darwin’s theory of evolution in Italy, where it had received a mixed response since the 1860s. The evolutionary idea had been adapted to serve aims across the political spectrum, including attempts to find a place for Darwin’s theory in Catholic dogma.²² As such, the Futurists’ awareness of the evolutionary theory as a challenge to the Church, and a scientific basis for the idea of progress can be safely proposed, but a reductive view of their interest in it as anti-Catholic or purely part of a social Darwinism should be avoided. Relevant here is how the theory of evolution essentially produced a hierarchy in which the

¹⁷ F.T. Marinetti, ‘Electrical War’ (1915), reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi, and Laura Wittman (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University, 2009), pp. 101-104 (pp. 101-102).

¹⁸ Marinetti, ‘Electrical War’ (1915), reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Rainey, Poggi, and Wittman, p. 103.

¹⁹ *The Time Machine* was translated into French in 1899 and Italian in 1902. Maria Teresa Chialant, ‘H. G. Wells, Italian Futurism and Marinetti’s *Gli Indomabili* (The Untameables)’, in *The Reception of H.G. Wells in Europe*, ed. by Patrick Parrinder and John S. Partington (London: Continuum, 2005), pp. 205–221, particularly, pp. 205–7. F.T. Marinetti, ‘Selections from *An Italian Sensibility Born in Egypt*’, reprinted in *Marinetti: Selected Writings*, ed. by Flint, pp. 303–363 (p. 345).

²⁰ Günter Berghaus, *Futurism and the Technological Imagination* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), p. 15.

²¹ In the next chapter I will come back to the effect of evolution on ideas of history.

²² Giuliano Pancaldi, *Charles Darwin “storia” ed “economia” della natura*, 1st edn (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1977). Rainer Brömer, ‘Many Darwinisms by Many Names: Darwinism and Nature in the Kingdoms of Italy’, in Eve-Marie Engels and Thomas F. Glick, eds, *The Reception of Charles Darwin in Europe*, 2 vols (London: Continuum, 2008), II, 375–385.

present is superior to the past, and superseded by the future. This is clearly analogous to Marinetti's "The past is necessarily inferior to the future."²³ Wells's vision of the future in *The Time Machine* counters this Darwinian faith in progress as humanity has not evolved for the better, it is a dystopian vision of where Wells's present was heading. Marinetti, however, is more optimistic "All your hope should be in the Future. Put your trust in Progress, which is always right even when it is wrong, because it is movement, life, struggle, hope."²⁴ In the same text Marinetti stresses that the Futurists are evolved beings compared to their grandfathers, "We breathe an atmosphere that to them would have seemed unbreathable."²⁵ Similar evolutionary phrases can be found elsewhere in *War, The World's Only Hygiene*; in 'Multiplied Man and the Reign of the Machine' Marinetti speaks of humans evolving to have wings and fly, changing the function of the heart, and never knowing old age or impotence.²⁶ However, while Marinetti's blind faith in the future may seem passive, I argue that the role of the Futurist movement is to act in the present to secure Italy's place in the future; he says "On the eve of this fearful conflict, we Italian Futurists have no desire to see Italy left in an inferior state. This is why we cast overboard the heavy burden of the past that weighs down our swift and warlike vessel."²⁷ The mechanized figure of Gazourmah in *Mafarka The Futurist* (1909) is also exemplary of the Futurist interest in evolution, but the Futurist in this story is Mafarka, the father rather than the evolved son.

The Futurist concern with action in the present in the name of the future recalls the aforementioned Derridian differentiation between *le futur* and *l'avenir*, a distinction which was to an extent current in the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1902 Wells's lecture 'The Discovery of the Future' differentiated the submissive mind that accepts the future from that which attacks the established order. Wells saw people in the modern age less concerned with tradition and accepting the future, but actively looking to shape it.²⁸ In 1918 Eugène Minkowski's 'How We Live the Future (and Not What We Know of It)' distinguished activity

²³ "Il passato è necessariamente inferiore al futuro. Noi vogliamo che così sia. Come potremmo riconoscere dei meriti al più pericoloso dei nostri nemici: il passato, lugubre mentore, tutore esecrabile?..." Marinetti 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 23.

²⁴ Marinetti, 'Electrical War' (1915), reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Rainey, Poggi and Wittman, p. 100.

²⁵ Marinetti, 'Electrical War' (1915), reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Rainey, Poggi and Wittman, p. 101.

²⁶ F.T. Marinetti, 'Multiplied Man and the Reign of the Machine' (1915), reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Rainey, Poggi and Wittman, pp. 89-92.

²⁷ Marinetti, 'Electrical War' (1915), reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Rainey, Poggi and Wittman, p. 101.

²⁸ Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, p. 94.

and expectation as two modes of experiencing the future, the former involves acting in the present to affect the future, the latter involves the individual accepting the future that comes towards him.²⁹ Mapping these ideas onto the Derridian distinction a *futur*-ist would seek to act in the present to change the future, whereas as *avenir*-ist would accept what was ahead and incorporate this into their present practice. As such, Marinetti's choice of Futurism suggests he was concerned with acting in the present rather than awaiting the developments of the future. A brief survey of the Futurist texts considered in this thesis show that usage of *futuro* is markedly higher than the use of *avvenire*. Although this can be ideologically supported in the dynamic attitude just mentioned, this was likely also a pragmatic choice in that *avvenire* has been used in a number of other contexts in post-Risorgimento Italy.

As I discuss further in chapter five, *avvenire* had been linked to the romantic painter Il Piccio and the Scapigliatura artists in the first and second half of the nineteenth century respectively, with all these artists being referred to as *avveniristi*, futurists. However, these Lombard artists showed no concern for science and technology, which those using *avvenire* in this period often did. In 1894 *L'avvenire: giornale di letteratura, scienza ed arte* was launched in Milan. Its programme, as outlined in its first issue was "We rise with a single goal, with a single destination: the achievement, in the great name of science, of a happier future [*avvenire*]."³⁰ This connection of the *avvenire* with science, the yet to be discovered, is also present in a use of the word contemporary to Futurism.

'Paradox of the Art of the Future [*avvenire*]' (1910-11), a manifesto by Arnaldo Ginna and Bruno Corra, and 'Painting of the Future [*avvenire*]' (1915) written solely by Ginna, can be usefully compared to those by the Futurists.³¹ The brothers Ginna and Corra were associated with Futurism but in this period they were on the periphery of the movement. The lengthy manifestos, in contrast to those of the Futurists, are predominantly concerned with science and its relationship with art; there is very little mention of the past and its inadequacies. In 'Painting of the Future' Ginna does discuss art of the past; he reads former masters as having a different artistic sensibility to modern painters, but notes that they did not solely copy

²⁹ Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, p. 89-90.

³⁰ "Sorgiamo con un unico scopo con un'unica meta: il raggiungimento, nel gran nome della scienza d'un più lieto avvenire." 'Il nostro programma', *L'avvenire: giornale di letteratura, scienza ed arte*, 1, 16 December 1894, Milan.

³¹ Arnaldo Ginna and Bruno Corra, 'Paradosso di arte dell'avvenire' (1910-11), reprinted in Mario Verdone, *Ginna e Corra. Cinema e Letteratura del futurismo* (Rome: Edizioni di Bianco e Nero, 1968), pp. 174-194. Arnaldo Ginna, 'Pittura dell'avvenire' (1915), reprinted in Verdone, *Ginna e Corra*, pp. 195-212.

nature, as each artistic epoch found something new to express, not seen in nature. This has something in common with the Futurist artists' manifestos which differentiate the Futurists from their predecessors while drawing an affinity between them by claiming that art should be of its time. Ginna's idea that the modern artist has his "hands loosened from the ropes of convention"³² is a far softer statement than Boccioni's "we modern Italians have no past"³³ and Marinetti's claim that modernity had broken "the genetic chain with the past."³⁴ The crux of my point here is that in constructing an art of the future (*avvenire*) Ginna and Corra saw little need to concern themselves with the past. On the contrary, the first manifesto of the Futurist painters was entirely concerned with the past, to the extent that this criticism led them to produce the technical manifesto, which still shows much concern with the past.

I therefore contend that while Marinetti and the Futurist artists mention science and technology in their writings, and that this has an impact on the Futurist aesthetic, the *futuro* and the *avvenire* are secondary to the present. Compared to the futurist imagination of Wells in *The Time Machine* the subjects of Futurist art tend to be their contemporary world of factories, machines, trains and motorcars, often accompanied by horses, human figures, birds in flight and dancers. As Carrà puts it: "We futurists scorn the prophets, but we consider ourselves the best at **sniffing out the future [*avvenire*]**."³⁵ For Marinetti, the Futurists were more evolved than their contemporaries in Italy, hence their avant-garde status, and in order for Italy to be an important part of the future, it was necessary to change the Italian present.

Turning to focus on the idea of the present, I argue that given their concern with the experiences and objects of their present, and the initial strict timeline set for themselves, the early Futurists can be read as more concerned with the present, than the future.

³² "Da questo momento l'artista si trovò veramente con le mani sciolte alquanto dalle corde delle convenzioni." Arnaldo Ginna, 'Pittura dell'avvenire' (1915), reprinted in Verdone, *Ginna e Corra*, p. 209.

³³ "Noi Italiani moderni siamo senza passato." Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 72.

³⁴ "Il presente non mai come in questi tempi apparve staccato dalla catena genetica del passato, figlio di sé stesso e generatore formidabile delle potenze future." F.T. Marinetti, 'Prefazione futurista a "Revolverate" di Gian Pietro Lucini,' (1909) reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, pp. 27-33 (p. 28).

³⁵ Noi futuristi disprezziamo i profeti ma ci consideriamo i migliori **fiutatori di avvenire**." Carlo Carrà, 'Elasticità dinamica del spirito nuovo', in *Guerrapittura* (Firenze: S.P.E.S, 1978 [1915]), pp. 43-51 (p. 44).

The Futurist present

The Futurist artists' use of the subjects and techniques of their present is, in fact, clearly stipulated in their writings. In the 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' they declare:

Living art draws its life from the surrounding environment. Our forebears drew their artistic inspiration from a religious atmosphere which fed their souls; in the same way we must breathe in the tangible miracles of contemporary life – the iron network of speedy communications which envelops the earth, the transatlantic liners, the dreadnoughts, those marvellous flights which furrow our skies, the profound courage of our submarine navigators and the spasmodic struggle to conquer the unknown. How can we remain insensible to the frenetic life of our great cities and to the exciting new psychology of night-life; the feverish figures of the bon viveur, the cocotte, the apache and the absinthe drinker?³⁶

This chapter argues that the Futurists' present deeply affected their temporality and therefore their relationship with the past, present and future.

Boccioni in particular repeatedly referred to "our time" as that which he wanted to depict and express. As I will come to explain, this present was opposed to the *passatista* present of Neoclassicism. The phrase "*nostro tempo*" repeats throughout *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* and other writings,³⁷ and Boccioni's use of this phrase begins before Futurism was even coined; in his 1907 diary he states: "I feel that I want to paint the new, the fruit of our industrial time."³⁸ Boccioni thus demonstrates an interest in Baudelaire's modernity: "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable."³⁹ Baudelaire continues "Every old master has had his own modernity"; the Futurist demand that art should be of its time was based on the same premise: "What was truth for the painters of yesterday is but a falsehood today."⁴⁰

It should be remembered that Italy had a varied position with regards to modernization, being both behind the rest of Europe and varying wildly in its industrialization across the still predominantly agricultural peninsula. This is particularly evident when Boccioni in 1910 painted the fruit of his industrial time in *The City Rises* (fig. 14.6), a composition dominated not by a machine, but by a workhorse. Balla seemed to express equal interest in the flight of

³⁶ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 25.

³⁷ Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, pp. 33, 139. Umberto Boccioni, 'La Pittura Futurista [Conferenza tenuta a Roma nel 1911]', reprinted in *Umberto Boccioni: altri inediti e apparati critici*, ed. by Zeno Birolli (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1972), pp. 11-29 (p. 14).

³⁸ "Sento che voglio dipingere il nuovo, il frutto del nostro tempo industriale." Boccioni, '[14th March 1907]', reprinted in *Diari*, p. 14.

³⁹ Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. by Jonathan Mayne (Oxford: Phaidon, 1964), p. 13.

⁴⁰ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 28.

swallows as he did in motorcars and astronomy (figs 2.10; 4.6). The workhorse of Boccioni's painting is as much of the Italian present as the car of Balla's.

In his essay 'The Subject in Futurist Painting,' published in *Lacerba*, Soffici concluded that "modernity is now the indispensable precondition of all the arts", insisting not only that the subject of Futurist painting should be modern, that is, present life, but that the present modes of transport and leisure activities necessitate a different approach to painting to the tableaux, nudes, pastoral scenes and still life compositions of the art of the past,⁴¹ thus arguing that both Futurism's subject and its style were related to the present.

Even as painters of motorcars, the Futurists were still considered behind the times by others in Europe. In 1914 the Vorticists dismissed Marinetti's "hullo-balloo about motor cars"⁴² because the supposedly backwards Italians were obsessed with an industrial revolution which had already lost its novelty in Britain. Salaris claims that presentism was only existent in the Futurist credo in its later years when it became interested in aeroplanes.⁴³ However, I argue that thirty years earlier the motorcar had held an equivalent status for the Futurists. It belonged more to the presents of Paris and London,⁴⁴ the *futurista* present which Marinetti sought to emulate, rather than to the *passatista* present of much of the Italian peninsula. The Futurists were also immensely proud of Milan, Italy's most 'advanced' city, but they considered the rest of the country to be technologically backwards and *passatista*.

The critique of Futurism as *passatista* by its avant-gardist contemporaries is returned to in chapter three, as is the idea that presentism is central to all avant-gardisms. François Hartog, who identifies presentism as the predominant regime of historicity in the post-war period, noting its diffusion throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, has singled out Futurism for particular attention, reiterating the above point that the subjects of Futurism were in fact found in the present rather than the future; an idea that has also been expressed

⁴¹ Ardengo Soffici, 'The Subject in Futurist Painting' (1914), reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Rainey, Poggi and Wittman, pp. 169-170 (p. 170).

⁴² Wyndham Lewis, 'Long Live the Vortex!', in *BLAST* 1, ed. by Paul Edwards (London: Thames & Hudson, 2009 [1914]), p. 7.

⁴³ Claudia Salaris, 'Aerial Imagery in Futurist Literature', in *Futurism in Flight: 'Aeropittura' Paintings and Sculptures of Man's Conquest of Space (1913-1945)*, ed. by Bruno Mantura, Patrizia Rosazza-Ferraris and Livia Velani (Rome: De Luca Edizioni d'Arte, 1990), pp. 27-32, p. 31. Matteo D'Ambrosio interprets Bruno Sanzin's 1934 essay about how Futurism overcame tradition by being of its own time, to be discussed further in chapter three, as claiming a presentist attitude for the movement. D'Ambrosio, *Le 'Commemorazioni in Avanti' di F.T. Marinetti*, p. 11.

⁴⁴ New York and Chicago can also be considered as present utopias by the Futurists, but they were less aware of them.

by Kern when reflecting on Futurism.⁴⁵ Hartog, who comments that Marinetti's Futurism was "pretty much a Presentism"⁴⁶ suggests that Marinetti's present was futurized as, after claiming that time and space are dead, he says that "We already live in the Absolute, since we have already created eternal omnipresent speed."⁴⁷ It is the Marinettian obsession with speed that ensures that Marinettism is not purely presentism, as he wished to accelerate towards the future, this blends the *futur*-ism discussed above with presentism.

While I have argued that Futurism is more interested in the present than the future, there is a counter-argument, made by Vincenzo Schilirò, that the present is actually more dangerous to Futurism than the past because the past is no longer a concern, but the backwardness of the present is a more pressing problem.⁴⁸ As I return to in chapter two, when addressing the past per se, while I agree that the *passatismo* of the present is the primary target of Futurist attacks, the *passatista* present is the other side of the same coin of the *futurista* present, which accelerates towards the future. As such, whether for its *passatista* or *futurista* qualities, the present is still the focus of Futurism.

Futurism and present times

Following on from this assertion that Futurism is presentist, the next section of this chapter assesses Futurism's relationship with the sciences and philosophies of time contemporary to the movement. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Kern has stressed the importance of changes in the understanding of time to early twentieth-century Europe. Marinetti's statement in the 'Founding and Manifesto' that "Time and Space died yesterday"⁴⁹ suggests not only that the Futurists were aware of these changes, but that they were considered relevant to the identity of the movement.

In order to schematize the varying perspectives on time from this period into a workable model, I draw on the Bergsonian dialectic of intellect-intuition to group them. By intellect I refer to philosophies of time related to the objective ordering of universal public time; by

⁴⁵ Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, p. 314.

⁴⁶ François Hartog, 'Time, History and the Writing of History: The Order of Time', *KVHAA Konferenser*, 37 (1996), 95-113 (p. 106).

⁴⁷ François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité: présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), p. 120. Marinetti made this statement in Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 22.

⁴⁸ Vincenzo Schilirò, *Dall'anarchia all'Accademia: note sul futurismo* (Palermo: La Tradizione, 1932), p. 79.

⁴⁹ Marinetti 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 22.

intuition I mean time as it is experienced by the human subject. The former is concerned with the ticking hand of the clock, the latter with a watched pot never boiling.⁵⁰ The Futurists demonstrate an ambivalent relationship to these types of time.⁵¹

The Futurist attachment to the clock-time of the intellect is necessitated by their obsession with science in general, which is regularly praised in manifestos, and more specifically with speed, efficiency, and crucially train travel, so relevant to the artists living in Milan when the Simplon tunnel speeded up travel to Paris after its opening on 10th May 1906. Marinetti emphasised the beauty of speed in both his 'Founding and Manifesto' and 'The New Religion-Morality of Speed'. Severini felt the same, claiming: "Indeed, one of the effects of science, which has transformed our sensibility and which has led to the majority of Futurist truths, is *speed*. Speed has given us a new conception of space and time, and consequently of life itself."⁵²

Measuring speed requires the understanding of time established by Sir Isaac Newton in his 1687 *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, the standard notion of time used in mathematics and physics, in which time is absolute, homogeneous, and atomistic.⁵³ Newton's absolute time could not be affected by anything else. Newton's ideas were neither unprecedented nor unquestioned. The precedent came in the Platonic idea that time is independent of events within it, that it is a feature of the order of space.⁵⁴ Contemporary opposition came from Gottfried Leibniz's Aristotelian idea that time is known only through events within it, and so should be understood as relative to those events.⁵⁵ Despite Leibniz's counter-argument, and the temporal distance between Newton and the late nineteenth century, the Newtonian idea of time had gained significant credence over this period, not

⁵⁰ This proverb is also used in Italy: *una pentola guardata mai bolle*.

⁵¹ For a focused treatment of Marinetti's ambivalence, see Cesaretti, 'Back to the Future: Temporal Ambivalences in F.T. Marinetti's Writings', in *Italian Modernism*, ed. by Somigli and Moroni, pp. 245-266.

⁵² Marinetti 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 21. F.T. Marinetti, 'La nuova religion-morale della velocità' (1916), reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, p. 130. Gino Severini, 'The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism – Futurist Manifesto' (1913), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 118-125 (pp. 124-25).

⁵³ "Absolute, true and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature, flows equably without relation to anything external, and by another name is called duration: relative, apparent and common time, is some sensible and external (whether accurate or inequable) measure of duration by the means of motion, which is commonly used instead of true time; such as an hour, a day, a month, a year." Sir Isaac Newton and N. W. Chittenden, *Newton's Principia: The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (New York: D. Adee, 1848), p. 77. It should be noted that even Newton distinguished two kinds of time, wishing to set apart the minutely inaccurate schematization of the day from the true time on which this 'relative' time depended.

⁵⁴ Whitrow, *Time in History*, p. 41.

⁵⁵ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. by Mary Morris (London: Dent, 1934), p. 200.

least as Newtonian time was so compatible with the technological developments of the mechanised clock and related technology over the next two hundred years.

Accurate time-keeping developed in tandem both with phenomena that it had facilitated and that had necessitated it.⁵⁶ During the Industrial Revolution the formerly agricultural society organised around solar time, that is, sunlight and the seasons, became instead governed by clocks; steam power required factory workers to work at a specific time, and transport links allowing workers who had previously lived in the countryside to come into the city also relied on clocks.⁵⁷

In Italy's industrial triangle of Milan-Turin-Genoa and the new capital Rome these changes were felt by the start of the twentieth century, and the Futurists would have been familiar with the new temporal experience of the industrial city. Trams had been introduced to Milan in 1891 by the Società Edison, and the city's imposing central train station had been completed in 1864. This station was the scene for Boccioni's *States of Mind* triptych and Carrà, who also painted a number of scenes of trams in the city, painted the station in the same years (figs 2.1-2.3, 2.5, 2.8, 2.12). Russolo painted trains and cars, and Marinetti owned a four-cylinder FIAT (figs 2.4, 2.9, 2.11). New and renovated factories, producing motorcars, tyres and locomotives, amongst other products, surrounded the Milan's old walls. By 1910 the number of workers travelling to the centre of Milan from the suburbs and outlying countryside by tram, train, horse drawn cart or on foot had reached 15,000.⁵⁸

Temporal concerns did not only affect travel to and from work, as artificial light meant longer working hours. Frederick W. Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) proposed a method of bringing efficiency to workers' movements through 'time-motion' studies which identified the quickest way of completing a task, leading to rigid regimes for factory staff. Taylorism, as it was also known, was popularized in newspapers and journals in Italy from 1914, with an official Italian translation of Taylor's book in 1915.⁵⁹ Balla's interest

⁵⁶ Transport was of particular importance to the expansion of homogenized clock-time. The example of the mail-coach in Britain in the 1780s demonstrates how a mechanical tempo whizzed through the countryside, bringing post office clocks, previously set to the local time, onto the national Greenwich Mean Time. Local time was not replaced straight away and in the first half of the nineteenth century, local time still appeared on railway timetables.

⁵⁷ E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past & Present*, 38 (December 1967), 56-97.

⁵⁸ Christine Poggi, *Inventing Futurism: The Art and Politics of Artificial Optimism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 72.

⁵⁹ Angelo Mariotti, 'L'Organizzazione razionale del lavoro e la sua importanza economica e sociale nel dopo guerra', *Rivista Italiana di Sociologia*, (1918), 48-73. Mariotti's review of recent literature

in social justice led him to highlight how these temporal changes affected workers, for example in *The Worker's Day* (1904) (fig. 3.4), which was originally called *They Work, They Eat, They Return Home*, in which workers arrive at dawn and return home under the streetlights. While Balla's ideas of Futurist clothing would aid 'industrial activities', Christine Poggi has argued that Balla's depictions of movement, including the examples above, show an expression of the joy of unconstrained movement, rather than the mechanical movements of Taylor's 'time-motion' studies.⁶⁰ Returning to the issue of natural light and the governance of a length of workers' days, this had been raised by the syndicalist Arturo Labriola, who knew Marinetti, in his popular book *Reform and Social Revolution*, published in 1904, reissued in 1906 and 1914.⁶¹ Boccioni too shows a social interest in light's relationship with work in his 1909 works *Morning* and *Twilight* (figs 3.1, 3.3).⁶² As returned to in chapter five, this is a well-established theme in Italian Divisionism.

However, transport and artificial light did not have a single uniform effect on time. On one hand the solar day, ever changing in length of daylight hours, was replaced by the homogenised 24 hour day, divided into identical lengths of seconds, minutes and hours. On the other, streetlamps meant that the night was illuminated so the potential activities of workers' newly distinct evening 'free time' or 'leisure time' was expanded. Streetlights had been introduced in Milan in 1882, thanks to the first central electric plant in Via Santa Radegonda.⁶³ Balla's painting of a streetlamp in Rome's piazza Termini (fig. 3.6), in which the electric light outshines the moon, illustrates Marinetti's call to 'Murder the Moonlight'. The new noctambulism made possible by these streetlights led to Futurist paintings like Boccioni's *Modern Idol*, Russolo's *Memories of a Night* and Carrà's *Leaving the Theatre* (figs 3.7, 3.9, 9.4) In fact, the theatre audience in Carrà's painting, journeying home in the

includes the Italian translation: Frederick W. Taylor, *L'Organizzazione scientifica del lavoro*, trans. by Giannini-Masino (Rome: Athenaeum, 1915) and the following articles: Anon., 'Il sistema Taylor e l'organizzazione scientifica del lavoro', *Don Marzio* XXI, 169, (19-20 June 1914); J., 'Il Sistema Taylor', *Economista*, (1914), p. 712; O. Arena, 'Sui principi di organizzazione scientifica del lavoro industriale', *Nuova Antologia*, n. 1048, (16 September 1915), pp. 266-277; Belluzzo, 'L'Organizzazione scientifica delle industrie meccaniche in Italia', *Industrie Italiane Illustrate*, (May 1917), pp. 31-35; T.R., 'Il Taylorismo', *Domenica del Corriere*, 3-10 February 1918.

⁶⁰ Giacomo Balla, 'Manifesto futurista del vestito da uomo', in *Scritti futuristi*, ed. by Giovanni Lista (Milan: Abscondita, 2010), pp. 22-24; Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, pp. 140-141. Jeffrey Schnapp has expressed a similar premise regarding Marinetti's pleasure in the struggle and efforts in working with a machine; despite their love of speed, the Futurists did not want everything to always run smoothly. Jeffrey T. Schnapp, 'Propeller Talk', *Modernism/modernity*, 1 (1994), 153-178 (p. 161).

⁶¹ Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, p. 82. Arturo Labriola, *Riforme e rivoluzione sociale*, 2nd edn (Lugano: Egisto Cagnoni, Società Editrice "Avanguardia", 1906), p. 114.

⁶² Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, p. 79.

⁶³ Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, p. 71.

cold, is not dissimilar to the groups of workers arriving at or leaving factories in Divisionist and pre-Futurist images.

While the new importance of clock-time and punctuality increased on a local scale, the relationship of transport and time became even more closely intertwined as temporal synchronization was needed on an ever larger scale. As speeds and distances for railroad travel increased in America, a similar standardization of time to that brought about by the mail-coach across Britain's eight degrees of longitude was required to allow safe and reliable railroad services across America's fifty-seven.⁶⁴ While the UK and USA had led the calls for globalizing homogeneous time, Italy and the rest of the world had this time thrust upon them.

Telegraphic communications were as important to Futurism as transport networks. Not only was the abbreviated language of the telegram inspirational for Marinetti's poetics, but the telegraphic networks allowed the Futurists to stay in touch when travelling across the world. While telegraphic communication could not readily be depicted, telegraph wires were an integral part of the Milan cityscape, and can be seen in Boccioni's *Workshops at Porta Romana* (1908) (fig. 3.2).

Given the Futurists' obsessions with speed and mechanization, it is immediately clear that this kind of scientific time should be preferred by them, not least as this regular chronology allows the clear separation of the past, present and future, which is not necessarily the case for intuited time. Moreover, clock-time relates to the *futurista* present of industrially developed cities like Paris, London and, to a lesser extent, Milan. The Futurists themselves position the speeding machine against the stereotypical Italian when the artists declare: "in the land where doing nothing in the sun was the only available profession, millions of machines are already roaring."⁶⁵ The Futurists were accused of Americanization, and this can be seen in their temporality as much as their other activities; they replaced the solar time of

⁶⁴ In 1881 a plan to standardize time on the North American continent was put forward based on four bands from east to west, each of fifteen degree of longitude, whose time would be five, six, seven or eight hours slower than GMT; this was implemented on 18 November 1883. This was neither finite nor mandatory until 1966, but its relevance here relates to its initiation of a system which was then rolled out globally. While intercontinental travel was still slow and across water, telegraphic communications meant that the standardization of time achieved within landmasses was also required on a global scale. At the Prime Meridian Conference in Washington D.C. in 1884, it was agreed that Greenwich Mean Time would be the common global meridian from which world standard time could be measured and Paris's Eiffel Tower would broadcast the time telegraphically. Eviatar Zerubavel, 'The Standardization of Time: A Sociohistorical Perspective', *American Journal of Sociology*, 1982, 1–23 (p. 8).

⁶⁵ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 25.

an agricultural nation with the globalized time of modernity. I challenge the reductive binary that associates the modernists with the promotion of homogeneous clock-time, and the antimodernists with its opposition, but it is a useful schematization at this stage to contrast the Futurists with figures such as Henri Rousseau, who upon embracing Primitivism threw away his watch.⁶⁶

It would also be reductive to claim that the science of this period only imposed the atomistic approach to time from Newton. In fact, in the first decade of the twentieth century the scientific understanding of time was re-written, as reflected in Futurist writings, most notably in Marinetti's statement "Time and Space died yesterday."⁶⁷ In analysing this phrase from the eighth point of the manifesto, it is useful to return to Marinetti's earlier drafts to see how the phrase evolved. In the first of the two extant handwritten drafts of the manifesto, this phrase, included in the fourth point of the (less developed version of the) manifesto, reads "We stand on the last promontory of the centuries. We have nothing more to look at behind us for we are at the door of Mystery which is necessary to break. It is necessary to kill Time and Space."⁶⁸ By the next draft, the death of time and space has shifted into the *passato remoto* as in the published version; the change was not necessarily for poetic effect.

This could have been a response to the discoveries in physics made by Albert Einstein and Hermann Minkowski, which altered perceptions of Time and Space to the extent that the old categories could be considered dead. Einstein's *Special* and *General Theories of Relativity*, published in 1905 and 1916 respectively, essentially disproved Newton's thesis that time is always the same. Einstein's *Special Theory* posited that a clock moving at speed would tick more slowly than a static clock. This refutes Newton's claim that no external influences can affect time, and supports Leibniz's theory that time is relative to events. It also suggests that time is not homogeneous. Finally, it linked space and time, when they had hitherto been conceived as independent; this claim was reiterated in the work of Hermann Minkowski, particularly his 1908 statement "Henceforth space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to

⁶⁶ Whitrow, *Time in History*, p. 148.

⁶⁷ Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 22.

⁶⁸ This English translation is from the following Matthew McLendon's PhD thesis which offers thorough analysis of the development of the manifesto through these drafts. Matthew McLendon, 'L'Arte di Far Manifesti: The Evolution of the Italian Futurist Manifesto' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Courtauld Institute, London, 2004), p. 82.

fade away into mere shadows, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality.”⁶⁹

It should be noted, however, that in the first five to ten years after its initial 1905 publication, Einstein’s theory was not widely acknowledged in scientific publications, let alone the popular press, as the seminal discovery it is considered today. In Italy it was initially given little credence by physicists, and its early reception was contained to the scientific community, receiving only very occasional mentions in widely read science journals such as *Scientia* and via the S.I.P.S. (Italian Society for the Progress of Science) conferences.⁷⁰ In France the situation was much the same due to the dominance of Henri Poincaré,⁷¹ so France cannot be considered as an alternative source of popularized information on Einstein. However, Minkowski’s four-dimensional formulation of special relativity was translated into Italian and published in the *Nuovo Cimento*, the journal of the Società Italiana di Fisica, in 1909. One of the translators, the mathematician Guido Castelnuovo, went on to publish on relativity in *Scientia* and present at the S.I.P.S. conference, both in 1911; his focus was Minkowski rather than Einstein, but the latter was mentioned. In his general address at the S.I.P.S. conference Castelnuovo praised Einstein for having destroyed “anthropomorphic idols” like the “absolute clock.”⁷²

While, as I have suggested, Marinetti may have been deliberately contrary with the tense of his statement on space and time, his remark does suggest familiarity with Hermann Minkowski’s linking of space and time. However, despite the lack of evidence connecting the Futurists to Einstein, this link is usually preferred to that with Minkowski. Leonard Shlain claims that “This poetically charged line [Time and Space died yesterday] could easily be transposed to summarize Einstein’s 1905 paper,” on the grounds of zeitgeist: “artists had divined a change in the direction of the wind blowing through a culture and they produced a body of work that heralded the change before the popularizers of scientific ideas were able to

⁶⁹ Hermann Minkowski, ‘Space and Time’, in Hendrik Antoon Lorentz et al., *The Principle of Relativity: A Collection of Original Memoirs on the Special and General Theory of Relativity* (New York: Dover, 1923), pp. 73-91 (p. 75).

⁷⁰ Roberto Maiocchi, *Einstein in Italia: la scienza e la filosofia italiane di fronte alla teoria della relatività* (Milan: Angeli, 1985), pp. 22, 26.

⁷¹ Poincaré’s electromagnetic theory was dependent on Lorentz’s electron theory and ether theory, which demanded that there be an absolute frame of reference for the universe, in stark opposition to Einstein. Stanley Goldberg, *Understanding Relativity: Origin and Impact of a Scientific Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), p. 205.

⁷² Giulio Maltese, ‘The Late Entrance of Relativity into Italian Scientific Community (1906-1930)’, *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences*, 31 (2000), 125-173 (p. 132-3). Guido Castelnuovo, “Sull’evoluzione delle Unità di Misura di Spazio e Tempo,” *Atti S.I.P.S.*, (1911), 47-63.

elaborate the concepts.”⁷³ Given the scarcity of references to Einstein in Italy at this time I would counter Clara Orban’s claim that “it is certainly possible that some of Einstein’s ideas about the motion of bodies in time and space may have filtered down to the artists.”⁷⁴ Gianni Grana takes the even stronger position that “It does not matter if [...] and how much Marinetti, Boccioni etc. had paid specific attention to the developments of contemporary physics: they certainly perceived these themes as fundamental givens of the imagination for a technological revolution in the arts and literature.”⁷⁵ As Marinetti, Boccioni and Balla took an active interest in science during a period when Italian physicists were reporting on Minkowski’s Special Relativity, which was based on Einstein’s, as part of a wider overturning of positivistic science and absolutes,⁷⁶ it can be surmised that Marinetti’s idea of the death (and inseparability) of time and space was linked to Minkowski as much as, if not more than, Einstein.

Marinetti’s conception of time is further problematized by comparing “Time and Space died yesterday” to the following phase in ‘The Birth of a Futurist Aesthetic’ of 1911-15: “We have almost abolished the concept of space and notably diminished the concept of time. We are thus preparing the ubiquity of multiplied man. We will thus arrive at the abolition of the year, the day and the hour.”⁷⁷ Here, several years after the ‘Founding and Manifesto’, the Futurists are the executioners of time and space, but the task is not complete. This is one of countless examples of Marinettian inconsistency between his manifestos; Marinetti reneges on the previous death and insinuates that time and space are autonomous as they can be destroyed and diminished at separate rates. Moreover, the call to abolish the units of calendar time (the year, the day and the hour) distances the Futurists from the scientific time discussed above. This passage has been linked by Cesaretti with Bergson’s intuitive approach to time in which time is experienced, rather than measured, hence the abolition of the units of calendar time. As this passage continues it highlights that the modern experience of time

⁷³ Leonard Shlain, *Art & Physics: Parallel Visions in Space, Time, and Light* (New York: Quill, 1991), p. 207.

⁷⁴ Clara Orban, *The Culture of Fragments: Word and Images in Futurism and Surrealism* (Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1997), p. 59.

⁷⁵ “Non importa neppure se – come risulta – e quanto Marinetti Boccioni ecc. abbiano prestato attenzione determinata agli sviluppi della fisica contemporanea: è certo che percepirono quei temi come dati fondamentali d’immaginazione per una rivoluzione tecnologica nelle arti e nella letteratura.” Gianni Grana, ‘Scienze e Letteratura di avanguardia: Il Futurismo’, *Rivista di studi italiani*, VII (1989), 1-14 (p. 6).

⁷⁶ Giuseppe La Monica, ‘Il tempo e lo spazio morirono ieri’, in Velia Gabanizza and Maurizio Calvesi, *Il Futurismo* (Milan: Fratelli Fabbri, 1976), pp. 48-49 (p. 49).

⁷⁷ F.T. Marinetti, ‘The Birth of a Futurist Aesthetic’ (1911-1915), reprinted in *Marinetti: Selected Writings*, ed. by Flint, pp. 80-83 (p. 81).

does not only breed the clear temporal distinction of the clock and calendar, but a more confused experience of time: "Meteorological phenomena anticipate us, because the seasons have already been fused together. [...] The noctambulism of work and pleasure in France, Italy, and Spain, has it not already melted together day and night?"⁷⁸ This connects to the ideas addressed above with respect to Futurist art's depictions of the temporality of the modern city.

Photographic time

While scientific time could tell the Futurists just how quickly they could reach Paris using the Simplon tunnel, the atomistic understanding of time it was based on could not express the experience of that speed, as the view out of the train window blurred. Scientific time may have been connected to all Futurism's favourite technological innovations, but when it came to depicting them, the atomistic approach rendered movement static by treating each moment as part of a sequence of 'nows'. Before moving on to address the intuitive phenomenological approaches to time posited by Bergson and Husserl, and the extent to which these were echoed in Futurist theory and practice, it is useful to discuss how the atomistic and flux ideas of time were seen in photography.

The paradigmatic comparison to make here is between the photographers Etienne Jules Marey and Eadweard Muybridge, who both experimented with photographing movement in the late nineteenth century and are often cited as precedents for the Futurists depictions of movement (figs 4.1, 4.4). Muybridge's use of photography to explain the way in which horses run has often been related to the statement in the technical manifesto "a running horse has not four legs, but twenty, and their movements are triangular."⁷⁹ Boccioni owned two volumes of Muybridge's work, *Human Figure in Motion* and *Animal Locomotion* given to him by Anselmo Bucci, possibly in 1908, when he procured them in Paris.⁸⁰ Muybridge made his discovery by setting up a series of cameras and trips wires so a horse could be photographed in the stages of a gallop; the result was a series of photographs demonstrating

⁷⁸ Marinetti, 'The Birth of a Futurist Aesthetic' (1911-1915), reprinted in *Marinetti: Selected Writings*, ed. by Flint, p. 81.

⁷⁹ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 28.

⁸⁰ Zeno Birolli and Marina Pugliese, 'I Gessi di Boccioni e le successive traduzioni in bronzo' in *Il Futurismo nelle avanguardie: Atti del convegno internazionale di Milano, Palazzo Reale, Sala delle Otto Colonne, 4-6 Febbraio 2010*, ed. by Walter Pedullà (Rome: Ponte Sisto, 2010), pp. 417-439 (p. 437).

this triangular movement, as opposed to the rocking horse style traditionally used by artists, reproduced in *Animal Locomotion*. Marey, on the other hand, exposed his staggered images of moving bodies on the same plate, often capturing the trajectory of movement, achieving a more kinetic effect than Muybridge. The more static work of the Anglo-American photographer shows exactly what the Futurists were averse to in the atomistic approach of scientific time; each photograph dissects the horse's dynamism into a static moment. This is explicitly opposed in 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' just prior to mentioning the horse's movement:

The gesture which we would reproduce on canvas shall no longer be a fixed *moment* in universal dynamism. It shall simply be the *dynamic sensation* itself.

Indeed, all things move, all things run, all things are rapidly changing. A profile is never motionless before our eyes, but it constantly appears and disappears. On account of the persistency of an image upon the retina, moving objects constantly multiply themselves; their form changes like rapid vibrations, in their mad career.⁸¹

Unlike Muybridge's fixed moments, Marey's photographic plate works like the retina, capturing the phases of movement at once. The work of Marey, who lived in Posillipo near Naples for the winter between 1870 and his death in 1904, would have been known certainly to Balla as it was displayed at the Paris World's Fair in 1900, which Balla attended, the international competition for scientific photography in Rome in April 1911 and the Universal Exhibition in Rome of the same year.⁸² In Balla's work, the almost cinematographic use of repeated images to show movement is a regular feature, perhaps most famously in his *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash* (fig. 5.2); of the Futurist painters Balla was the most interested in photography.

His *Girl Running on a Balcony* repeats a simplified figure in a manner very similar to Marey's graphic explanations of human motion (figs 5.1, 5.4, 5.5). The multiple images of the single girl are not separated, but connected, linking in to each other, connected by her clothes; the technique of connecting the fabric around a body is an often used way of suggesting that it is the same figure that moves rather than a number of distinct static figures.⁸³ The bars of Balla's balcony keep a regular beat, suggesting that the girl has a

⁸¹ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 27-28.

⁸² Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, pp. 111, 114. Giovanni Lista, *Cinema e Fotografia Futurista* (Milan: Skira, 2001), particularly pp. 148-154.

⁸³ Ruggero Pierantoni, *Forma fluens: Il movimento e la sua rappresentazione nella scienze, nell'arte e nella tecnica* (Turin: Editore Boringhieri SpA, 1986), p. 212.

regular speed, and evoking the measurable spatialized conception of time. I return to the Renaissance precedents for these techniques of depicting motion and speed in chapter four.

Amongst the wider network of Futurists in 1911 Anton Giulio Bragaglia, with his brother Arturo, pioneered a Futurist school of photography which drew heavily on Marey's work. However, the Futurist painters, led by Boccioni, opposed this. Boccioni wrote to the Futurist gallerist Sprovieri in September 1913 urging him "to refuse all contact with the photodynamism of Bragaglia-It is arrogant uselessness that damages our aspirations of liberation from the *schematic* or *successive* reproduction of stasis or of motion."⁸⁴ Poggi reads Boccioni's rejection of 'grafomania' in this letter as a rebuttal of Marey and Muybridge.⁸⁵ Later the same month, the Futurist artists, including Balla, made a statement opposing the use of photography in art and disowning the Bragaglias, on the basis that photography divides and freezes moments, thus creating static, rather than dynamic images. This 'Avviso' claimed that photographic developments had nothing to do with the plastic dynamism of Futurist painting, sculpture and architecture.⁸⁶ The aversion to photography is a particularly Boccionian trait and after his death Marinetti and Balla were both involved in the manifesto 'The Futurist Cinema', which embraced the medium for its polyexpressive capabilities.⁸⁷ This manifesto does not focus on film's ability to capture movement, and calls for cinema to detach itself from the reality of photography. Instead it encourages cinema to develop from painting and combine different episodes simultaneously.

Balla's contradictory stance is particularly evident when comparing the *Hand of the Violinist* (1912) to the Bragaglias' photograph of a cellist (1913); Russolo's *Music* (1911) (figs 4.2, 4.3, 4.5) also shows the multiplied hands of a musician. In all three works the trajectory of the musician's moving hands are traced into an arc. In *Futurist Painting and Sculpture*, Boccioni mocks this interest:

When we speak of movement, we are not thinking in cinematographic terms, nor are we obsessed by the instantaneous, nor by the childish curiosity which would observe and pin down the trajectory A-B. On the contrary, we want to grasp the *pure*

⁸⁴ "escludi qualsiasi contatto con la fotodinamica del Bragaglia – È una presuntuosa inutilità che danneggia le nostre aspirazioni di liberazione dalla riproduzione *schematica* o *successiva* della statica e del moto." Umberto Boccioni, '[Letter to Giuseppe Sprovieri of 4th September 1913]', reprinted in *Umberto Boccioni: Lettere futuriste*, ed. by Federica Rovati (Rovereto: Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, 2009), pp. 87-88 (p. 88).

⁸⁵ Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, p. 141.

⁸⁶ Umberto Boccioni, 'Avviso' (27 Settembre 1913), reprinted in *Gli Scritti editi e inediti*, p. 66.

⁸⁷ F.T. Marinetti, Bruno Corra, Emilio Settimelli, Arnaldo Ginna, Giacomo Balla, Remo Chiti, 'The Futurist Cinema' (1916), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 207-219.

sensation, that is to create a plastically intuited form, create the *duration of appearance*, to live the object in its becoming.⁸⁸

Boccioni's aversion to staticness and the division of time, and consequently, photography, stems from his interest in the philosophy of Bergson, who was very popular in the first decade of the twentieth century, his major works translated into Italian by Papini. In 'Plastic Foundation of Futurist Sculpture and Painting' in 1913 Boccioni quotes the philosopher "Henri Bergson said: 'Any division of matter into autonomous bodies with absolutely defined contours is an artificial division', and elsewhere, 'Any movement, viewed as a transition from one state of rest to another, is absolutely indivisible.'"⁸⁹

Futurism and Bergsonian time

As Petrie has highlighted "Bergson's philosophy occupies a central, not a peripheral place in Boccioni's thinking about art,"⁹⁰ but he was not the only Futurist interested in the philosopher. Severini, living in Paris and involved in the *Vers et Prose* milieu, was, according to his autobiography, exposed to Bergsonian ideas about intuition around the time of the launch of Futurism.⁹¹ Marinetti, who was very well versed in current European philosophy, often referenced Bergson when defending his preference for intuition over intellect.⁹²

One of Bergson's fundamental concerns was the experience of time, and the dialectic he proposed between *durée*, the duration of experienced time, and spatialized homogeneous clock-time, is of great importance to this thesis. Bergson's work is difficult to subsume into any major school or rationalize into a movement of its own. The diversity of those who cite Bergson's influence leads to diverse readings and applications of his theories; as Schwartz reminds us "We must always ask which image of Bergson is under consideration."⁹³ My focus here is on the elements of Bergsonian theory relevant to the Futurists and to this study; much as the Futurists picked from his theory and interpreted it to support their ideas, I here offer a piecemeal account of the relevant parts of Bergson, as interpreted by the Futurists.

⁸⁸ Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 86. English translation from Petrie, 'Boccioni and Bergson', p. 142.

⁸⁹ Umberto Boccioni, 'Fondamento plastico della pittura e scultura futurista', in *Lacerba*, I, n. 6, 15 March 1913, 51-52, translated and reprinted as 'The Plastic Foundations of Futurist Sculpture and Painting' in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 88-90 (p. 89).

⁹⁰ Petrie, 'Boccioni and Bergson', p. 140.

⁹¹ Gino Severini, *La vita di un pittore* (Milan: Abscondita, 2008), p. 47.

⁹² F.T. Marinetti, 'Risposte alle obiezioni' (1912), reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futuriste*, pp. 55-62 (pp. 55-56).

⁹³ Sanford Schwartz, 'Bergson and the Politics of Vitalism', in *The Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy*, ed. by F. Burwick and P. Douglass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 272-305 (p. 303).

Mark Muldoon lists a series of binaries he considers central to Bergson's methodology, which offer a simple starting point for discussing Bergson's interest in time: "duration-space, instinct-intelligence, intensity-extensity, quality-quantity, heterogeneous-homogeneous, continuous-discontinuous, inner-outer multiplicities, recollection-perception, matter-memory."⁹⁴ The most relevant of these to be addressed here are instinct-intelligence and duration-space, and then recollection-perception and matter-memory.

Here I re-write the first dialectic, concerning how knowledge is received, as intuition-intellect, which I have used to structure this discussion of the philosophy of time. Intuition, although not clearly defined by Bergson, can be considered as signifying immediate consciousness, a way of gaining knowledge of the real, unorganised, constantly moving and changing matter of the world underneath the static surface of reality science reveals to us.⁹⁵ The intellect, on the other hand, is knowledge achieved through analysis, the tool of positivistic science. The effort of thinking intuitively, rather than using the intellect, is rewarded by this contact with the real. I argue that thinking intuitively is a primary tenet of Bergsonian philosophy as it is thinking in this way that reveals the other dialectics – thinking intuitively about time reveals *durée*. This leads on to Bergson's opposition of duration and space. Bergson critiques the mathematical homogeneous time outlined above as a way of constructing time spatially, according to the intellect, rather than temporally, and so ignoring what is unique to time. Duration, on the other hand, is described by Bergson in *Time and Free Will* as "essentially heterogeneous, continuous, and with no analogy to number."⁹⁶ It cannot, therefore, be measured or divided; it is the movement of constant qualitative change; therefore it is heterogeneous as no two moments can be the same and it cannot be described as static or linear.⁹⁷

My first point about Bergson is that he opposed the spatialized time discussed above, that is, the homogeneous clock, calendar and world-standard time. He emphasised that time is not experienced as a succession of identical 'nows', that is, independently identifiable moments, it is a continuously changing flux. Like many other philosophers of time he used the example

⁹⁴ These words will recur throughout this thesis, but not always with specific reference to Bergson; all Bergsonian references will be signposted. Mark S. Muldoon, *Tricks of Time: Bergson, Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur in Search of Time, Self and Meaning* (Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2006), p. 73.

⁹⁵ Muldoon, *Tricks of Time*, pp. 74-75.

⁹⁶ Henri Bergson, 'Time and Free Will: The Idea of Duration', in *Henri Bergson: Key Writings*, ed. by Keith Ansell Pearson and John Mullarkey (New York; London: Continuum, 2002), pp. 49-77 (p. 68).

⁹⁷ Muldoon, *Tricks of Time*, pp. 79-84.

of the melody: if each 'now' were cut off from the previous, how could a melody be perceived? This prompts the question of how Bergson structured the past, present and future in his *durée*, and leads to Bergson's conception of memory, and then to Husserl's. When reading Bergson and Husserl through the lens of the relationship between the past, present and future, the key point is that the past persists in the present, much like the aforementioned persistence of multiple images on a retina.

Bergson identified two kinds of memory, habit and recollection. The difference between these can be best explained via the metaphor of an actor learning his lines for a play.⁹⁸ When he performs the lines, he does not think about the previous readings and rehearsals, he repeats, he does not recollect. Therefore, Bergson declassified this as memory, it is habit. However, Bergson did stress the importance of memory for perception, which, in broader terms stresses the significance of the past in the present. Pure memory becomes part of the perception through the memory-image; perception is thus never independent of the past, as there is a circuit between perception and memory. Recollection is the actualisation of the past, whereas pure memory is the past; this past (in the widest sense of all previous perception) is with us in the present.⁹⁹ Bergson charted memory as a cone, the point of which intersects with a temporal plane, this point is the 'now', but supporting that point is the whole of the subject's past, which remains connected, but edges further and further away. Temporality for Bergson was, therefore, contemporaneous; according to Gilles Deleuze: "If each past is contemporaneous with the present that it was, then *all* of the past coexists with the new present in relation to which it is now past."¹⁰⁰ Bergson explains the relationship between the past, present and future thus:

what I call 'my present' has one foot in my past and another in my future. In my past, first, because 'the moment in which I am speaking is already far from me'; in my future, next, because this moment is impending over the future: it is to the future that I am tending, and could I fix this indivisible present, this infinitesimal element of the curve of tie, it is the direction of the future that it would indicate. The psychical state, then, that I call 'my present,' must be both a perception of the immediate past and a determination of the immediate future.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Bergson uses the example of learning a lesson by heart, but I have replaced this with script as the English idiom 'to learn a lesson' muddies the clarity of the example. This alternative example was used in the following conference paper: Corry Shores, 'The Still of Time: A-Temporal Phenomena in the Duration of Deleuze's Bergson' (presented at the Bergson and His Postmodern and Immanent Legacies, Courtauld Institute, London, 25-26 February 2011: unpublished).

⁹⁹ John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 52.

¹⁰⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 103. Deleuze is widely credited with reintroducing Bergson into continental philosophy.

¹⁰¹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. by W. Scott Palmer and Nancy Margaret Paul (London: Macmillan Co., 1911), p. 177.

The second point I wish to take from Bergson is that the past, present and future are not divisible; perception cannot be separated from memory. The ever-changing flux of *durée* also means that:

Your perception, however instantaneous, consists then in an incalculable multitude of remembered elements; and in truth every perception is already memory. *Practically we perceive only the past*, the pure present being the invisible progress of the past gnawing into the future.¹⁰²

Bergson's notion that all time is experienced through one temporal mode is an augmentation of Saint Augustine's idea that all temporal experience is present as perceptions of the past (memories) and perceptions of the future (signs) both take place in the present; "there are three times; a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future."¹⁰³ Bergson's continuous time has also been related to that of Leonardo da Vinci.¹⁰⁴

In summary, rather than conceiving time as spatial or measurable, Bergson's time was an indivisible flux, in which past, present and future collide and all perception is memory. Marinetti expressed a similar concern when he stated that "Nothing is more beautiful than the steel frame of a house in construction," an idea based on the Futurists' "burning passion for the coming-into-being of things."¹⁰⁵ Things that are 'becoming' extend into the past and the future, suggesting their past absence and future presence, while being neither of them. Bergson's understanding of time is, however, more clearly articulated in the Futurist artists' mantra that "the picture must be the synthesis of *what one remembers* and of *what one sees*."¹⁰⁶

Severini's 1913 introduction to the catalogue 'The Futurist Painter Severini exhibits his latest works' at London's Marlborough Gallery includes two quotes from *Matter and Memory* which relate to aforementioned Futurist statement "the picture must be the synthesis of *what one remembers* and of *what one sees*;"¹⁰⁷ these are "In the end, to perceive is no more than

¹⁰² Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 194.

¹⁰³ Saint Augustine, 'Book XI: Time and Eternity', in *Confessions*, trans. by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 221-245, (p. 235).

¹⁰⁴ "Leonardo's idea of time as a continuous and therefore infinitely divisible quantity is closer to Bergson's (and thus Boccioni's and Russolo's) psychological time than to Kant's notion of time as a series of equal discontinuous quantities, a pulse of homogeneous time points on a time-line vector. Psychological time, Art time, is the time that created miracles; it fashions youth from decrepitude, life from death." Chessa, *Luigi Russolo, Futurist*, p. 176.

¹⁰⁵ Marinetti, 'The Birth of a Futurist Aesthetic' (1911-1915), reprinted in *Marinetti: Selected Writings*, ed. by Flint, pp. 81, 82.

¹⁰⁶ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'The Exhibitors to the Public' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 47.

¹⁰⁷ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'The Exhibitors to the Public' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 45-50 (p. 47).

an opportunity to remember”¹⁰⁸ and “we mix up with that which is given to our perception thousands of details of our past.”¹⁰⁹ In this essay Severini continues on to discuss Futurism’s relationship with its artistic forebears “in every epoch,” which supports the importance this thesis attributes to the relationship between the philosophic conception of the role of the past in the present and the role of art of the past in the present, and so this essay is returned to in chapter two.

Boccioni was Bergson’s most dedicated Futurist follower; as previously mentioned, Petrie has produced a thorough re-appraisal of the role of Bergson’s philosophy in Boccioni’s practice, charting how it increased in significance from the initial encounter in 1910 to the 1911-12 move to a total “commitment to a Bergsonian ontology”, followed by a withdrawal from Bergson in 1914.¹¹⁰ Boccioni’s interest in Bergson is clear in archival as well as published documents. The 10 handwritten pages ‘Libri da consultare, Bergson’ (c. 1910), later published in Birolli’s edition of his writings, feature Boccioni’s notes from Bergson, probably taken from Papini’s 1909 anthology of Bergson translations, *La filosofia dell’ intuizione*, in the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense in Milan, which also held a copy of Bergson’s original 1896 *Matière et Memoire*.¹¹¹ Flavio Fergonzi has noted the “superficiality and rapidity” of Boccioni’s reading of Bergson, which encourages the idea that the artist did not necessarily fully comprehend and subscribe to of all Bergson’s oeuvre, but that Boccioni took from

¹⁰⁸ “Il faut tenir compte de ce que percevoir finit par n’être plus qu’une occasion de se souvenir.” Henri Bergson, ‘Matière et Mémoire’, *Œuvres* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959), pp. 161-379, p. 213. See Gino Severini ‘Introduction to *The Futurist Painter Severini exhibits his latest works*, Marlborough Gallery, April 1913’, reprinted in *Archivi del futurismo*, ed. by Drudi Gambillo, and Fiori, I, 113. This phrase appears translated somewhat differently in the official English translation of *Matter and Memory*: “We must take into account that perception ends by being merely an occasion for remembering”. Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 71. Severini’s English text for this introduction uses the direct translation of the French given above, not this official English translation.

¹⁰⁹ «une survivance des images passées, ces images se mêleront constamment à notre perception du présent et pourront même s’y substituer.» Henri Bergson, ‘Matière et Mémoire’, *Œuvres*, p. 213.

¹¹⁰ Petrie, ‘Boccioni and Bergson’, p. 145. Scholars attribute varying dates to when Bergson became so important for Boccioni: Zeno Birolli suggests spring 1912, after the trip to Paris for the Bernheim-Jeune exhibition; Petrie suggests autumn 1911, after the Paris trip which Russolo and Carrà also took part in. Petrie, ‘Boccioni and Bergson’, p. 142, n. 30. Others date the awareness of Bergson’s philosophy back to articles circulating in 1910 and to Papini’s *Filosofia dell’ intuizione*, published in 1909, which Flavio Fergonzi claims Boccioni took notes from in Milan’s Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense a year later. Flavio Fergonzi, ‘On the Title of the Painting *Materia*’, *Boccioni’s Materia: A Futurist Masterpiece and the Avant-garde in Milan and Paris*, ed. by Laura Mattioli Rossi and Emily Braun (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), pp. 47-53 (p. 50). See also Bergman, ‘*Modernolatria*’ et ‘*Simultaneità*’, p. 342, n. 2. Christine Borel ‘Severini tra Parigi e Milano: la disputa sulla simultaneità’, in *Gino Severini, 1883-1966* ed. by Gabriella Belli and Daniela Fonti (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2011), pp. 67-76 (p. 62). Denys Sutton suggests that Severini read Papini’s book while in Florence in 1911. Denys Sutton ‘The Singularity of Gino Severini’, *Apollo*, (May 1973), 448-461 (p. 450).

¹¹¹ Fergonzi, ‘On the Title of the Painting *Materia*’, in *Boccioni’s Materia*, ed. by Rossi and Braun, p. 50.

Bergson what was useful to him.¹¹² Boccioni's notes include the quotes used in the 'Plastic Foundation'¹¹³ and Bergson's assertion, paraphrased in 'The Exhibitors to the Public', that "*Practically we perceive only the past.*"¹¹⁴ It is arguably in response to Bergson that Boccioni jotted the following aphorism in his notebook: "if the future does not exist then the past does not exist,"¹¹⁵ demonstrating the simultaneity of the experience of time upon which I base Futurism's presentism.

The Bergsonian element in Boccioni's practice can be identified in a number of works. For example, the simultaneity of experience is present in both the composition and title of *Simultaneous Visions* (fig. 15.9) where temporal moments (evident in the moving carriage) and spatial positions (the profile and face of the figure) collide. Boccioni's Bergsonian concern for the synthesis of relative and absolute motion in the human figures as seen in *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (fig. 6.8) in which a simultaneity of movement is captured, which Boccioni opposed to the trajectories of movement captured by photography. The Bergsonian element is also evident in Russolo's *Memories of a Night* (1911) (fig. 3.7), in which images (memories) of the evening (a woman, a horse, an audience, figures in a dark street) are loosely scattered across the canvas. Martin has identified this painting as an illustration of Bergson's 'psychic duration' "which links the past with the present and future,"¹¹⁶ noting that the use of Bergsonian ideas in this work "helped to remove the otherwise backward-looking, *passéiste* overtones of such a subject."¹¹⁷ This is exemplary of the tendency in scholarship on Futurism, which this thesis challenges, to read a Bergsonian interest in the past as unrelated to *passatismo*, an idea developed further in the next chapter. According to Mark Antliff, Severini's *Memories of a Journey* (1910-11) (fig. 8.1) was, by his own admission, painted in response to reading Bergson's *Introduction to Metaphysics*.¹¹⁸ It

¹¹² Fergonzi, 'On the Title of the Painting *Materia*', in *Boccioni's Materia*, ed. by Rossi and Braun, p. 50. Boccioni was not skilled in the French language, increasing the likelihood that he read Papini's translation.

¹¹³ Boccioni, '[Note agli articoli di "Lacerba"]', *Gli Scritti editi e inediti*, pp. 440-447 (p. 441).

¹¹⁴ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p. 194. These papers are held in the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Boccioni papers 1899-1986, Barcode 33125008273969, Accession 880380, Box 3. Folder 29. Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'The Exhibitors to the Public' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 47.

¹¹⁵ Umberto Boccioni, unpaginated manuscript. These papers are held in the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Boccioni papers 1899-1986, Barcode 33125008273969, Accession 880380, Box 3. Folder 21.

¹¹⁶ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 89.

¹¹⁷ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 90 n.2.

¹¹⁸ Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde*, p. 53. Sutton 'The Singularity of Gino Severini', particularly pp. 450-451. Neither Antliff nor Sutton states where Severini wrote this, and neither of them quote such an overt statement from him, as such this could be an apocryphal tale. However, Severini's interest in Bergson, as claimed by these two scholars, is assured.

depicts the artist's journey from his home town of Cortona to Paris in 1906. In his manifesto 'The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism' Severini writes of this work as the first in which he had:

realized the possibility of expanding *ad infinitum* the range of plastic expression, totally doing away with the unities of time and place with a painting of memory which brought together in a single plastic whole things perceived in Tuscany, in the Alps, in Paris, etc.¹¹⁹

In both Severini's and Russolo's paintings of memory, the artist recollects as intuited images. I now turn to Husserl's idea of memory, which aids consideration of whether the temporal distance between the event they recall and the act of painting itself changes the interpretation of the relationship with the past and memory depicted.

Futurism and Husserlian time

Husserl was a near contemporary of Bergson, who drew on the same Augustinian phenomenological approach to time.¹²⁰ The two philosophers did not explicitly reference each other, but some archival documents show that Husserl was familiar with, and critical of, Bergson.¹²¹ The key difference between Husserl and Bergson, as summarized by David Couzens Hoy, is their relationship with diachrony and synchrony. For Husserl temporality is diachronous and successive as the past is a different point, retained in the present; for Bergson temporality is synchronous and simultaneous, and the past is only meaningful in the present.¹²²

Although Husserl's major work on time, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* was written and presented at the University of Gottingen during in the years preceding Futurism (part one was presented winter 1904-1905, part two dates from up to 1910), the lectures were not edited into a book until 1928.¹²³ This problematizes any suggestion that the Futurists were familiar with these ideas. Husserlian phenomenology was

¹¹⁹ Gino Severini, 'The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism, - Futurist Manifesto' (1913), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 118-125 (p. 121).

¹²⁰ Unlike Bergson, Husserl acknowledged this debt to Augustine. Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, ed. by Martin Heidegger, trans. by James S. Churchill (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), p. 21.

¹²¹ These manuscripts (A I 5/22a-23b and B I 38/115) are in the Husserl Archives in Leuven. See Hanne Jacobs and Trevor Perri, 'Intuition and Freedom: Bergson, Husserl and the Movement of Philosophy', in *Bergson and Phenomenology*, ed. by Michael R. Kelly (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 101-117 (p. 115, n.2).

¹²² Couzens Hoy, *The Time of Our Lives*, p. 130.

¹²³ Calvin O. Schrag, 'Introduction' in Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, pp. 11-12.

not taken up by Italian philosophy journals until the 1920s.¹²⁴ In this study, therefore, I use Husserl's ideas as an alternative way of thinking about the Futurist temporality, not necessarily one they were themselves using.

Husserl's work was of its time; it does not accept the existence of a world-time, an objective universal flow of time, only time and duration's appearance as such.¹²⁵ This is not necessarily a critique of, but a reaction to, the implementation of world standard time in the years preceding this work, as his study concerns how individuals perceive time. Husserl was interested in the perception of sensations without stimulus, in Augustinian terms, the present of times past and the present of times future. Like Bergson, he used the example of melody: "When the new note sounds, the one just preceding it does not disappear without a trace; otherwise, we should be incapable of observing the relations between notes which follow one another."¹²⁶ Nor, he says, do we preserve the prior note and hear the present and past note simultaneously. In neither of these cases would we hear the succession, the movement of the melody, Husserl considers the capacity to do so through memory and protension.

In retention, or primary remembrance, the past is attached to the 'now' by a comet's tail, it shades off into the past. It is no longer present, that is to say, it is not the continued reverberation of the musical note in our metaphorical melody, it is consciousness of that note having been. In contrast to Bergson's tendency to mix perception and memory, Husserl keeps them divided:

in memory (retention) what is remembered is not given as now: otherwise, memory or retention would not be just memory but perception (or primal impression). [...] "Past" and "now" exclude each other. Something past and something now can indeed be identically the same but only because it has endured between the past and now.¹²⁷

In recollection, or secondary remembrance, a 'now' appears to us, but it is other to the appearance of the 'now' in perception, it is a 'now' not perceived but presentified.¹²⁸ The "present, actual self-generating duration" becomes "past, 'expired', duration" but it is known or produced in recollection as if it were new.¹²⁹ Recollection is the coming to mind of a melody heard many years previously. Husserl's retention and recollection parallel the

¹²⁴ Mauro Mocchi, *Le Prime interpretazioni della filosofia di Husserl in Italia: il dibattito sulla fenomenologia, 1923-1940* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1990).

¹²⁵ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, p. 23.

¹²⁶ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, p. 30.

¹²⁷ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, p. 56-57.

¹²⁸ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, p. 63.

¹²⁹ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, p. 45.

passato prossimo and *passato remoto*; the recent past is something retained, still connected to the present, and the historic past is something distinct from the present which must be recalled. Returning to Severini's *Memories of a Journey* (fig. 8.1), the relevance of the journey four or five years previously to Severini's life in Paris when he paints this work allows for the journey to be considered a retention rather than a recollection. However, given the temporal distance between the events, it is more likely that Severini was involved in active recollection when bringing the images of his hometown, the route across the Alps and his first views of Paris to mind. In the next chapter I consider a Carrà painting which is certainly a recollection rather than a retention in terms of history painting, a discussion to which this picture is also relevant.

Four of Balla's most iconic works serve as excellent illustrations to Husserl's idea of retention. In fact, Balla's paintings of swifts and swallows give Husserl's comet's tail pictorial form. In works such as *Swifts: Paths of Movement + Dynamic Sequences* (1913) (fig. 4.6) the changing positions of the bird's wings in flight are repeated and layered, the body traces lines around the canvas, the image of where the bird has been is retained. In his aforementioned *Hand of the Violinist* (fig. 4.5), Husserl's assertion that we must retain and, as I will come to discuss, protain into the future in order to hear melody is manifested as the violinist's left hand plays the previous and forthcoming notes. The trajectory of the violinist's arm suggests that they are moving vigorously during the performance, or lifting the violin to their chin; the five white shirt cuffs merge into one line marking this trajectory. *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash* (fig. 5.2) blurs the swiftly moving legs of the dog and its owner; the body of the dog does not appear to travel even though the legs furiously swing forwards and backwards. On the other hand, *Girl Running on a Balcony* (fig. 5.1) clearly shows the figure to be travelling from the left to the right of the canvas.

Husserl also charts an equally primordial futural equivalent to his ideas of remembrance. Protension is the equivalent of retention, and is just as necessary for Husserl's example of the ability to hear a melody. The idea of an extension into the future, an expectation relates to the differentiation of *futur* and *avenir* made earlier in this chapter, as active expectation of the next note can be interpreted as futural. To be aware that a note is to come, as well as perceiving the present note and consciousness that another note has been, are all necessary in order to perceive the melody.

The existence of protension and this diachronic, successive, model of the phenomenological experience of time can also be found in the work of Boccioni, despite his allegiance to Bergson. The *States of Mind* triptych (figs 2.1-2.3), the title of which can be related to Bergson's use of this term with reference to the absolute motion internal to objects, shows a successive scene across three canvases which suggests more Husserlian diachrony than Bergsonian synchrony. *The Farewells*, *Those Who Go*, and *Those Who Stay* is quasi-cinematic, three shots which build up a scene. The embracing couples of *The Farewells* demonstrate an awareness of the immediate future of their separation like that of Husserl's protension. Moreover, their different states of mind in the second and third canvases, the dynamic forward thrust of those who go and the staticity of those who stay re-evokes the idea posited earlier in the chapter that the present can be *futurista*, in the case of those moving forward, or *passatista*, for those remaining static.

The aim of this chapter has been to demonstrate that this *futurista* present was the main focus of Futurist rhetoric, rather than the future itself, and that the Futurist temporality was reliant upon an ambivalent, and even contradictory, synthesis of ideas of time contemporary to the movement.

Addressing the linguistic and sociological basis of temporal understanding at the outset of this chapter stressed the diversity of interpretations of time and the necessity of exploring their contexts. It also highlighted the distinction between the *futuro* and *avvenire* not found in the English language, which allowed a re-evaluation of Futurism's nomenclature as a semantic choice based on the desire to change the present for the benefit of the future, rather than to live in an imagined science-fiction future. This is evident when comparing the future imagined by Marinetti to that of Wells, and in the fact that the Futurist artists tended to paint objects of their present, rather than an imagined future. Their present, Boccioni's "*nostro tempo*", was however a *futurista* present, which looks forward, rather than back.

The industrialization of this Milanese *futurista* present brought with it particularly temporal concerns, as new transport and communication systems, speed and punctuality, governed by Newtonian intellectual clock-time, became part of everyday life and were depicted in Futurist

art. On the other hand, Marinetti's repeated references in his manifestos to the death of time and space reflect Einstein and Minkowski's challenge to the absolutes of clock-time.

Photography, a contentious subject among the Futurists, also highlights the varied ideas of time within the movement. While Boccioni's awareness of chronophotography is evident in his works, Balla's deeper interest in the possibilities of photography and subsequently cinematography led him to approach the depiction of motion differently. This difference between the two artist protagonists of Futurism is also evident when considering the phenomenological approaches of Bergson and Husserl. For Bergson and Boccioni, the past, present and future, and therefore motion, were conceived in a simultaneous flux. For Husserl and Balla, the immediate past was attached to the present, following behind it like a comet's tail. The two positions here are not entirely contradictory, but highlight the heterogeneity of temporalities within the Futurist milieu.

The considerations of Futurist depictions of movement and phenomenological understandings of time in this chapter have necessarily led into a discussion of the role of memory, or the role of the past in the present. This topic is the primary focus of the next chapter which builds upon the ideas of time discussed so far and develops my deconstruction of the Futurist temporality to show the important role the past had in Futurism.

Chapter 2: Futurism, *passatismo* and historicism

The idea that Futurism unequivocally repudiated the past was questioned in the previous chapter due to the importance attributed to memory in the portrayal of motion. This chapter further investigates the Futurist relationship with the past and *passatismo*. Mirroring the previous chapter's reading of Futurism as a *futurista* approach to the present, this chapter argues that the Futurists' *antipassatismo* repudiated not the past itself, but *passatismo*, the presence of the past in the present, related to retrospection, history and historicism.

This chapter commences by addressing the difference between the past and history as found in the words' etymology and postmodern approaches to history. It then seeks to prove the validity of this differentiation when close reading Futurist texts which repudiate the cult of the past, or history (which I will be taking to mean retrospection, that is, the *passatista* present) far more than the past itself. The chapter then argues that this aversion to retrospection is also found in Nietzsche's anti-historicism, and as such *passatismo* can be considered cognate with (a particular definition of) historicism; moreover this shows that the Futurist attitude to history was far from *sui generis*. Like Nietzsche the Futurists did find some uses for history, addressed in the second part of this chapter. By re-considering Futurism's concept of history as related to cyclical as well as progress-based models, the possibility for diachronic relationships between Futurism and its predecessors can be established. Such relationships are particularly evident in Boccioni's model of the history of art, which I compare to those of Giorgio Vasari and Roberto Longhi. Bringing together two strands, the idea that the Futurists were not averse to the past itself, but to history, and the suggestion that the Futurists claimed diachronic analogies with certain aspects of the past in order to justify their movement, this chapter seeks to demonstrate that the past and history, as aspects of the present, both have important roles within the movement.

History ≠ Past

In Futurism's abundance of *antipassatista* rhetoric, which I will shortly come to analyse, a variety of language is used. The past, history, the cult of the past, nostalgia, memory, archaeologists, *ciceroni*,¹ antiquarians, historians, museums and libraries were all, at various points, attacked and repudiated by the Futurists. As mentioned in the introduction,

¹ Stemming from the name of the Roman historian Cicero, *cicerone* means tour guide, particularly those taking visitors around historic sites.

Palazzeschi, Papini and Soffici's article 'Futurism and Marinettism' distinguished their true Futurism from Marinetti's movement on the basis that they scorned "cult of the past", while the Marinettists scorned "the past;"² it is this distinction which I wish to make here. Following chapter one's use of the subtle difference between *futuro* and *avvenire* to nuance the Futurist relationship with the present and future, this chapter will now distinguish the past per se from the cult of the past, or rather the *passatista* present, which I am associating with the word 'history'. Once again, etymology aids this differentiation.

Both the English history and the Italian *storia* stem from the Latin *historia* – a narrative, account, story or tale – the modern words clearly betray their link with the story. In fact, the Italian *storia* can signify either a history in the sense of past events or a story in the sense of a fable or even a lie. It is this distinction (or lack thereof) between the truthful recreation of the past as it really was and a fictional narrative that is of concern when attempting to filter out history from our notion of the past. Before offering a summary of the postmodern ideas of history which set up such a distinction, I would like to give the caveat that I am, for the purposes both of concision and to emphasise my hypothesis, addressing here one of a vast number of discourses on the nature of history, one which should not be uncritically accepted.³ I do not suggest that the Futurists were aware of this discourse, but I do argue that the basis for the distinction between the past and history was available to the Futurists and that the careful use of rhetorical language in the Futurist manifestos enables this distinction.

Keith Jenkins makes the clearest and strongest argument for individual natures of the past and history in his *Re-thinking History*: "the past and history are different things [...] history is a discourse about, but categorically different from, the past."⁴ Fighting the vernacular habit of using 'the past' and 'history' synonymically, Jenkins distinguishes the past, made up of events, from history, which he considers to be historiography, the writings of all historians. He then distinguishes History (with a capital H) as the ensemble of all relations between these. This is in direct opposition to Leopold von Ranke's claim that history should recreate the past "as it really was [*wie es eigentlich gewesen*]."⁵ Jenkins argues that the past was

² "Disprezzo del culto del passato [...] Disprezzo del passato" Palazzeschi, Papini, Soffici, 'Marinettismo e Futurismo', p. 50.

³ Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London: Granta Books, 1997), p. 14.

⁴ Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 5-6.

⁵ Leopold von Ranke, 'Preface: Histories of the Latin and Germanic Nations from 1494-1514,' reprinted in *The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the present*, ed. and trans. by Fritz Richard Stern (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), pp. 54-58 (p. 57).

events, not written narrative, and the fundamental difference in kind renders recreation impossible. Given the enormity of events that occur, history can never be total; by its very nature it contracts, focuses, exaggerates and constructs a narrative which emphasises ruptures and changes, rather than stasis and continuity. The concise summary of Jenkins's thesis, that the past is anterior events and that history is retrospection upon and narrativization of those events in the present, is an important foundational tenet for this thesis. Jenkins is far from alone in this position, and I will here outline a fragment of the postmodern philosophy of history which supports and adds to this idea.

Particularly useful on this front is Reinhardt Koselleck's *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, which charts the changing relationships with historical time brought about by modernity. Koselleck focuses on the semantic shift from *Historie* to *Geschichte* in German, which is illuminating with regards to both the etymological point made above and Jenkins's distinction of the past and history. From around 1750 the naturalized foreign word *Historie* was replaced by *Geschichte*, the former, from the Latin *historia* meant an account of events, whereas *Geschichte* referred more to an event itself. According to Koselleck, this semantic shift accompanied an ideological shift which saw history (*Geschichte*) unite the event and its representation.⁶ History no longer acknowledged itself as a narrative; it was, to return to Ranke, a recreation of the past as it really was. The postmodern idea of history discussed here is thus a return to an earlier understanding of history.

To accept that history is not the past as it really was, in short, that it is not a pure science, is to also accept that its content and methodology can be ideologically driven and subjectively presented. The idea of history as a story, a literary genre, is taken further by Hayden White who considers how the historian transforms the chronicle of events contained in the historical record into a story. The historian emplots his story into a particular kind of narrative by the inclusion or exclusion, stress or subordination, of past events. The historian differs from the fiction writer in that the former has events outside his consciousness to work with; he finds, rather than invents. However, White's *Metahistory* stresses that the historian also invents via the arrangement of events to serve different functions in the story.⁷ Paul Ricœur also considers the similarities of history and fiction when he engages with the

⁶ Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. by Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 32.

⁷ Hayden V. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 5-7.

relationship between time and narrative. Considering both history and fiction to be narratives, Ricœur describes how they both mimetically transform the time of action (whether that action be real or fictive) into the time of narrative.⁸ Such relation does not accuse history of being fictive, but it does insist on the inability of historical narrative to be the same as lived events.

In the second part of this chapter the idea of there being different modes of emplotments of history, and history as the narrativization of the past will be particularly relevant when analysing Futurist 'historical' writings. However, the relevance of these ideas here is the importance they attribute to the present in the reading of the past. This is not dissimilar to memory's retention of the past in the present as discussed in the previous chapter with reference to Bergson and Husserl. Retention or recollection of the past in the present affects interpretation of that past and, in turn, the way in which it is mimetically transformed into the narrative of historical writing. Such an approach to history, acknowledging the role of the present in its interpretation, has been articulated by a number of philosophers and historians. White has summed up Jean-Paul Sartre on History by saying "We choose our past in the same way as we choose our future,"⁹ emphasising that we choose our history by our interpretation of the past. Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics argues that we are unable to understand the past other than in the terms of our present:

The projecting of the historical horizon, then, is only a phase in the process of understanding, and does not become solidified into the self-alienation of a past consciousness, but is overtaken by our own present horizon of understanding. In the process of understanding there takes place a real fusing of horizons, which means that as the historical horizon is projected, it is simultaneously removed.¹⁰

For Gadamer our retrospection on the past is governed by the contemporary vantage point, by the present's horizon. Walter Benjamin also thought about the past and history in this way; for him "every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own threatens to disappear irretrievably."¹¹ Gadamer's teacher Martin Heidegger suggests a similar understanding of the relationship with the past and present in paragraph 75 of

⁸ Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, 3 vols (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

⁹ Hayden V. White, 'The Burden of History', *History and Theory*, 5, 2, (1966), 111–134 (p. 123).

¹⁰ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by William Glen-Doepel (London: Sheed and Ward, 1975), p. 273.

¹¹ Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', reprinted in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt (London: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 253–264 (p. 257).

Being and Time: “The past immediately belongs to passed times, it is part of passed events, but all the same it can be still present *now*, like for example, the remains of a Greek temple. With them is *present* a *fragment of the past*.”¹² This idea shared by Benjamin and Heidegger, usually seen as oppositional figures, is also present in their shared radical re-reading of the notion of tradition that I present in the next chapter. As I will come to discuss, Papini in particular shows a similar understanding of history, recurrent in Italian historiography of the early twentieth century, in Giovanni Gentile’s actualism and most famously in Benedetto Croce’s later aphorism that all history is contemporary history.¹³

Passatismo ≠ Past

As alluded to above, the distinction between the past and history allows reappraisal of much Futurist writing. My claim that the Futurists repudiated history and not the past itself is married to another assertion, that Futurist *antipassatismo* is *anti-passatismo* not *anti-passato-ismo*. Futurism opposed *passatismo*, not that which is *passato*, past, passed. These claims can be supported by evidence from the early manifestos by Marinetti and the Futurist artists, and texts by Papini, particularly the article introduced above.

In the ‘Founding and Manifesto’ when Marinetti first mentions Futurism in the second section of prose its very purpose is defined as to free Italy from “its smelly gangrene of professors, archaeologists, *ciceroni* and antiquarians.”¹⁴ He asks artists who visit museums “Do you then want to waste your best powers in this eternal and futile worship of the past, from which you emerge fatally exhausted, shrunken, beaten down?”¹⁵ It is those who admire the past that are the main focus of his attack. If the past were the true object of his repudiation one would expect him to attack Caesar, Galileo, Marco Polo, Garibaldi, not to mention the Futurists’ poetic and artistic predecessors, but he is concerned with the obsession with the past in the present – history. In his open letter to Mac Delmarle, the

¹² “Il passato appartiene immediatamente ai tempi trascorsi, fa parte di eventi trascorsi, ma tuttavia può essere ancora presente *ora*, come ad esempio i resti di un tempio greco. Con quelli è *presente* un *frammento del passato*.” Martin Heidegger, *Essere e Tempo*, trans. by Pietro Chiodi (Turin: Bocca, 1953), p. 391.

¹³ “Il bisogno pratico, che è nel fondo di ogni giudizio storico, conferisce a ogni storia il carattere di “storia contemporanea”, perché, per remoti e remotissimi che sembrano cronologicamente i *fatti* che vi entrano, essa è, in realtà, storia sempre riferita al bisogno alla situazione presente, nella quale quei fatti propagano le loro vibrazioni.” Benedetto Croce, *La storia come pensiero e come azione* (Bari: G. Laterza, 1938), p. 5.

¹⁴ Marinetti ‘The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism’ (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 22.

¹⁵ Marinetti ‘The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism’ (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 23.

Parisian Futurist painter, Marinetti classes archeology, academicism, pedantry, sentimentalism, and erotomania as forms of Italian *passatismo*, declaring “Italy, more than any other country, had an urgent need for Futurism, because it was dying from *passatismo*.”¹⁶ Marinetti’s attack on backward-looking professions is an attack on *passatismo*, which is the true enemy of Futurism, not the past itself.

However, as Cesaretti has highlighted and I reiterated in the previous chapter, Marinetti’s writings demonstrate great temporal ambivalence, which problematizes the clear identification of a singular consistent relationship with the past, or history.¹⁷ In the ‘Founding and Manifesto’, Marinetti claims that while the “the admirable past may be a solace for the ills of the moribund, the sickly, the prisoner...”, that is, those for whom the future is barred, “we want no part of it, the past, we the young and strong *Futurists*!”¹⁸ Marinetti’s acceptance that the past could be of use to anyone is surprising. This ambivalence is also manifest in his call to destroy museums in the same manifesto as the acceptance of an annual visit to *La Gioconda*; surely if all museums were destroyed, *La Gioconda* would be too. As Trillo Clough and Bethke have suggested, such rhetoric was intended more for provocation than for action.¹⁹

A few years later, in ‘We Abjure Our Symbolist Masters, the Last Lovers of the Moon,’ Marinetti’s message remains unclear. Here, the past is the enemy: “The past is necessarily inferior to the future. That is how we wish it to be. How could we acknowledge any merit in our most dangerous enemy: the past, gloomy prevaricator, execrable tutor?”²⁰ Marinetti also attacks history and retrospection in this essay: “History, in our eyes, is fatally a forger, or at least a miserable collector of stamps, medals and counterfeit coins.”²¹ In the ‘d’Annunzian

¹⁶ “L’Italia, più di qualunque altro paese, aveva un bisogno urgente di Futurismo, poiché moriva di *passatismo*.” F.T. Marinetti, ‘Lettera Aperta al Futurista Mac Delmarle’, *Lacerba*, I, n. 16, 15 August 1913, p. 174.

¹⁷ Cesaretti, ‘Back to the Future: Temporal Ambivalences in F.T. Marinetti’s Writings’, in *Italian Modernism*, ed. by Somigli and Moroni.

¹⁸ Marinetti ‘The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism’ (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 23.

¹⁹ Bethke, ‘From Futurism to Neoclassicism: Temporality in Italian Modernism, 1916-1925’, p. 2. Clough, *Futurism: The Story of a Modern Art Movement*, p. 12.

²⁰ “Il passato è necessariamente inferiore al futuro. Noi vogliamo che così sia. Come potremmo riconoscere dei meriti al più pericoloso dei nostri nemici: il passato, lugubre mentore, tutore esecrabile?...” Marinetti, ‘Noi rinneghiamo i nostri maestri simbolisti ultimi amanti della luna’ (1915), reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, pp. 302-306 (p. 303).

²¹ “La storia, agli occhi nostri, è fatalmente una falsaria o, tutt’al più una miserabile collezionista di francobolli, di medaglie e di monete contraffatte”, F.T. Marinetti, ‘Noi rinneghiamo i nostri maestri simbolisti ultimi amanti della luna’ (1915), reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, p. 303.

poisons' he demonizes: "the sickly, nostalgic poetry of distance and memory" and "the professorial passion for the past and the mania for antiquity and collecting."²²

Despite Marinetti's ambivalence as to whether he repudiates the cult of the past or the past itself, and the fact that he does not overtly use the same distinction of *passato* and *storia* that I do, I argue that his aversion is to the presence of the past in the present, the *passatista* present; his quarrel is with the past in its role as prevaricator and tutor, with historians, professors and antiquarians.

This message is far clearer in close-readings of the artists' manifestos. In the quote from the 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' used in the introduction to establish the received idea of Futurist *antipassatismo*, the cult of the past is clearly the enemy:

We want to fiercely fight the fanatical, senseless and snobbish *religion of the past*, a religion encouraged by the tragic existence of museums. We rebel against *that spineless worshipping* of old canvases, old statues and old bric-a-brac, against *the enthusiasm* for everything which is filthy and worm-ridden and corroded by time, and we judge unjust and criminal, the habitual disdain for everything that is young, new, pulsating with life [emphasis mine].²³

As emphasised by my italics, it is the religion, the worshipping, the enthusiasm for the past and the old which the Futurist artists fight and rebel against. As highlighted in a footnote in the introduction, in the widely-used 1973 English translation of this passage "the enthusiasm for" is omitted; it is exactly this distinction between rebelling "against everything which is filthy and worm-ridden and corroded by time," and rebelling against enthusiasm for it, which I wish to make here.²⁴ The artists, like Marinetti, opposed the archaeologists, professors, and restorers. In an interesting parallel to their objection to restoration, in 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' the Futurists also fight "1. Against the bituminous tints by which it is attempted to obtain the patina of time upon modern pictures."²⁵ As discussed in the previous chapter, they wanted art to be of its time, not falsely preserved or aged, claiming that this has

²² "1° la poesia morbosa e nostalgica della distanza e del ricordo; [...] 4° la passione professorale del passato e la mania delle antichità e delle collezioni." Marinetti, 'Noi rinneghiamo i nostri maestri simbolisti ultimi amanti della luna' (1915), in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, p. 304.

²³ "Noi vogliamo combattere accanitamente la religione fanatica, incosciente e snobistica del passato, alimentati dall'esistenza nefasta dei musei. Ci ribelliamo alla supina ammirazione delle vecchie tele, delle vecchie statue, degli oggetti vecchi e all'entusiasmo per tutto ciò che è tarlato, sudicio, corrosivo dal tempo, e giudichiamo ingiusto, delittuoso, l'abituale disdegno per tutto ciò che è giovane, nuovo e palpitante di vita." Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Manifesto dei pittori futuristi' (1910), reprinted in *Manifesti del futurismo*, ed. by Biroli, p. 27.

²⁴ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 24.

²⁵ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 30.

always been so for living art “Our forebears drew their artistic inspiration from a religious atmosphere which fed their souls; in the same way we must breathe in the tangible miracles of contemporary life...”²⁶ This attitude is opposed to that of the lazy artists who “ever since the sixteenth century, have endlessly exploited the glories of the ancient Romans” as evident in Neoclassicism in Rome and “hermaphroditic archaism” of Florence.²⁷ In short, it is Neoclassicism that the manifesto attacks, not classical art: “1. Destroy *the cult of the past, the obsession with the ancients, pedantry and academic formalism* [emphasis mine].”²⁸

Establishing whether Marinetti and the Futurist artists, especially in their early theoretical texts, repudiated the past or the cult of the past is important in the light of the aforementioned distinction made by Palazzeschi, Papini and Soffici. In this key article, often referenced as the seminal moment of the split between the Florentine and Milanese Futurists after a two-year partnership on the pages of *Lacerba*, the three Florentines bemoan the dogmatism of Marinetti’s brand of Futurism and distinguish the theoretical stances, precursors and adherents of the two movements. Of *il cinque*, Palazzeschi, Papini and Soffici accept Carrà and Severini into the Futurist fold, leaving Boccioni and Balla as Marinettist painters and listing Russolo as an aural, rather than visual artist.²⁹ The article has not, however, been interrogated as a document of the developing and diverging temporalities of the Milanese and Florentine Futurists. As highlighted above, the third theoretical standpoint they list is for the Futurists, “scorn for the cult of the past” and for the Marinettists “scorn for the past.”³⁰ These synthesized statements come after the following attack on Futurism, which merits a lengthy quote:

To Marinettism, which uses a new technique, lacks a renewed, purified, sensibility. Blindly refuting the past it blindly approaches the future [*avvenire*], but since there can be no art or thought that is not a sublimated offshoot of an anterior art or thought, Marinettism turns on itself like an isolated phenomenon without real relevance to the future, precisely because it does not have a connection to the past. Instead of surpassing or overtaking culture by absorbing it and deepening it, it hates it like the peasant hates the machine it has never seen, or it denies it. Lacking the finesse that one can only acquire through intelligent exploration of preceding theories and arts, it often falls into superficial programmatic discoveries that do not compensate for the effective emptiness with the apparent exterior novelty. In these

²⁶ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, ‘Manifesto of Futurist Painters’ (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 25.

²⁷ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, ‘Manifesto of Futurist Painters’ (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 25.

²⁸ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, ‘Manifesto of Futurist Painters’ (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 26.

²⁹ Russolo was working primarily on *L’arte dei rumori* at this time, so this need not be seen as a snub.

³⁰ “Disprezzo del culto del passato [...] Disprezzo del passato” Palazzeschi, Papini, Soffici, ‘Marinettismo e Futurismo’, 50.

programmes, which seem to be hits of renovation and magnificent discoveries, are nestled such concepts and prejudices that, brought to their rigorous consequences, cancel out and destroy the meaning of the movement.³¹

This paragraph justifies the (Florentine) Futurists not repudiating the past per se, as it claims that doing so closes off the future. This idea reiterates the interconnections of the past and the future made in the previous chapter, especially with regard to phenomenological time, supporting my claim that for the Futurists the past, present and future were not necessarily readily distinguishable. The Florentines here are not proposing a new movement; they are wishing to disassociate Marinetti's scorn for the past from Futurism.

To further interrogate this Florentine angle, it is useful to consider Papini's essay 'The Past Does Not Exist', published in *Lacerba* in 1914 while Papini was a Futurist.³² According to correspondence between Carrà and Papini, this essay was appreciated by the Milanese Futurists.³³ During this period Papini wrote a number of articles in *Lacerba* declaring his support for Futurism. In this one he defended Futurism's *antipassatismo*, claiming that the Futurists do not deny the past because the past does not exist. Instead:

they deny, repudiate, and reject the stupid ideas, idiotic fears and debilitating ideas that exist today in the heads of *living, present-day* men. [...] The Futurists do not hate the past as real and concrete past – that is, as the ensemble of things that are no longer, that are dead, buried forever – but they hate the artificial and posthumous life of this past in the brains of our, alas, contemporaries.³⁴

This supports my hypothesis that it is the presence of the past in the present, rather than the past itself which was the enemy of Futurism.

³¹ "Al Marinettismo, che si serve di una tecnica nuova manca una sensibilità rinnovata, purificata. Rifiutando ciecamente il passato esso tende ciecamente all'avvenire, ma poiché non si dà arte o pensiero che non sia una propaggine sublimata di un'arte o di un pensiero anteriore, il Marinettismo si torva come un fenomeno isolato senza reale attinenza col futuro, appunto perchè non l'ha col passato. Invece di superare e oltrepassare la cultura coll'assorbirla l'approfondirla, esso l'odia di quell'odio che il contadino ha per la macchina che non ha mai visto o la nega. Mancandogli quella finezza che sola s'acquista coll'intelligente esplorazione delle teorie e dell'arti precedenti, esso cade assai spesso in trovate programmatiche superficiali che non ripagano l'effettiva vuotezza con l'apparente novità esterna. In quei programmi, che sembrano colpi di rinnovazione e scoperte magnifiche, sono annidati concetti e pregiudizi tali che, portati alle loro conseguenze rigorose, annullano e distruggono il significato stesso del movimento." Palazzeschi, Papini, Soffici, 'Marinettismo e Futurismo', 49-50.

³² Giovanni Papini, 'Il passato non esiste', *Lacerba*, II, n. 2, 15 January 1914, p. 22; reprinted in *L'Esperienza Futurista 1913-1914* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1981), pp. 101-111. Papini's Futurist period ran from 21 February 1913, when Papini declared his collaboration with Marinetti to 15 February 1914, when he attacked Futurist art in 'Il cerchio si chiude'.

³³ "(Marinetti ed io abbiamo trovato bellissimo il tuo articolo *Il passato non esiste*)" Carlo Carrà, '[letter to Giovanni Papini of 25th January 1914]', reprinted in *Il Carteggio Carrà – Papini da 'Lacerba' al tempo di 'Valori Plastici'*, ed. by Massimo Carrà (Milan: Skira, 2001), p. 44.

³⁴ "Essi negano, ripudiano, dileggiano, e rifiutano le idee balorde, le paure idiote, gl'ideali debilitanti ch'esistono oggi nelle teste degli uomini *vivi, presenti*. [...] I Futuristi non odiano il passato in quanto reale e concreto passato – cioè in quanto insieme di cose che non sono più, che son morte, sepolte per sempre – ma odiano la vita artificiale e postuma di questo passato nei cervelli dei nostri, ahimè, contemporanei." Papini, 'Il passato non esiste', (1914), reprinted in *L'Esperienza Futurista 1913-1914*, p. 104.

Papini's essay demonstrates a conception of history parallel to that discussed above, acknowledging both the impossibility of the reconstruction of the past in the present and the role of the present in the interpretation of the past. This idea is reiterated in the following passage:

He seizes a book written 500 years ago – thousands of words that represented a certain quality of life 500 years ago – and he imagines that this book truly represents a piece of the past that is conserved amongst us. Error, a hundred thousand times an error.

This book is a present fact upon which the historians, based on other books, write a date – a chronological and mnemonic sign that does not change a thing. The words of this book no longer have for us the sense that they had for the man that wrote them, one after another. That which he lived and wanted in those hours of creation is for us perpetually unknowable. His associations, sensations and intentions are not evoked again except hypothetically, with the fallible force of the imagination.

This book is for us an *actual* reading, a *present* fact, a *personal* creation made by *living* men, a very modern interpretation from the first to the last syllable, from the first to the last concept – and made with the continuing help of visions, memories, thoughts, and emotions, belonging to one of us, to the reader of which one speaks – the artificial resurrection all of our own, all present, all actual and vital.³⁵

Papini's use of actual (*attuale*) here relates his ideas to those of Gentile's actualist history, first conceived in 1915. For Gentile's actualism, like Papini's, "reading a history book, a historical document, or a historic event were all activities belonging to the transtemporal "presence" of experience."³⁶ Papini and Gentile's conceptions of knowledge of the past as something read and interpreted from the perspective of the present bring the ideas of Benjamin and Gadamer discussed above contemporary to the Futurist movement. Moreover, in the case of Papini these ideas were certainly known to the other Futurists, supporting my claim that the Futurists repudiated history as the presence of the past in the present.

The importance of the reader of history, the interpreter of past events, and the notion that history is a form of literature, recalls Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author.' This essay denies the role of the author as the source of the text, which holds the text back to the

³⁵ "Essa piglia un libro scritto cinquecento anni fa – migliaia di parole che rappresentavano una certa qualità di vita di un uomo di cinquecent'anni fa – e s'immagina che questo libro rappresenti veramente un pezzo di passato che si conserva ancora vivo fra noi. Errore, centomila volte errore. Questo libro è un fatto presente sul quale gli storici, in base ad altri libri, scrivono una data – segno cronologico e mnemonico che non cambia nulla alla faccenda. Le parole di questo libro non hanno più per noi il senso che avevano per l'uomo che le scrisse una dopo l'altra. Quello ch'egli ha vissuto e voluto in quell'ore di creazione è per noi perpetuamente inconoscibile. Le sue associazioni, sensazioni e intenzioni non sono rievocabili che per ipotesi – con uno sforzo fallibile d'immaginazione. Quel libro è per noi una lettura *attuale*, un fatto *presente*, una creazione *personale*, fatta da uomini *vivi*, un'interpretazione modernissima dalla prima all'ultima sillaba, dal primo all'ultimo concetto – e fatta coll'aiuto continuo di visioni, ricordi, pensieri, ed emozioni appartenenti a uno di noi, al lettore di cui si parla – resurrezione artificiale tutta nostra, tutta presente, tutta attuale e vitale." Papini, 'Il passato non esiste' (1914), reprinted in *L'Esperienza Futurista 1913-1914*, p. 106.

³⁶ Claudio Fogu, 'Actualism and the Fascist Historic Imaginary', *History and Theory*, 42 (2003), 196–221, p. 204.

author's time, as does Papini's. This could also be related to Marinetti's desire to "Destroy the 'I' in literature,"³⁷ related to the abandonment of psychology, but which could be interpreted as related to the Futurist call for the artwork to die with its author, this severing of the tie between the author or artist in the past and the interpretation of their writing or artwork in the present. For Barthes "every text is eternally written *here and now*;"³⁸ this idea will be returned to in the following chapter when considering how artists position themselves with regard to past artists.

Historicism and Nietzsche

Papini's claim that true Futurists hate the cult of the past leads to a consideration of historicism and its relationship with *passatismo*. Even though this chapter has argued that the past and history are not the same, the definition of historicism I will now consider is, in fact, cognate with *passatismo*. The latter can be easily defined as an attitude which prioritises the past, related to the previously discussed futurism and presentism, but the former has been used in a wide spectrum of ways.³⁹ The historicism in question here is that opposed by Friedrich Nietzsche, a kind of historical-mindedness. This sense of the word would have been familiar to the Futurists both through Nietzsche's critique of this attitude and Croce's early interest in the importance of historical study for culture and action in the present, which later developed into Croce's own brand of historicism.

A regular reference in the notes of the Futurists, Nietzsche's theories, particularly the *Übermensch* and the will-to-power, are associated with Futurist theories in much scholarship on the movement. There has, however, been little written on the relationship between Nietzsche and the Futurists' temporalities, despite the similarity of Nietzsche's complaints against historicism in 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' and the Futurists' *antipassatismo*.

³⁷ F.T. Marinetti, 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature', reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Rainey, Poggi and Wittman, pp. 119-125 (p. 122).

³⁸ Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image Music Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-148 (p. 145).

³⁹ The term was coined in the late nineteenth century, but retrospectively applied to Vico, Herder and Hegel, and became most common and controversial in the early twentieth century. It can refer to Rankeian attempts to understand historical epochs on their own terms or Crocean approaches to historical study which stem from issues in the present; Rickert opposed it to the universal laws of naturalism, whereas Popper opposed it on the basis of the universal historical laws he saw it attempting to establish. See Robert D'Amico, 'Historicism', *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, ed. by Aviezer Tucker (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 243-252.

In the same manner that I argue that the Futurists oppose the *passatista* present as evident in Neoclassicism, Nietzsche too identified the disease of history in his time:

This meditation is itself untimely, because it seeks to understand as an illness, a disability, and a defect something which this epoch is quite rightly proud of, that is to say, its historical culture, because I believe that we are all consumed by the fever of history and we should at least realize it.⁴⁰

Giorgio Agamben has focused on this aspect of Nietzsche to claim that he was contemporary (to his time) for the very reason that he was untimely, and thus more able than most to perceive his own time.⁴¹ Combining this sense of contemporary with the idea that the present is plural I arrive at the notion that like Nietzsche, the Futurists were of a *futurista* rather than a *passatista* present, which they were able to identify and opposed themselves to.

In 'On the the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', Nietzsche bemoans the abuse of history in the present, as manifest in the historicist culture prevalent in Germany, typified by Hegel, while identifying how it can be used positively. Nietzsche condemns the dependence upon history to the detriment of the present: "the understanding of the past is desired at all times only to serve the future and the present, not to weaken the present, not to uproot a forceful living future." He warns against those who value the past, particularly the artistic past, above that of the present; those who "do not desire to see new greatness emerge [...] say 'Behold, greatness already exists!'" ; those who act as if their motto is "let the dead bury the living."⁴²

The Futurists' opposition to the domination of past styles over new creation echoes Nietzsche's condemnation of the historicist's blindness to the value of novelty. Nietzsche's description of the degeneration of antiquarian history, which no longer inspires the present - "a blind rage for collecting, a restless raking together of everything that ever existed. Man is encased in the stench of must and mould"⁴³ - is very similar to Marinetti's aversion to "the

⁴⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' (1873), in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. by Daniel Breazeale, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 159-123 (p. 160).

⁴¹ Giorgio Agamben, 'What Is the Contemporary?', in *What Is an Apparatus? and Other Essays* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 39-54 (p. 42).

⁴² Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' (1873), in *Untimely Meditations*, p. 72.

⁴³ Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' (1873), in *Untimely Meditations*, p. 75.

mania for antiquity and collecting” and Boccioni’s complaint that Italy “hangs back cultivating the mould of the past.”⁴⁴

Somigli has noted the similarity between Marinetti’s attack on established culture and Nietzsche’s in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. According to Somigli “Nietzsche’s polemic against history is rephrased (and simplified) in terms of art history, a move that allows Marinetti to launch his attack against the institutions [museums, libraries, and academies] that mediate artistic production in bourgeois society.”⁴⁵ The parallel between the rhetoric of both writers is evident in the following phrase reminiscent of the ‘Founding and Manifesto’:

I told them to overthrow their old professorial chairs wherever that old conceit had sat; I told them to laugh at their great masters of virtue and their saints and poets and world redeemers. I told them to laugh at their gloomy wise men and any whoever perched in warning, like black scarecrows, in the tree of life.⁴⁶

Futurism also shared with Nietzsche a desire to forget in order to prevent the past from holding back the present, as expressed in ‘On the Uses’: “Forgetting is essential to action of any kind.”⁴⁷ In *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* Boccioni says “We deny the past because we want to forget, and to forget in art means to renew oneself.”⁴⁸ Papini called for Italians to forget the dead and their cultural tradition:

The dead have worked and well: admire them but let them be, forget them [...] Every futurist has behind them at least twenty years in which, both at school and in their environment and reading, they have bathed in the recent and distant past. The essence of this remains, and cannot be expelled. But much of it can be successfully abandoned and above all forgotten, - returning oneself to a sort of spiritual virginity.⁴⁹

However, key to my comparison of Nietzschean and Futurist temporality is the idea that Nietzsche did not believe that the past should be entirely forgotten, as it could be useful to the present.

⁴⁴ “la mania delle antichità e delle collezioni.” Marinetti, ‘Noi rinneghiamo i nostri maestri simbolisti ultimi amanti della luna’ (1915), reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, p. 304. “Invece ci si attarda nella coltivazione delle muffe del passato.” Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 15.

⁴⁵ Luca Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism, 1885-1915* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 117. Somigli’s argument looks to situate Futurism in Peter Bürger’s theory of the avant-garde, which I will return to in the next chapter.

⁴⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: a Book for All and None*, ed. by Adrian Del Caro and Robert B. Pippin, trans. by Adrian del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 157. Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist*, p. 113.

⁴⁷ Nietzsche, ‘On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life’ (1873), in *Untimely Meditations*, p. 62.

⁴⁸ “Noi neghiamo il passato perché vogliamo dimenticare, e dimenticare in arte vuol dire rinnovarsi.” Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 80.

⁴⁹ “I morti hanno lavorato e bene: ammiriamoli ma lasciamoli stare, dimentichiamoli. [...] Ogni futurista ha dietro sé almeno vent’anni ne’ quali, sia per le scuole per l’ambiente e le letture, ha fatto un bagno lungo di passato prossimo e remoto. Il succo rimane, e non può essere espulso. Ma si può benissimo abbandonare il di più e soprattutto dimenticare, - rifarsi una specie di pulcellaggio spirituale.” Giovanni Papini, ‘Difesa’ (1913), reprinted in *L’Esperienza Futurista*, pp. 25-38 (p. 35).

Of what use, then, is the monumentalistic conception of the past, engagement with the classic and rare of earlier times, to the man of the present? He learns from it that the greatness that once existed was in any event once *possible* and may thus be possible again; he goes his way with more cheerful step, for the doubt which had assailed him in weaker moments, whether or not he was perhaps desiring the impossible, has now been banished.⁵⁰

This connection between the awareness of the past in order to imagine a future different from the present relates to the Husserlian time of the previous chapter and an inversion of Boccioni's observation there quoted to read 'if the past does not exist, then the future does not exist.'

Nietzsche was not against the practice of history, hence my reading of 'On the Uses' as attacking historicism in the sense of historical-mindedness, rather than the practice of history or the past per se. He himself studied ancient civilizations, which informed his ideas about the problems with the present and the possibilities of the future. Marinetti was familiar with Nietzsche's interest in the past and for this reason disassociated himself from him, leading, arguably, to the lack of scholarship on the relationship between Futurist and Nietzschean temporalities. In 'Against the Professors' Marinetti declares:

In our struggle against the professorial passion for the past, we violently oppose the ideal and the doctrine of Nietzsche [...] Nietzsche remains, despite all his enthusiasms for the future, one of the fiercest defenders of the greatness and beauty of the ancients.

He is a *passatista* who walks on the tops of Thessalyic peaks, with his feet unfortunately hindered by long Greek heads.⁵¹

However, Nietzsche can be seen as a precedent for a mindset which opposes historicism but not the past or the practice of history; he is supremely interested in Ancient Greece, but is averse to the use of history to the disadvantage of the present. My reading is therefore similar to Somigli's but with a more precise use of terminology; for Somigli "futurism rejects history as such, levelling its critique not only at one or more specific moments within the literary tradition [...] but at the past in general;"⁵² I would agree, stressing that the 'past in general' should be considered as historicism in order to keep it separated from the moments which make up the past.

⁵⁰ Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' (1873), in *Untimely Meditations*, p. 59.

⁵¹ "Nella nostra lotta contro la passione professorale del passato, noi rinneghiamo violentemente l'ideale e la dottrina di Nietzsche. [...] Nietzsche resterà, malgrado tutti i suoi slanci verso l'avvenire, uno dei più accaniti difensori della grandezza e della bellezza antiche. È un *passatista* che cammina sulle cime dei monti tessalici, coi piedi disgraziatamente impacciati da lunghi testi greci." F.T. Marinetti, 'Contro i professori' (1915), reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, pp. 306-310 (p. 306).

⁵² Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist*, p. 118.

Futurist history

Through Nietzsche I have nuanced my reading of Futurist *antipassatismo* from an aversion to history to an aversion to historicism. This has been necessary because history, in the sense of the narrativization of the past, is not completely absent from Futurist writings; in fact, it is used as an antidote to forgetting. This is one of many contradictory temporal positions within Futurism.

The 'Founding and Manifesto' commences with Marinetti recounting the events of the birth of Futurism, the car crash which had taken place on 15th October 1908, in via Domodossola in Milan; the passage is, as such, a history. Similarly, the painters' 'Technical Manifesto' begins with a description of the *serata* of the 8th March 1910 in the Politeama Chiarella theatre in Turin. These are not isolated incidents, the key ideas of Futurism (e.g. dynamism, speed, and the machine), its adherents and its activities are repeated *ad infinitum*; Marinetti and the Futurist artists are ever-historicizing the recent past of the movement. Cesaretti considers this 'recycling of the past' as "one of the structuring principles of much of Futurism's rhetorical and ideological practice" as either a propagandistic appeal to memory or a fear that his "tradition which has just been formed" will be forgotten.⁵³ I revisit this idea of Futurism as a tradition in the next chapter.

It is fruitful at this point to consider an early Futurist work which can be described as a history painting, Carrà's *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli* (1911) (fig. 10.6). The work's appropriation of early Renaissance Italian battle paintings will be discussed at length in chapter four, but here its relevance lies in its recording of a historic event, although its scale and formal qualities are pertinent here in that they support its history painting status; other examples of the Futurists painting events, such as Severini's *Memories of a Journey* and Boccioni's *Riot in the Gallery* (1910), do not lend themselves as easily to this category. This is arguably due to their modern compositions; the scattered images of Severini's journey across the Alps and Boccioni's aerial view of a Milanese ruckus are not as suggestive of a historical event as the battling figures of Carrà's work. The extent to which any of the three events is historic is, of course, also debatable. Carrà, whose academic training at the Brera would have well-prepared him for history painting, originally painted a companion piece to this painting,

⁵³ Cesaretti, 'Back to the Future: Temporal Ambivalences in F.T. Marinetti's Writings', in *Italian Modernism*, ed. by Somigli and Moroni, pp. 246-247.

but he considered his *The Martyrs of Belfiore* too much a romantic history painting of this Risorgimento theme and destroyed the work by 1912.⁵⁴

The title and subject of *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli* refer to the death of Angelo Galli during a strike and the subsequent funerary parade to the cemetery, which erupted into violence between the anarchists and the police:

I found myself unwillingly in the centre of it, before me I saw the coffin, covered in red carnations sway dangerously on the shoulders of the pallbearers; I saw horses go mad, sticks and lances clash, it seemed to me that the corpse could have fallen to the ground at any moment and the horses would have trampled it. Deeply struck, as soon as I got home I did a drawing of what I had seen.⁵⁵

In the same way that Carrà wrote history by narrativizing the events of the past in his memoirs in 1942, when he came to make the painting in 1910, he created a history painting. Carrà's written account was not factually accurate; he associated the funeral with the strikes of 1904 which had gained a mythological status in the history of Italian politics. However, the death and subsequent funeral of Angelo Galli took place two years later during a smaller strike, as chronicled in the *Corriere della Sera* on 14th May 1906.⁵⁶ The inaccuracy of Carrà's description, sacrificing precise chronology to give the event more gravitas, is in line with this chapter's critique of historical epistemology and contention that the narrativization of the past is affected by present concerns.

This work relates to memory as well as history, as unlike many history paintings, it was executed by an artist who had really experienced the event. Returning to the previous chapter's discussion of the Husserlian division of memory between the retention and recollection, the first sketch for this work (fig. 10.9), completed as soon as he got home, could still be a retention. However, in 1910 Carrà was recollecting the event, using the primary source of his own sketch to reconstruct what had occurred.

While I have sought to nuance my reading of the Futurist repudiation of history as a repudiation of historicism in order to accommodate this Futurist history, the fact that the Futurists were writing history still causes a tension in their temporality that the actualist

⁵⁴ Tisdall and Bozzolla, *Futurism*, p. 48.

⁵⁵ "Io che mi trovai senza volerlo al centro della mischia, vedevo innanzi a me la bara tutta coperta di garofani rossi ondeggiare minacciosamente sulle spalle dei portatori; vedevo i cavalli imbizzarrirsi, i bastoni e le lance urtarsi, sì che a me parve che la salma cadesse da un momento all'altro in terra e che i cavalli la calpestassero. Fortemente impressionato, appena tornato a casa feci un disegno di ciò a cui ero stato spettatore." Carlo Carrà, *La mia vita*, ed. by Massimo Carrà (Milan: Abscondita, 2002), p. 46.

⁵⁶ Alessandro Del Puppo, 'I Funerali dell'Anarchico Carrà' in *Il Futurismo nelle avanguardie*, ed. by Pedullà, pp.383-396 (pp. 384-6). Del Puppo's research has overturned this widely held misconception about the events behind the painting.

notion of history referred to above can help to resolve. Mussolini's aphoristic motto "Fascism makes history, it does not write it" opposed Gentile's actualist history to Croce's liberal history.⁵⁷ However, Croce was also concerned with history as action, as a means to liberate the present from the past.⁵⁸ As stated in my introduction, I wish to avoid conflation of the Futurist relationship with history 1909-1919 and that of the Fascist regime, however the concern with the relationship between history and the future of the Fascist moment is no doubt related to the earlier Futurist moment, and the idea of Futurism writing its own history based on actions which look to the future allows this Futurist history to be not entirely anathema to *antipassatismo*. However, given Marinetti's demand that the movement be obsolete after a decade, the paradoxical nature of Futurism's relationship to history remains.

Progress and repetition in Boccioni's art history

In a similar fashion to Marinetti's descriptions of Futurism as both revolution and progress, Boccioni considered the history of art as a progress leading up to Futurism in an article in *Lacerba* of 15th August 1913, 'For Italian Ignorance: Introduction to Painting' (figs 1.1, 1.2), which spells out how art history arrived at Futurism.⁵⁹ This does not chart Futurist history in the same way of the examples from the manifesto above which address the history of the movement, but suggests a Futurist understanding of the shape of history, by positioning Futurism in relation to its forebears, to art history, much as this thesis does. This section of the chapter will use Boccioni's schema as a microcosm of wider issues in the relationship between temporality and approach to history in order to suggest that Futurism's approach to history, and also to the past, was governed by a model which combined linear progress with cyclical repetition. This notion is both key to the discussion of avant-gardism and tradition in the following chapter, and essential to the interpretation of possible Futurist appropriations of the art of the past to be addressed in part II of this thesis. Notably it is also found in the art historical models of Vasari and Longhi, known to the Futurists, which will be addressed at the end of this chapter.

⁵⁷ "il fascismo fa la storia, non la scrive" Fogu, 'Actualism and the Fascist Historic Imaginary', p. 199.

⁵⁸ Croce, *La storia come pensiero e come azione* (Bari: G. Laterza, 1938), p. 37. On this aspect of Italian historiography see also Antimo Negri, 'Il concetto attualistico della storia e dello storicismo', in *Giovanni Gentile: la vita e il pensiero* (Florence: Sansoni, 1962), 1-220.

⁵⁹ Umberto Boccioni, 'Sillabario Pittorico: per l'ignoranza Italiana', *Lacerba*, I, n.16, 15 August 1913, pp. 179-180. This is literally a spelling out, in that *Sillabario* translates most directly as spelling-book.

The structure of the first part of Boccioni's model, which addresses art history from Ancient Egypt to Manet, is based on a division into three over-arching phases, which he then subdivided into four stages, the elaboration, the apex, the transformation and the final stage. For the first phase, Greek Plastic Abstraction, described as placing the physical and external at the centre of the universe, the stages are the Egyptian, Assyrians and Babylonians, etc etc; the ancients, Phidias; Roman Art and Byzantine Art. The next phase is Christian Plastic Abstraction, the passage from the external to the internal. The elaboration of this is Roman and Byzantine Art; the apex is the Gothic and Michelangelo; the transformation is the Venetians, the Spanish and Rubens; the final stage is the Spanish, Flemish, French and Rembrandt. The third and final phase before Futurism is Naturalistic Plastic Abstraction, the exteriorization of the internal. The elaboration is the Spanish, Flemish, French and Rembrandt; the apex is the French nineteenth century; the transformation is Impressionism and Post-Impressionism; the final stage is cubism. Beneath all this Boccioni writes "and so one arrives as FUTURIST PLASTIC ABSTRACTION."⁶⁰

This table highlights three things about how Boccioni related to art history. Firstly, and crucially for this thesis, Boccioni here not only demonstrates that he had a good understanding of art history, but that he saw all the art described here as leading up to Futurism; he made Futurism the end point of this teleological view of art history. As Flora has noted, "for Boccioni [...] all art that preceded futurism could be considered as a series of experiences that must arrive at futurist painting and sculpture."⁶¹ Boccioni, by insisting that art history had hitherto been a progress towards Futurism has given a presentist, rather than futurist idea of art history, as he proffered no ideas as to where Futurist plastic abstraction may lead. It should be noted that Carrà's view of art history, given in *Guerrapittura*, in which there had been no art until Futurism, could also be described as presentist: "The art of the past must be considered as a great nonsense based on morals, religion and politics. **Only with Futurist art is ART truly born.**"⁶² However, elsewhere in *Guerrapittura*, Carrà

⁶⁰ "Si arriva così alla: ASTRAZIONE PLASTICA FUTURISTA" Boccioni, 'Sillabario Pittorico: per l'ignoranza Italiana', pp. 179-180.

⁶¹ "per Boccioni, come vedremo, tutta l'arte precedente al Futurismo si potrebbe considerare quale una serie di esperienze che dovranno arrivare man mano alla pittura e scultura futurista." Flora, *Dal Romanticismo al Futurismo*, p. 101.

⁶² "L'arte del passato deve essere considerata come una grande baggianata a base di morale, di religione, di politica. **Solo coll'arte futurista nasce veramente l'ARTE.**" Carlo Carrà, 'L'illustrazionismo dell'arte plastica,' in *Guerrapittura* (Firenze: S.P.E.S, 1978 [1915]), pp. 55-57 (p. 56).

claims a lineage between Courbet, Manet, Cézanne and Renoir and Futurism, considering the Futurists, as in Boccioni's teleology, to complete the revolution these artists instigated.⁶³

Secondly, Boccioni's periodization of the past implies how he thought about his predecessors. Only Manet, Delacroix, Rembrandt, Rubens, Michelangelo and Phidias are singled out; artistic periods are grouped together by culture, or nationality, the latter being especially vague. However, when addressing the recent past, and indeed present, Boccioni highlighted the movements of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and Cubism. It is interesting in itself that historical artists are given such prominent roles. Thirdly, Boccioni has presented a model of art history which aligns itself both with linear and cyclical precedents. While the three phases themselves adhere to a linear chronology, diachronic comparisons between the stages within them can be made. For example, between the apex of Greek Plastic Abstraction, that is, the ancients and Phidias, and the apex of Christian Plastic Abstraction, the Gothic and Michelangelo.

In order to further analyse Boccioni's model and its use of linear and cyclical history I now address other models of history available to the Futurists, starting with a consideration of periodization. This is an inherent part of historical writing in which the temporality of the author is often evident; as Croce wrote "*To think history is certainly to divide it into periods.*"⁶⁴ As raised in the introduction the example of the periodization of Futurism is itself problematic. Marinetti's manifesto was published a number of times in Italy before *Le Figaro*. Boccioni expressed Futurist tendencies in his diary in March 1907, three years before he joined the movement.⁶⁵ In the previous chapter I highlighted the effect of the Futurists' industrial age on their temporality as clock-time gained a prominent role in life yet was countered by a return to phenomenological time. An analogy can be drawn between clock-time and phenomenological time and two different kinds of periodization, both of which are found in the Futurist consideration of art history.

Calendrical periodization divides up history by date, in the case of art history, usually by decade and century; the latter is particularly common in Italian art history. Boccioni occasionally used this method in *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* and in his 'Introduction to

⁶³ Carlo Carrà, 'Il Dinamismo Plastico', in *Guerrapittura*, pp. 65-75 (p. 74).

⁶⁴ Benedetto Croce, *History: Its Theory and Practice*, trans. by Douglas Ainslie (New York: Russell & Russell, 1960), p. 112.

⁶⁵ Boccioni, '[14th March 1907]', reprinted in *Diari*, p. 14.

Painting' for the case of the French nineteenth century.⁶⁶ Much like clock-time calendar periodization is unilinear, and its continuous forwards motion is often related to the idea of progress. As Osborne has identified the totalization of time as created by world standard time led to a totalization of history; when working within the bounds of chronology, one time means one history.⁶⁷ However, divisions made on the basis of calendars are often particularly artificial and the periods it creates lack internal cohesion. For example, when Eric Hobsbawm looks at the twentieth century, he constricts it to 1914-1991.⁶⁸

Hobsbawm's use of socioculturally meaningful events, the First World War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, to book-end his historical period is representative of Johannes Fabian's anthropological device of typological time. For Fabian time, or rather periods, are measured according to such meaningful events.⁶⁹ Typological periods are not restricted in their duration; while for Fernand Braudel and the *Annales* school deep stability can lead to *longue durée* history unphased by superficial discontinuities, for others very short periods have been historically analysed.

Typological time's divorce from the calendar also means that it is not singular. For Fabian different cultures can develop and change at different speeds without the connotation of being temporally displaced. This idea is also present in Erwin Panofsky's 'Reflections on Historical Time', which discussed the problems of chronological simultaneity in art history highlighted by the example of an African sculpture made in 1530 and the Michelangelo's *Medici Madonna* (1521-34) (fig. 16.2).⁷⁰ Panofsky thus differentiated historical, cultural time from chronology to suggest that 1530 meant something different in different places. The idea that people and cultures that are simultaneous according to clock and calendar time are not coeval is essential to this thesis's conception of contemporary *passatista* and *futurista* presents. This is further supported by Jameson's argument that a period should not indicate a shared way of thinking and acting, but "the sharing of a common objective situation, to which a whole range of varied responses and creative innovations is then possible, but always

⁶⁶ "quel maledetto Trecento, di quel maledettissimo Quattrocento." Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 33.

⁶⁷ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p. 35.

⁶⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1995).

⁶⁹ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 23.

⁷⁰ Erwin Panofsky, 'Reflections on Historical Time', *Critical Inquiry*, trans. by Johanna Bauman, 30 (2004), 691-701.

within that situation's structural limits."⁷¹ This idea will be returned to in the next chapter with regard to avant-gardism, modernism and anti-modernism.

When cultural and chronological time are brought together, connections across time can be made. In contrast to unilinear periodization, typological time can suggest relationships between periods, especially through nomenclature, for example the *Renaissance*, the *neoclassical*, and the *postmodern*,⁷² which give a shape or structure to history other than the straight line. In the previous chapter I outlined Marinetti's concern with progress and evolution, but Boccioni's art historical structure dominated by repeating categories demands a combination of progress with cyclical history.

It is not unusual for linear and cyclical models of history often cross over; Hegel is usually associated with linear progress, but Marx famously commented in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* that "Hegel observes somewhere that all the great events and characters of world history occur twice, so to speak. He forgot to add: the first time as high tragedy, the second time as low farce."⁷³ Marx's model of history can also be associated with progress, but he also noted the importance of the past, stressing the importance of the past on the present, in terms similar to those later used by the Futurists: "Tradition from all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."⁷⁴ Those undertaking a revolution take up the language of their revolutionary forebears; this can either glorify the new or parody the old revolution. Marx continues:

The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot create its poetry from the past but only from the future. It cannot begin until it has stripped off all superstition from the past. Previous revolutions required recollections of world history in order to dull themselves to their own content. The revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury the dead in order to realise its own content.⁷⁵

As Deleuze emphasises in *Difference and Repetition*, in Marx's theory, "historical repetition is neither a matter of analogy nor a concept produced by the reflection of historians, but above all a condition of historical action itself."⁷⁶ In the following chapter I return to the

⁷¹ Fredric Jameson, 'Periodizing the 60s', *Social Text*, 9/10 (April 1984), 178–209 (p. 178).

⁷² Marshall Brown, 'Periods and Resistances', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 62 (2001), 309–316 (p. 313).

⁷³ Karl Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon' (1852), reprinted in *Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire: (post)modern interpretations*, ed. by Mark Cowling and James Martin, trans. by Terrell Carver (London: Pluto Press, 2002), pp. 19–109 (p. 19).

⁷⁴ Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon' (1852), reprinted in *Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire*, p. 19.

⁷⁵ Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon' (1852), reprinted in *Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire: (post)modern interpretations*, pp. 19–22.

⁷⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 114.

relationship of revolution and historical repetition with regards to avant-gardism. Here, however, Marx's concept of history repeating itself is part of a network of analogous thought of which the Futurists were arguably aware, and thus contributes to the discussion of the possible consequences of repetition in Boccioni's art historical model.

Marx's ideas were certainly known to the Futurists as he is mentioned in their diaries and autobiographies with regard to their formative years.⁷⁷ Two other figures known to them, Nietzsche and Giambattista Vico, also proposed repetitive ideas of history. The Futurists relationship with Vico is less straightforward than that with Nietzsche as they may not have had direct knowledge of his work. Croce's study and dissemination of Vichian philosophy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought him into the centre of philosophical discourse in Italy at this time. However much the Futurists may have opposed Crocean neoidealism, it is certain that they were familiar with Croce's work, and by association, with that of Vico. They could also have been aware of Papini's review of Croce's *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico* (1911) which mentioned both Vico's concept of *corsi e ricorsi* and, as will become relevant again towards the end of this thesis, the poetry of barbarism.⁷⁸ The revival of interest in Vico was not restricted to Italy. Georges Sorel wrote an essay on Vico in 1896, which highlighted the importance of Vico's idea of cyclical history and noted that Marx had referred to Vico in *Capital*.⁷⁹ The idea of the general strike as a Vichian recovery resurfaces in *Reflections on Violence* (1908), which is widely accepted to have been a formative text in the genesis of Futurism.⁸⁰ While Vico was seen in the early twentieth century as a precursor of that century's renovators,⁸¹ Mark Lilla has emphasised that Vico was not a modernist and should not be allied to those perpetuating cyclical history from Schopenhauer to Spengler.⁸² However, his utility and contemporary relevance when considering models of history available to the Futurists should not be overlooked.

⁷⁷ According to Carrà's autobiography he read Marx's *Manifesto* and *Das Kapital* in 1902-3. Severini recounts that he and Boccioni were encouraged to read Marx by Mosone Pietrosalvo around 1900. Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 43; Severini, *La vita di un pittore*, p. 18.

⁷⁸ Benedetto Croce, *La filosofia di Giambattista Vico*, (Bari: Laterza, 1911). Benedetto Croce and A. Sica, *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*, trans. by R.J. Collingwood (New Brunswick, N.J.; London: Transaction, 2002). See also Giovanni Papini, 'Vico', in *24 Cervelli: saggi non critici*, 5th edn (Milan: Facchi, 1919), pp. 167-188.

⁷⁹ As Stanley notes, Sorel is ambivalent in his reading of Marx's attitude towards Vico, but the connection between the two is constant. John L. Stanley, 'Sorel's Study of Vico: The Uses of the Poetic Imagination', *European Legacy*, 3 (1998), 17-34 (pp. 17, 22). Georges Sorel, 'Etude sur Vico' *Devenir Social* (October 1896), 785-815; (November) 906-941; (December), 1011-1046.

⁸⁰ Stanley, 'Sorel's Study of Vico: The Uses of the Poetic Imagination' p. 18.

⁸¹ Schilirò, *Dall'anarchia all'Accademia: note sul futurismo*, p. 80.

⁸² Mark Lilla, *G.B. Vico: The Making of an Anti-Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

It should be noted that the cyclical model of history proposed by Vico in *The New Science* (1725) is one of gentile history; Vico conceived Catholic history as a linear progress.⁸³ Vico's temporality is unusual amongst Enlightenment thinkers in that he did not look down on the past;⁸⁴ furthermore, the past is important for Vico as he considers all things created by man as knowable and understandable by man, and so the past is both understandable and the understanding of it aids us in the present.⁸⁵

Like many models of cyclical history, Vico's is made up of three parts; in his case there is the age of gods, the age of heroes and then the age of men; this *corso* is followed by a *ricorso*, that is, a return to the first stage. By attributing an inherent quality to each of the stages, and suggesting that after the last stage the process returns to the first, Vico's *corsi e ricorsi* are similar to Machiavelli's cycles of governance. Machiavelli, himself following the Ancient Greek historian Polybius, claimed that monarchy leads to tyranny, which then leads to democracy, which leads to anarchy, which causes a return to monarchy.⁸⁶ Vico made analogies between the chronologically distant but typologically similar periods, for example between the barbarism of the two heroic ages of the Christian early Middle Ages and the Homeric Age.⁸⁷ Vico did not claim these periods to be identical, merely analogous, and it is on this basis that his cycle is often compared to a spiral. As summarised by Collingwood, "it is not a circle but a spiral; for history never repeats itself but comes round in each new phase in a form differentiated by what has gone before."⁸⁸ This combination of progress and repetition is not unlike Boccioni's progressive phases and repeating stages.

Nietzsche's eternal return, or eternal recurrence, can also be read as not strictly repetitive, but analogical. The model of time he sketched in a notebook in 1873 (fig. 1.3) does not show time as a straight line from the past to the future, but with arches going back and forth making connections between points on that line,⁸⁹ in a way similar to Boccioni's bracketing of temporal periods and connections made between them. This aspect of Nietzsche's work stems from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In 'On the Vision and the Riddle' in the third part of the

⁸³ T.S. Murphy, 'The Eternal Return of "The Seim Anew": Joyce's Vico and Deleuze's Nietzsche', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 35 (1998), 715–734 (p. 716).

⁸⁴ Peter Burke, *Vico* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 55.

⁸⁵ Whitrow, *Time in History*, p. 149.

⁸⁶ Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (London: Arnold, 1969), p. 87.

⁸⁷ Whitrow, *Time in History*, p. 150.

⁸⁸ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 68.

⁸⁹ Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'Image Survivante : Histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 2002), p. 140.

book the dwarf surmises from the two paths leading away and towards the gateway named 'moment' that time is a circle, Zarathustra disagrees, saying "Must not whatever *can* already have passed this way before? Must not whatever *can* happen, already have happened, been done, passed by before?"⁹⁰ For Nietzsche time, unlike space, was eternal and infinite and so everything must eternally return. The key to the return not being a repetition is Nietzsche's use of 'the same', *des gleichen*. As Joan Stambaugh has identified, this word does not directly translate as 'the same', nor is it 'similar', it is somewhere in-between.⁹¹ In this sense, the years are not the same, but analogous and so the eternal recurrence has some sense of structure. Agamben has also noted the difficulty of translating this term, suggesting the alternative translation "the eternal return of the *like*" and noting that this like could very well be an image, uniting the modern German translation of *Leich* as corpse or cadaver to the Roman connection between death and images which the classicist Nietzsche would have been aware of.⁹² Combining the likeness of Agamben's reading of Nietzsche and the similar of Stambaugh's, encourages comparison between Vico's inter-cyclical analogies and the eternal return. What returns for Vico and Nietzsche is never the same but an equivalent, a likeness. While Vico is not thought to have been a source for Nietzsche, the similarity of their ideas in a number of fields has not gone unnoticed, and Nietzsche's anti-historicism described earlier has been compared to Vico's barbarism of reflection, which identifies an excess of reflection, or retrospection to echo the terminology used above, amongst a base section of humanity as dangerous for a culture, and likely to lead to decline.⁹³

Vico's spiral history can be connected to his concept of *Ingenium*, or mother wit, which he considered the proper faculty of knowledge, and attributes as particular to the Latins and their Italian descendents. Defined as "the creative power through which man is capable of recognising likenesses and making them himself,"⁹⁴ this ability is necessary for the recognition of the resemblance of the *corso* and the *ricorso*. *Ingenium* resonates with Marinetti and Severini's interest in analogies as literary and painterly tools, but it recalls the

⁹⁰ Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 125-6.

⁹¹ Stambaugh gives the example of two women wearing the same hat at the same time, the hat is not identical, there are two of them, but they are the same, they are not similar. Joan Stambaugh, *Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Return* (Baltimore; London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1972), pp. 29-30.

⁹² Giorgio Agamben, 'The Eternal Return and the Paradox of Passion', in *Nietzsche in Italy*, ed. by Thomas Harrison (Saratoga, CA: Anma Libri, 1988), pp. 9-17 (pp. 9-10).

⁹³ Thomas Norris, 'Nietzsche and Vico: On Irony and Cultural Dissolution', in *Nietzsche in Italy*, ed. by Harrison, pp. 313-332 (pp. 315-6).

⁹⁴ Giambattista Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians, Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language*, trans. by L.M. Palmer (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 102.

Bergsonian intuition which the Futurists valued over intellectualism. Marinetti's 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature' (1912) demands that Futurist poets hate intelligence and aims to reawaken in them "divine intuition, the characteristic gift of the Latin races."⁹⁵ The intuition of history's spiral shape is thus given a nationalist quality. It should also be noted that although when discussing the Baroque in the next chapter importance of the spiral in Futurist art will also be evident, I do not claim a connection between the spiral idea of Futurist history and the spiral in Futurist composition, but this analogy encourages an association of this model of history with dynamism. While Severini's 'The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism – Futurist Manifesto' is quite unrelated to the question of time and history, I do not think it inappropriate to consider the temporal application of Severini's call for "Simultaneous contrast [...] of groups of analogous forms disposed in spherical expansion. – Constructive interpretation" in artistic form.⁹⁶ This spherical expansion of analogies is akin to Boccioni's art historical model. However, this model is not *sui generis* in art history and is, in fact, comparable to that of Vasari.

Art historiographical precedents for Boccioni's 'Introduction to Painting'

Vasari's history of Renaissance art *The Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Architects, Painters and Sculptors, from Cimabue to our times* was well-known in Italy and the rest of Europe in the early twentieth century. Boccioni was clearly familiar with the book as he referred to it in a letter to the sometime Futurist writer and poet Gian Pietro Lucini (who vehemently opposed Marinetti's call to destroy museums and art galleries).⁹⁷ This letter demonstrates the potential utility of the Vasarian model of art history to the Futurist cause:

For the necessity of energetically maintaining a violent artistic polemic my futurist artist friends and I will need detailed exposure to all the steps (naturally with precise bibliographic references) chosen in the works of Vasari or of other more secure writers on art that confirm our conviction that every great innovative and creative artistic period necessarily implicates a tendency to despise and destroy the masterpieces of the preceding periods.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Marinetti, 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature' (1912), reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Rainey, Poggi and Wittman, p. 124.

⁹⁶ Marinetti, 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature' (1912), reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Rainey, Poggi and Wittman, pp. 119-125; Gino Severini, 'The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism – Futurist Manifesto' (1913), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p.123.

⁹⁷ Andrea Cortellessa, 'Erostrato e i grandi morti. Lucini, i futuristi e la tradizione' in *Il Futurismo nelle avanguardie*, ed. by Pedullà, pp. 273-287 (p. 282).

⁹⁸ "Per la necessità di sostenere energicamente una violenta polemica artistica io e i miei amici pittori futuristi avremmo bisogno di una esposizione particolareggiata di tutti i passi (naturalmente citati con precision di date bibliografiche) passi scelti nelle opere di Vasari o di altri scrittori d'arte più sicuri che confermino la nostra convinzione che ogni grande periodo artistico novatore e creatore implica

I will come back to this in the next chapter, when addressing tradition, and in chapter four when discussing Boccioni's relationship with the Renaissance, but it is pertinent here as it shows Boccioni's awareness of and interest in a Vasarian model of art history which is both cyclical and progressive as it focuses on artists' destructive attitude in the name of progress and the analogy of that Renaissance attitude to the Futurists. Vasari's art history is very much a narrative, exemplifying the literary nature of history discussed earlier in the chapter; the *Lives's* literary historical approach has been compared to those of Cicero, Pliny, Petrarch, and Dante, and the stories which characterise the artists are often compared to *novelle* such as those of Boccaccio.⁹⁹

Vasari's art history is usually associated with the idea of progress,¹⁰⁰ described by him as "from humble beginnings, they very gradually improve, and finally reach the summit of perfection."¹⁰¹ This progression occurs in three phases: infancy, adolescence and maturity. It is fitting that Vasari's anthology of biographies is structured as a metaphorical life, with the text itself is divided into three phases. While these can be roughly mapped onto the *trecento*, *quattrocento*, and *cinquecento*, Vasari did not periodize according to calendar, but by typological time. In fact Vasari has often been chastised for his errors with regards to dates and chronology, for example thinking Duccio younger than Giotto, but his chronological inconsistencies can be attributed to the lesser value given to accuracy of dates at this time, and his creation of a cohesive story.

The three phases create a teleological development of art through the Renaissance from Cimabue to the zenith of Michelangelo, with younger artists learning from and then overtaking their predecessors, as in Dante's couplet "Cimabue thought to hold the field in

necessariamente una tendenza spiccata a disprezzare e distruggere i capolavori dei periodi precedenti" Boccioni, [letter to Gian Pietro Lucini from between 28th May and 30th August], reprinted in *Umberto Boccioni: Lettere futuriste*, pp. 18-19 (p. 19).

⁹⁹ T. S. R. Boase, *Giorgio Vasari the man and the book* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 43. Patricia Lee Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), particularly chapter 4 "In Another's Profession": Vasari and the "Writers of Histories", pp. 148-186.

¹⁰⁰ Ian Verstegen has made a convincing argument that the nature of Vasari's progress was ordinal rather than historicist and as such not teleological. See his 'Vasari's Progressive (but Non-historicist) Renaissance', *Journal of Art Historiography*, Number 5 (December 2011), 1-19. However, the aim of this section is to present commonly understood schematization of Vasari of which the Futurists would have been aware.

¹⁰¹ Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. by Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 49.

painting, and now Giotto hath the cry, so that the fame of the other is obscured.”¹⁰² This schema is similar to that of Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* (c. 77-79 AD), as both authors saw the history of art progressing towards “the Essential Copy of the real.”¹⁰³ As identified by Panofsky, in addition to these three phases of development, Vasari like others in the Renaissance looked back at all of history and divided it into three parts, the Ancients (*antico*), the Middle Ages (*vecchio*), and the Renaissance (*moderno*).¹⁰⁴ In the first of these Vasari did not distinguish Roman copies of the Greeks and authentic classical Greek art, although the rediscovery of some Greek sculpture is considered a cause of the achievements of the Renaissance.¹⁰⁵ He promoted the Roman *maniera* above the Egyptian, Greek and Etruscan as it took the best of all of these to become “the most divine of them all.”¹⁰⁶ From Vasari’s perspective in the *moderno*, the *antico* is related in style but distant in time, the *vecchio* related in time but distant in style.¹⁰⁷ The analogical return to the first stage in the third stage, the rebirth known as the Renaissance, creates the cyclical metaphor in Vasarian art history. The roles which Pliny attributed to Apollodorus and Zeuxis, that of art’s initiator and fulfiller, are played out again by Cimabue and Giotto, respectively.¹⁰⁸ Vasari’s cyclical approach echoes Petrarch and Ghiberti’s use of cycles to describe the passage of time.¹⁰⁹

Vasari’s model of art history brings together evolution and progress in a way analogous to the Vichian spiral of history, which allows history to repeat itself not identically analogically. In Vasari the birth of art with Apollodorus repeats with the rebirth of art with Cimabue; Giotto’s “O” is retelling of Pliny’s story of Apelles’s perfect line.¹¹⁰ These echoes are not neat, Giotto is also analogous to Zeuxis, Raphael is also compared to Apelles. There is progress within antiquity and within the Renaissance, but Michelangelo’s elevation above the ancients means there is an undercurrent of progress, which is not a constant process throughout time.

¹⁰² “Credette Cimabue nella pittura tener lo campo, e ora ha Giotto il grido, sì che la fama di colui oscura” Translation from Dante Alighieri, *The Purgatorio of Dante Alighieri*, trans. by T. Okey (London: Temple Classics, M.J. Dent & Sons, 1964), p. 133.

¹⁰³ Bryson, *Tradition and Desire*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, new edn (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 227.

¹⁰⁵ Boase, *Giorgio Vasari the man and the book*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁶ Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de’ più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue, insino a’ tempi nostri*, ed. by Luciano Bellosi and Aldo Rossi, 2 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1991 [1550]), I, 139.

¹⁰⁷ Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, p. 227.

¹⁰⁸ Bryson, *Tradition and Desire*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁹ Petrarch saw the millennium following the Greek as a decline; Ghiberti mapped this construction onto the history of art, noting Christian iconoclasm as a historical reason for the artistic dark ages. Eric Fernie, *Art History and its Methods: A Critical Anthology* (London: Phaidon, 1995), pp. 10-11.

¹¹⁰ Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History*, p. 309.

Like Vasari's model, Boccioni's is a teleology with two different rhythms of development taking place, one governed by progression, as artistic practice develops from the depiction of the external to the exteriorization of the internal, the other by cyclical stages. I do not suggest that Boccioni was imitating Vasarian art history in his 'Introduction to Painting', merely that he had an awareness of Vasari's schema when he created this diagram, and that this precedent (along with those before and after Vasari using similar models) again invalidates the Futurist mantra of having no past. Moreover, as will be expanded upon with reference to Futurism's possible appropriations of the art of its *passato remoto*, the Futurists were averse to the entrenchment of his critical judgements, the dominance of neoclassical and neo-Renaissance styles.

In the previous chapter I argued that the Futurists were governed by a presentist temporality, as supported by Boccioni's art historical model which situates the telos of art history in the present of Futurism. Vasari had done the same by claiming that Michelangelo had surpassed his predecessors both of his *passato prossimo* (e.g. Giotto) and his *passato remoto* (e.g. Phidias).¹¹¹ Moreover, while Vasari was negative about the future after Michelangelo, seeing it as a decline, his decision to write in vernacular Florentine (like Machiavelli and Guiccardini before him) and his desire for his book to educate young artists showed that Vasari was, to an extent, also oriented towards the future. He shows optimism in the book's dedication to Cosimo de' Medici Vasari wrote "I hope that someone after us will have to write a fourth part to my book."¹¹² Like Cicero, Vasari saw history as "the true guide and teacher of our actions".¹¹³ However, Vasari's hope for the future is that the fame of these artists is preserved, as evident in the title page to the 1568 edition is an engraving showing Fame awaking the dead, watched by the muses of painting, sculpture and architecture, accompanied by the phrase "I shall claim that with this breath these men have never perished, nor been conquered by death."¹¹⁴ Vasari had succeeded in maintaining the fame of the artists he praised, and his own, into the twentieth century. However, those artistic

¹¹¹ "this man surpasses and triumphs over not only all those artists who have almost surpassed Nature but even those most celebrated ancient artists, who beyond all doubt surpassed Nature." Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, p. 282.

¹¹² "spero che ci verrà doppo noi arà da scrivere la quarta età del mio volume" Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue, insino a' tempi nostri*, I, 5.

¹¹³ Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue, insino a' tempi nostri*, I, 16. Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History*, p. 151.

¹¹⁴ Boase, *Giorgio Vasari the man and the book*, p. 66. Boase's translation of "HAC SOSPITE NUNQUAM HOS PERIISSE VIROS VICTOS AUT MORTE FATEBOR"

periods and styles which he perceived as inferior were at this time beginning to gain more attention thanks to, among others, Roberto Longhi.

Longhi was anti-academic in that he wished to reclaim the artists and art historical periods that the academy had pushed out of history, namely Piero della Francesca and the Italian Primitives and Caravaggio and the Baroque.¹¹⁵ In this sense, Longhi broke with the Vasarian model, which considered artists of these periods merely precursors to or decadence from the divine Michelangelo. Longhi was also quite different to Vasari in his approach to art historical writing, in that he had little interest in the artists' biographies, and was concerned primarily with the works' formal properties.¹¹⁶ Longhi also wrote on the Futurists, but his subscription to Futurist and avant-gardist ideologies is questionable.¹¹⁷ Longhi drew comparisons between his historical and contemporary interests which will be discussed at length in relevant subsequent chapters. Before addressing Longhi's model of art history, it is necessary to return to Boccioni's second section of the 'Introduction to Painting' to see how he modelled art history from Manet to Futurism.

Placing Manet at the top of the diagram, which then divided into the two streams governed by colour and form respectively, Boccioni divided the Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, Neo-Impressionist and Cubist artists into three periods which took place across both streams. In the first phase, colour is associated with sensation, as represented by Monet, Sisley, Pissarro and Renoir, while form and intellect are associated with Cézanne, Degas, Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Derain. The second phase, scientific predomination is found on both sides, divided into the "study of reality with the division of coloristic elements", represented by Seurat, Signac and Cross, and the "study of reality with the division of formal elements", represented by Picasso and Braque. In the third phase, "Synthesis of Static Colour (Exasperation of colour that does not find form)" is represented by Matisse and Delaunay; "Synthesis of Static Form (Exasperation of form and chiaroscuro that does not find colour)" is represented by Cubism, namely Gleizes, Metzinger and Léger. In general, although the Futurist artists respected Cézanne and Picasso from the form side of the model, the colour

¹¹⁵ Roberto Longhi, 'Avvertenze per il lettore', *Scritti giovanili, 1912-1922* (Florence: Sansoni, 1961), p. IX.

¹¹⁶ Longhi's skills of *ekphrasis* are, however, reminiscent of those of Vasari.

¹¹⁷ Cesare Garboli says Longhi was a Futurist, while Ezio Raimondi claims the opposite. Cesare Garboli, 'Breve storia del giovane Longhi', in Roberto Longhi, *Breve ma veridica storia della pittura italiana* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2001), p. XX. Ezio Raimondi, 'Il "cerchio" e l'"elisse"', *Da Renoir a De Staël: Roberto Longhi e il moderno*, ed. by Claudio Spadoni (Milan: Mazzotta, 2003), p. 22.

side contains more of their named precursors, such as Seurat, and their direct rivals, such as Delaunay.¹¹⁸ Most importantly, however, Boccioni stressed that Futurism is a synthesis of form and colour. This is very similar to Longhi's idea of art history, formulated in his writings from as early as 1912, in which he gave most credence to those artists throughout history who achieved a synthesis of colour and line. I do not necessarily suggest a causal relationship between Boccioni's model and Longhi's, but the artist and art historian were certainly acquainted at this time. Further instances of the proximity of Futurist and Longhian turns of phrase are present in the following chapters.

In his *A Brief but True History of Italian Painting*, published in 1914, Longhi divided the history of art dicharomically into those concerned with line and those concerned with colour; the former are associated with *disegno* and *plastica*, the latter are also concerned with these, but synthesises them with colour; the former school runs from Giotto to Michelangelo, the latter is connected primarily to Piero della Francesca and creates a second ideal chain from Paolo Uccello to Paul Cézanne, or at least to Paolo Veronese.¹¹⁹ As explained in an article in *La Voce* in 1912, the linearists could be further split into those concerned with the plastic and those concerned with movement, in the former camp we find "Roman sculptors, Giotto, Florentine Naturalists, Masaccio, Mantegna, Signorelli, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Courbet;" in the latter: "French Gothic, Giovanni Pisano, Internationalism of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Pisanello, the Siennese and Japanese, Pollaiuolo, Botticelli, Leonardo, Tiepolo, Magnasco, Degas."¹²⁰

Like Boccioni, Longhi created analogies between artists across artistic periods through the themes of form and colour. Again this highlights continuity and implies both progress and continuity; artists continue to return to the same issues. The relationship between Futurism and these diachronic relationships is of far-wider significance for this thesis than merely

¹¹⁸ See chapter 5.5 for more on Cézanne and Futurism and chapter 5.4 for more on Seurat as a precedent.

¹¹⁹ Cesare Garboli, 'Breve storia del giovane Longhi', in Roberto Longhi, *Breve ma veridica storia della pittura italiana* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2001), p. XXVI. This lineage is returned to when discussing Cézanne in chapter 5.5.

¹²⁰ "La tradizione disegnativa si arteria in due visioni: la lineale e la plastica: si uniscono talora in uno stesso artista.

Ad ogni modo la tradizione capitalmente plastica ha le sue tappe negli scultori romanici, Giotto, naturalisti Fiorentini, Masaccio, Mantegna, Signorelli, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Courbet. E la lineale, essenzialmente ricercatrice del movimento, si chiama Gotico francese, Giovanni Pisano, Internazionalismo del '3-400, Pisanello, Senesi e Giapponesi, Pollajolo, Botticelli, Leonardo, Tiepolo, Magnasco, Degas. [...] Le seconda era non rinnega i risultati della prima, solo li incorpora nella nuova visione; basti pensare a Cézanne e ai cubisti creatori-critici." Roberto Longhi, 'Rinascimento Fantastico', *La Voce*, IV, n. 52, 26 December 1912, 976-977. Reprinted in Longhi, *Scritti giovanili, 1912-1922*, pp. 3-13 (p. 10).

highlighting Boccioni's tendency of legitimize Futurism through connection with their supposedly non-existent past, as Longhi's art historical model relates back to the idea suggested earlier in this chapter that the present affects our interpretation of the past and therefore its narrativization into history, which is integral to the next chapter's consideration of appropriation and tradition.

This chapter has opposed the received understanding of Futurism's supposed repudiation of the past by nuancing Futurism's relationships with the past and history. Drawing on etymology and postmodern philosophy of history I have distinguished the past as a temporal mode from history as a narrativization and presentification of the past, which is always interpreted according to its present. This led to my assertion that Futurism did not oppose the past per se but its presence in the present in the form of history, as demonstrated in my reading *antipassatismo* as *anti-passatismo* rather than *anti-passato-ismo*. My claim is supported by close-readings of the Futurist manifestos in which historians rather than historical figures are attacked, and the present's cult of the past reviled. I have further suggested that in this context historicism (in the sense of historical-mindedness) can be considered cognate with *passatismo*. In relation to the last chapter, in which I argued that the Futurists demonstrated a temporality which was not preoccupied purely with the future, but rather with the *futurista* present, this chapter has shown that what the Futurists repudiated was the opposite side of this coin, that is, the *passatista* present. The fact that such an attitude does not require an opposition to the past is evidenced by Nietzsche, a clear precedent for this aversion to historicism, who acknowledged that the past did have some value, and awareness of it was necessary in order to conceive of a different future. Moreover, Futurism's self-historicizing tendencies allow historical practice to be part of Futurism. The second half of this chapter considered the shapes of history and their relationship to the understandings of time outlined in the previous chapter, that is the relationship between linear time and progressive history and between phenomenological time and cyclical history, and how the historical schema and periodization used by the Futurists and their precedents supports my hypothesis that the Futurist temporality was, at bottom, presentist. The example of Boccioni's model of art history suggests that both models were available to and

interested the Futurists, as Boccioni combined the progressive and the repetitive in a schema which had precedents in the art historical models of Vasari and Longhi.

Chapter 3: Subverting the past (again): Avant-gardism, tradition, appropriation

The relationship between the art of the past and the art of the present is to an extent reliant on the actuality of the art of the past in the present and on the way in which (hi)stories of art are conceived in that present. In order to reconsider Futurism's relationship with the art of the past this chapter looks at three concepts: avant-gardism, tradition and appropriation, aiming to subvert the received temporalities of these art historical tropes by showing how avant-gardism can denote continuity and how tradition and appropriation can be forms of rupture with the past. By combining these ideas I arrive at a notion of avant-gardism which continues a tradition of rebellion and appropriates the art historical canon as a means of that rebellion, which can be taken forward into the second part of this thesis where Futurism's appropriations are discussed.

The previous chapter emphasised that the past as events is distinct from history, and that objects from the past (such as a book, in the example given by Papini) persist into the present but are themselves changed by their different reception in that present. The interest in objects which 'belong' to another time but which are still available to the present is common to all historical studies, but for scholars concerned with the temporality of art history, such as Michael Ann Holly, the incongruence between the temporality of the object of study (the artwork produced in the past) and the study taking place in the present affects that study.¹ The reciprocity of the relationship between the past and the present discussed in the previous chapter is also found in art. The art of the past accumulates into the present, becoming part of it, while simultaneously the specificity of that present affects the reception of the art of the past.

In addition to the art historian's temporality, this chapter also deals with the temporality of the artist. While eventually the artist's position with relation to other artists is in the hands of critics and historians, the artist positions their practice in relation to their predecessors, and may consider how they will be received by their successors. The artist's awareness of art history, whether by in-depth study, art education's tendency to encourage artists to copy or study great works of the past, or from the most minimal consciousness that s/he is not the first to render an image, forces the artist to take a stance, to either break from or continue the

¹ Michael Ann Holly, 'The Melancholy Art', *The Art Bulletin*, 89 (2007), 7-17 (p. 8).

tradition(s) in which they find themselves. Although many artists take a position between the two, the polarity of Futurism's claims to be entirely original and opposed to their completely imitative contemporaries necessitates a more profound interrogation of the temporality of art history as the story of art, and the relationship between art history and art practice. This thesis is an apposite example of art history's re-writing of artists' temporalities.

This thesis as a whole therefore deals not only with the Futurists' temporality, but with my own as an art historian. As Arnold Hauser has stressed, the "art historian also is confined within the limits set by the artistic aims of his time."² While my re-reading of Futurism as having appropriated the past, rather than having entirely negated it, as is posited in the majority of previous scholarship, demonstrates the subjectivity and malleability of art history into contrary narratives, it is also essential that I am aware of my own temporality, and how that impacts my re-reading of the Futurists'; this will be a primary point of reflection in the conclusion.

In order to consider avant-gardism as part of the Futurist temporality, this chapter reconsiders the temporality of avant-gardism demonstrating that it is not exclusively based on rupture with the past, and in fact, its ambivalent relationship with the past and future are essential to its identity.

On avant-gardism 1: defining the avant-garde

Futurism defined itself as avant-garde and for many scholars it has defined the meaning of avant-gardism. In 1911 in a speech given in Rome Boccioni declared "We Futurists feel ourselves to be at the avant-garde of the world, completely detached from the past."³ In 1914 at the beginning of *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* Boccioni praised his colleagues Carrà, Marinetti and Russolo for creating Milan's "avant-garde anti-traditional atmosphere."⁴ In 1919 Marinetti, Emilio Settimelli and Mario Carli still described their movement as "the avant-garde of the Italian artistic sensibility."⁵ The Futurists are also identified as avant-

² Arnold Hauser, *The Philosophy of Art History* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1963), pp. 236, 218.

³ "Noi futuristi che ci sentiamo all'avanguardia del mondo ci proclamiamo completamente staccati dal passato." Umberto Boccioni, 'La Pittura Futurista [Conferenza tenuta a Roma nel 1911]' in *Umberto Boccioni: altri inediti e apparati critici*, p. 15.

⁴ "creando nelle notti elettriche di Milano e di Parigi la grande atmosfera d'avanguardia antitradizionale." Umberto Boccioni, *Futurist Painting and Sculpture*, p. 11.

⁵ "il movimento artistico futurista, avanguardia della sensibilità artistica italiana" F.T. Marinetti, Emilio Settimelli, Mario Carli, 'Che cos'è il Futurismo, Nozioni Elementari', in *Catalogo per la Esposizione Futurista, Galleria Subalpina, Torino, 27 Marzo al 27 Aprile, 1919*, unpaginated.

garde retrospectively by historians of art and literature; Poggi claims that “Futurism provides a template for the “historical avant-garde””⁶ while Peter Nicholls calls Futurism “the avant-garde movement, par excellence.”⁷

The positioning of Futurism as the paradigmatic avant-garde is common in the branch of avant-garde studies which focuses on avant-gardes’ artistic output and formations, using a historical overview of self-selecting avant-garde artists’ practices to produce a picture of what the avant-garde(s) (and as I come to explain, avant-gardism(s)) was or were. Of course, the focus of these studies, their authors’ priorities, and their level of concern with the historical emergence and application of the term ‘avant-garde’ and the conditions of it as a formation, lead to varied conclusions on the nature of the avant-garde, which can usefully be grouped together as one of two approaches to the field. The other branch of avant-garde studies begins with the ideology of the avant-garde, which it conceptualizes and then retrospectively applies, with avant-garde artists and movements being co-opted or excluded, depending on their congruence with this conceptualization. At one extreme Poggioli equates futurism, in the general sense given in chapter one, to avant-gardism; a position continued by Perloff.⁸ At the other extreme Peter Bürger entirely omits Futurism from his *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, despite its manifestation of the blending of art and life, as it failed to comply with the political allegiances of the other avant-gardes he was trying to theorize.⁹ Both Bürger and Poggioli fail to fully engage with the historical emergence of avant-garde formations and as a result, produce theories of the avant-garde which create a model which cannot be applied to all its manifestations.

This research is primarily concerned with Futurism as an avant-garde but the questioning of its temporality and more specifically that of avant-gardism undertaken in this chapter requires an interrogation of the conceptualization of avant-gardism. The absence of analysis of the phenomenon itself within histories of avant-gardes has been criticised by Nicos Hadjinicolaou and David Cottington.¹⁰ The consequence of this absence has been the failure

⁶ Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, p. ix.

⁷ Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 104.

⁸ Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 52. The original Italian text was published in 1962. Renato Poggioli, *Teoria dell'arte d'avanguardia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1962). Perloff, *The Futurist Moment*.

⁹ Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. by Michael Shaw (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

¹⁰ Nicos Hadjinicolaou, ‘On the Ideology of Avant-gardism’, *Praxis*, 6 (1982), 39–69. David Cottington, *Cubism in the Shadow of War: The Avant-Garde and Politics in Paris 1905-1914* (New Haven: Yale

to properly conceptualize and define the avant-garde on three levels. First is the use of 'avant-garde' as a noun and as an adjective; the formation of the avant-garde, the group of individuals involved, is rarely distinguished from the description of their artworks or activities as avant-garde. Following on from this, there is the term 'avant-gardism', which indicates the attitude, or ideology, of being avant-garde (in the adjective sense). Second is the distinction as to whether the avant-garde constitutes all artists who alongside scientists and industrialists are ahead of society as a whole (as per the Saint-Simonian origin of the term), or just some artists who are ahead of other artists; this distinction was already extant by the middle of the nineteenth century, according to Linda Nochlin, and towards the end of the nineteenth century, according to Cottington.¹¹ The third consequence is the conflation of 'modernism' and 'avant-garde', particularly rife in scholarly texts addressing the culture of this historical period.¹²

My consideration of the temporality of avant-gardism must begin with a differentiation of the meaning of avant-garde used in this thesis. Regarding the differentiation between avant-gardism being a position taken within society at large, or purely within art, the latter is addressed here as this thesis's project is concerned with how the Futurists (and their predecessors) positioned themselves in relation to other artists. I do not suggest that the Futurists, and certainly Marinetti, did not consider themselves as ahead of society as a whole, however, the focus of this dissertation on the visual arts necessarily restricts the discussion of avant-gardism to this arena.

Regarding the distinction between the avant-garde formation and the adjective avant-garde, the focus of this research is on the latter, that is avant-gardism as an attitude, because I am interested in the relationship between the avant-gardist attitude to the past and Futurist *antipassatismo*.¹³ In chapter five modernist and avant-garde formations in Florence, Milan and Paris are considered and compared in terms of their respective manifestations of

University Press, 1998); particularly chapter 2. David Cottington, 'The Formation of the Avant-Garde in Paris and London, c. 1880–1915', *Art History*, 35 (2012), 596–621 (p. 602).

¹¹ Linda Nochlin, 'The Invention of the Avant-Garde: France, 1830–80,' in *The Avant-Garde*, ed. by Thomas B. Hess and John Ashbery (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 11–18 (p. 16). Cottington, 'The Formation of the Avant-Garde in Paris and London, c. 1880–1915', p. 607. Cottington refers to Robert Estivals, Jean-Charles Gaudy and Gabrielle Vergez, *L'Avant-Garde. Etude historique et sociologique des publications periodiques ayant pour titre 'L'avant-garde'* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1968), p. 77.

¹² It is for this reason that I do not exclude texts concerning modernism from this discussion, but throughout the thesis, distinctions are made between modernism and avant-gardism.

¹³ I will not use avant-gardist and avant-gardism when paraphrasing other scholars who do not make this distinction; however, my own conclusions will be framed by avant-gardism.

antipassatismo via their relationships with the academy, that is, their roles in constructing alternative spaces for the sale, exhibition and criticism of their work, which set a practical as well as an ideological precedent for the Futurists' independent formation. The function of this strand of the wider discussion is to counteract the tendency to read the strong *antipassatista* rhetoric of Futurism's predecessors in Italy as evidence of their being fully-fledged avant-gardes by highlighting these formations' continuing ties with the academy, despite their rhetoric and some anti-academic activities and avant-gardist tendencies. The focus here is still on avant-gardism as an attitude, but the consideration of its formations in this discussion gives a fuller picture of *antipassatismo* amongst the predecessors of Futurism.

Before explicating these ideas further it is necessary to turn to the question of differentiating modernism from avant-gardism. Modernism is here taken to mean the artistic expression of the experience of modernity, and would therefore be an apt description of the Futurists' depictions of the modern city as they experienced it. This definition of modernism refutes the notion that modernism is a period, in line with recent scholarship which highlights the multiplicity and specificity of modernities, and the modernisms they produce; as Theodor W. Adorno's stated, and Peter Osborne oft repeats, "modernity is a qualitative, not a chronological, category."¹⁴ Furthermore, avant-gardisms are also taken to be pluralized, and this thesis joins a strand of research which counters the assumption that the avant-garde is monolithic and homogeneous within and across historical formations.¹⁵

It is necessary to briefly consider the specifics of the Italian situation regarding modernism which are rarely, if ever, addressed in scholarship on modern Italian art. The word *modernismo* had a particular resonance in Italy in the early twentieth century due to its association with the modernization of the Catholic Church. This modernist movement within

¹⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, trans. by E.F.N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 2005), p. 218. Peter Osborne, 'Modernity is a qualitative, not a chronological, category', *New Left Review*, 192 (1992), 65–84. Terry E. Smith, Okwui Enwezor and Nancy Condee, eds, *Antinomies of art and culture: modernity, postmodernity, contemporaneity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008). Okwui Enwezor, 'Modernity and Postcolonial Ambivalence', *Altermodern: Tate Triennale*, ed. by Nicholas Bourriaud (London: Tate, 2009). S. N. Eisenstadt, 'Multiple Modernities', *Daedalus*, vol.129, no.1 Winter 2000, 1–29. Susan Stanford Friedman, 'Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies', *Modernism/modernity*, 13 (2006), 425–443. On the other hand, Frederic Jameson argues against this multiplicity in *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of Being* (London: Verso, 2002).

¹⁵ Cottington, *Cubism in the shadow of war*, p. 11. Josephine M. Guy, *The British Avant-Garde: The Theory and Politics of Tradition* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991). Martin Daunt and Bernhard Rieger, eds, *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late Victorian Era to World War II*, (Oxford; New York: Berg Publishers, 2001).

the Catholic Church encouraged progressive ideas to be incorporated into the religion. Pope Pius X formally identified the movement in his 1907 encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*; in 1910 he decreed an obligatory 'Oath against Modernists' to be taken by all Catholic clergy and teachers.¹⁶ The Futurists, averse to Christianity and the Vatican, were bound to identify themselves as avant-gardist rather than modernist in order to differentiate their activity from this particular Italian modernist movement. The Futurists and their intellectual milieu were aware of this sense of modernism: Boccioni wrote about it in his diary in September 1907, and it was a regular topic in magazines like *La Voce*.¹⁷ Arguably the Catholic ownership of the word modernism led Boccioni to coin his own word, *modernolatria*, a word first used in *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* and used enthusiastically by other Futurists including Marinetti long after Boccioni's death.¹⁸ *Modernolatria* fuses *moderno* with *idolatria*, idolatry or an excessive admiration or worship, a term with pagan or anti-Christian connotations. It would be a mistake to take *modernolatria* as a simple synonym of modernism; it is more than an expression of the experience of modernity, it is a raging obsession for everything new.

In addition to the distinction between avant-gardism and modernism made above, that is, between the attitude of the avant-garde and the articulation of the experience of modernity, and the distinction between avant-gardism and modernism in Italy due to the religious connotations of the latter, there is another differentiation, touched upon in the introduction and earlier chapters. Guido Guglielmi has sought to disentangle the avant-gardist and modernist temporalities, claiming that in avant-gardism a complete rupture with the past has been achieved and so the concern is with a synchronic present, while modernism is diachronic, and looks to recuperate and transform the past.¹⁹ Guglielmi draws his ideas from T.S. Eliot's *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1919), which I discuss in the next section on tradition, and I pick up this idea again there, having considered other approaches to the temporality of avant-gardism. However, I would like to deny at this stage the mutual

¹⁶ Finn Fordham, '1910: When "Modernism" Changed - from Christian Heresy to Critical Orthodoxy' (presented at the "On or about 1910 human nature changed": 1910 Centenary Conference, University of Glasgow, 10-12 December 2010: unpublished).

¹⁷ "Ho seguito in questi giorni lo svolgersi della lotta tra il Vaticano e il Modernismo. Dico Vaticano perché mi sembra che il nemico sia lì e non nei cattolici. Ho letto un articolo su Murri, uno di Sabotrer e altri. È una lotta interessantissima." Boccioni, '[24th September 1907],' reprinted in *Diari*, pp. 51-52 (p. 51). Salvatore Minocchi, 'La Crisi del Clero,' *La Voce*, I, n. 5, 14 January 1909, 17-18.

¹⁸ Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 155.

¹⁹ Guido Guglielmi, *La parola del testo: letteratura come storia* (Bologna: Mulino, 1993), particularly chapter 7 Memoria e oblio della storia, pp.153-187.

exclusivity of avant-gardism and modernism that Guglielmi's binary opposition creates. I argue not only that it is possible for an artist or artwork to conceive themselves or be conceived as both avant-gardist and modernist, but that both the temporalities described by Guglielmi, the synchronic and the diachronic were available to and used by the Futurists and other avant-gardists. Furthermore, I insist that the temporalities of avant-gardisms and modernisms cannot but relate to the temporality of the culture from which they emerge.

On avant-gardism 2: the temporality of avant-gardism

I deny Guglielmi's assertion that avant-gardism is synchronic because, like Futurism, it is an inherently temporal concept with specific kinds of relationships to the past and future; the avant-gardist asserts that their art is nearer to the future than the rest of the present, which is burdened by the past. However, I do not oppose the importance Guglielmi attributes to the present in avant-gardism, as he feels the presentism to be its dominant temporality, which supports my argument in chapter one that presentism was Futurism's dominant temporality. The difference between my position and Guglielmi's is the nature of the present, which following Bergson, Husserl and the Futurists I have conceived for the purposes of this thesis as incorporating the past and future, rather than being a singular point, a now.

Extending the argument made in chapter one, I suggest that presentism is not only the temporality of Futurism, but could be seen as a wider avant-gardist trait. This proposition has been made by a number of scholars, including Jürgen Habermas, Éric Michaud, François Hartog and Sascha Bru,²⁰ due to the avant-gardist tendency to idolize the modernity of the present rather than hypothesise about the future. However, as stated above, because the model of the present I am working with includes the past and future, I here focus on avant-gardism's relationship with these, comparing this to my earlier discussions of the Futurist temporality. This section argues that avant-gardism has a complex temporality which can imply continuity with the past as much as a negation of it.

Hadjinicolau's article 'On the ideology of avant-gardism' argues that "the major problem posed by the notion of avant-garde" to be "the relationship it implies to *time*," and has

²⁰ Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity versus Postmodernity', trans. by Seyla Ben-Habib, *New German Critique* 22 (Winter 1981), p. 5. Éric Michaud, 'Le présent du futurisme. Les vertiges de l'auto-destruction' *Mil neuf cent. Revue d'histoire intellectuelle*, 1 (2003), pp. 21–42. Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité: présentisme et expériences du temps*, p. 122. Sascha Bru, 'Now' (presented at the "On or about 1910 human nature changed": 1910 Centenary Conference, University of Glasgow: Unpublished, 2010).

offered a very useful discussion on the temporality of the ideology of avant-gardism, which I draw upon in this chapter.²¹ He identifies five constituent parts of the ideology of avant-gardism, the first four of which concern me here as they have some temporal resonance: a linear conception of history; historical determinism; an evolutionist/revolutionist conception of history and novelty as a criterion for evaluation of the work of art.

As suggested above, if the avant-gardist is ahead of the present, and if the present will follow them, then avant-gardism demands a linear conception of history and historical determinism. The linear conception fits with the importance attributed to novelty in art, as does the evolutionary conception of history. However, as Hadjinicolaou stresses, the ideology of avant-gardism is also tied up with a revolutionary idea of history, in which history is a series of revolutions, the avant-garde being one of them. In order to reconcile the problem that avant-gardism presents itself both as linear evolution and cyclical revolution, Hadjinicolaou simply accepts that it can be both. This combination recalls both Vico's spiral and Boccioni's model of art history, with each revolution Futurism positions itself as an avant-garde as both an evolution and a revolution of the Italian art which had gone before, a claim which will be supported by chapters four and five.

While Hadjinicolaou accepts the dualism, Harold Rosenberg notes the internal tension caused by the paradox of the avant-garde: the insistence on newness causes it on occasion to violate its own dogmas, and causes art history to violate them regularly as it conserves the art it should be destroying. The latter is a disciplinary concern, returned to in the conclusion. The former, however (this conflict between the new and the advanced) causes the avant-garde to go to war with itself. It is eternally negating its predecessor through originality, but also attempting to establish itself as the new order, against those attempting to negate it.²² In another essay on avant-garde art production Rosenberg states: "Though its aim is to close the door of history, revolutionary art contradicts this aim by its dream of permanence and continuity. It wishes to close the door *behind* itself."²³ Robert Jensen has identified the market forces behind this position. Each avant-garde artist or collective must place themselves ahead of all predecessors and rival contemporaries in order to claim the novelty essential to their value, while also legitimizing their place in art history by establishing a

²¹ Hadjinicolaou, 'On the ideology of avant-gardism', particularly p. 50.

²² Harold Rosenberg, 'Collective, Ideological, Combative,' in *The Avant-Garde*, ed. by Thomas B. Hess and John Ashbery, pp. 75-78.

²³ Harold Rosenberg, *The Tradition of the New* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1962), p. 79.

genealogy with the modern masters.²⁴ This is ostensibly the purpose of Boccioni's diagram, conferring the value both of novelty and of modern art provenance. However, I would not argue that the Futurists' avant-gardism was necessarily instigated by market forces, but that it formed part of the wider desire for a cultural Risorgimento, which in its political form had been a revolution which unified the nation but failed to produce the degree of innovation hoped for. The tension between novelty and heritage is explored further in chapter five.

Futurism, in its inception, expressed this expectancy for its own replacement by a new revolution "When we are forty, other younger and stronger men will probably throw us in the wastebasket like useless manuscripts – we want it to happen!"²⁵ Adamson has suggested that in 1909 the planned obsolescence of Futurism was precisely the point.²⁶ As described in the introduction, Marinetti and some Futurists, if not all of *il cinque*, failed to cease operations after ten years. Adamson considers the end of Marinetti's avant-gardism, if not Futurism's end as a movement, to occur in 1923 when Marinetti wanted to make Futurism the art of the state, a point at which Marinetti's Futurism lost its autonomy and took on a sense of arrival, which replaced its previous self-revising nature. Marinetti may have integrated his decision to join the Italian Academy, write articles praising great Italians of the past, and aim to open a museum into his Futurist movement, but his movement was not, according to Adamson, still avant-gardist when he did so.²⁷

During the early years of Futurism the artists also struggled with the avant-gardist desire to be superseded; the Futurist artists defended themselves against attacks from other avant-garde movements, most notably Apollinaire and Delaunay's Simultaneisme, which Boccioni accused of plagiarising his theory and practice.²⁸ As previously mentioned, the Vorticists accused Marinetti's movement of belatedness because of its obsession with the motorcar, which had been part of British life long enough to have become an annoyance, as evident in E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910).²⁹ Wyndham Lewis also mocked Severini's depictions of

²⁴ Robert Jensen, 'The Avant-Garde and the Trade in Art', *Art Journal*, 47 (1988), 360–367.

²⁵ Marinetti, 'Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 23

²⁶ Adamson, 'How Avant-Gardes End—and Begin: Italian Futurism in Historical Perspective', p. 856.

²⁷ Adamson, 'How Avant-Gardes End—and Begin: Italian Futurism in Historical Perspective', pp. 863–865.

²⁸ Umberto Boccioni, 'I futuristi plagiati in Francia', *Lacerba*, I, n. 7, 1 April 1913, 66–68.

²⁹ Wyndham Lewis, 'Long Live the Vortex!' *BLAST* I, ed. by Edwards, p. 8. Andrew Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 65. For a more in-depth discussion of the Futurist and Vorticist temporalities see Rosalind

dancers, a subject with a great Impressionist and Pointillist precedent, declaring “No cocottes for Ginos of the Future!” and deeming the “fanciful but rather conventional” Futurists too illustrative and naturalist to “produce profounder visions with this faith of novelty.”³⁰ In Russia the avant-garde’s reaction to Marinetti and Futurism was also telling as they considered Italian Futurism not to be revolutionary enough, due to its lack of desire for a popular revolution, and yet Russian Futurism openly incorporated a mythic national past in their artistic productions.³¹ The Italian movement did not accept any of these potential successors.

The difficulty with the future for the avant-gardist affects their relationship with the past; as Matei Calinescu puts it:

hypnotized by his enemy [the past] – of whom he makes an infinitely cunning and terrifying monster – the avant-gardist often ends up forgetting about the future. The future, he seems to imply, can take care of itself when the demons of the past are exorcised.³²

Webber conceives avant-gardism similarly:

Like the angel of history, as postulated by Walter Benjamin after Klee’s picture *Angelus Novus* (1920), the avant-garde directs its gaze at what lies behind as it moves forward with its back to the future. Its futurism is always disposed dialectically, set in a sort of reverse gear.³³

While at first glance avant-gardism appears to be directed towards the future, often the majority of its rhetoric is projected towards, and in opposition to, the past. This resonates with the arguments about Futurism put forward in previous chapters.

The dialectical relationships with the future and past at the core of the concept of avant-gardism can be further explored with reference to the figure of the precursor and the rebel as defined by George Kubler.³⁴ The idea of the avant-gardist as precursor is raised by Hadjinicolaou and Poggioli. Hadjinicolaou follows Poggioli’s assertion that the notion of precursor should only be applied retrospectively, from the position of that present of which the precursor was a precedent; both critique the avant-garde position of identifying oneself

McKever, ‘The Present is Art’: Futurist and Vorticist Temporalities’, *Wyndham Lewis Studies Journal*, 3 (2012), 143-169.

³⁰ Wyndham Lewis, ‘The Melodrama of Modernity’, in *BLAST* 1, ed. by Edwards, p. 144.

³¹ John Milner, *A Slap in the Face! Futurists in Russia* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2007), p. 10.

³² Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism*, 2nd edn (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 96.

³³ Andrew Webber, *The European Avant-Garde 1900-1940* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2004), pp. 5-7.

³⁴ George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things*, rev edn (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008).

as a precursor of the future, an act which Poggioli calls “an anticipatory anachronism.”³⁵ Although the concept may not stand up to analysis, its value as a myth is highly important for avant-gardism.³⁶ Kubler defines the precursor through comparison with the rebel, they are both innovators, but the precursor, the rarer form, is an originator of new behaviour in a provincial setting, whereas the rebel rejects the old civilization he finds himself in. Notably, Kubler identifies Picasso as a rebel, rather than a precursor; Caravaggio too is in this group. Precursors are named as Giotto, Donatello, and Brunelleschi.³⁷ The precursor comes at the beginning of a civilization, the rebel at the end, Giotto and Caravaggio being valuable examples book-ending the Renaissance. This thesis contends that avant-gardists may mythologize themselves as precursors, but are, in fact, more often rebels.

To apply this model to the Futurists is especially interesting, and I argue that the Futurists were in some respects precursors, in others rebels, precursors in theory, rebels in practice. The Futurism’s (or rather Marinettism’s) publicity techniques, particularly manifesto writing, iconoclasm, and performative *serate* were not completely original to them,³⁸ but they established its place in the canon of artistic practice. However, as the Futurists wished to be thrown into the wastebasket after a decade, they demanded the kind of ephemerality anathematic to the idea of a precursor. Moreover, while their manifesto writing gave them the role of precursors, the content of those manifestos is distinctly rebellious rather than precursive; they rebelled against Neoclassicism, but did not set a precedent for their artistic successors.

The relationship between avant-gardism and its predecessors given in theories of the avant-garde is illuminated by the way in which they consider continuity in art’s histories. Pierre Bourdieu, in his discussion of position-taking in relation to the rest of the field of cultural production, considers how the avant-garde positioned itself in relation to its predecessors. Bourdieu claims that new artists never make a total submission or absolute break from the old; “a break with the immediately preceding generation (fathers) is often supposed by a return to the traditions of the next generation back (grandfathers), whose influences may have persisted in a shadowy way”; instead they consecrate their forebears by creating an

³⁵ Hadjinicolaou, ‘On the Ideology of Avant-gardism’, p. 49. Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 70.

³⁶ Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, p. 71.

³⁷ Kubler, *The Shape of Time*, p. 83.

³⁸ See chapter 5, particularly 5.2 on Scapigliatura *serate*.

oppositional rupture away from them.³⁹ This model seems to evoke the Freudian ‘return of the repressed’ in which the indestructible contents of the unconscious re-emerge in a distorted fashion; a theory contemporary to the avant-gardism in question.⁴⁰ However, the active return to the grandfathers in the search for artistic and commercial legitimacy should not be overlooked; in rejecting the immediate forebears this model allows the rhetoric of progress to combined with that of provenance, as mentioned above in terms of Jensen’s consideration of the avant-garde art market, which I related to Boccioni’s modelling of the ‘Introduction to Painting’.

Bourdieu’s model also echoes Hannah Arendt’s notion that the Renaissance was the first attempt to break with tradition in that it sought out a different past, the antique rather than the medieval.⁴¹ This idea was posed in the previous chapter in Vasari’s positioning of the Renaissance as looking to the *antico* instead of the *vecchio*. I do not claim that the Renaissance was avant-gardist, but as I have previously intimated and explore in the following chapters, parallels between the position taken by avant-gardists against their predecessors and those taken by some of those predecessors are analogous, in the cyclical sense explored in the previous chapter.

Such an idea of continuity between avant-gardists and those who came before them is not entirely alien to theories of the avant-garde. However, the dominance of Bürger’s conception, in which the avant-garde was radically distinct from modernism, reliant on the notion, contended earlier, of them being mutually exclusive, has led to the prevalent model of the avant-garde being one of rupture with everything beforehand. However, Bürger’s theory itself was written in opposition to a previous conception of the avant-garde, that of Poggioli.⁴² Poggioli saw continuity between the avant-garde and what went before, which he called Romanticism (but which might also be described as modernism, remembering that Poggioli was coming from context of *modernismo* as a religious term). In fact, one area of

³⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Field of Cultural Production, or: the Economic World Reversed’, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), pp. 29-73 (pp. 59-60).

⁴⁰ Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Books, 1988), p. 398. Freud developed this notion through ‘Delusions and Dreams in Jensen’s ‘Gradiva’ (1907) and ‘Repression’ (1915); I do not claim that the Futurists were familiar with these works.

⁴¹ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, new edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p. 25.

⁴² On Bürger’s critique of Poggioli see Jochen Schulte-Sasse, ‘Foreword: Theory of Modernism versus Theory of the Avant-Garde’, in Bürger, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, pp. xiv-xv.

continuity between the avant-garde and its predecessors that Poggioli identified by exactly this tradition of rebellion:

the cult of novelty and even of the strange, which is the basis for avant-garde art's substantive and not accidental unpopularity, was an exquisitely romantic phenomenon even before it became typically avant-garde; [...] not only was there a romantic antitraditionalism, but indeed it was, in some places and movements, no less extreme and absolute than in the avant-garde itself.⁴³

Combining Poggioli's contention that the cult of novelty was not original to (in the sense of having its origins in) the avant-garde, with Rosalind Krauss's observation that "the actual practice of vanguard art tends to reveal that 'originality' is a working assumption that itself emerges from a ground of repetition and recurrence,"⁴⁴ I wish to replace her example of the grid as a ubiquitous aspect of avant-garde to which no-one can claim invention, which is ever-repeated in the Nietzschean sense of the previous chapter, with the example of originality itself. That is to say that what avant-gardism repeats is a claim to 'originality.'

In 'Against All Returns in Painting' (1919) Russolo defines the Italian tradition as one of originality:

We declare that the true Italian tradition is never to have had any tradition, since the Italian race is a race of innovators and constructors. In no moment in the history of Italian art does one find a real return to the imitation of previous epochs. All the great Italian painters were absolutely original and innovative. In French painting, more equipped with genius than with plastic power, we find instead more than a few imitative returns. We have Giotto, Masaccio, Raphael; France has the Poussins, the Ingreses and the Davids.⁴⁵

This quote seems to situate Futurism within the tradition of precursors. Boccioni's letter to Gian Pietro Lucini,⁴⁶ cited in the previous chapter, in which he likened Futurist iconoclasm to Renaissance artists' desire to destroy the work of their predecessors by painting over it, also suggests that the Futurists could be conceived as part of a tradition of rebellion. This idea is supported by the continuity between Futurism and other avant-gardist movements, for example Dada, which rejected Futurism but in doing so emulated its iconoclasm. Links

⁴³ Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, pp. 50, 54.

⁴⁴ Rosalind Krauss, 'The Originality of the Avant-Garde', reprinted in *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 1032-1037 (p. 1033).

⁴⁵ "Noi dichiariamo che la vera tradizione italiana è quella di non aver mai avuto tradizione alcuna, giacchè la razza italiana è una razza di innovatori e di costruttori. In nessun momento della storia della pittura italiana, si trova un vero e proprio ritorno all'imitazione di epoche precedenti. Tutti i grandi pittori italiani furono assolutamente originali e novatori. Nella pittura francese, più dotata di genialità che di potenza plastica, troviamo invece non pochi esempi di ritorni imitativi. Noi abbiamo Giotto, Masaccio, Raffaello; la Francia ha i Poussin, gl'Ingres e i David." Luigi Russolo, 'Contro tutti i ritorni in pittura', in *Catalogo per la Esposizione Futurista, Galleria Subalpina, Torino, 27 Marzo al 27 Aprile, 1919*, unpaginated.

⁴⁶ Boccioni, '[letter to Gian Pietro Lucini from between 28th May and 30th August]', reprinted in *Umberto Boccioni: Lettere futuriste*, p. 19.

with rebellious predecessors are also particularly apparent in the chapter on *passato prossimo* when considering the iconoclastic rhetoric of Italian artists immediately prior to the launch of Futurism, but rebellious links are also found in the *passato remoto* chapter. Originality can of course be read as a return to origins as well as, or instead of, being innovative. This re-reading, evident in Krauss's essay, echoes the statement in Carrà's *Metaphysical Painting*, written between 1916 and 1918 and published the following year: "we do not rest our case on originality, but rather on the discovery of origins."⁴⁷ The dual meaning comes into play as the origin identified by Russolo, is one of innovation. Recalling once more the Vichian cycle, in returns to the origins of innovation, a new period of innovation begins.

Russolo's statement traces this originality or, in Poggioli's terms, the cult of novelty and antitraditionalism, or more properly the tradition of not having a tradition, back to Giotto, stressing the relationship between Futurist originality and the originality of the Italian tradition. It is of course somewhat ironic that Russolo is claiming continuity on the grounds of originality, but this irony is, as highlighted in the introduction, an essential part of Futurism's auto-contradictory nature.

This discussion of avant-gardism has aimed to show that it has a far more complex relationship to time than the rupture with the past it is normally attributed. The inherently temporal notion of avant-gardism has a paradoxical relationship with the future due to its fear of replacement and so focuses its energy on its relationship with the past; however, its rebellious iconoclasm is analogous to predecessors in the *passato remoto* and the *passato prossimo*. While it may claim to be entirely originary, it therefore finds itself in a continuity of the past, the tradition which Russolo himself describes.

On tradition

Having re-addressed avant-gardism and highlighted that it itself has become a tradition, this chapter now turns to reconsider tradition itself. Such an enterprise is necessarily attached to the previous investigations of the meanings of the past and history as tradition is sometimes used as a synonym of these words, from which I distinguish it. This section of the chapter

⁴⁷ Carlo Carrà, 'Our Antiquity' (1916-18), reprinted in *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. by Harrison and Wood, pp. 232-236 (p. 235).

discusses tradition's role in connecting the past and present with the aim of showing how tradition can be destructive rather than conservative.

Tradition is widely understood as the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the customs and beliefs being transmitted. As such, it is clearly related to, but distinct from history; the writing of history can be a transmitter of customs and beliefs, but tradition often foregoes the narrative of history, and manifests itself in the repetition of practices. Tradition is closer to the *passatismo* (or historical-mindedness), which seeks to preserve the past, discussed in the previous chapter.

When used in the field of art and its histories, tradition tends to mean the genealogy of art, the relationship a practising artist has with their forebears; 'the tradition' is used as a synonym of the canon. Tradition may therefore appear anathema to Futurism, but in 1913 Severini emphasised its relevance and its distinction from the subservience to the past discussed in the previous chapter:

We are unfairly accused of severing all connection with tradition. The force with which we rid ourselves of the yoke of the Past and our hatred of the Past do not prevent our recognizing brethren in every great epoch through which Art has passed. Every expression of Art which possesses true depth bears a natural connection with tradition.⁴⁸

This rarely quoted statement⁴⁹ can be fruitfully linked to the quote from Russolo above which stressed that the Italian tradition the Futurists joined was one of originality, of not having a tradition. Josephine Guy, who also notes that avant-gardism has itself become a tradition, has stressed that a simple negation of tradition or the past is not always the manner in which avant-gardism conceives *antipassatismo*.⁵⁰

It is telling that conceptions of tradition tend to set it into a binary opposition with modernism or avant-gardism. David Gross has argued that tradition has barely survived in modernity, persisting only privately and being subsumed into aspects of modernity (bureaucracy, capitalism, media etc); Gross therefore sees the potential of tradition for the

⁴⁸ Severini, 'Introduction to *The Futurist Painter Severini exhibits his latest works*, Marlborough Gallery, London, April 1913', reprinted in *Archivi del futurismo*, ed. by Drudi Gambillo and Fiori, I, 114.

⁴⁹ Mention should be given here to Anna Maria Brescia's doctoral thesis 'The Aesthetic Theories of Futurism' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1971), particularly chapter IV 'Tradition and Futurism', pp. 64-75, which quotes this passage from Severini and Papini's 'Il passato non esiste', but uses these to nuance rather than overturn the idea of the Futurist repudiation of the past.

⁵⁰ Guy, *The British Avant-Garde*, p. 11.

critique of modernity.⁵¹ On the other hand, Susan Stanford Friedman has argued that tradition was invented by modernity, that the (supposed) rupture with the past necessitated an equal opposing force which desired continuity.⁵² This idea connects directly to the idea posited in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), that the period 1870-1914 in Europe is notable for the prevalence and mass-production of invented traditions.⁵³ According to Hobsbawm traditions are ritual or symbolic practices that inculcate certain values and behavioural norms through repetition and thus imply continuity with the past.⁵⁴ It could be argued that the distinction between genuine and invented traditions is unworkable as all traditions can be conceived of as invented at least in their beginnings.⁵⁵ However, given that Hobsbawm claims that the motivation for the production of invented traditions was to instigate loyalty as the public became more involved with politics, and national identity had to be generated, in order for it to be defended, this discussion has particular pertinence for the Italian case. The Risorgimento had failed to create a unified people to go with a unified state, its 'missing revolution' became mythologized and these myths contributed to attempts to complete it. The invented traditions of the Italian nation also had to replace the real traditions of the country's composite parts; the *nazionalismo* developed in Italy in the first decades of the twentieth century had to replace centuries of *campinilismo*, loyalty to the local area, literally, to the nearest bell-tower. While Italy's existing traditions were seen to hold the country back, the invented traditions aimed to move Italy forward, and such a tradition could be described as futurist.

In further interrogating the definition of tradition etymology is again instructive. The shared Latin root of 'tradition' in English, *tradition* in French, and *tradizione* in Italian, *tradere*, stems from *trans-* 'across' + *dare* 'give', and is a doublet of treason. Its early use was the

⁵¹ David Gross, *The Past in Ruins: Tradition and the Critique of Modernity* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), pp. 4-6. Gross's book has been analysed and at points heavily critiqued in a special edition of *Telos*. In that issue John Michael has suggested that Gross is actually concerned with history rather than tradition due to this interest in how the past is transmitted into the present, an argument that I would counter on the basis of my above statement that history is a narrative while tradition is the repetition of practices, even though both have an over-arching concern of the transmission of the past into the present. John Michael, 'Tradition and the Critical Talent', *Telos*, 94 (Winter 1992-93), 45-66 (p. 63, n. 33).

⁵² Friedman, 'Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies', particularly pp. 431, 434.

⁵³ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁵⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', in *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 1-14 (p. 1).

⁵⁵ Mark Salber Phillips, 'Introduction', in *Questions of Tradition*, ed. by Mark Salber Phillips and Gordon J. Schochet (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 3-29, particularly pp. 3-6. Phillips's essay defends the idea of tradition from the neglect he considers it to have suffered due to the popularity of Hobsbawm and Ranger's notion of the invented tradition.

Roman legal term *traditio* denoting delivery, conveyance or surrender. A traditor, or traitor as it has become, was guilty of committing the crime of 'tradition'. The Roman legal term and the religious significance were simultaneously extant at the beginning of the first millennia AD: tradition could refer to Judas's betrayal of Christ, or the ecclesiastical crime of surrendering sacred texts in a time of persecution.⁵⁶ *Tradere* later also came to signify the ancient human obligation of taking care of that passed over to you by your ancestors, and has become synonymous with conservation, the preservation of the past. This sense has prevailed and the concept of tradition as betrayal has, for the most part, been lost.

Benjamin and Heidegger, who as discussed in the previous chapter are usually seen as oppositional figures, but had similar thoughts on the importance of the present for understanding the past, both considered tradition in the light of this etymology. Howard Caygill's essay on their shared idea of tradition as destructive dates this interest to the summer of 1916, to Benjamin's first sketches towards *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1925) which were possibly in response to Heidegger's essay 'The Concept of Time in the Science of History' (1916).⁵⁷ While this falls within the decade of investigation, I do not suggest that the Futurists would have been directly aware of the double nature of the etymology of tradition through Benjamin or Heidegger, however, as I come to discuss, the way in which Benjamin considered tradition was current in European avant-garde circles.

Benjamin, who saw his present as "a tremendous shattering of tradition,"⁵⁸ considered tradition's transmission from past to present as changing the nature of the thing transmitted; this is related to Benjamin's idea that the past must be altered to be recognized, and therefore to survive in the present. As Caygill notes "In Benjamin, tradition is ruination – barbarism – it destroys what it hands over; yet without this destruction nothing would be handed over. The work of art is a ruin where can we acknowledge tradition's destruction."⁵⁹ Benjamin saw the after-life of an object not as an identical repetition; it is instead an illusion

⁵⁶ Howard Caygill, 'Benjamin, Heidegger and the Destruction of Tradition', *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*, ed. by Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1-31 (p. 12).

⁵⁷ Caygill, 'Benjamin, Heidegger and the Destruction of Tradition', pp. 3, 12. Caygill notes how *TOGTD* commences with 'Sketched 1916...Composed 1925'. Martin Heidegger, 'Der Zeitbegriff in der Geschichtswissenschaft', in his *Frühe Schriften*, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1972) translated by S. Taylor and Hans W. Uffelmann as 'The Concept of Time in the Science of History', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 9, 1, (January 1978), 3-10.

⁵⁸ Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. by Arendt, pp. 211-244 (p. 215).

⁵⁹ Caygill, 'Benjamin, Heidegger and the Destruction of Tradition', p. 21.

of retrospection which must be destroyed and made new again in the present. This recalls Benjamin's conviction that translation is creative rather than purely imitative. The idea of the non-identical repetition chimes with the Nietzschean idea of the eternal return, in which *des gleichen* is not the identical, but the like, the similar. As I come to later in this chapter, appropriation sees the past used by the present, and transformed.

Tradition is unable to preserve that which it transmits as the process of transmission distorts it: "The idea of discontinuity is the foundation of genuine tradition."⁶⁰ This creates an antinomy between continuity and discontinuity in Benjamin's understanding of history and tradition. Benjamin acknowledges the existence of both continuity and discontinuity, but struggles to resolve this aporia. This is highlighted in preparatory notes to 'On the Concept of History' (1940): "Fundamental aporia: [...] Tradition as the discontinuum of what has been as opposed to history [*Historie*] as the continuum of events. [...] The history [*Geschichte*] of the oppressed is a discontinuum."⁶¹ The resolution of this antinomy is found in Benjamin's dialectical images, that is, temporal constellations between the past and present that allow this paradox, as the past and present reciprocally illuminate one another in a constellation of the now, as this reciprocity breeds continuity and discontinuity.⁶² This idea of a reciprocal connection between and illumination of the synchronous past and present is returned to when considering the dialectical relations in artistic appropriation.

The key point to be taken from Benjamin is that when something is transmitted into the present via tradition it is not unchanged by that process: "The connection between the feeling of beginning anew and tradition must be pointed out."⁶³ The change to the whole field of relations necessitated by that transmission means that the original thing is, in a sense, destroyed. This alternative view of tradition, as something destructive rather than conservative, is supportive of this thesis's re-reading of Futurism's anti-tradition stance. The

⁶⁰ Walter Benjamin, '[untitled notes for 'On the Concept of History' from Benjamin Archiv-Ms 473]' (1940), in *Gesammelte Schriften, volume I: Abhandlungen*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhauser, pp. 1241-1242 (p. 1242). Translation from John McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 296.

⁶¹ Walter Benjamin, '{Problem der Tradition I} Die Dialektik im stillstande [Untitled notes for On the Concept of History from Benjamin Archiv-Ms 469]' (1940), in *Gesammelte Schriften, volume I: Abhandlungen*, ed. by Tiedemann and Schweppenhauser, p. 1236 (p. 1236). Translation from McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*, pp. 295-6.

⁶² McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*, p. 295.

⁶³ Benjamin, '[untitled notes for 'On the Concept of History' from Benjamin Archiv-Ms 473]' (1940), p. 1242. Translation from McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition* p. 296.

tension between originality and tradition suggested by Benjamin, it also relevant to the cyclical models of history here discussed.

The notion that tradition was not conservative was in fact present in *secondo futurismo*. In 1934 the Futurist poet Bruno Sanzin's article on 'Tradizione e futurismo' in the journal *Stile Futurista*, argued that the tradition was a positive force, and that the greats of the past wanted young artists to follow their example, not slavishly imitate them; a task Sanzin thought the Futurists capable of. D'Ambrosio, who also considered the Futurists to be presentists, when considering this article coins the phrase "post-traditional presentists", as their works were at the same time emblems of the present and examples of the overtaking of the tradition, guaranteeing the continuity of the Italian artistic primary today and tomorrow, an Italian "tradition of the new."⁶⁴

An idea analogous to Sanzin's was posited in 1919 by T.S. Eliot. His essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' has been compared to Benjamin's ideas as described above by Brett Neilson, who highlights how both writers consider the past and present as mutually dependent, stress the importance of the present in the understanding of history and argue against historical teleology and progress.⁶⁵ In this essay Eliot describes how the poet has a 'historical sense' which leads him to write with the feeling of being simultaneous to the literary canon; according to Eliot, this "is what makes a writer traditional."⁶⁶ Guglielmi considers Eliot's essay to be a manifesto for modernism, and therefore diachrony, although Eliot is suggesting a synchronic temporality of artistic production. As discussed above I oppose Guglielmi's restriction of diachrony to modernism and consider the avant-gardist Futurists engaged with the past, present and future, albeit within the diachronous present. It

⁶⁴ "[...] È sbagliato il credere che i valori tradizionali tendano a produrre un influsso retroattivo [...] La tradizione è invece una forza eminentemente positiva. Le grandezze del passato brillano al sole eterno perché gli uomini nuovi li superino, perché le loro quote siano di [p.11] partenza, non di arrivo... Gridano i Grandi: "più oltre! noi siamo qui di esempio, non da modelli!"

La ricchezza di una tradizione non dev'essere fondo patrimoniale da porre a frutto, ma patrimonio da aumentare sempre più col contributo del proprio genio. Come si può essere quindi degni della tradizione? *Superando il già fatto per continuarla [corsivo nostro]... E chi può arrogarsi tale capacità e tanta forza volitiva? Soltanto i futuristi*" Bruno Giordano Sanzin, 'Tradizione e futurismo,' *Stile Futurista*, I, n. 4 (October 1934), p. 45. "Sembra che i futuristi siano divenuti dei "presentisti post-tradizionali"; ciò promette nuovi capolavori, nello stesso tempo emblemi del presente ed esempi di superamento della tradizione, insomma "garanzia per la continuità del primato artistico italiano nell'oggi e nel domani": una vera e propria "tradizione del nuovo" tutta italiana." D'Ambrosio, *Le Commemorazioni in Avanti' di F.T. Marinetti*, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁵ Brett Neilson, 'At the frontiers of metaphysics: time and history in T.S. Eliot and Walter Benjamin', in *T.S. Eliot and the Concept of Tradition*, ed. by Giovanni Cianci and Jason Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 202-209.

⁶⁶ T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), reprinted in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*, (London: Methuen, 1920), pp. 42-53 (p. 44).

is possible to draw a parallel between the experience of time as a flux of past, present and future, as presented by Bergson, and Eliot's notion of the artist's present being simultaneous with the whole canon.

Although Eliot stresses that the poet should write simultaneously with the past, he does not want the poet or artist to copy the work of his predecessors. This echoes the Futurist opposition to imitation as expressed in the conclusions to the artists' first manifesto which states "2. Totally invalidate all kinds of imitation" and again in the 'Technical Manifesto' "We declare: 1. That all forms of imitation must be despised."⁶⁷ Eliot states: "If the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, 'tradition' should positively be discouraged."⁶⁸ Conforming would make the art not new, and thus not a work of art.⁶⁹ By acknowledging that the new work affects the existing order, Eliot gives new art power over the old; to use Kubler's example, the sculpture of Rodin makes us look at that of Michelangelo in a new way;⁷⁰ this idea is reminiscent of Longhi's 'short-circuit' but for Longhi there is no hierarchy of the old and new. In short, traditionality, or simultaneity with the canon, and originality, or not imitating that canon, are both essential for Eliot. A friend of Eliot, and of the Futurists, the Paris based writer Remy de Gourmont, expressed a similar disdain for the imitation of tradition five years before Eliot. In an article printed in *The Egoist* his phrases echo the Futurists; he declares "Tradition is a great power opposing the originality of writers;"⁷¹ concluding "They have taken beforehand all my words, all my phrases, all my ideas. Oh, these obligatory ancestors! They bind me. They suffocate me."⁷² These statements serve to support the hypothesis posited earlier that there was a tradition of repudiation of the imitation of the past within and beyond European avant-gardism.

This idea is fundamental to the considerations in the second half of this thesis. In chapter five, when the rhetoric of the Futurists' immediate artistic predecessors is compared to that

⁶⁷ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. Apollonio, p. 26. Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. Apollonio, p. 30.

⁶⁸ Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), p. 43

⁶⁹ "To conform merely would be for the new work not really to conform at all; it would not be new, and would therefore not be a work of art." Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), p. 45.

⁷⁰ Kubler, *The Shape of Time*, p. 31.

⁷¹ Remy de Gourmont, 'Tradition and Other Things', *The Egoist*, I, 14 (15 July 1914), reprinted in *The Road from Paris: French Influence on English Poetry, 1900-1920*, ed. by Cyrena N. Pondrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 275-279 (p. 275).

⁷² Remy de Gourmont, 'Tradition and Other Things', *The Egoist*, I, 14 (15 July 1914), reprinted in *The Road from Paris: French Influence on English Poetry, 1900-1920*, ed. by Pondrom, p. 279.

of the Futurists, this idea is further supported as earlier Italian artists also demonstrate this supposedly avant-gardist iconoclasm *ante litteram*. Moreover, this tradition of the repudiation of imitation is traced back even further. The *passato remoto* chapter also deals with the idea, highlighted above by Benjamin, that the appropriation of the past in the present, the transmission through tradition of the art of the past, destroys that art, and the idea posited by Eliot that the creation of a new work of art changes our retrospection on its predecessors.

On appropriation

Writing on the appropriation of the simultaneous artistic corpus as affecting the past as much as the present Eliot declares: "Whoever has approved this idea of order...will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past."⁷³ The 'preposterous' has been adopted by Mieke Bal (via Patricia Parker) to create preposterous history, which reverses the pre- and post- in order to stress that rather than influence coming from the past and to the present, that there is a reverse operation occurring at the same time.⁷⁴ Bal uses this idea to consider the effect that contemporary art's appropriations of the Baroque have on our understanding of the Baroque, claiming that the earlier art is fundamentally changed by the later. This re-evokes the constellation of past and present discussed above with reference to Benjamin. The final part of this chapter examines the temporality of art historical repetition, arguing that as for tradition, this process which may at first seem conservative can be subversive, undermining what it copies, which is a fundamental idea for the next section of this thesis which studies Futurist appropriations of the Italian artistic tradition.

Bal's preposterous history is indicative of a wider art historical trend which opposes the received notion of art historical influence. Norman Bryson has identified both the importance of tracing sources for many schools of art history, and the inversion of this source-hunting which occurs when it is written up:

⁷³ Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), p. 45.

⁷⁴ Patricia Parker, 'Preposterous Events', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 43 (1992), 186–213. Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

a good art historian develops a truly hawk-like instinct for the cues which point backwards from a given work to its predecessors: but the manner in which the sources, once found, are presented or written up is insistently forward-looking, or proleptic.⁷⁵

As Bryson says, the art historian traces sources backwards, and then re-presents these connections as coming forwards; the art historian notes that the apprentice has learnt from the master, but then writes that the master influenced the apprentice. Art history narrates influence as the trickling down of artistic practice from the past to the future. It is also important for judging the historic importance of an artist, as 'influential' tends to be a major aspect of establishing the centrality of a certain figure in art history. However, the artist cannot control his successors, those by whom he is attributed influentiality. The artist can only truly concern themselves with how they position themselves with regard to their predecessors and the tradition, as described above by Eliot. It is this relationship between the artist of the present and the art of the past which is the concern of this thesis.

Bryson is not the only theoretician of history and art history to find the concept of influence lacking. For Foucault:

[Influence] provides support of too magical a kind to be amenable to analysis – for the facts of transmission and communication; which refers to an apparently causal process (but with neither rigorous delimitation nor theoretical definition) the phenomenon of resemblance and repetition; which links, at a distance and through time – as if through the mediation of a medium of propagation of such defined unities as individuals, oeuvres, notions or theories.⁷⁶

Foucault's denial of "an apparently causal process" highlights the historical determinism applied to history, in the sense that the apprentice was bound to produce the work they did, having been apprentice to that master. Michael Baxandall makes a similar argument in

Patterns of Intention:

'Influence' is a curse of art criticism, primarily because of its wrong-headed grammatical prejudice about who is the agent and who the patient: it seems to reverse the active/passive relation which the historical actor experiences and the inferential beholder will wish to take into account.⁷⁷

This research uses appropriation rather than influence as the active version, in which the practising artist selects, consciously or unconsciously, a work from the tradition available to them for appropriation and makes from it their own work. It is not simply a copy or an imitation, the artist transforms it, much as Benjamin considered the process of tradition to transform that which is transmitted.

⁷⁵ Bryson, *Tradition and Desire*, p. 1.

⁷⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 24.

⁷⁷ Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 58-59.

Before further considering the nature and temporality of that transformation, it is pertinent here to note, reiterating the methodological point made in the introduction, that appropriation also requires the art historian to empirically support the connections made. With influence it suffices to claim that the predecessor is sufficiently 'influential' for the connection to be plausible, and relating specific works is not necessary. When scholars have made comparisons between art made before 1909 by non-Futurists, and the work of the Futurist *il cinque*, they tend to suggest influence, giving no empirical evidence. Working with appropriation in the second part of this thesis tests the validity of these connections made by other scholars through this more analytical lens. With appropriation it is necessary that, if not necessarily conscious, the Futurist appropriations from art of the past were active. My defence of this idea is supported by the destructive idea of tradition posited earlier in this chapter, that is, that to appropriate is not to conserve the past, but to destroy it.

Discussions of artistic appropriation relate to literary studies' considerable work on quotation. Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality in which all texts interrelate takes from Mikhail Bakhtin the idea that text is dialogic, that there is a two-way connection between a quote and the text it originally came from, and follows Bakhtin in insisting that this is the case for all text, not only quotations which are identified as such: "any text is constructed as mosaic of quotations."⁷⁸ Barthes expressed the same notion:

Any text is woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony. The citations that go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet *already read*; they are quotations without inverted commas.⁷⁹

This idea was aptly demonstrated by Jonathan Letham's essay 'The Ecstasy of Influence' which discusses textual and visual appropriations, and is itself a mosaic of quotations, including the one from Barthes above, none of which had inverted commas; only those Letham could remember were acknowledged at the end of the text. This conception of the production of text relies upon Eliot's notion of the artist being simultaneous with the canon. The dialogism of Bakhtin and Kristeva returns us to the two-way relationship between past and future, found also in Benjamin and Eliot. Harold Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence* argues the necessity of mis-reading predecessors via Bloom's six 'revisionary ratios' which allow the

⁷⁸ Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel' (1966), reprinted in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 34–61 (p. 37). See also Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin; London: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 259–422.

⁷⁹ Jonathan Letham, 'The Ecstasy of Influence', *Harper's Magazine*, February 2007, 59–71 (p. 68).

poet to overcome the influence of their forebears.⁸⁰ An interesting pendant to intertextuality exists in the palimpsest, a document where the original text has been scraped off the vellum and written over.⁸¹ In many cases a trace of the original text can be seen under the new text, they share the space.

It should not, however, be forgotten that this thesis is concerned primarily with visual rather than textual material and as such intertextuality can only direct us towards new ways of conceiving visual quoting. Foucault's 'Fantasia in the Library' and his consideration of modernist literature as about books, may lead to the identification of Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* and *Olympia* as "museum paintings" in which the relationship of painting to itself was acknowledged,⁸² but the visual quotation can be harder to identify, and as Bal has claimed, the borrowing of visual forms does not necessary imply the borrowing of meaning associated with the textual quote.⁸³

The obviously destructive, and yet productive and subversive, action of the palimpsest in literary studies is mirrored by spolia in visual and material culture. Spolia, particularly associated with late antiquity, but present in most artistic periods, is the practice of re-using old materials (for example columns from a ruin) in a new architectural project. The recycled materials are not physically changed in this process, in fact, they are an integral part of the new structure, both part of it and other to it. The example of spolia emphasises that appropriation is not confined to postmodernism, and that, as with the palimpsest, the motivation for appropriation can be practical and economic as well as theoretical.

An interesting counterpoint to appropriation is Warburg's idea of the survival of images. Warburg's primary concern is the afterlife (*Nachleben*) of expressive figures (*Pathosformeln*) from antiquity in the art of other periods, particularly the Florentine Quattrocento. His key example is the *ninfa* whose flowing draperies suggesting movement are found in the work of Ghirlandaio, Hellenistic sculpture and a range of visual media in-between. A parallel could be drawn between Warburg's approach here and Krauss's description of the grid, which has no original, being repeated throughout avant-garde art.

⁸⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁸¹ For more on palimpsests, see Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

⁸² Michel Foucault, 'Fantasia of the Library', in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 87–109 (p. 92).

⁸³ Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio*, p. 9.

Warburg's approach to temporality was more complex than the ideas of influence and renaissance down to which, according to Georges Didi-Huberman, Panofsky sought to simplify Warburg's *Nachleben der Antike*.⁸⁴ Warburg rejected the idea of influence as a succession, and certainly as a teleology or progress. He was interested in Darwin's theories, but he did not conceive time for images as running continuously or progressively in the way associated with evolution in chapter one.⁸⁵ Warburg's interest in psychoanalysis led him to a conception of the primitive which invalidated any linear progress or evolution.⁸⁶ The afterlife of images was not related to any form of survival of the fittest, but was more ghostly, the form disappears and reappears.⁸⁷ Warburg's particular pertinence for this discussion lies in the relationship he demands between past and present in these survivals. For Warburg the early Renaissance frescoes which re-used the *ninfa* model were "incomprehensible until the *anachronistic* time of the survivals they embody is elucidated."⁸⁸ The confrontation between the afterlife and the present creates for Warburg a dialectical iconology which Matthew Rampley has compared to Benjamin's dialectical method.⁸⁹ This was identified by Warburg's assistant in terms which emphasise the discontinuous idea of tradition which Warburg's work presupposes:

Tradition, for Warburg, was not a stream on which events and people are borne along. Influences are no matter of passive acceptance but demand an effort of adjustment, 'eine Auseinandersetzung' [a confrontation] as Warburg put it, which includes that of the present with the past.⁹⁰

This dialectical art historical relationship recalls Longhi's 'short-circuit': "Piero explains Cézanne and Courbet makes you understand Caravaggio."⁹¹ This reiterates the simultaneity

⁸⁴ Georges Didi-Huberman, 'Artistic Survival: Panofsky Vs. Warburg and the Exorcism of Impure Time', *Common Knowledge*, trans. by Vivian Rehberg and Boris Belay, 9:2 (2003), 273–285 (particularly p. 278).

⁸⁵ Georges Didi-Huberman, 'The Surviving Image: Aby Warburg and Tylorian Anthropology', *Oxford Art Journal*, 25 (2002), 59–69 (p. 67).

⁸⁶ Matthew Rampley, 'Archives of Memory: Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project and Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas' in *The Optic of Walter Benjamin*, De-, Dis-, Ex, v. 3, ed. by Alex Coles (London: Black Dog Publishing, 1999), pp. 94–117 (pp. 97–98).

⁸⁷ Didi-Huberman, 'The Surviving Image: Aby Warburg and Tylorian Anthropology', p. 68.

⁸⁸ Didi-Huberman, 'Artistic Survival: Panofsky Vs. Warburg and the Exorcism of Impure Time', p. 264.

⁸⁹ Matthew Rampley, 'Mimesis and Allegory, On Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin', in *Art history as cultural history: Warburg's projects*, ed. by Richard Woodfield (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2001), pp. 121–149 (p. 121).

⁹⁰ Gertrud Bing, 'A. M. Warburg', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 28 (1965), 299–313, p. 310. Didi-Huberman has also noted this similarity between Warburg and Benjamin in 'Artistic Survival: Panofsky Vs. Warburg and the Exorcism of Impure Time', p. 276. Matthew Rampley has examined a number of points of consensus between Warburg and Benjamin in *The Remembrance of Things Past: On Aby M. Warburg and Walter Benjamin* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000).

⁹¹ "nella storiografia longhiana Piero spiega Cézanne, e Courbet fa capire Caravaggio." Cesare Garboli, 'Breve storia del giovane Longhi', in Roberto Longhi, *Breve ma veridica storia della pittura Italiana*, pp. V–XLVI (pp. XLII–III).

of art history for Longhi, who imagined the discipline without dates.⁹² Longhi did not see the past as “a reality preserved in the cultural memory and in documents”, for him, the past and history, like history and time, are separate.⁹³

Warburg's *Nachleben*, Longhi's 'short-circuit' and Bal's preposterous history all connect to Freud's *Nachträglichkeit* (translated as a deferred action or retrospective revision) in which the past is only fully understood when in conjunction with a related present.⁹⁴ Essential here is the idea initially argued in the previous chapter that the present affects the comprehension of the past. The two-way channel between past and present that this opens up allows the present to have an effect on the perception of the past in the present, and as I argue, the possibility for the Futurists to attack it.

As discussed in the introduction I have appropriated Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, the visual map of the repetitions he had identified, in the figures of this thesis, but I wish reiterate that my aim in this study is not to conduct a Warburgian investigation into the afterlife of *pathosformeln* in Futurist art. In the following chapters my concern lies primarily with direct appropriations of artworks with which the Futurists were familiar, although the tropes which Warburg identifies, particularly the dynamic figure of the *ninfa*, form an undercurrent of sorts.

I insist on appropriation, rather than survival, as I wish to emphasise its destructive and subversive power, in opposition to the passive and conservative idea of survival. As I explained regarding tradition, even the conservative is not static; for Warburg, in an afterlife the meaning of the image is different. However, through appropriation the change to an object's afterlife is actively made. I wish to conclude this chapter by returning to Guy's work on the British avant-garde which brings together the themes of this chapter.

Guy argues that while all avant-gardes can identify with *antipassatismo*, the way in which this *antipassatismo* is practised varies between the cultures in which avant-gardes form, and

⁹² Longhi, *Scritti giovanili, 1912-1922*, p. 458.

⁹³ “Per Croce, come per Panofski, il passato è una realtà che si conserva nella memoria culturale e nei documenti; per Longhi, fuori dalla realtà sempre attuale dell'opera d'arte, il passato è la memoria immaginaria, insignificante e casuale di una realtà che si è vanificata per sempre. Come la storia e il tempo, anche il passato e la storia si scindono. Il passato non è la storia, perché la storia non può essere pensata come un oggetto.” Garboli, ‘Breve storia del giovane Longhi’, in Longhi, *Breve ma veridica storia della pittura Italiana*, p. XL.

⁹⁴ Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 111-115. Hal Foster considers the neo-avant-garde as a retrospective revision of the avant-garde in these terms in ‘Who's Afraid of the Neo-Avant-Garde?’, in *The Return of the Real. The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 1-33 (particularly, pp. 28-32).

even within those cultures. She identifies in Courbet a straight rebellion against all conventions in history painting but sees in the work of Manet, whose infamous *Olympia* and *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, above deemed “museum paintings” by Foucault for their appropriations of (among others) Titian and Raphael, an artist subverting the tradition from within. She considers this kind of *antipassatismo* to be that which is pervasive in the British avant-garde of Walter Pater, William Morris and Oscar Wilde, noting how the use of traditional forms for subversive ends in Pater, the appropriation of a non-dominant tradition by Morris and the innovative transformation of tradition by Wilde was more proper to the British political and intellectual situation than the strict negation carried out by Courbet.

What I wish to suggest in order to conclude this chapter is that this model of avant-gardism, in which *antipassatismo* can involve the appropriation of the art of the past in order to make apparent the untimeliness of that art, could well have been an option for the Futurists. In the following chapters identifying potential Futurist appropriations of the art of the past this hypothesis is central to attempting to explain the repeated presence of visual connections to the Italian artistic *passato remoto* and *passato prossimo*.

Whereas the previous chapter sought to argue that it was the presence of the past in the present which the Futurists repudiated, rather than the past itself, this chapter has problematized this concept by arguing that the presence of the past in the present was not necessarily conservative and could itself be futurist.

Part II Past Artistic

The force with which we rid ourselves of the
yoke of the Past and our hatred of the Past
do not prevent our recognizing brethren in
every great epoch through which Art has passed.
Gino Severini, 'Introduction to *The Futurist Painter*
Severini exhibits his latest works' (1913)¹

The argument of this thesis here shifts from the past as an idea, from history and art history as narratives, to the content of that art history, to the Italian artistic past (in the very general sense of Italian given in the introduction) up to 1909, which is divided into two chapters. The first of these chapters addresses Italian art produced before the unification of Italy and the birth of the older Futurists Balla and Marinetti, the art of history. The second deals with art produced after this point and includes work produced by other artists in the Futurist decade 1909-1919, the art of the Futurists' experiential pasts. The five sections in each chapter proceed approximately chronologically, allowing the different relationships the Futurists held with different periods to become evident; however, due to the contemporaneity of all the art considered in the present of the Futurist decade, the interconnections between sections stress the fallacy of this chronological schematization. These two chapters present together for the first time the connections existing scholarship makes between Futurist art and its predecessors, but critically interrogate the formal, rhetorical and practical continuities between Futurism and its predecessors to ensure a nuanced reading, using the ideas of avant-gardism and tradition from the previous chapter to consider the ideological consequences of these appropriations for the Futurists.

¹ Severini, 'Introduction to *The Futurist Painter Severini exhibits his latest works*, Marlborough Gallery, London, April 1913', reprinted in *Archivi del futurismo*, ed. by Drudi Gambillo and Fiori, I, 114.

Chapter 4: *Passato remoto*

The Futurist relationship with the art of the Italian tradition, from classical art to Tiepolo, is usually considered one of pure repudiation; however, as stated in the introduction, comparisons between Futurist art and that tradition are peppered through existing scholarship. This chapter considers these formal similarities, assessing their plausibility as appropriations by the Futurist in question and the consequences of this for Futurist *antipassatismo*. The reconsideration of *antipassatismo* given in the first part of the thesis is applied to these possible appropriations, some of which will be revisited in chapter five where *passato prossimo* artists have drawn upon the same sources discussed in this chapter, and thereby a more cyclical, Vichian, model of art history and appropriation is produced, allowing the returns to the past made in this chapter to be considered forms of progress.

4. 1 Futurism and Classical art

The art of antiquity is paradigmatic for art practice and the discipline of art history and thus also for this thesis. Revivals and rejections of classicism run through this part of the thesis and the next. This first section outlines the relationship the Futurists have with this very broad period of art history by using a comparison of Boccioni's *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (fig. 6.8) and the *Victory of Samothrace* (fig. 6.9) to analyse a number of issues in the relationship between Futurism and classical art, particularly the role of the latter in the Futurists' artistic education, the complex temporality of the then recently discovered *Victory* and the scope for reasserting the classical tradition in an innovative way offered by this sculpture.

Under the rubric of classical art I include art produced by the Ancient Greeks and Romans from approximately the fifth century BC to the fourth century AD. Both of these empires included at least part of the Italian peninsula, although, of course, the Romans left the more indelible mark on what was to become the Italian nation. I do not wish to deny all nuance between the two civilizations, but in the field of art the Romans are known for their appropriation of the Greeks, and schematic stories of art often group the Antique together. The Futurists often referred to the *antico* or *classico* more frequently than the *Greco* or *Romano*, which were often hyphenated into a generic *greco-romano*. In *Futurist Painting and Sculpture*, when stressing the Futurists' disconnection from their national tradition,

Boccioni says “The definitive, in the classical sense, ancient Greek or Italian, is completely unknown to the futurists. *We modern Italians are without a past.*”² This suggests that Boccioni, at least, saw the ancient Greek and the ancient Italian, or rather Roman, as cognate. Of course, *antico* is used for very old in the wider sense of the period addressed by this whole chapter, as well as antique in the sense of classical. Marinetti’s statement in the ‘Founding and Manifesto’: “Admiring an old [*antico*] picture is the same as pouring our sensibility into a funerary urn”³ to an extent equates all past art. It is the goal of this part of the thesis to make evident the nuanced relationships with different periods of the past held by the Futurist artists.

Affection for the ancients, and particularly the Romans, is one of the main points of repudiation for the Futurists. In early twentieth-century Italy, ancient Rome was often called upon in nationalist rhetoric: Giuseppe Mazzini, the political activist who for years fought for Italy’s unification, called for a Third Rome; the protagonists of the Risorgimento were compared to the Romans; and the colonialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was lauded as a reclamation of Italy’s former Roman territories, such as Libya.⁴ Neoclassical art, a revisitation of classical form and subjects, was also prevalent in Italy’s academies, as elsewhere in Europe; Italian Neoclassicism was synonymous with the sculpture of Antonio Canova, who Boccioni argued was not part of the history of the Italian sensibility, instead associating his Neoclassicism with French art.⁵ The predominant taste for the classical owed much to Johann Joachim Winckelmann and his studies of classical art in the 1750s and 1760s which praised Hellenic art (and its later imitators such as Raphael) above all other periods, encouraging all artists to emulate it. Winckelmann’s praise of the serene ideal of Greek art, and of course his endorsement of the imitation of the past, was contrary to the Futurist aesthetic.

The Futurists were concerned that comparisons of their art with the classical would be made.

In ‘The Exhibitors to the Public’ they state:

² “Il definitivo, nel senso classico, greco o italiano antico, è completamente sconosciuto ai futuristi. Noi Italiani moderni siamo senza passato.” Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 72.

³ Marinetti, ‘The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism’ (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 22-23.

⁴ Lista and Sheridan, ‘The Activist Model; or, the Avant-Garde as Italian Invention’, pp. 13-14. See chapter 5.5 for more on the Roman rhetoric of Italian colonialism.

⁵ “Canova non esiste nella storia della sensibilità italiana.” Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 72.

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 on as a return to methods, conceptions and values transmitted by classical painting.⁶

Carrà, writing after he had left the Futurist group to work on Metaphysical art, wrote “By a strange anarchical paradox we have returned, almost without wishing to do so, to pure classicism.”⁷ As will be evident in this section, I do not argue that the Futurists returned to the classic as the Metaphysical artists did, but that they exploited it. The inevitability of the comparisons made between Futurist and classical art will be returned to in the conclusion of this thesis when considering how an art historical mindset can demand such connections.

Boccioni's striding figures and the *Victory of Samothrace*

The *Victory* is considered one of the masterpieces of Hellenistic art. The figure of Nike standing on the prow of a ship is thought to commemorate a naval victory. It is lauded for its sense of motion created by the billowing tunic, and although it is dated to 190BC it recalls fourth to fifth century BC Greek artistic tradition and fashion through its exposure of the body through the wet drapery, and the cord placed under the breasts. The statue was originally positioned in a niche overlooking the Sanctuary of the Gods on the Greek island of Samothrace; today it overlooks the sculpture hall from the top of the Daru staircase in the Louvre, Paris, where it has been since 1866.

Unique Forms was made by Boccioni in 1913, the year after he began making sculpture and published his ‘Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture’ (1912). The plaster work is part of a series of striding figures, and is far simpler in its design than many of Boccioni's earlier sculptural works, both those in mixed media and the other plaster striding figures. *Unique Forms* has become one of the iconic works of Futurism, its canonical status confirmed by its appearance on the 2002 Italian 20 cent coin.⁸ Alongside the critical acclaim it has received, its fame has been secured by the loss of many of Boccioni's other sculptures, and the proliferation of posthumous bronze casts, which vary wildly in appearance due to their different patinas, found in many of the world's major modern art museums. In this thesis, I

⁶ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, ‘The Exhibitors to the Public’ (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 47.

⁷ Carrà, ‘Our Antiquity’ (1916-18), reprinted in *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, ed. by Harrison and Wood, p. 232.

⁸ Other coins in the series feature the coliseum, Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*, Leonardo's *Vitruvian Man* and Raphael's *Portrait of Dante*.

strongly oppose the common practice of discussing the bronze casts as if they were the original; Boccioni himself opposed the use of bronze as a single material in sculpture in his technical manifesto.⁹ The original plaster version is extant in the Museum of Contemporary Art in São Paulo, and the comparisons made here are with this object and the other plaster works in this series, unfortunately only known through monochrome photography and reviews.

The connection between the *Victory* and Boccioni's series of striding figures is found in the work of Marianne W. Martin, John Golding and Maurizio Calvesi. Martin compares *Synthesis of Human Dynamism* (1913) (fig. 6.6), the first of the series of striding figures, to the *Victory*:

The multiple calves and feet resemble the legs of Severini's *White Dancer*, but the total sculptured effect of the web of motion connecting these force-lines is also quite like the animated and delicately modelled drapery which clings to the legs of the *Victory of Samothrace*.¹⁰

While noting the presence of a cast of the *Victory* in the Brera as a means of appropriation for the Futurist working in Milan, Martin does not posit why Boccioni may have created a work which she clearly sees owing great debts to a classical precedent so anathemic to the manifestos' rhetoric. While around the lower leg, the more ornate 'drapery' of *Synthesis* has a stronger formal resonance with the drapery of the *Victory of Samothrace*, as a sculptural whole, the simplicity of *Unique Forms* is more akin to the antique sculpture. Boccioni's desire to use straight lines and force-lines was partly an attempt to escape the Greek and Baroque influences. It is telling that *Unique Forms*, which barely contains any straight lines, unlike *Synthesis of Human Dynamism*, is the sculptural focus of this thesis, precisely due to its comparability with Greek and Baroque sculpture.

Golding, studying the Tate's bronze cast of Boccioni's *Unique Forms*, was one of the first to make this comparison between this icon of Futurism and the *Victory*; he too was fully aware of the status of the *Victory* as a symbol of everything Futurism opposed. "The final armless image with its muscular contortions reminiscent of fluttering wet drapery owes more than a little to the originally despised forms of antiquity. The *Victory of Samothrace* and the

⁹ "4. Destroy the literary and traditional 'dignity' of marble and bronze statues. Refuse to accept the exclusive nature of a single material in the construction of a sculptural whole." Boccioni, 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 65.

¹⁰ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 166.

speeding automobile have in a sense become one.”¹¹ Golding, who as will be discussed later in this chapter also compared this sculpture to a work from the Italian Baroque, sees this “unwilling recognition of the splendours of her [Italy’s] cultural heritage” as a way of asserting Italian primacy over the French, whose supposed plagiarism, mentioned in chapter three, and Primitivism caused Boccioni to turn to an Italian tradition,¹² a justification of appropriation to be considered throughout this chapter.

It is certain that the Futurists, including Boccioni, were familiar with the *Victory* well before *Unique Forms* was produced in 1913. The *Victory* had been discovered in 1863, was restored and on display in the Louvre in 1866; it underwent further restorations, including some extensive remodelling of the left wing from a cast of the right, completed in 1884. Although it dates from circa 190BC, the *Victory* was extant and receiving a lot of attention in the half century prior to the launch of Futurism. For the modern discipline of art history this work did not exist before the 1860s, at which point it entered into the canon, and became fodder for appropriation, much as it may have done when it was originally carved.

As an ancient work that was restored and put in pride of place in the capital of art, the *Victory* would have been hugely offensive to the Futurist sensibility, which bemoaned exactly this much attention being paid to ancient art when modern art received so little. The fact that many areas of the statue were reconstructed was also inimical to the statement in the ‘Manifesto of Futurist Painters’: “Away with hired restorers of antiquated incrustations.”¹³ The *Victory* is the quintessential example of the desire to revive the dead, rather than support the artistic youth.

As there was less than a fifty year period between the (AD) appearance of the *Victory* and the production of *Unique Forms*, any appropriation of the *Victory* by Boccioni can be considered as either direct, or as suggested by Martin, filtered through another artist, such as Auguste Rodin. This makes the *Victory* temporally interesting for this thesis, more so than other Ancient Greek masterpieces such as the *Laocoön* or *Belvedere Torso* that had been copied and appropriated *ad infinitum* before the launch of Futurism.

¹¹ John Golding, *Umberto Boccioni: Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (London: Tate, 1985), p. 26.

¹² Golding, p. 26. On Futurist Primitivism see chapter 5.5.

¹³ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, ‘Manifesto of Futurist Painters’ (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 26.

Boccioni's classical training

Drawing from antique sculpture was an important part of artistic training in the early twentieth century, hence the presence of a cast of the *Victory* in Milan's Reale Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, which I come back to. Boccioni's early sketches *Seated Mercury*, *Athlete* and *Discus Thrower* (figs 7.3, 7.6, 7.10) are evidence of his familiarity with classical sculpture, and show that his early training included sketching such works as an important formative exercise. Calvesi has suggested that Boccioni's strong interest in drawing rather than painting in his early years (he had never painted when he met Severini in 1898) led to this early interest in art of the past and these sketches of antiquities,¹⁴ but it is unresolved where Boccioni made these drawings. His sketch *Seated Mercury* appears to be from the bronze (fig. 7.1), originally from Herculaneum, found in August 1758 and on display in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples. This Roman work is in the style of Lysippus, and the *Athlete* from this series of sketches can be traced to a Roman copy of Lysippus's *Apoxyómenos*, found in the Vatican Museums (fig. 7.5). The third of these sketches, the *Discus Thrower* can be linked to the Louvre's statue (fig. 7.4). This is a first or second-century AD marble copy from around of a lost bronze original thought to be by the Greek sculptor Naucydes of Argos, which was moved from Rome to Paris in 1808. The geographic distance between these extant copies, although all in locations Boccioni could well have visited (particularly the Vatican and the Louvre), suggests that these sketches may not have been made from these Roman copies.

It is more likely that Boccioni made these sketches from plaster casts. With his friend Severini, Boccioni attended, albeit infrequently and briefly, the Disegno Pittorico course of the Scuola arti ornamentali in Rome from October 1901; the first year of this course included drawing from plaster casts, as well as prints and photographs.¹⁵ While details of the *gipsoteca* (cast hall) of this school are no longer extant, all of these models would have been available to him in Rome's cast hall of the Museo dell'arte classica; this collection included all three of these casts (figs 7.2, 7.7, 7.9). The museum, now as then, displays these works near each other for reasons of chronology; this can be seen in this later photograph of the museum

¹⁴ Calvesi, *Boccioni prefuturista*, p. 18.

¹⁵ Raffaele Erculei, 'L'insegnamento secondario in Italia dell'arte applicata all'industria, I. Roma,' *Arte Italiana Decorativa e Industriale*, IV, 4 April 1895, p. 34. See also Roberta Perfetti and Lucia Collarille, eds, *Scuola Arti Ornamentali di Roma: La Storia* (Rome: Edizioni Joyce, 2003). Virginia Baradel also suggests that these sketches were completed during Boccioni's time at this school. Virginia Baradel, 'Disegni e tempere', *Boccioni Prefuturista: Gli Anni di Padova*, ed. by Virginia Baradel (Milan: Skira, 2007), pp. 174-197 (p. 174).

at a different site (fig. 7.11) next to sections of the Parthenon frieze. Boccioni also sketched a section of this frieze in watercolour and gouache (fig. 7.8), which could not have been completed from the original, as Boccioni never visited Greece, where this section is conserved, in his youth. I will return to the Museo dell'arte classica as it also contained a cast of the *Victory of Samothrace* itself.

There is, however, reason to believe Boccioni had direct interaction with the *Victory* before sculpting *Unique Forms*. Boccioni visited Paris between 1 April-4 December 1906 and a short trip 3-10 October 1907, as well as the infamous visits made in the lead up to, and opening of, the first exhibition of Futurist painters in Paris in 1912. He also toured Parisian sculpture studios before starting to sculpt in 1912. His diaries and letters do not recount a trip to the Louvre, but Calvesi and Coen suggest that Boccioni could have been sketching in the Louvre because his sketch of a dead horse appears to be copied from Daumier's *Don Quixote and the Dead Mule* (1867).¹⁶ The positioning of the *Victory* at the top of the Daru staircase ensures that any Louvre visitor would struggle to miss it. As will be discussed in the section on the Renaissance, Boccioni had great respect for Michelangelo in his formative years and so could well have seen the *Victory* from the sculpture hall where Michelangelo's *Slaves* (1513-15) were, and still are, positioned, below the Daru staircase. However, it is certain that as a Futurist he was aware of the existence of the work.

The Futurists and the *Victory*

Marinetti's 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' refers to the *Victory* in its fourth point:

We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath – a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*.¹⁷

In fact, this statement itself is indebted to the past as Mario Morasso, in his *La nuova arma: la macchina*, published in 1905, compares the beauty of a car to that of the *Victory*; quoting Morasso at length demonstrates the similarity of his rhetoric:

It was said for the winged and headless Victory of Samothrace, enthroned at the top of the stairs in the Louvre, that it has locked up the wind in the folds of its dress, and that

¹⁶ However, as Calvesi and Coen stress, this sketch may well have been from a reproduction as it could predate the first Parisian trip of 1906. Maurizio Calvesi and Ester Coen, *Boccioni* (Milan: Electa, 1983), p. 151.

¹⁷ Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 21.

it reveals in the attitude of its persona the impetus of an easy and playful race; however, the comparison is not disrespectful, even the iron monster when it shakes and champs the bit for the excited throbbing of the engine offers in the same way a magnificent revelation of virtual force and evidently shows the breakneck speed of which it is capable.¹⁸

The citation of this sculpture by another writer further shows how deeply the image of the *Victory* was imprinted on the psyche of the European intellectual elite. Boccioni's Futurist colleagues were also involved. Carrà who would have known the cast in the Brera used the *Victory* in a design for the motif for membership card for the Famiglia Artistica in Milan (fig. 6.3), which won this competition in 1908;¹⁹ according to Martin this is a sign of Carrà's "indelible respect for tradition."²⁰ Perhaps the most surreal involvement of the *Victory* in the Futurist milieu is the story recounted by Severini in his memoirs of an Italian friend making him a plaster cast model of the *Victory of Samothrace* and presenting it to him as a wedding gift at his nuptials in 1913; later in the celebrations, the writer and artist Max Jacob, found it in the antechamber where Severini had politely hidden it, and proceeded to smash the statue to pieces with a bottle.²¹

Calvesi claims that Boccioni copied the *Victory* from a group in the Capitoline Museums in Rome in 1913, but does not mention the oddness of Boccioni going to the world's oldest museum to sketch a plaster copy of a Hellenistic masterpiece repudiated by his colleagues.²² The plaster copy now in the Museo dell'arte classica may have been in the museum at this time,²³ but the only victories listed in catalogues were Roman bas-reliefs (fig. 6.11) from the Arco di Portogallo, similar to those on the Arch of Constantine, installed in the museum in the seventeenth century.²⁴ These bas-reliefs share less formal traits with *Unique Forms* than the three-dimensional *Samothrace*. However, there are of course many other dynamic Roman sculptures in the Capitoline Museums including those of *Athletes* and *Diana*.

¹⁸ "Fu detto per l'alata e decapitata Vittoria di Samotraccia, troneggiante in cima allo scalone del Louvre, che ha nelle pieghe della sua veste racchiuso il vento, e che nell'atteggiamento della sua persona rivela l'impeto della corsa facile e giocando; orbene, e non è irriverente il paragone, anche il ferreo mostro quando scuote e scalpita per il battito concitato del motore offre nello stesso modo una magnifica rivelazione di forza virtuale e dimostra palesamente la folle velocità di cui è capace." Mario Morasso, *La nuova arma: la macchina* (Turin: Centro Studi Piemontesi, 1994 [1905]), p. 60

¹⁹ For more on the Famiglia Artistica in Milan, see chapter 5.2.

²⁰ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 68.

²¹ Severini, *La vita di un pittore*, p. 129.

²² Maurizio Calvesi, *Umberto Boccioni: incisioni e disegni* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1973), p. 3. Maurizio Calvesi, *Boccioni prefuturista*, p. 19.

²³ This cast could have been one of those moved from the Capitoline Museum to the dedicated museum of plaster casts on 24th March 1970. However, it appears in this 1920s photograph so was present in the collection prior to this date. Marcello Barbanera, *Museo dell'arte classica: Gipsoteca*, Cataloghi dei musei e gallerie d'Italia (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 1995).

²⁴ H. Stuart Jones, *A Catalogue of the Ancient Sculptures Preserved in the Municipal Collections of Rome: The Sculptures of the Museo Capitolino* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912). I would like to thank the staff of the Museo Capitolino for their information and assistance regarding these works.

Another source of familiarity with the *Victory* is Galileo Chini's decorations at the 8th Venice Biennale in 1909, which will be returned to throughout this chapter. While evidence regarding Boccioni's possible attendance at the Biennale is inconclusive, it has recently been suggested that he attended,²⁵ and therefore would have seen these decorations, had he not learnt about them later. Chini's decorations of the *New Civilization*, which he imbued with Italian nationalism, stressing the dominance of Italy in western civilization, included an image of the *Victory* in the third section which celebrated Greek and Roman art (fig. 6.4). Doubtless Chini chose the *Victory* as a contemporary symbol of classical art.

Formal appropriations of the *Victory*

While on paper the *Victory* appears entirely opposed to the ideology of Futurism, a brief glance at Boccioni's *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, particularly the original as the tone of the Parian marble is similar to that of Boccioni's plaster, swiftly undoes all this rhetoric. The two figures, carved in the round, stride out powerfully, right leg leading, their swift motion demonstrated by the billowing curvaceous forms that surround their limbs and trail in their wake, creating spirals of movement. Their torsos rush forwards; their arms are missing, or perhaps concealed; their motion only curbed by the plinths beneath them, which shackle their feet into stasis. It is primarily the dynamic pose, the lack of arms and the comparability of the drapery on the earlier work to the abstract forms of the latter which make these two sculptures so formally similar.

The first two of these areas of comparison suggest that the 'missing link' in the appropriation, as Martin notes,²⁶ could be Rodin's *The Walking Man* (c. 1900) (fig. 6.2). This sculpture, based on Rodin's own earlier sculpture *John the Baptist* (1879-80) (fig. 6.1), deliberately excludes the head and arms in homage to classical statuary. Boccioni was familiar with this work, not least due to its presence at the Rome International Exhibition of 1911, and the publicity surrounding the gift of a bronze cast of the work to the French Embassy in Rome in

²⁵ No conclusive evidence to confirm or deny this has come to light, but Stringa makes this suggestion on the basis of Boccioni's regularity of attendance of the prior and subsequent Biennales of this period, and the similarity of another Boccioni painting to a work exhibited in that year, namely the echoing of the pose of Guglielmo Talamini's *La Veggente (Ritratto di una centenaria)* in Boccioni's *Materia* (1912) particularly the hands positioned on her lap. Stringa offers no further information on this work by the now unknown Venetian painter; given the purely formal nature of this comparison and lack of supporting evidence of Boccioni's awareness of Talamini, I have not pursued this similarity further in this research. Nico Stringa, 'Boccioni e Venezia, integrazioni e nuovi indizi', *Boccioni Prefuturista: Gli Anni Di Padova*, ed. by Virginia Baradel (Milan: Skira, 2007), pp. 81-87 (pp. 81, 85).

²⁶ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 166.

February 1912.²⁷ Both Rodin's figures have both feet on the ground, in a position never taken when walking,²⁸ and so these sculptures function as precedents for Boccioni's attempt to show diachronic movement through a single position rather than a frozen point in time.

Boccioni had a retort for the accusation that his armless figure appropriated a trope of classical statue:

We want the entire visible world to tumble down on top of us, merging and creating a harmony on purely intuitive grounds; a leg, an arm of an object has no importance except as an element in the plastic rhythm of the whole, and can be eliminated, not because we are trying to imitate a Greek or Roman fragment, but in order to conform with the general harmony the artist is trying to create. A sculptural whole, like a painting, should not resemble anything but itself, since figures and objects in art should exist without regard to their logical aspect.²⁹

Boccioni acknowledges that a Futurist sculpture may have missing elements, but stresses that the ideology for this is entirely Futurist, and his association of Rodin with the Renaissance in this same manifesto suggests that his French predecessor had more *passatista* motivations. Boccioni's argument that a seemingly classical formal motif (and I stress that this is classical through retrospective eyes as the ancient sculptures would have originally had their full complement of limbs) can be used for an entirely Futurist ideology is an idea that will be returned to, as it serves to develop my hypothesis.

For now I would like to discuss the importance of the surface of *Unique Forms* and its relation to the drapery of the *Victory*. The reason for the abstract forms on the surface of Boccioni's work is that he was depicting the environment as well as the figure; this is the three dimensional development of the demand from the 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' "To paint a human figure you must not paint it; you must render the whole of its surrounding atmosphere."³⁰ This is the primary theme of the 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture': "8. There can be no renewal unless it is through ENVIRONMENTAL SCULPTURE, since only by this means can plastic art develop and come to MODEL THE ATMOSPHERE which surrounds our objects."³¹ This interest in sculpting atmosphere is usually attributed as an appropriation of the work of Medardo Rosso, the Italian sculptor and friend of Rodin working in Paris, to be considered at length in the following chapter. For

²⁷ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 170. Martin also cites Albert E. Elsen, *Rodin* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1963), pp. 173-174, 212.

²⁸ Albert E. Elsen, *Rodin* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1974), p. 27.

²⁹ Boccioni, 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 63.

³⁰ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 28.

³¹ Boccioni, 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 65.

example, in *Impressions of the Boulevard: Woman with a Veil* (1893) (fig. 16.6), Rosso not only sculpts the figure's face, but the environment around them, including their veil. In the *Victory of Samothrace* the billowing drapery shows us the form of the wind sailing past and through the figure of Victory on the prow of the ship. In *Paris by Night* (fig. 6.14) Rosso's figures also surge forward with cloaks flowing behind them. I do not wish to speak of the *Victory* as pre-empting the work of Rodin, Rosso or Boccioni, but as instigating, or even continuing, a sculptural tradition, which could be consciously or unconsciously appropriated. There are flaws in using the *Victory* to represent the entire classical artistic tradition. However, given the prominence of this work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries canon of art history, I would argue that it functions well in the role of representative of classical art and the relationship of the artistic establishment with that art. Secondly, I would argue that the *Victory* is one of a large number of similar statues, coming from a range of sites across the ancient world, and found in museums and as public statuary, thus establishing it as a readily available and typical, as well as an iconic work. Another *Victory* (fig. 6.5) was unearthed in Naples in September 1893, today found in the city's Museo Archaeologico Nazionale, a first-century AD Roman replica based on the Greek model, particularly affiliated with the Nike of Paionios (fig. 6.10), which itself was excavated and put on display in its original site at Olympia in 1875-76. The Greek statue is an example of the traditional fourth-century BC technique and clothing mentioned in reference to that of Samothrace.³² While the statues excavated in the nineteenth century share the formal traits which link that of Samothrace to *Unique Forms*, it is the fact that Marinetti singled out the example found in Paris, the most well-known, that makes it exemplary of, as well as part of, the tradition Boccioni was subverting from within.

The billowing drapery of these victories does, however, point to an aspect of this classical art which is anathema to Winckelmann's idea of the classical and thus to Neoclassicism. Winckelmann had not gone unchallenged in his assertion that Greek art was an epitome of tranquillity. Nietzsche, whose importance for Futurism was emphasised in chapter two,

³² These are also shared by a colossal statue of a goddess, possibly Aphrodite, unearthed off the Sicilian coast and thought to originate from the southern Italy or Sicily of Magna Graecia. Although this statue, recently repatriated from Los Angeles to Sicily, was unearthed after Boccioni's work, this by no means lessens the message here that these four statues form a tradition which was as much part of the Italian peninsula's artistic production as the Greek.

highlighted the Dionysian elements in classical art in *The Birth of Tragedy*, published in 1872, less than a decade after the discovery of the *Victory*.³³ The sense of movement and dynamism achieved through the drapery on these figures, stressed also by Warburg when considering Botticelli and the classical in his appraisal of the *ninfa* trope, showed that Winckelmann's immobile classical art was highly reductive. Nietzsche's dynamic classicism was known to some modernist artists, for example, it was also used by Isadora Duncan in her expressive modern dance in the early twentieth century.³⁴ Moreover, Boccioni's possible appropriation of the *Victory* places his dynamic figure into a tradition other to the Neoclassicism he associated with France (that of Antonio Canova, who, as mentioned above, Boccioni felt to be French, and of course Jacques-Louis David) and supports Golding's idea that the appropriation could have been an attempt to reclaim Italian cultural heritage.

At a point when Italy was drawing upon Ancient Rome for its national identity, many artists were turning to the nation's patrimony in acts of nationalist art. If, as Golding suggests, this is also an issue of Franco-Italian relations, of re-establishing the artistic dominance of Italy, then to appropriate a classical work found in such a prominent Parisian position, despite its Greek production, can be read as a reclamation of artistic dominance. As Fernando Agnoletti bemoans in his article 'Contro le "Belle Arti"' in *La Voce* in 1910, "In modern history every living people has succeeded better than us in returning to *our* antique."³⁵ *Unique Forms* could be seen as a new victory for the start of the new civilization (or barbarism?) the Futurists sought to instigate, one connected to the cultural heritage. The fame and obscure temporality of the *Victory*, and this desire to reassert Italian artistic dominance, lead to the idea that Boccioni was, consciously or otherwise, subverting the classical tradition from within, in a manner discussed in the previous chapter.

In short, while Futurist rhetoric stresses the importance of not imitating the classical, I argue that the appropriation of a Dionysian classical sculpture is quite different to the imitative (and Apollonian) Neoclassicism of their contemporaries. The appropriation of the *Victory* in

³³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, ed. by Michael Tanner, trans. by Shaun Whiteside (London: Penguin, 1993 [1872]).

³⁴ On Duncan's reading of Nietzsche see Kimerer L. LaMothe, *Nietzsche's Dancers: Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, and the revaluation of Christian values* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 107-150. On Dionysian classicism in modern painting see also Silvia Loreti, 'Avant-garde Classicism: the Cases of Giorgio De Chirico and Pablo Picasso, Ca. 1907-1924' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 2008).

³⁵ "Nella storia moderna ogni popolo vivo riesce meglio di noi a ritornare al *nostro* antico." Fernando Agnoletti, 'Contro le "Belle Arti"', *La Voce*, II, n. 16, 31 March 1910, 1-2 (p. 1).

Unique Forms can be seen to highlight the dynamic character of the ancient statue, thus invalidating the suggestion that modern art should not be dynamic in order to emulate the ancient. It can also be considered an attempt to usurp, or rather to subvert, the *Victory*, using the model of a striding figure to establish the dominance of *futurista* Italy over its French contemporaries and the peninsula's own past. In subsequent sections of this and the next chapter the Futurists will be aligned with other rejecters of the (Apollonian) classical, the first example of which, are the Byzantine mosaic artists of the next section.

4.2 Futurism and Byzantine art

When in 330AD Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire to Byzantium the hegemonic aesthetic did not change overnight, yet in early twentieth-century art history the classical and Byzantine were positioned as diametrically opposite. In the Byzantine aesthetic the two-dimensional was preferred to the three-dimensional and the stylized to the mimetic. The period is particularly known for its mosaics, the key examples in Italy being at Ravenna and Venice. The Byzantine Empire, the eastern part of the Roman Empire, stretched across much of south east Europe and Asia Minor, and for a time included part of Italy, with Ravenna being Italy's Byzantine capital.

Another difference between the Byzantine and the classical is that the Futurists rarely mentioned Byzantine art, and no scholars have made any direct connections between Byzantine art and Futurism. As this section seeks to demonstrate, using comparisons that are entirely my own, there are a number of works, particularly by Severini, which encourage this connection, and the ideological reasons supporting the appropriations are also strong.

Severini's work relates to Byzantine mosaic's technique and stylization, while Boccioni's *Modern Idol* (1911) (fig. 9.4) could be seen as a specific appropriation of the mosaics of Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora at the Basilica di San Vitale in Ravenna, which will serve as the example of Byzantine art in Italy for this case study. These mosaics date from 548 AD, but have been altered at multiple points in their history.³⁶ They cover much of the interior of the octagonal basilica (in fact, mosaics cover much of the surface of a number of basilica interiors in Ravenna) and the panels in question face each other on the sides of the apse (figs 8.3, 9.1). As David Talbot Rice has identified, these mosaics combine the continuation of classical models and the aesthetics of the East,³⁷ which runs contrary to the binary opposition of classical and Byzantine as described above, but such views were not presented 1909-1919.

These mosaics depict the Emperor and Empress, each with a halo and ornate headdress, wearing lavish purple robes, and bearing gifts for the church. Justinian is accompanied by ecclesiastical figures and his guards, dressed in simple robes and Roman style armour respectively, and Theodora is among her lady's maids in oriental attire. The background of

³⁶ Irina Andreescu-Treadgold and Warren Treadgold, 'Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale', *The Art Bulletin*, 79, 4 (1997), 708-723 (p. 721).

³⁷ David Talbot Rice, *The Appreciation of Byzantine Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 7.

Justinian's panel is plain gold, while Theodora's includes some architectural details, including a doorway with an opening curtain. The presence of Maximian, archbishop of Ravenna, in Justinian's entourage has led scholars to conclude that this was an imaginary, symbolic procession, rather than the record of an actual meeting.³⁸ As the images of the Emperor and Empress are portraits these mosaics have been reproduced and analysed more regularly than the other imagery from San Vitale and all Ravenna.

Although Ravenna was a Byzantine capital and is Italy's mosaic-capital, it is far from the only site of Byzantine mosaics in the country. Venice is also a major site of Byzantine art in Italy, particularly the Basilica di San Marco. Notably for the present context Byzantine mosaics are also found in Rome, where Boccioni and Severini trained (and were encouraged by Balla to sketch in churches³⁹), key examples being in Santa Maria Maggiore and Santi Cosma e Damiano. Milan, the Futurist city, also has similar examples in the Chapel of Sant' Aquilino in the Church of San Lorenzo and the mortuary chapel of San Vittore in Ciel d'Oro in the Church of Sant'Ambrogio.⁴⁰ The turn of the century fashion for mosaics was evident in Milan, as in Paris; the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, where the Futurists often met, was decorated with patriotic mosaics (fig. 8.5). The styles of these mosaics are varied, Roman heraldry on the floor and neoclassical figures in the lunettes; the gold background to these figures linked this contemporary mosaic design to the Byzantine. As in the previous section, where the *Victory of Samothrace* was one of many similar works, whose prominence in the public eye led it to be singled out by the Futurists, here the Justinian and Theodora mosaics serve as representative of the Byzantine style, and the most frequently reproduced.

The Byzantine was gaining popularity in Italy as it became an alternative to the classical: "Between the beginning of the twentieth century and the Second World War, the fortune of Byzantium was ascending, and the Byzantine, born from a rib of the antique, consolidated itself as an autonomous discipline. The revaluation of Byzantium and its art was parallel to, in art history and contemporary artistic production, a devaluation of Roman art."⁴¹ Alberto Sartoris saw in mosaics (those of the Roman as well as the Byzantine empires) the roots of

³⁸ Andreescu-Treadgold and Treadgold, 'Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale', p. 708.

³⁹ Gino Agnese, *Vita di Boccioni* (Florence: Camunia, 1996), pp. 38-39.

⁴⁰ Daniel Crena de Iongh, *Byzantine Aspects of Italy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), pp. 43, 48, 145.

⁴¹ "Tra l'inizio del Novecento e la seconda guerra mondiale la fortuna di Bisanzio è in veloce ascesa e la bizantinistica, nata da una costola dell'antichistica, si consolida come disciplina autonoma. La rivalutazione di Bisanzio e della sua arte sono parallele, negli studi e nella produzione artistica contemporanea, alla svalutazione dell'arte romana." Massimo Bernabò, *Ossessioni Bizante e Cultura Artistica in Italia: Tra d'Annunzio, Fascismo e Dopoguerra* (Naples: Liguori Editore, 2003), p. 71.

Italian abstraction.⁴² Chini's decorations in Sala Ottogona of the Italian pavilion also reflect the new interest in the Byzantine as they feature gold prominently and the cycle's position in a cupola caused the decorative scheme to echo the nearby Byzantine mosaics in San Marco.⁴³ The design of the fourth section of the cycle is related to the aforementioned Ravenna mosaics. The central figure of this scene is clearly based on the portrait of Theodora at Ravenna, and the figures to the left, in which Chini recreates the appearance of the mosaic surface, are very similar to the lady's maids in the San Vitale design (fig. 9.2).

Byzantine art was also receiving something of a renaissance amongst artists and art historians outside Italy in the decades before the launch of Futurism; 1900 has been described as the turning point when 'Byzantists' began to appear.⁴⁴ It interested both admirers and critics of the classical tradition. For the French Symbolists and Nabis it offered a non-mimetic, decorative, and, of course, symbolic model.⁴⁵ Maurice Denis, who in 1892 exhibited a mosaic called *Stella Matutina* at the Salon des Indépendents,⁴⁶ in his 'Notes sur la peinture religieuse' (1896) praises the Byzantine visual language for transcending the classical *trompe-l'oeil*, and considers this language as having been passed on to Cimabue, Giotto, Raphael and Ingres, as well as seeing it in Cézanne, Gauguin and Bernard.⁴⁷ It should be noted that in creating this lineage Denis was emphasising the Latin roots of the French modernist art he endorsed and thus a Western rather than what Denis would term a 'semitic' Byzantine in the context of the Dreyfus affair. Roger Fry, who was interested in Byzantine space and line, also considered mosaic the natural continuation of the new pictorial design of artists after Cézanne, particularly Gauguin and Matisse.⁴⁸ Matthew Prichard, a curator of Byzantine art and friend of many in the avant-garde circles of London, Paris and the United States, introduced Matisse to Byzantine art. Prichard is of particular relevance to this discussion because he used Bergsonian ideas of intuition to support his preference for

⁴² See F.T. Marinetti, 'Collaudo', in *Eroi macchine ali contro nature morte*, ed. by Renato di Bosso and A. G. Ambrosi (Rome: Edizioni Futuriste di 'Poesia', 1942), p. 3.

⁴³ Claudio Spagnol, *Galileo Chini: La Cupola del padiglione Italia alla Biennale di Venezia: Il Restauro del ciclo pittorico* (Venice: Marsilio, 2006), p. 28.

⁴⁴ Talbot Rice, *The Appreciation of Byzantine Art*, p. 35.

⁴⁵ J. B. Bullen, 'Byzantinism and Modernism 1900-14', *The Burlington Magazine*, 141, 1160 (1999), 665-675 (p. 665).

⁴⁶ Claire Frèches-Thory, *The Nabis: Bonnard, Vuillard and Their Circle* (Paris: Flammarion, 2002), p. 157.

⁴⁷ Maurice Denis, 'Notes sur la peinture religieuse' (1896), in *Théories, 1890-1910, Du symbolisme et de Gauguin vers un nouvel ordre classique* (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Occident, 1912), pp. 30-44.

⁴⁸ Bullen, 'Byzantinism and Modernism 1900-14', pp. 665-666. See also Roger Fry, 'Modern Mosaic and Mr. Boris Anrep', *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 42, 243 (1923), 272-278 (p. 277).

Byzantine decoration over Western art's verisimilitude.⁴⁹ Wilhelm Worringer's *Abstraction and Empathy* (1908), widely read in avant-garde circles, claimed that stylization, as seen in Byzantine and other supposedly 'primitive' artistic periods, was not lesser to mimetic art, but had value in its own right; Worringer opposed this tradition of abstract work to the Greco-Roman tradition.⁵⁰

Although existing scholarship connects the Byzantine to Post-Impressionism and Post-Impressionism to Futurism, it has not made direct connections between Byzantine art and Futurism as I do here. However, beyond the ideological power of appropriating an alternative to the classical, there are a great number of aesthetic similarities, and the fame and positioning of these mosaics suggest the high probability of the Futurists having awareness of them directly (rather than merely through Chini's painted homage) from early in their careers. In addition to having opportunity to see mosaics in Rome and Milan, Boccioni lived for a brief period in his childhood in Forlì, a town less than 30 kilometres from Ravenna, then for a more substantial period in Padua, a similar distance from Venice, and in Venice itself. I have confidence in Boccioni's familiarity with Byzantine mosaics in general, and suggest that he could well have been aware of the Ravenna mosaics, due to their widespread fame. It is certain that Boccioni was aware of them by 1911, when he painted *Modern Idol*, as he specifically mentioned "Empress Theodora" in his conference on 'Futurist Painting' which was delivered to the Circolo degli Artisti in Rome in May 1911.⁵¹

Severini's mosaic divisionism

First, however, I wish to look at Severini's relationship with Byzantine mosaics. From the 1930s Severini began to create mosaics in Ravenna, his hometown of Cortona and in France, and even set up a school of mosaic making in Paris. This activity falls outside the Futurist decade of 1909-1919 which this thesis addresses, but this does not mean that his interest and use of the Byzantine only began after his Futurist period. Luigi Tallarico considers Severini's

⁴⁹ Bullen, 'Byzantinism and Modernism 1900-14', pp. 665-666

⁵⁰ Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, trans. by Michael Bullock (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953).

⁵¹ Boccioni, 'La Pittura Futurista [Conferenza tenuta a Roma nel 1911]', in *Umberto Boccioni: altri inediti e apparati critici*, p. 19.

interest in the Italian tradition after his Futurist period to be a return, rather than a discovery, and claims that this interest had never really left him during his Futurist years.⁵² Severini's memoirs are not clear which year he indicates when he says "The first time I saw the mosaics at Ravenna, immediately it appeared to me the stringent analogy, by intentions and by motives, between the art of these ancient artisans and so-called modern art, meaning that which started with Impressionism."⁵³ In his *Lessons on Mosaic* Severini explicitly drew parallels between his avant-garde practice and mosaics:

Futurism and cubism find many points of contact with the Byzantines, the former in expressing movement, the latter in expressing volume. If one thinks of a dynamic-Cubism or a cubist-Futurism, as Apollinaire and many others thought, one can find in the Byzantine "methods" the authentication of some "methods" that our generation, returning to the sources of painting, have reinvented.⁵⁴

It is Severini's distinct mention of the Byzantine when he speaks of mosaics, albeit later in life, that encourages focus on Byzantine mosaics rather than the trend for Art Nouveau mosaics as seen in the work of Alphonse Mucha and others, which would have been available for appropriation by Paris-based Severini. In 1954 Severini wrote at length on the analogous nature of Byzantine mosaics and art after the Impressionists, claiming that modern painting was born at Ravenna, comparing Matisse, Van Gogh and Cézanne, as well as the Cubists and Futurists, to the Byzantine aesthetic. Severini also related the return to the two-dimensional space of the Byzantine mosaics to the spatio-temporal developments of Bergson and Einstein, discussed in chapter one. The depiction of volume through colour rather than contrast allows the Futurists to achieve the N-dimensional space demanded by their desire "to put the spectator in the centre of the picture."⁵⁵ It cannot be assumed that Severini's praise of the mosaics, or comparisons drawn were conceived in the 1910s or earlier. However, it is useful to bear this in mind while looking at the work produced within his Futurist period, particularly *The Boulevard*, *Memories of a Journey*, *The Haunting Dancer*

⁵² Luigi Tallarico, 'Severini, Modernità e Tradizione' in *Futurismo: nel suo centenario, la continuità* (Galatina: Congedo, 2009), pp. 43-46 (p. 46).

⁵³ "La prima volta che vidi i mosaici di Ravenna, m'apparve subito l'analogia stringente, per intenzioni e per motivi, tra l'arte di questi antichi artigiani e l'arte cosiddetta moderna, quella, per intenderci, che inizia con l'impressionismo". Gino Severini, *Témoignages par Severini*, (Rome: Edizioni Arte Moderna, 1963), quoted in Giorgio Mascherpa, *Severini e il mosaico* (Ravenna: Longo, 1985), p. 15.

⁵⁴ "Futurismo e cubismo trovano nei bizantini numerosi punti di contatto, gli uni per esprimere il movimento, gli altri per esprimere il volume. Se si pensa ad un cubismo-dinamico, o ad un futurismo-cubista, come vi hanno pensato Apollinaire e molti altri, si può trovare nei "mezzi" bizantini l'autenticazione di certi "mezzi" che la nostra generazione, risalendo alle fonti della pittura, ha reinventato." Gino Severini, *Lezioni sul mosaico*, trans. by Paola Chiarini (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1988), p. 49.

⁵⁵ See Gino Severini, *Mosaïque et Art Mural dans l'Antiquité et dans le temps modernes* (Biarritz: Imprimerie Moderne de Biarritz, 1954), particularly, pp. 4, 7, 9.

and *Dynamic Hieroglyph of the Bal Tabarin* (figs 8.1, 8.2, 8.8, 8.9) all produced 1910-1912; each work emphasises a different aspect of how Severini's Futurist practice was comparable to Byzantine mosaics.

Bal Tabarin is one of the first examples of Severini using real sequins in his work, which clearly relates to mosaics. Severini related the practice of using real jewels, such as those used in Justinian and Theodora's headdresses, to the Italian Primitives (addressed in the next section) introduced to him by Apollinaire.⁵⁶ The use of sequins allowed Severini to go further than the Neo-Impressionists, such as Seurat who he was keen to emulate, in the realm of luminosity. The Pointillist, and Italian Divisionist, division of colour, to be discussed in the next chapter, is comparable to how a mosaic is constructed. Even so, however precise and rigid Seurat's technique, he could not change the fact that paint is a soft medium, while a tessera has its own shape, and that paint, depending of course on the type, had little reflective qualities. Like the tesserae, Severini's sequins are flat, shiny and reflect light. In *Bal Tabarin*, much more than the equally famous sequined work of the same year *Blue Dancer* (fig. 8.7), Severini used the sequins for creating decorative patterns on clothing, much like those on the garments of Theodora's maids. Severini's use of sequins in these works is similar to his use of colour blocks in earlier works, which occasionally persist in his later, more abstract works. Severini's use of blocks of colours has often been related to his Divisionist training at the hands of Balla, and this trait is also found in some Boccioni works, including *Abstract Dimensions of a Head (Portrait of the artist's mother)* (1912) (fig. 9.6).

For Severini, this technique also reflects his admiration for Seurat. However, as Anne Coffin Hanson has emphasised, Severini's technique is not the same as the scientifically accurate work of the French Pointillists or the more intuitive work of the Italian Divisionists, in that he does not place a dot or stroke (respectively) of pure colour next to a complementary colour (whether this be decided by optical theory or intuition), he very often places a patch of pure colour next to another patch of the same colour, or one very similar.⁵⁷ While Severini's 'Preface to the Exhibition in New York' (1917) associates this practice with Matisse,⁵⁸ it is not a great leap to see this as an appropriation of mosaic technique. As stated above, Matisse himself appropriated mosaic making as evident in works such as *Calme, Luxe et Volupté*

⁵⁶ Severini, *La vita di un pittore*, p. 120.

⁵⁷ Anne Coffin Hanson, *Severini Futurista: 1912-1917* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1995), p. 33.

⁵⁸ Coffin Hanson, *Severini Futurista: 1912-1917*, p. 128.

(1904) (fig. 8.4), exhibited at the 1905 Salon des Indépendents. Severini complained that he met Matisse too late in life; although he was doubtless familiar with his work before this, it is feasible that Severini appropriated directly from Byzantine mosaics.

In *Memories of a Journey*, the patches of slightly different hues, which fill what would otherwise be geometric shapes of flat colour, are very close together, allowing very little canvas to appear in the gaps. The sky is one block of slightly differing tones of azure, punctuated by the Alps, some trees, anonymous buildings, and the Sacre Couer. In *The Boulevard* these areas of colour have become flatter, but instead of outlining figurative forms, they have become colourful cracks in the visual plane. The sky is fractured into purple, green, blue, yellow and orange, with the spindly black silhouettes of trees, occasionally with leaves, and solid blocks of white light radiating from small circular streetlights, cutting further into the sky. Each of the triangles and trapeziums is constructed of patches of the same colour, and then builds, what can only be described as a mosaic, of these shapes, to create the picture.

In *Lessons on Mosaic* Severini's tract on colour discusses the mosaic artist's use of contrasting colours in order to create the desired effect from the predetermined colours of the tesserae provided. Notably however, he did not want to exclude the modern scientific techniques from the craft:

The ancients followed their instinct and probably some traditional and empirical rules, but we, in addition to this, have all the scientific notions that Newton, Chevreul, Helmholtz, Brucke, Rood, and Charles Henry have given us, notions from which Delacroix, Seurat, Signac, etc. have profited, and I think that we should follow their example.⁵⁹

Although anachronistic to this discussion, it can be taken from this statement that he did not necessarily want to keep the intuitive (recall here Prichard's association of Byzantine art with Bergsonian intuition) separate from the scientific aspect of Pointillism which will be returned to in chapter five.

I would, however, posit that other works created around the same time as *Memories of a Journey* and *The Boulevard* better illustrate Severini's early appropriation of mosaics. *The Black Cat*, *Yellow Dancers*, *The Milliner* and *The Haunting Dancer* all share a similar painterly technique, in which the patches which form the geometric shapes that build the

⁵⁹ "Gli antichi seguivano il loro istinto e probabilmente certe regole tradizionali ed empiriche, ma noi, oltre a questo, abbiamo tutte le nozioni scientifiche che Newton, Chevreul, Helmholtz, Brucke, Rood, Charles Henry, ci hanno trasmesso, nozioni da cui Delacroix, Seurat, Signac, ecc. hanno saputo trarre profitto, e penso che noi dobbiamo seguire il loro esempio." Severini, *Lezioni sul mosaico*, p. 109.

composition are separate enough to allow the canvas or ground to be seen, but I wish to focus on *The Haunting Dancer*. In this work the forms around the face(s) use different coloured patches to achieve modelling on the face(s). This, along with the large bold eyes and thin dark lips, is particularly reminiscent of Justinian and Theodora's faces in the Ravenna mosaics. These works demonstrate not only a Byzantine appreciation of colour and its means of application, but a flattening of space, which can be associated with a rebuking of Renaissance perspective on Severini's part. Renaissance perspective was itself an attempt to recreate the classical, and it is notable that with the Byzantine, which for religious reasons preferred two-dimensional to three-dimensional. Flat geometric space, particularly associated with Cubism, is clearly seen in the work of Paris-based Severini. To refer again to *Lessons on Mosaic*:

The space of the Byzantines is not a geometrical space in the true sense of the word, nor is it even a classical space expressed with geometry (as for the Greeks); nor is it a gothic-expressionist one; but it brings together different conceptions in a synthesis of chromatism and linearism.⁶⁰

The Ravenna mosaics of the Carolingian school, such as those in San Vitale, are praised for their synthesis of colour and line; the colour does not merely decorate a line drawing, it is an essential part of the composition.⁶¹ Hence, while again wanting to avoid the lure of hindsight, I see the early works of Severini discussed above as appropriating Byzantine mosaic technique in the construction of flattened compositions from dabs of intuited complementary colours. Synthesising line and colour also recalls Boccioni's description of Futurist Plastic Abstraction as a "synthesis of colour and form" which will be revisited in the next section with regards to Carrà's very similar description of Futurism and Longhi's praise for Piero della Francesca. This, therefore, serves as a connection between these two periods, as well as with the Futurists.

Boccioni's Byzantine idol

I now return to Boccioni, whose *Modern Idol* has a very different relationship with the Byzantine than Severini's work. This painting is one of the early Futurist works which make visual a specific part of the 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910):

⁶⁰ "Lo spazio dei bizantini non è uno spazio geometrico nel vero senso della parola, e non è nemmeno uno spazio classico che si esprime con la geometria (come per i greci); né uno spazio gotico-espressionista; ma partecipa delle diverse concezioni in una sintesi in cui si accordano cromatismo e linearismo." Severini, *Lezioni sul mosaico*, p. 48.

⁶¹ Talbot Rice, *The Appreciation of Byzantine Art*, p. 8.

How is it possible still to see the human face pink, now that our life, redoubled by noctambulism, has multiplied our perceptions as colourists? The human face is yellow, red, green, blue, violet. The pallor of a woman gazing in a jeweller's window is more intensely iridescent than the prismatic fires of the jewels that fascinate her like a lark.⁶²

This painting seamlessly blends Futurist ideas for life and practices for painting. The technique is *complementarismo congenito*: the application of pure colour which then mixes on the retina. This is the intuitive Italian school of this technique appropriated from the Divisionists, not the scientific application of these theories, derived from Eugène Chevreul's investigation of colour blending for tapestries, and put into practice in Paris by Georges Seurat and others. Science has informed this practice (the Divisionist technique was still dependent on revelations in optical science, if not applied scientifically), but it has also played a vital role in the subject, as electric street lighting, which made possible the noctambulism so common in modern depictions of Paris, had recently been installed in Milan.⁶³ It is this modernity, both in the subject and technique, which led Boccioni to title it *Modern Idol*; he differentiates it from, but relates it to, a traditional idol.

An idol, stemming from the Greek *eidos* 'form, shape, picture', often refers to false gods, images used as objects of worship against the Christian and Jewish tradition, and has later come to mean anyone, or anything, which is worshipped excessively. Futurism's infamous "scorn for woman"⁶⁴ is invoked here as this figure is represented as an idol, the glamorous bourgeois woman, greedy for jewellery, an object for worship. An important caveat here is that he does not call it an icon; this would give it religious connotations which Boccioni would have been keen to avoid, and more pressingly for my purposes it would relate it to the expansive icon painting tradition of the Orthodox Church.⁶⁵

There are formal similarities between Boccioni's painting and the mosaics at Ravenna. The mosaic portraits of Justinian and Theodora in San Vitale both share, with each other and with *Modern Idol*, large ornate headdresses which cover the face down to just above the eyebrows, strongly delineated and intensely staring almond eyes, and pursed lips; Theodora's slender face (fig. 9.3) is also similar to that of the *Idol*. Theodora and Justinian both wear long earrings in addition to their bejewelled headdresses and golden auras. The tesserae for

⁶² Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 29.

⁶³ See chapter two for an examination of the consequences of these streetlights on temporality.

⁶⁴ Marinetti, 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' (1909), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 22.

⁶⁵ On Russian avant-garde icons see Andrew Spira, *The Avant-garde Icon* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries/Ashgate, 2008).

these areas are precious gems, mother of pearl and gold; the light effects created by these materials are dazzling, and complement their devotional function. Notably Boccioni demanded the use of real materials “in order to rediscover the basic elements of plastic sensitivity;”⁶⁶ his urge to rediscover this suggests he considers that there was this plastic sensitivity at some point in the past. In this earlier painted work he has not attached real precious gems (unlike Severini’s sequins, discussed above), but has used *complementarismo congenito*, in an attempt to recreate the play of the electric street light on the figure from behind, and that light as reflected by the window and jewels she admires. Her left earring, a teardrop pearl or diamond, is very similar to those worn by Justinian, and the glaring street light orbs behind her resemble the mother of pearl circles which surround Theodora; the strong yellow curve of her hat brim is also reminiscent of the auras around the mosaic figures. Similarities can be found beyond even the pictorial surface of the mosaics, the raking light that dissects Boccioni’s work recalls that provided by the high windows of the Basilica itself, which streams in from Theodora’s right and Justinian’s left. Another Byzantine aspect of Boccioni’s work is the frontality of the figure, which although not exclusive to or within Byzantine art, is particularly associated with it. Given Boccioni’s interest in human movement, his figures are very rarely composed face forward, as there is an inherent staticity about such a pose, felt as much in Byzantine portraits as it is in Boccioni’s.⁶⁷

This consideration of the Futurist relationship with the Byzantine has served to demonstrate the formal and technical links between some aspects of the Futurist aesthetic, particularly Severini’s own brand of Divisionist application of paint, and the Byzantine aesthetic’s use of radiant colours intuitively juxtaposed, attachment of real elements, flattened perspective, and frontal compositions. Appropriations of these elements are both practically and ideologically justifiable. Boccioni and Severini would have been familiar with Italy’s Byzantine art through their educations, and would have seen it first hand in Rome, Milan and Venice, if not also in Ravenna. The renewed interest in Byzantium and its art in

⁶⁶ Boccioni, ‘Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture’ (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 64.

⁶⁷ This static frontality has been identified as a Byzantine trait appropriated by Fillia, who in 1931 declared his preference for the arts of Egypt, the High Medieval period and Byzantium as “living exemplars of history”, as opposed to the Greco-Roman or Renaissance periods. It is perhaps not surprising that the roots of this *secondo futurismo* interest in the Byzantine can be traced back to Boccioni and Severini. Fillia, ‘Spiritualità Futurista’, in *Fillia pittore futurista* (Turin: A.R.S., 1931); quoted in Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, p. 252.

European artistic circles at the beginning of the twentieth century has been well documented, and many of the Futurists' avant-garde colleagues were open about their appreciation and appropriation of this aesthetic. The Byzantine offered those artists appropriating it a connection with the past, but a fresh connection, a deliberate subversion of Neoclassicism by calling on the style which was considered a dark age between the classical and the Renaissance. This potential appropriation, therefore, connects to the rhetoric of rebellion against the classical, the originality of non-imitative art, and a lesser known part of national identity. As has been mentioned throughout this chapter, there are connections between Byzantine and the Italian Primitives, which will be discussed further in the next section and in reference to the Italian Divisionists and French Neo-Impressionists in chapter five.

4.3 Futurism and the Italian Primitives

The art historical narratives of Vasari and Longhi considered in chapter two both commenced with the Italian Primitives, and the role attributed to these artists as initiators of Italian art is important for this section. Following Vasari and Longhi, I start this phase with Cimabue and conclude it with Botticelli. This approach runs together the first and second parts of Vasari's schema as the Futurists themselves referred to artists from as wide a temporal, geographic and aesthetic spectrum as this as Primitives; this category includes artists working over three centuries and in artistic centres across Italy but the focus in this section is on Giotto, Paolo Uccello and Piero della Francesca. I use the word Primitives here not only as this is the word used by the Futurists, but in order to set up the link with the Primitivism, referring to the turn of the century interest in so-called 'primitive' cultures, which I return to at the end of chapter five. The double meaning of the word primitive for the Futurists at the outset of the twentieth century, during the shift in meaning from the early Renaissance to, for the most part, African art, raises a terminological issue. The quotes from the Futurists used in this section clearly refer to the early stages of the Renaissance or a more general sense of the word primitive, which stresses the originary nature of both these forms of primitive art. Although I further discuss the temporal attributes of Primitivism in the relevant section, it is useful here to think of these early Renaissance artists as initiators, or precursors as discussed in chapter three.

The name 'Primitives' aids the differentiation of this period or category of artists, who could also be labelled early Renaissance, from the High Renaissance of Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael. It is crucial to make this distinction due to the diversity of critical fortunes enjoyed by artists from these two periods of art, as the High Renaissance had been praised since its first historicization in Vasari, while its predecessors were only beginning to receive more historical attention. The 'rediscovery' of the Primitives can be traced to the Settecento, when Vico asserted that great artists are born in times of barbarism, not reflection,⁶⁸ and can thus be related to Primitivism, as returned to in chapter five, but here I focus on the interest in the Primitives prior to and during the period 1909-1919.

⁶⁸ Luisa Filippi, 'Esempi di Primitivismo dalla Collezione Estorick' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Università degli Studi di Trento, 2004/5), p. 4. Filippi refers to Franz Boas, *Arte primitiva* (Turin: Boringhieri, 1981).

At the outset of the twentieth century art historians were rediscovering and recuperating the reputations of the Primitives. Giotto had, to an extent, received more sustained positive attention than other artists of this period. From Vasari onwards he was seen as the instigator of an artistic path that Michelangelo had fulfilled. However, the fact that Giotto's frescoes in the Peruzzi Chapel in Santa Croce, Florence, were whitewashed in the eighteenth century and only uncovered again in 1840, demonstrates that even he was not immune to the distaste for the Primitives.⁶⁹

Paolo Uccello's reputation had been restored by Bernard Berenson, who praised his naturalism, scientific interests and dexterity in *The Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (1896). Uccello's frescoes in the Chiostro Verde of Santa Maria Novella in Florence underwent restoration in 1859, involving two young artists later to become Macchiaioli, as discussed in the next chapter,⁷⁰ and again in 1909, leading to an even greater interest in the artist.⁷¹ Also in 1909, Carlo Gamba published an article in the Florentine *Riviste d'Arte*, with a number of reproductions of Uccello's work. Gamba applauded not only his perspectival achievements, but his ability to render movement (for which he was considered a precedent for Leonardo) and his force and spontaneity, qualities prized by the Futurists.⁷²

Piero della Francesca received scholarly attention at the turn of the century through monographs by Giovanni Felice Pichi (1892), Felix Witting (1898), William George Waters (1901), and Corrado Ricci (1910), as well as later from Lionello Venturi (1913) and Roberto Longhi (1914).⁷³ He was also popular amongst Post- and Neo-Impressionists and his rediscovery is often attributed to Cézanne and Seurat, as discussed in the next chapter.⁷⁴

This return to popularity was shared with the other Primitives. Lionello Venturi notes in his *The Taste of the Primitives*, artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century developed an interest in artists from Cimabue to Uccello.⁷⁵ As well as the aforementioned Post- and Neo-Impressionists in France and Macchiaioli in Italy, the Primitives were also

⁶⁹ Tancred Borenius, 'The Rediscovery of the Primitives', *Quarterly Review*, 475 (1923), 258-270 (p. 258).

⁷⁰ Antonio Paolucci, 'Silvestro Lega e il Quattrocento' in *Silvestro Lega: i macchiaioli e il quattrocento*, ed. by Giuliano Matteucci, Fernando Mazzocca and Antonio Paolucci (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan: Silvana, 2007), pp. 29-41 (pp. 32, 41).

⁷¹ Eugenio G. Campani, 'Uccello's Story of Noah in the Chiostro Verde', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 17 (1910), pp. 203-205+208-210 (p. 203).

⁷² Carlo Gamba, 'Di alcuni quadri di Paolo Uccello o della sua scuola', *Rivista d'Arte*, VI, 1 (1909), 19-30 (p. 27).

⁷³ Maurizio Calvesi, *Piero della Francesca: nel XV e nel XX secolo* (Rome: Lithos, 1997), p. 56.

⁷⁴ Calvesi, *Piero della Francesca: nel XV e nel XX secolo*, p. 61. For more on Piero della Francesca and Seurat, see chapter 5.4.

⁷⁵ Lionello Venturi, *Il gusto dei primitivi* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli Editore, 1926), pp. 294-297.

appropriated by the German Nazarenes, the English Pre-Raphaelites and the Italian Purists, whose manifesto 'Purism in the Arts' (1842-43), written by Antonio Bianchini and Tommaso Minardi, positioned them against Neoclassicism and encouraged a return to the Primitives. For the Futurists, as for these artists and art historians, the Primitives revived painting. After his Futurist years Severini, in *From Classicism to Cubism* (1921), wrote: "In short, the primitives, starting from Giotto, had to reinvent painting."⁷⁶ In *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* Boccioni repeatedly begins phrases referring to art's history with "from Giotto" "from Cimabue", inevitably following these with "to Michelangelo."⁷⁷ Soffici stressed the comparability of the inaccuracy of the Primitives' perspective to that of modern painting in a 1910 *La Voce* article, claiming that artists of both periods felt rather than calculated perspective (although this of course refers more to Giotto than Uccello and Piero).⁷⁸ As noted in chapter three, in 'Against All Returns in Painting' Russolo stated that "We note straight away that what appears to be definitive in Giotto, for example, was the extreme point of the avant-garde, that was brought up to Raphael and Michelangelo!"⁷⁹ This idea of the Primitives being an avant-garde *ante litteram* is essential to establishing why they were of interest to the Futurists. Boccioni's famous slogan "We are primitives of a completely renewed sensibility," creates the connection between the Futurists and the Primitives while maintaining a distance from them. I here allude to the cyclical ideas of history and art history given in the previous part of this thesis, in order to think of the relationship between the Primitives and the Futurists as one of revolution as well as evolution. The idea of the precursor was as important for reception of the Primitives as it was for the mythologization of the avant-gardists. The analogy lies in the creative power of the new Futurist language, rather than the destructive rhetoric it contained.⁸⁰

It should be noted that particularly in the case of Piero della Francesca the Futurists tended to retrospectively overemphasise his role in their work. In his autobiography Carrà says that he rediscovered Piero at the same time as Uccello, that is, in 1915, claiming to refer to them

⁷⁶ "I primitivi insomma, a cominciare da Giotto, hanno dovuto reinventare la pittura." Gino Severini, *Dal Cubismo al classicismo*, ed. by Elena Pontiggia (Milan: Abscondita, 2001), p. 35.

⁷⁷ "Da Giotto a Masaccio, a Michelangelo [...]" "dai Primitivi, da Cimabue, a Michelangelo [...]" Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, pp. 47, 72.

⁷⁸ Ardengo Soffici, 'Divagazioni sull'arte', *La Voce*, II, n. 41, 22 September 1910, 3. Soffici was familiar with Milanese Futurist art at this point, but does not specifically refer to it.

⁷⁹ "Notiamo subito, intanto, che ciò che a questi imitatori appare come definitivo in Giotto, per esempio, non era invece che la punta estrema d'avanguardia, che ha poi portato fino a Raffaello ed a Michelangelo!" Russolo, *Contro tutti i ritorni in pittura*, in *Catalogo per la Esposizione Futurista, Galleria Subalpina, Torino, 27 Marzo al 27 Aprile, 1919*, unpaginated.

⁸⁰ Ballo, *Preistoria del Futurismo*, pp. 19-20.

both often in his writings, but Carrà did not mention Piero until the 1930s.⁸¹ Severini too tried to re-insert Piero into his writings by asking the editors of the *Archivi del futurismo* to add Piero's name to the list of scientists of art listed in his 1917 *Mercure de France* article on avant-garde painting.⁸²

Carrà's Primitive battle

While the above quotes are snippets, references which pepper Futurists writings, Carrà undertook a more substantial examination of two of these Italian Primitives, Giotto and Uccello. These studies, 'Parlata su Giotto' and 'Paolo Uccello Costruttore', were published in 1916, a year after Carrà moved away from Futurism. When reflecting on his split from Futurism in his memoirs, Carrà said "I felt a very strong desire to identify my painting with history, and especially with the history of Italian art."⁸³ This split was, however, not a clean break, as evident in his continuing interest in the Primitives throughout 1915. In *Guerrapittura* (1915), a Futurist text, Carrà calls the Primitives "the purest and strongest artists that I know" and defends the use of multiple materials in sculpture, as realized by Boccioni, in their name.⁸⁴ In a letter to Papini of July 1915, Carrà said "I am making a return to primitive, concrete forms, I feel like a Giotto of my times."⁸⁵ This statement sums up Carrà's ability to cross over from Futurism to this interest in the Primitives; he did not entirely overturn his artistic ideology, but he injected his innovation with a dose of tradition. This attitude is also present in his essays on Giotto and Uccello. Carrà bemoans the tendency amongst his contemporaries in Italy to think of Giotto only as a forebear of the Renaissance, stressing that "Giotto is worth returning to;" he also calls Masaccio "a fourteenth-century visionary."⁸⁶ Carrà complains that the same people do not appreciate Uccello, referring to the

⁸¹ Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 147. Flavio Fergonzi, 'Un modello difficile: quattro momenti di piero contemporaneo nella critica del primo novecento', in *Piero della Francesca e Il Novecento: Prospettiva, Spazio, Luce, Geometria, Pittura Murale, Tonalismo, 1920-1938*, ed. by Maria Mimita Lamberti and Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco (Venice: Marsilio, 1991), pp. 229-243 (p. 232).

⁸² Fergonzi, 'Un modello difficile: quattro momenti di piero contemporaneo nella critica del primo novecento', in *Piero della Francesca e Il Novecento*, ed. by Lamberti and Fagiolo dell'Arco, p. 233. See Gino Severini, 'La peinture d'avant-garde', reprinted in *Archivi del futurismo*, ed. by Drudi Gambillo and Fiori, I, 210-223 (pp. 216-217).

⁸³ "in me era un fortissimo desiderio di identificare la mia pittura con la storia, e specialmente con la storia dell'arte Italiana." Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 129.

⁸⁴ Carlo Carrà, 'Io non sono specialista NO!' in *Guerrapittura*, pp. 1-4 (p. 4).

⁸⁵ "Faccio ritorno a forme primitive, concrete, mi sento un Giotto dei miei tempi." Carlo Carrà, '[letter to Giovanni Papini from July 1915]', reprinted in *Il Carteggio Carrà-Papini. Da "Lacerba" Al Tempo Di "Valori Plastici"*, ed. by Carrà, pp. 61-62 (p. 61).

⁸⁶ "Ma a Giotto convenien fare ritorno." [...] "masaccio visionario trecentista" Carlo Carrà, 'Parlata su Giotto', *La Voce*, VIII, n. 3, 31 March 1916, (Florence: Libreria della Voce), 162-174 (p. 167, p. 163).

aforementioned Chioistro Verde frescoes.⁸⁷ When discussing Uccello, Carrà quotes Soffici's praise of the artist:

...the madman who did not know how to construct a horse according to anatomy, was one of the freshest, sincerest, most courageous, and so one of the greatest artists of the fifteenth century and of all time in Florence, in Italy, and the whole world.⁸⁸

The proudly Tuscan Soffici positioned Uccello as a good Etruscan carrying on Masaccio's work, and thus an integral part of the development of Italian art.

Carrà's praise of these two artists, and particularly of Uccello, is relevant to a comparison made between the work of the Primitive artist and one of Carrà's major Futurist works painted six years prior to this article, *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli* (fig. 10.6). This painting, begun in 1910, was substantially reworked after the 1911 Futurist trip to Paris with a flattened geometrical treatment of planes which demonstrates Carrà's new-found interest in Cubism. It is very large, especially compared to Carrà's other works of the same period and its scale encourages the link to history painting made in chapter two. The comparison of this work to Uccello was originally made by Barr, and then cited by Martin:

The Futurist use of broken silhouettes, interpenetrating lights and shades and the flickering fan-shaped patterns of flailing weapons contributes to the frenzied kinaesthesia of the painting. Yet, fundamentally, in its main lines and masses Carrà's *Funeral* is as classically organized as a fifteenth-century battle piece by Paolo Uccello.⁸⁹

Of these battle pieces I compare *Funeral* with Uccello's *The Battle at San Romano* (figs 10.4, 10.7, 10.10), relating this to the tradition of battle imagery in Italian painting. The first item to address is which of Uccello's *Battles* Carrà was potentially appropriating; there are three versions, currently to be found in Florence's Uffizi, Paris's Louvre and London's National Gallery. Carrà visited the Louvre while working in Paris in 1899-1900 (the work entered the collection in 1863) and the National Gallery while visiting London in the same period (the painting entered the collection in 1857).⁹⁰ Carrà was familiar with the Uffizi work by the time of his essay on Uccello in 1916,⁹¹ and his Brera education would have ensured that he knew of

⁸⁷ Carrà, 'Parlata su Giotto', p. 166.

⁸⁸ "...il pazzarello che non sapeva costruire un cavallo secondo anatomia, era uno dei più freschi, de' più sinceri, de' più coraggiosi, e perciò de' più grandi pittori del quattrocento e di tutti i tempi di Firenze, d'Italia, del mondo." Carlo Carrà, 'Paolo Uccello Costruttore', *La Voce*, VIII, n. 9, 30 September 1916 (Florence: Libreria della Voce), 375-384 (p. 375). Ardengo Soffici, 'Henri Rousseau', reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri: scritti sull'arte*, 2nd edn (Florence: Vallecchi, 1929), pp. 119-133 (p. 130).

⁸⁹ Soby and Barr, *Twentieth Century Italian Art*, p. 10. See also Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 88.

⁹⁰ Carrà, *La mia vita*, pp. 27, 30. Carrà recounts visiting the Louvre and the National Gallery, but does not mention these specific paintings.

⁹¹ "Certo è che la linearità distese allo sfumino delle caccie d'Oxford, e ancora la giovanili simbologie del Palazzo d'Urbino, sono lontane da queste cubicità racchiuse sul piano (battaglia degli Uffizi e affreschi

Uccello's San Romano works before the execution of *Funeral*. Carrà began and reworked this painting between 1910 and 1911, but it is based on sketches created during the workers uprisings of 1906.⁹² The compositional dissimilarity between the preparatory sketch (fig. 10.9) and the final work demonstrate the strong influence of the Futurist aesthetic of the 'Technical Manifesto' and Carrà's 1911 exposure to Cubism.

Uccello is famed for his attempts at perspective, which can be seen in the Uffizi and National Gallery versions by the broken lances lying on the ground and the foreshortened horses. While Carrà's preparatory sketch for this work features correct one-point perspective, in the final composition space has been collapsed into a few overlapping planes. The coffin, the clearest geometric shape included in the composition is neither drawn nor modelled with any desire to portray its orientation in the picture plane. There is some sense that the crowd is large and continues indefinitely, but this is more implied by the lines jutting into the air than any carefully constructed perspective system. Uccello, on the other hand, looked to create depth by depicting scenes occurring in the background of his work, and using broken lances to create space in the foreground.

Compositionally, it is the Uffizi version which offers the most scope for comparison. Carrà may have depicted a riot, a mass of anarchists with smatterings of police, but as Barr noted and Martin repeated, he has classically organised the work's main lines and masses by having a central focus. The sharply lineated figure in the foreground of *Funeral*, whose oblique lunge draws attention to the red form of the coffin, is the compositional and narrative centre of the picture, with figures and horses appearing to its left and right.⁹³ However, the reason why this image is so often compared to medieval battle scenes is the *mêlée* of flag poles, lances,⁹⁴ cranes and other lines jutting into the sky. It is the direction of these lines, coming towards the centre from either side that give the impression of there being two battling sides, much like in the Uffizi *Battle*. These lines convey the energy of the crowd, and are alluded to in 'The Exhibitors to the Public':

di S. Maria Novella), come l'ombra d'un'astrazione è lontana dall'elemento concretizzato in un solido." Carrà, 'Paolo Uccello Costruttore,' p. 382.

⁹² As mentioned previously, the event of the funeral is misdated by Carrà to the workers' uprisings of 1904 which had gained a mythical status. Alessandro Del Puppo has highlighted this error and reattributed this sketch to 1906. Del Puppo, 'I Funerali dell'anarchico Carrà' in *Il Futurismo nelle avanguardie*, ed. by Pedullà, pp. 384-386.

⁹³ Barr and Soby, *Twentieth-Century Italian Art* p. 10. See also Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-15*, p. 88

⁹⁴ Lances may sound archaic, but Carrà describes their presence in his memoirs. Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 46.

If we paint the phases of a riot, the crowd bustling with uplifted fists and the noisy onslaughts of the 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.⁹⁵

Thus, as a compositional tool, these force lines and flags can find their justification entirely within the Futurist aesthetic. This is not unique to this work in the Futurist oeuvre, both Boccioni's *Charge of the Lancers* and Severini's *Italian Lancers at a Gallop* (figs 10.2, 10.3), both of 1915, use lances as force lines in their images of repeating soldiers; the latter has been compared to the work of Uccello by Antonello Negri.⁹⁶

While the Uffizi *Battle* does not feature a flag, the version today found in the Louvre does. This work is also relevant to Carrà's *Funeral* for its coloration; the background to the upper half, predominantly foliage, is unusually dark, almost black, thus giving prominence to the lighter tones of the lances, and emphasising the bright red used across the canvas which binds the image together.⁹⁷ Carrà's work also features this dominant use of very dark tones, and then primary colours, particularly red to highlight key areas of the composition, particularly the coffin and the sun.

The prevalence of lances and flags in medieval battle painting, not least due to the presence of such items in medieval battles, renders of all these Futurist works formally reminiscent of the tradition of Italian battle paintings. I do not claim this motif to be exclusive to Italian battle paintings, as it is also often found elsewhere, particularly in French and Spanish battle scenes, but when constructing a 'battle' such as Carrà has here, there is an Italian tradition with which would he would have been familiar and could, and I argue did, draw upon.

Uccello's *Battle at San Romano* has been compared to the *Judas's Kiss* (fig. 10.1) in Giotto's fresco cycle in the Scrovegni chapel in Padua. By giving the soldiers in this work lances, Giotto has doubled the necessary height of the image, allowing the faces of Christ and Judas to take a central position; the same is true of the coffin in Carrà's work, which, had it only shown the height of the pallbearers, would have positioned the coffin at the very top. Moreover, the use of lances raised in the air offers a sense of violence which betrays the true act of Judas's kiss. The entire upper half of Piero della Francesca's *Battle between Heraclius and Chosroes* (fig. 10.8) from the fresco cycle in San Francesco in Arezzo is also dominated

⁹⁵ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'The Exhibitors to the Public' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 48.

⁹⁶ Antonello Negri, 'Il Futurismo e la guerra' in *Il Futurismo nelle avanguardie*, ed. by Pedullà, pp. 351-360 (p. 354).

⁹⁷ Arguably the relative darkness of this work's colour scheme is a result of the Louvre and the National Gallery contrary policies on the cleaning of artworks.

by flags, although these are perpendicular, in contrast to Carrà's swords and lances which fly at various angles; Piero's work lacks a central focus, which is provided by the presence and direction of the lances in the works of Giotto, Uccello and Carrà.

The use of gold leaf on Uccello's three versions of the *Battle* ties this work to the point made in the previous section connecting the use of collage elements by the Futurists with the use of real elements by the Primitives, as introduced to Severini by Apollinaire at the end of 1912.⁹⁸

As Martin states:

The poet [Apollinaire] had called his [Severini's] attention to the Italian primitives' halos made of real jewels and pearls and to a St Peter (attributed to Crivelli) [fig. 13.5] at the Brera who carried real keys, and remarked how such contrasting elements 'augment the life of the paintings and their dynamics'⁹⁹

As well as Severini's aforementioned sequins, he used collage elements like a fake moustache in a 1913 portrait of Marinetti. Collage elements were also present in Boccioni's sculptural work; the 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture' demands the inclusion of "glass, wood, cardboard, iron, cement, hair, leather, cloth, mirrors, electric lights, etc."¹⁰⁰ as seen in *Fusion of a Head and a Window* (1913) (fig. 13.2), which I discuss later with reference to the Baroque. Carrà also used newspaper collage in his works, such as *Interventionist Demonstration* (1914) (fig. 13.1).

Notably, it is in yet more collage work that Martin locates more resonances between Carrà and the early Renaissance; she aligns his collages for *Guerrapittura* with his research on Giotto of the same year, and particularly an interest in concrete forms. However, she does not note any specific comparisons to be made, and her ending of the study in 1915, before Carrà's treatises on Uccello and Giotto, and his transition into metaphysical art, prevents her from continuing on to discuss Carrà's burgeoning interest in the Primitives.

Carrà had, whether consciously or not, formed part of the Futurism-Piero link as early as 1913, when he used the same terminology to describe Futurism as Longhi did to describe Piero. Carrà called the Futurist spatial expressions "abstract perspective of form-colour" in 1913; the following year Longhi described Piero's work as a "perspectival synthesis of form-colour."¹⁰¹ Calvesi has stressed that it is more likely that Longhi copied Carrà than vice

⁹⁸ Severini, *La vita di un pittore*, p. 120.

⁹⁹ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-15*, p. 140 n.1.

¹⁰⁰ Boccioni, 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 64-65.

¹⁰¹ "prospettiva astratta di forma-colore" Carlo Carrà, 'Costruzione spaziale Simultaneità dei ritmi' *Lacerba*, II, n. 4, 15 February 1914, 53-54 (p. 53). Roberto Longhi, 'Piero dei Franceschi e lo sviluppo della pittura veneziana, *L'Arte*, XVII (1914), 198-256.

versa.¹⁰² As such, this is a historiographical rather than an artistic link, as Longhi read Piero in Futurist terms, but it still serves to connect how the Futurists positioned themselves in art history and how the art historical canon was being repositioned.

Carrà's role in the 'return to order' both in his art and his writings has been well documented. His tendency to be involved with the most prominent movement of the age, shifting seamlessly between the apparently antithetical Futurist and Metaphysical painting has led him to be considered an opportunist.¹⁰³ In the historiography of Futurism, Carrà, the only Futurist to have attended a traditional art academy, is considered the most reluctant to abandon Italy's artistic tradition, and the first to return to it. I argue that he was not necessarily unlike his colleagues in this respect, but certainly more open in expressing his deeply ingrained sense of tradition.

Looking at a Carrà painting from the end of the decade of investigation shows how far down the primitive path Carrà went. *The Daughters of Loth* (fig. 11.2), painted in 1919, is exemplary as a return to the Italian fourteenth and fifteenth-century styles: the weighty figures, one kneeling and one with her hand on her stomach, deliberately recall annunciation scenes. The flooring shows the perspective lines used, which in turn focus the eye on the small building in the background, which seems directly plucked from Piero's *Ideal City* (fig. 11.5); the sparse landscape and architectural forms, further enhance the geometrical arrangement of the composition.¹⁰⁴ Fergonzi has also compared this work to Raphael's *The Marriage of the Virgin* (1504) (fig. 11.4) known to Carrà from the collection at the Brera gallery.¹⁰⁵

Sant'Elia's Ideal City

A more formal connection between these works by Piero and Raphael and the Futurists comes in the form of Antonio Sant'Elia's architectural drawings, particularly one drawing for his *New City* (fig. 11.6). To some extent it is inevitable that a perspectival drawing resembles this kind of early Renaissance aesthetic in which Albertian perspective begins to be so effectively applied. The similarity can also be seen in the work of Leonardo, particularly his *Annunciation* (1472-74) (fig. 11.1) in the Uffizi, in which the building behind Mary creates

¹⁰² Calvesi, *Piero della Francesca: nel XV e nel XX secolo*, p. 63.

¹⁰³ Tallarico, 'Carrà, continuità della tradizione', *Futurismo nel suo centenario*, pp. 47-50 (p. 48).

¹⁰⁴ Bethke, 'From Futurism to Neoclassicism: Temporality in Italian Modernism 1916-1925', p. 106.

¹⁰⁵ Fergonzi, 'Un modello difficile: quattro momenti di piero contemporaneo nella critica del primo novecento', in *Piero della Francesca e Il Novecento*, ed. by Lamberti and Fagiolo dell'Arco, p. 233.

strong perspectival lines leading into the distance, also comparable to the aforementioned Carrà. Leonardo's painting and the Raphael in the Brera are likely to have been known to Sant'Elia while the Leonardo sketch for an ideal city (fig. 11.3) which most closely resembles Sant'Elia's drawing, may only have been known to him through facsimile reproductions of Leonardo's notebooks, which I discuss in the next section, as the drawing constitutes part of Manuscript B in the library of the Institut de France. However, the similarity of media gives this ideal city the most visual proximity with Sant'Elia's.

Although Leonardo's work is from just a few years after Piero's, at the beginning of the twentieth century Leonardo was associated with the Renaissance, while Piero was still considered a Primitive. Both Piero and Leonardo's visions of an ideal city share with the Sant'Elia the prioritisation of architecture evident in the exclusion of people and the utopian rhetoric imbued in these cities. In all three the lines are clean, the composition centralized and the columns classically ordered. While Sant'Elia's drawing does not include columns as such, the extensions of the main building, which from this angle appear to be buttresses, form a pattern of black and white stripes that evokes classical columns found in Renaissance architecture. The importance of the Piero as an example of perspectival drawing and Renaissance architecture has led to its repeated reproduction and dissemination and as an architectural student Sant'Elia would certainly have encountered it.

In this section on the early Renaissance Primitives I have sought to demonstrate that this long and diverse period of art, which was being given new attention by artists and scholars, offered the Futurists a heritage of innovation and originality. As evident from their own rhetoric, there is a connection between the artists who initiated the Renaissance, and the Futurist self-identity, both starting a revolution in Italian art. While this connection is made later in Futurist theory, it is evident in Carrà's practice of the Futurist period, particularly *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli*. In Longhi's writing about Piero della Francesca it also becomes apparent the extent to which art history's return to the Primitives was aesthetically and terminologically linked to modern art. While Carrà moved towards the Primitives while moving away from the Futurists, there is not a clean break between the two.

4.4 Futurism and the High Renaissance

High Renaissance art, like classical art, appears vehemently and openly opposed by Futurism. While for classical art the *Victory of Samothrace* neatly provided an example of the Futurists appropriating their own nemesis, the situation with the High Renaissance is quite different. Unlike all the other works and periods in the *passato remoto* chapter, the Renaissance temporality as a whole had not been shifted by a discovery or revival of scholarly or artistic interest; it had enjoyed steady and unfaltering praise for hundreds of years since being positioned at the apex of artistic achievement by Vasari, with its status more recently confirmed by Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). Renaissance art was seen both as a development from the Primitives of the early Renaissance and a return to the classical, an evolution and revolution; it was considered, and for some remains, the art to which all other art should be compared.

This section argues that while the Futurists were ostensibly against the Renaissance, they were unable, and perhaps even privately disinclined, to ignore it. This section focuses on specific comparisons of Balla with Leonardo and Boccioni with Michelangelo, but the Futurist relationship with the Renaissance exists on a more general level. Early twentieth-century artistic training was built upon the desire to emulate the Renaissance, as well as the classical, within and without of the academy. Boccioni's early sketchbooks demonstrate an interest in the High Renaissance in his formative years. Studies from Andrea del Sarto, Donatello, Pontormo and Tintoretto, suggest a focus on works from the Uffizi, where, according to Agnese, Boccioni and Severini visited in spring 1905 when their works were accepted by the Società di Belle Arti di Firenze.¹⁰⁶ Given that Severini moved to Paris in 1906 with money earned producing a copy of Filippo Lippi's *Adoration of the Virgin*,¹⁰⁷ it is clear that at this stage in their careers, the artists retained an interest in the Italian tradition, if only for its economic rewards. The formative role of Leonardo in Russolo's visual arts training will be returned to shortly.

¹⁰⁶ Agnese, *Vita di Boccioni*, p. 60. See chapter 6.1 for more on Florentine artistic societies.

¹⁰⁷ Severini, *La vita di un pittore*, pp. 29-30. Technically Lippi should be associated with the previously addressed period, but the interest demonstrated in the Uffizi is more indicative in an interest in the established Italian pictorial tradition in this chapter.

The Futurist artists' interest in the Renaissance did not cease with the launch of the movement. Indeed, returning to the quote from Boccioni's letter to Lucini, the Futurist stressed that he and his colleagues were not so different from the artists of the Renaissance, who also had little respect for their forebears:

For the necessity of energetically maintaining a violent artistic polemic my futurist artist friends and I will need detailed exposure to all the steps (naturally with precise bibliographic references) chosen in the works of Vasari or of other more secure writers on art that confirm our conviction that every great innovative and creative artistic period necessarily implicates a tendency to despise and destroy the masterpieces of the preceding periods.

I allude, for example, to Raphael, who painted his Vatican *Stanze* after having scraped off Sodoma's frescoes: Michelangelo's Last Judgement was done over a fresco by Perugino –

I also allude to the great Leonardo who had no qualms in proposing a renaissance style dome to replace the gothic Milan Duomo.¹⁰⁸

An *antipassatista* attitude can also be found in Leonardo's opposition to the slavish imitation of forebears.¹⁰⁹

This section is concerned with Leonardo and Michelangelo. Michelangelo's fame and prized place in art historiography from Vasari onwards hardly requires further explanation. In the aforementioned 1909 Chini decorations at the Venice Biennale, one of the eight stages of civilization is dedicated entirely to Michelangelo, an accurate indication of his enduring estimation when Futurism was launched; as will become pertinent, this homage features none of his works to be discussed in this section. Leonardo was receiving increased attention at the start of the twentieth century, not least as many of his writings were being published in facsimile. The 1904-08 restoration of the *Last Supper* and his *Stanze* in the Castello Sforzesco had raised Leonardo's profile in Milan. In 1911 the *Mona Lisa* was stolen from the Louvre by an Italian who wished to return the painting to its home country. After its recovery the painting toured Italy in a gesture of acknowledgement of its patrimony before returning to France.

¹⁰⁸ "Per la necessità di sostenere energicamente una violenta polemica artistica io e i miei amici pittori futuristi avremmo bisogno di una esposizione particolareggiata di tutti i passi (naturalmente citati con precisione di date bibliografiche) passi scelti nelle opere di Vasari o di altri scrittori d'arte più sicuri che confermino la nostra convinzione che ogni grande periodo artistico novatore e creatore implica necessariamente una tendenza spiccata a disprezzare e distruggere i capolavori dei periodi precedenti. Alludo per esempio a Raffaello che dipinse le sue Stanze dopo aver fatto grattare affreschi del Sodoma: il Giudizio di Michelangelo eseguito sopra un affresco del Perugino – Alludo anche al grande Leonardo che non avevo [aveva] scrupoli a proporre la costruzione di una cupola stile rinascimento sul gotico [canc.]. Duomo di Milano" Umberto Boccioni, '[letter to Gian Pietro Lucini from between 28th May and 30th August]', reprinted in *Umberto Boccioni: Lettere futuriste*, pp. 18-19 (p. 190).

¹⁰⁹ Leonardo of course also encouraged artists to study artistic predecessors. Leonardo da Vinci, *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. by Jean Paul Richter and Irma A. Richter, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), II, 307-9.

As Chessa has explored, the Futurist relationship with Leonardo is hugely ambivalent. The 'Founding and Manifesto' called for the *Mona Lisa* to be treated like a grave, and the painting's theft and recovery was met with the paradigmatic Futurist attitude as expressed in Soffici's poem in *Lacerba*, which concluded with the lines "WE FUTURISTS | reunite in extraordinary assembly deplore profoundly the retrieval of the "Mona Lisa" thanks to the double imbecile act of the *passatista* [passéist] housepainter and we demand for the infamous little painting the prompt reburial in the cemetery-like Louvre Museum."¹¹⁰

However, apart from this work, the "icon of past-worshippers" as Soffici's poem described it, Leonardo and much of his work received respect from the Futurists (and it should be noted, other avant-garde figures). Marinetti's autobiographical texts *The Great Traditional and Futurist Milan* and *An Italian Sensibility Born in Egypt* both mention Leonardo, describing how his work on the Milanese canals dynamized navigation in the city and speaking of the statue of the artist in Piazza della Scala as looking down paternally on the Futurist revolutionary cyclone. Marinetti even co-opts Leonardo for the Futurist cause:

They are charmingly persuaded that with the same courage of an Italian which reaches its poetic apex in the midst of danger, the innovating typically futurist genius of Leonardo da Vinci Umberto Boccioni Antonio Sant'Elia Marinetti can put together a marvellous poem capable of summarizing the whole universe.¹¹¹

The use of the word simultaneously recalls the previous part's discussions of the presence of figures of the past in the present. Papini also contemporarized Leonardo, claiming that his Leonardo, that is, the Leonardo to whom he related, was not the same of that of historians, as he was not dead, but lived on within him (Papini).¹¹² This claim recalls Papini's statement quoted in chapter two about the temporality of a book, which is a part of the past existing in the present, but changed by it.

It is possible that Boccioni would not have been offended by Marinetti's mention of him alongside Leonardo; in 1907 Boccioni encouraged Severini to visit him in Milan on the basis that he could see *The Last Supper* and other works.¹¹³ That fresco had recently been restored under the tutelage of Luigi Cavenaghi and a team that included the soon to be Futurist Luigi Russolo, who, as Chessa has convincingly argued, appropriated much from Leonardo in his

¹¹⁰ Ardengo Soffici, 'Giornale di Bordo', *Lacerba*, I, n. 24, 15 December 1913, translation from Chessa, *Luigi Russolo, Futurist*, p. 199.

¹¹¹ Marinetti, 'Selections from *An Italian Sensibility Born in Egypt*', in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Flint, p. 334.

¹¹² Giovanni Papini, 'Vico', in *24 Cervelli: Saggi Non Critici*, 5th edn (Milan: Facchi, 1919), pp. 27-37, p. 34, p. 37.

¹¹³ Umberto Boccioni, '[Letter to Gino Severini of October or November 1907]', reprinted in *Archivi del futurismo*, ed. by Drudi Gambillo and Fiori, I, 228-229 (p. 228).

musical experiments and interests in spirituality and occultism.¹¹⁴ In this section I wish to focus on Balla's relationship with Leonardo.

Balla as Leonardo reborn

Balla himself made the connection between his work and that of Leonardo. In an autobiographical fragment written in 1912-13 he says: "In 1500s I called myself Leonardo or...Titian. After four centuries of artistic decadence, I have reappeared in the 1900s to cry to my plagiarisers that it is time to finish it with the past".¹¹⁵ Balla is considered a quite separate figure in the Futurist milieu because he was based in Rome, he was older and came to Futurism later, invited by his former pupils Boccioni and Severini, and was the only member of *il cinque* to continue working as a Futurist artist after the First World War. This idea of Balla is central to Martin's reading of him in relation to Leonardo.

Neither this subject [light], nor the flight of swallows which was Balla's next preoccupation, was Futurist in the sense of being 'modern' and aggressive. But in peaceful, enduring Rome the intense, high-speed world of the twentieth century was less in evidence than in Milan. The steady rhythms of life – youth and age, the passing seasons – were more meaningful to a reticent, gentle man like Balla. To him the dizzying, whirring flights of swallows around the eaves at dusk in spring and summer were probably a more important sign of renewal than the inventions of the age of technology. Numerous drawings, watercolours and gouaches prepared and accompanied a series of oils of flying swallows. Balla was nearly as obsessed as Leonardo with the flight of these graceful aviators and he tirelessly examined and increasingly conceptualised its mechanics and effects. He approached this problem with the same humility and single-mindedness with which he had sought inspiration in the colour harmonies of a ray of light.¹¹⁶

This may sound a little patronising towards Balla, insinuating that the older artist could not quite keep up with the technology, but as evidenced in chapter one, all the Futurist artists were guilty of presentism. In fact, Balla's *Iridescent Interpenetrations*, which married colour theory with abstraction as early as 1912, are some of the most abstract and original work to come out of the movement. Poggi also relates these works to Balla as a fan of Leonardo, citing the letter to his family of December 1912 in which he noted that he has in his room an unopened volume on Leonardo, amongst other books: "Even if Balla did not open his

¹¹⁴ Chessa, *Luigi Russolo, Futurist*, pp. 172-173.

¹¹⁵ "Nel 500 mi chiamavo Leonardo o...Tiziano. Dopo 4 secoli di decadenza artistica, son riapparso nel 900 per gridare ai miei plagiatori che è ora di finirla con il passato". Quoted in Giovanni Lista 'Analisi del movimento', in *Balla: La modernità futurista*, ed. by Lista, Balducci and Velani, pp. 41-121 (p. 62). Balla's relationship with Titian has not been followed up in this thesis as this is the only instance of the Venetian Renaissance master being mentioned and the difference between Venetian and Central Italian Renaissances problematizes the inclusion of this discussion in this necessarily schematic and exclusive art historical survey.

¹¹⁶ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, pp. 176-177.

Leonardo, the model of the artist as an experimental scientist and keen observer of nature would have appealed to him.”¹¹⁷

A specific comparison to draw here is between Balla's series of sketches and paintings of the flight of swallows (figs 4.6, 4.7) and Leonardo's drawings from the *Codex on the flight of birds* (fig. 4.8) in the Biblioteca Reale in Turin. The first thing to note here is that Balla was born and raised in Turin, and attended the Università di Torino before moving to Rome at the age of 24. There is thus a strong possibility of Balla having awareness of these drawings, and perhaps having seen these works specifically, as well as being familiar with Leonardo's oeuvre.

Leonardo studied the flight of birds as part of a larger project of building a mechanized flying machine. His main concerns in the studies are therefore the mechanics of flight, air resistance and the effects of wind, as seen in the lines which pass across the sketches of birds in the codex. Such lines are, in the graphic arts, associated with giving the impression that something is moving; it is such lines that form the basis of Balla's sketches and more formal compositions on the flight of swallows. Despite Balla living in the age of the aeroplane he chose the same subject as Leonardo for the study of flight, and uses these same lines to demonstrate the movement of the birds. The connection between the Futurist interest in flight and Leonardo's was made by Wyndham Lewis in his Vorticist magazine *BLAST*, which highly praised Balla, as his favourite of the Futurist artists, and identified Leonardo as “the first Futurist, and, incidentally, an airman among Quattro Cento angels.”¹¹⁸ As Lista identifies, Leonardo was not the first to study birds in flight and like Balla seems more concerned with flight than with the birds themselves. Balla's swallows, whether they be in the form of sketches or oil paintings, are stylized yet sketchy, a composite of black arcs with white highlights, tracing a clear line across the paper or canvas. This series lacks colour, particularly in comparison to Balla's other works and the focus on the line, and earthy tones, could be another motivation for comparisons with Leonardo.

In the same vein as placing Balla in a tradition of representing the flight of birds, Lista also relates Balla's *Girl Running on a Balcony* (fig. 5.1) back to the chronophotography of Marey discussed in chapter one, and in turn back to Leonardo, specifically Carlo Urbino da Crema's

¹¹⁷ Poggi considers *Window in Düsseldorf* (1912) related to Leonardo's discussions of aerial perspective which establishes relative distance, but Balla allows the blue cast Leonardo reserves for distant objects to filter through the whole work. Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, pp. 38, 76-88.

¹¹⁸ Wyndham Lewis, 'Futurism, Magic and Life', *BLAST* 1, ed. Edwards, pp. 132-135 (p. 132).

Study of human motion (fig. 5.6) from the Codex Huygens, a copy of Leonardo's treatise on human proportions. This is, however, an obtuse reference as before 1938 this codex was in The Hague, never visited by Balla; it is more likely that he would have been familiar with extant original Leonardos such as the *Vitruvian Man*, held in Venice (fig. 5.3). While the *Vitruvian Man* is more concerned with proportion than with movement, both works overlay figures in different positions. This can be easily formally linked to Balla's work, as the repeated girl assumes the different positions of motion as she moves across the frame. Looking back to the previous section and also in reference to this image, Lista finds precedent for Balla's use of verticals to denote the girl's speed in the trees of Paolo Uccello's hunts (fig. 5.8) and Botticelli's story of *Nastagio degli Onesti* (fig. 5.9). In Botticelli's *Primavera* (fig. 5.7) there is a precedent for the repetition of the figure to symbolise movement as the figures of Chloris and Flora both appear, but it is through their physical connection that Botticelli communicates that they are but one person, who has metamorphosed.¹¹⁹

Boccioni as a devotee of Michelangelo

This reading of Balla as the Leonardo of Futurism is also addressed by Lista when referring to the Balla quote cited above; Lista goes on to highlight the next comparison of this section, between Boccioni and Michelangelo:

Balla projects himself into the figure of a great colourist like Titian or an artistic and scientific experimenter like Leonardo. Developing the metaphorical image, one can affirm that Boccioni was surely the Michelangelo of Futurism, for his dramatic pathos and for the titanic accents with which he lived his research, while Balla was the Leonardo. For Boccioni energy became only visible through a telluric mixture of lilting matter in corpose flexings and contractions. For Balla energy is instead immaterial like light, for this it can be the simple line of an arrow that flies. His painting, which is sketchy, graphic, essential, objective, aims at mental synthesis.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Botticelli is generally considered to belong to the Primitive period rather than the High Renaissance, but like Piero, he is very much on the borderline.

¹²⁰ "In una 'autobiografia' manoscritta di questi anni [1912-13?], Balla di se stesso dice: 'Nel 500 mi chiamavo Leonardo o...Tiziano. Dopo 4 secoli di decadenza artistica, son riapparso nel 900 per gridare ai miei plagiatori che è ora di finirla con il passato'. Il riferimento retorico alla metempsicosi ha ovviamente un valore di intensificazione. Balla si proietta nella figura di un grande colorista come Tiziano e di uno sperimentatore d'arte e di scienze come Leonardo. Sviluppando l'immagine metaforica, si può affermare che Boccioni è stato sicuramente il Michelangelo del futurismo per il pathos drammatico e per gli accenti titanici con cui ha vissuto la sua ricerca, mentre Balla ne è stato il Leonardo. Per Boccioni l'energia diventava visibile solo tramite un impasto tellurico di materia cadenzato in flessioni e contrazioni corpose. Per Balla l'energia è invece immateriale come la luce, per questo può essere la semplice linea di una freccia che vola. La sua pittura, che è scheletrica, grafica, essenziale, oggettiva, punta sempre su una sintesi mentale." Lista, 'Analisi del movimento', in *Balla: La modernità futurista*, ed. by Lista, Balducci and Velani, p. 62.

Lista's claim could have been inspired by Boccioni's obsession with the Florentine master. In his writings Boccioni repeatedly refers to Michelangelo, predominantly in positive terms. Perhaps the strongest statement comes from his diary:

Michelangelo! How can I venture to speak of him with my words? Who am I? Why am I writing? For me? Yes, perhaps this will permit me to say that I kneel, I adore him. I adore everything, even his excessive servility to the classical. Oh! mysterious power of the genius. I cannot follow him in everything.¹²¹

The previous year he showed a similar awe for and sense of intimidation regarding the Renaissance masters:

I am reading a book by Müntz on the Renaissance. The words he says about Leonardo, Michelangelo, Bramante, Raphael make me disappear like snow in the sun. How can I believe myself to be anything in front of such giants?¹²²

The book in question is Eugenio Müntz's *The Golden Age of Italian Art* (1895), which stressed that Michelangelo was not merely a classicist, but also an innovator independent from tradition.¹²³

As Gabriella Di Milia notes "Boccioni compares himself with great artists of the past, above all he is attracted by the grandiosity of dramatic expression of Michelangelo and Dürer."¹²⁴ These diary entries from 1907 and 1908 are personal not public statements from an early point in Boccioni's artistic career, when he was establishing himself as an artist in his own right.

Boccioni did not repeat such strong words, but he never renounced Michelangelo, much to the surprise of his friends, as demonstrated by the following story from Palazzeschi:

One morning, Boccioni, along the way, showed me a magazine that he bought at the newsstand in which two of his drawings were reproduced: for that streak of cruelty that shows my affection, I wanted to test him and so saying that there were good and I liked them, I added that I saw deep in them something michelangelesque. I was sure I was going to be punched: but instead of coming closer to attack me, he took a few steps away, without a sign of response, much to my relief.¹²⁵

¹²¹ "Michelangelo! Come posso arrischiarmi le mie parole di parlare di lui? Chi sono io? Perché scrivo? Per me? Sì, forse questo mi permetterà di dire che m'inginocchio, l'adoro. Adoro tutto, anche il suo eccessivo servilismo classico. Oh! misteriosa potenza del genio. Io non posso seguirlo in tutto." Umberto Boccioni, '[1st February 1907]' reprinted in *Diari*, pp. 70-72 (p. 72).

¹²² "Leggo Muntz un libro su Rinascimento. Le parole che dice su Leonardo Michelangelo Bramante Raffaello mi fanno scomparire come la neve al sole. Come posso credermi qualche cosa davanti a simili giganti?" Umberto Boccioni, '[Sunday, 21st December 1907]', reprinted in *Diari*, pp. 62-64 (p. 63, n. 47).

¹²³ Eugenio Müntz, *L'età aurea dell'arte italiana* (Milan: Tipografia del Corriere della Sera, 1895).

¹²⁴ "Boccioni si confronta con grandi artisti del passato, si sente soprattutto attratto dalla grandiosità dell'espressione drammatica di Michelangelo e Dürer." Gabriella Di Milia, 'Note', in Umberto Boccioni, *Diari*, pp. pp. 135-139 (p. 137, n. 47). This note refers to the diary entry '[Sunday, 21st December 1907]', reprinted in *Diari*, pp. 62-64.

¹²⁵ "Una mattina, Boccioni, lungo la via, mi mostrava una rivista che aveva acquistato in un'edicola e nella quale erano riprodotti due suoi disegni: per quella vena di crudeltà che segna la misura dell'affetto volli provarlo, e dicendo che erano belli e molto mi piacevano, vi aggiunsi che ci vedevo in fondo qualche cosa di michelangelesco. Ero sicuro d'essere preso a pugni quel giorno: ma invece di avanzarsi verso di me per aggredirmi, si allontanò di qualche passo senza un cenno di risposta al mio

When speaking at the aforementioned Rome conference of 1911, Boccioni said: "It is, in fact, painful to detach oneself and to deny this genius that was, in the past, the greatest abstractionist to express himself by concrete means."¹²⁶ The way Boccioni describes his reason for insisting upon a break with Michelangelo suggests that it was not the artist himself, who Boccioni considered a rebel, that motivated it, but the continuing adoration of him. Flora's description of Boccioni's relationship with Michelangelo chimes with this and my hypothesis that the Futurists did not repudiate the past, but *passatismo*, in that he claims that "no one felt the overbearing power of Michelangelo more than Boccioni, and he loved him; but he scorned michelangelists of yesterday and today."¹²⁷

The earliest Boccioni work that Martin connects to Michelangelo is his *Nude from Behind (Effect of Light)* (1909) (fig. 12.1).¹²⁸ This is a typical early work, a portrait of his mother in fine Divisionist threads of colour. Despite the ephemeral nature of this technique, Boccioni has given the body a corporeity, a weight and volume, which leads Martin to compare it to Michelangelo, whose painted figures are as present and weighty as his marble ones. Martin makes compositional links between the pose of the figure and some of Michelangelo's works. "The strong diagonal of the left arm and back acts as a *repoussoir*, uniting the figure with the background and giving the subject the distance and inscrutability of a Michelangelesque sibyl;" Martin highlights the Libyan sibyl (fig. 12.5) and some of the *ignudi* (figs 12.6, 12.7) with their backs to the viewer.¹²⁹ As Poggi notes, the *ignudi* also appear to be a source for the hypermasculine figures in Boccioni's design for a masthead for the journal *Il lavoro italiano* of 1908; this early example of Boccioni's interest in Michelangelo ties in with the diary entries which praise the Florentine master.¹³⁰

Michelangelo's *contrapposto* rear view has been appropriated by many; Martin mentions Degas, Seurat, Pissarro and Toulouse-Lautrec. This is certainly a more acceptable group for Boccioni to appropriate from, even though it has been argued that Seurat probably

rilievo." Aldo Palazzeschi, 'Alle fonti della contestazione', in Gianfranco Bruno, *L'Opera completa di Boccioni* (Milan: Rizzoli Editore, 1969), pp. 5-9 (p. 9).

¹²⁶ "È infatti doloroso distaccarsi e negare questo genio che fu nel passato il più grande astratto che si esprimesse per mezzo del concreto!" Boccioni, 'La Pittura Futurista [Conferenza tenuta a Roma nel 1911]', in *Umberto Boccioni: altri inediti e apparati critici*, pp. 27-28.

¹²⁷ "Nessuno sente più di Boccioni la prepotenza di Michelangelo, e lo ama; ma egli disprezza i michelangiologisti di ieri e di oggi." Flora, *Dal Romanticismo al futurismo*, p. 131.

¹²⁸ This painting is in some sources titled *Figura nel Sole (Signora Boccioni)*.

¹²⁹ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 66.

¹³⁰ Poggi, *Inventing Futurism*, p. 73.

appropriated his bather's pose from Ingres's *Bather* (figs 12.2, 12.3).¹³¹ The drapery, sheet or towel which Signora Boccioni wraps around her immediately places the work within the tradition of bathers, but the fact that Boccioni was painting his mother immediately jars with the sensuality usually found in such works, particularly those listed by Martin; in this light the comparison with Michelangelo seems more suitable.

The date of Boccioni's painting must be considered; it was painted in 1909, soon after the above quoted diary entries, but before Boccioni formally joined the movement, and so it cannot necessarily be considered a Futurist painting. However, for this thesis, the notion that the Italian artistic tradition had infiltrated a Futurist's practice, even if in their formative years, is valuable in negating the Futurist claim that they had no past. Moreover, as discussed in the introduction, Boccioni showed evidence of a Futurist mentality in 1909, and there is significant continuity between work produced in this year and after his subscription to Futurism.

Martin also compares one of the masterpieces of Futurism to a Michelangelo work as part of her general connection of *The City Rises* (1912) (fig. 14.6) to traditional renderings of the conversion of Saint Paul:

This romantic attraction to the incomplete and perpetually growing structure can be seen as a modernization of the Pauline notion of God's builder ceaselessly labouring on God's building. The affinity to Saint Paul may be supported, perhaps coincidentally, by the similarity of Boccioni's immense horse and falling man to the image of the conversion of Saint Paul, from Michelangelo to Caravaggio. Saint Paul's mystical death, which led to his conversion, is suggested by Boccioni's wish to embody in this painting the 'fatal striving of the crowds of workers'.¹³²

This is a particularly strange comparison to make, given Boccioni's atheism as well as his supposed *antipassatismo*.

Michelangelo's fresco of the *Conversion* in the Pauline Chapel of the Vatican (fig. 14.2) is also a peculiar choice. This work, along with the *Crucifixion of Saint Peter* found on the opposite wall of the chapel, are Michelangelo's last paintings; they received little attention at their time of completion, and, excluding the loyal Vasari and Condivi (Michelangelo's biographer), and most of the attention they received before the twentieth century was negative. It is, in fact, debatable whether these are Renaissance frescoes at all; they are often described as Mannerist, although at the beginning of the twentieth century, definitions of Renaissance,

¹³¹ John Leighton and Richard Thomson, 'The Continuity of the Classical', in *Seurat and the Bathers* (London: National Gallery, 1997), pp. 146-150 (p. 148).

¹³² Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, pp. 86-87.

Mannerist and Baroque styles were still forming. Heinrich Wölfflin struggled with these frescoes as they do not fit neatly into the categories he demarcates in *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888),¹³³ it is certainly an anti-classical work, and possibly also anti-Renaissance, as the space depicted is neither inhabitable nor receding.¹³⁴ Leo Steinberg discusses the revival of interest in these frescoes at the beginning of the twentieth century in terms of how modernist abstraction and expressionism aid our appreciation of these works which he calls “Michelangelo’s gift to the twentieth century.” Steinberg quotes a number of scholars from the early 1920s who speak of the frescoes in modernist terms.¹³⁵

The other issue with these frescoes is that they are found in one of the most private parts of the Vatican, far more difficult to access than the Sistine Chapel. This reduces the possibility that Boccioni would have been familiar with them first hand. The aforementioned lack of critical interest in them also rendered drawings and engravings of them rarer than those of, for example, the Sistine Chapel ceiling and *Last Judgement*. However, engravings of both the *Conversion* and the *Crucifixion* were made and distributed in the sixteenth century.¹³⁶ The resurgence of interest in these late works of Michelangelo in the years in question increases the probability that photographs would also have been in circulation. Boccioni was a keen student of Michelangelo in his youth, and so could well have been familiar with an image of the work, as well as Vasari’s description of it.

There is some degree of formal similarity between the two works. They became more comparable if the top half of the fresco is excluded. Michelangelo conveys the sense of chaos in the scene in a way Boccioni’s Divisionist technique has exaggerated; the Futurist work seems to vibrate with energy. Like his predecessor, Boccioni has placed a figure in the central foreground in front of the rearing horse, surrounded by a crowd; it is ambiguous whether the angle of this man’s body is due to him straining to control the horse, falling as a result of the horse’s rearing, or whether, like Saint Paul, he has fallen from the horse. While Michelangelo’s horse is oriented quite differently to Boccioni’s, both artists depict the figure beneath it with legs jutting out and with either one or two arms raised to the sky. In the Michelangelo, the pose of the figure supporting Saint Paul emphasises the raised arms, and is

¹³³ Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque*, trans. by Kathrin Simon (London: Collins, 1964).

¹³⁴ Leo Steinberg, *Michelangelo’s Last Paintings: The Conversion of St. Paul and the Crucifixion of St. Peter in the Cappella Paolina, Vatican Palace* (London: Phaidon, 1975), particularly pp. 17-20.

¹³⁵ Steinberg, *Michelangelo’s Last Paintings*, particularly pp. 17-20.

¹³⁶ Bernadine Barnes, *Michelangelo in Print: Reproductions as Response in the Sixteenth Century* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 112-114.

an important part of creating a cycle of movement within the composition between Saint Paul and Jesus, which flows from the lightning bolt through the aid's arms, to Saint Paul, whose body swings it up round through the horse, the outstretched heavenly nude, and back to Jesus. In Boccioni's work there is an overwhelming thrust of movement from the lower right to the upper left of the canvas, and while this movement is not cyclical, the vibrating light of the Divisionist technique ensures it is the Michelangelo which looks more static.

Martin also compares some later Boccioni Futurist paintings to Michelangelo, but suggests that the return of the Renaissance master in Boccioni's work marks the end of his Futurist period; the contradiction of having already made the Michelangelo connection with an early Boccioni is not addressed. The two works in question are the two paintings titled *Dynamism of a Human Body* and *Human Body (Dynamism)* from 1913 (figs 12.4, 12.8).

These two sculptural figures are giants who dwarf and almost overpower the spectator. They seem so large that only a close-up view is possible. Gone is the eagerness of *Elasticità*, the willed swiftness of the *Footballer*, and the untrammelled élan of the *Bicyclist*. These ominous, dark red beings move with an ineluctable rhythm and seem like grandiose personifications of churning dynamos. A *terribilità* which recalls Michelangelo, the artist who humbled Boccioni when he was still a beginner, had re-entered his work and with it also indications that Boccioni's Futurism had nearly run its course.¹³⁷

Terribilità is a term often specifically used in reference to Michelangelo, indicating a power, a grandeur, that may inspire awe or fear in the viewer. Martin makes no specific suggestions for influence and appropriation in this case, probably due to these works being some of Boccioni's most abstract, inferring instead Michelangelo's style and complete oeuvre. While with any other artist I would be disinclined to suggest any Futurist had too profound an awareness of their work, but I argue that Boccioni had an interest in and respect for Michelangelo, demonstrated in his writings, and, as Martin suggests, in his practice.

It is notable that in this section Raphael, the third member of the triumvirate at the pinnacle of the High Renaissance, briefly mentioned in the previous section, has not been discussed. This is due to the fact that, bar the reference to his destruction of a predecessor's work when creating the *Stanze* at the Vatican, Raphael is renowned for his *passatismo*, both in his interest in antiquity, and the fact that he himself was so widely appropriated by neoclassical artists. While Leonardo and Michelangelo were not unlike Raphael in this respect, the artist from Urbino's classicism was particularly prominent.

¹³⁷ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 161.

This section, in bringing together Martin's and Lista comparisons of Boccioni with Michelangelo and Balla with Leonardo, with the artists' own writings on these predecessors, has argued that the Futurists' motivations for achieving grandeur could have been founded in a desire to emulate the artists they privately admired and considered precedents to their innovation. Boccioni's desire to create artwork entirely unlike that of the Renaissance can be seen as an avoidance of his feelings of inadequacy compared with his hero, while Balla's interest in light and flight can be seen as timeless artistic and human interests, which are rendered contemporary by their contexts.

While these connections are far from clear-cut as Balla retains a peripheral position as regards the Futurist *il cinque* and Boccioni's potential appropriations are not easily supportable, the fact that the Futurists wished to re-establish, rather than establish Italy's artistic dominance, their ideological connection to the Renaissance is made by means of a Vichian spiral.

4.5 Futurism and the Baroque

The final comparison of this chapter, between Futurism and the Baroque, is the one most commonly made, because of their resemblance in both aesthetic and attitude. This section will consider how the Baroque attitude is echoed in Futurism on a general level, and trace possible formal appropriations of Gianlorenzo Bernini and Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio made by Boccioni in his sculpture and painting. This section will also address the importance of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, despite the absence of formal similarities between his work and that of the Futurists, as he is regularly mentioned in Futurist rhetoric. Although Tiepolo may now be considered Rococo, he was considered Baroque by the Futurists and their contemporaries.

The focus here will be on the Baroque as constituted in Italy, both for its ideological *italianità* and its practical availability to the Futurists. The question of when the Baroque started, and whether it was something that began simultaneously across Italy or just in Rome was much in debate in the first decades of the twentieth century as scholars, most notably Wölfflin and Alois Riegl, looked to overcome art history's preference for the classical, thanks to Winkelmann, and the Renaissance, thanks to Burckhardt, by attempting to recover the reputation for the Baroque.¹³⁸ Although more recent scholarship has cast its own opinions about the spread of the Baroque, its aesthetic, and the period it covered, I follow Wölfflin and Riegl by focusing on Rome in the seventeenth century, and in particular the figures of Bernini and Caravaggio. The former is considered as synonymous with the Baroque; after his death in 1680 there was a general backlash against the Baroque aesthetic that lasted around 200 years.¹³⁹ However, as suggested above, in the decades preceding the birth of Futurism, there was a revived interest in the period and its style, acknowledged by Carrà in 1921.¹⁴⁰

The aforementioned protagonists of Baroque, Bernini in sculpture, and Caravaggio in painting, also enjoyed a revived interest from scholars. Bernini's profile was raised by the 1898 tercentenary celebrations of his birth, when a plaque and bust was erected outside his

¹³⁸ Both Riegl and Wölfflin position the start of the Baroque around 1524 and relate it above all to Rome and the Papal States. Alois Riegl, *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome*, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010 [1908]), p. 101; Alina Payne, 'Beyond Kunstwollen: Alois Riegl and the Baroque' in Riegl, in *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome*, pp. 1-33 (p. 16). See also Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque*. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, trans. by M.D. Hottinger (New York: Dover, 1950).

¹³⁹ Charles Avery, *Bernini: Genius of the Baroque* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006), p. 276.

¹⁴⁰ Carlo Carrà, 'Il Seicento e la critica italiana', *Valori Plastici*, n. 4, 1921, reprinted in *Tutti gli scritti*, ed. by Massimo Carrà (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1978), pp. 218-223.

former residence on Via della Mercede.¹⁴¹ This was followed by Stanislao Fraschetti's lavish 1900 book, filled with photographic reproductions and detailed descriptions of his work.¹⁴² Fraschetti promoted Bernini as the Michelangelo of his century, reinvigorating and sometimes rebelling his way into producing original art. As Riegl commented about this text, Fraschetti still saw the Baroque as a decadence from the Renaissance, and praised Bernini for his ability to produce original work in such a period of decline.¹⁴³

Although architecture and sculpture often dominate in descriptions of the Baroque, Caravaggio's painting also gained more attention in the early twentieth century. Caravaggio's Lombard origins and reputations as the violent destroyer of painting connect him to the iconoclastic Milan-based Futurists. As Genevieve Warwick has suggested, it was Caravaggio's rejection of Raphael and antiquity, the central curricula of academic teaching, which led to his popularity amongst romantic artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁴⁴ This revival of interest among artists is also present among art historians. Longhi wrote his 1911 dissertation on Caravaggio, and the interest in the artist, apparently sparked by the Courbet retrospective at the 1910 Venice Biennale, led to a lifelong study of his work and that of other Baroque painters, particularly Matteo Preti. It is, however, Roger Fry's 1905 discussion of the Lombard artist, or rather an appalled response to the lack of discussion of Caravaggio by Joshua Reynolds in his *Discourses* to the Royal Academy in 1768, that best sums up the sentiment of the time: "He [Caravaggio] was indeed, in many senses, the first modern artist, the first artist to proceed not only by evolution but by revolution; the first to rely entirely on his own temperamental attitude and to defy tradition and authority."¹⁴⁵ It is this modernity, revolution and defiance against tradition which leads me to associate him with the Futurists who aspired to similar ideals. Previtali notes in his introduction to Longhi's *Caravaggio* that the revival of interest in this artist was instigated by the artistic avant-garde, describing him as the "founding father of the "tradition of the new.""¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Avery, *Bernini: Genius of the Baroque*, p. 277.

¹⁴² Stanislao Fraschetti, *Il Bernini: la sua vita, la sua opera, il suo tempo* (Milan: U. Hoepli, 1900).

¹⁴³ Riegl, *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome*, p. 99.

¹⁴⁴ Genevieve Warwick, 'Introduction', *Caravaggio: Realism, Rebellion, Reception* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), pp. 13-22 (p. 16).

¹⁴⁵ Roger Fry, in Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses Delivered at the Students of the Royal Academy* (London: Seeley & Co., 1905) p. 170 n. 6.

¹⁴⁶ "la ripresa di interesse per l'artista e il suo tempo, indotta anche negli ambienti universitari dall'adozione, da parte dell'avanguardia artistica, del Caravaggio come padre fondatore della

Later discussions of Caravaggio and particularly of Bernini have stressed that there are elements of classicism in their work which suggest that they are not as rebellious as they may at first appear. However, in the period in question, scholarship confronted the preference for the classical and its revival in the Renaissance by demonstrating the value of the Baroque style as diametrically opposed to the classical and the Renaissance. Such an opinion is found in the writings of Boccioni, "And so here rebellious Bernini, bold despiser of the classical imposed everywhere, his art reanimating all Italy with a new fervour, a new artistic life. And here Giambattista Tiepolo does for painting what Bernini did for sculpture and architecture."¹⁴⁷ In short, in this period discussions of the Baroque, and particularly of Caravaggio, were imbued with the romantic and avant-garde anti-academic rhetoric found in Futurism. Therefore, the Baroque had a status analogous to the Byzantine, as a newly rediscovered alternative to classical and Renaissance aesthetics.

Before discussing specific possible appropriations of Bernini and Caravaggio's work in Boccioni's sculpture and painting, it is useful to introduce the more general analogy between Futurism and the Baroque. Flora compares the two artistic styles, for their love of novelty and the societies from which they emerged as ones of fast-paced social reform and scientific discovery, that is, governed by a spirit of innovation in every field.¹⁴⁸ This comparison was first identified by Longhi in his essay 'The Futurist Painters' published in *La Voce* 10 April 1913. He says:

the problem of Futurism with respect to Cubism is that of the Baroque in relation to the Renaissance. The Baroque merely puts in motion the mass of the Renaissance: the smooth church facade, a thick and robust stone, curves under the pressure of a gigantic force. The circle is replaced by the ellipse. The circle is immobility, abandon, rest. The ellipse is a compressed circle, energy put at work, movement.¹⁴⁹

"tradizione del nuovo" Giovanni Previtali, 'Introduzione', in Roberto Longhi, *Caravaggio* (Rome: Editore Riuniti, 1982), pp. 7-30 (p. 12).

¹⁴⁷ "Ed ecco allora il Bernini ribelle, audace sprezzatore del classico imporre ovunque l'arte sua rianimando tutta l'Italia d'un nuovo fervore, d'una nuova vita artistica. Ed ecco Giambattista Tiepolo fare per la pittura ciò che il Bernini aveva fatto per la scultura e l'architettura." Umberto Boccioni, 'Ricerche sull'arte di Russolo', reprinted in *Umberto Boccioni: altri inediti e apparati critici*, pp. 49-51 (p. 51).

¹⁴⁸ Flora, *Dal Romanticismo al futurismo*, pp. 74-75. Alfredo Baccelli, writing in 1924, also highlighted the analogy between Futurism and Secentismo, an often pejorative synonym of Seicentismo (Seventeenth century-ism), which stresses the extravagance of this period's literary and artistic style. Baccelli notes how both movements "are animated, above all, by the love of the new, by the search for the unusual and the difficult, and they lead to the strange." Alfredo Baccelli, 'Seicentismo e Futurismo', *Nuova Antologia*, 1924, 331-354.

¹⁴⁹ "il problema del futurismo rispetto al cubismo è quello del Barocco di fronte al Rinascimento. Il Barocco non fa che porre in moto la massa del Rinascimento: la liscia facciata di chiesa, una tavola di pietra spessa e robusta s'incurva pressa da una forza gigantea. Al cerchio, succede l'elisse. Cerchio è staticità abbandono riposo. Ellisse è cerchio compresso, energia all'opera, movimento." Roberto Longhi, 'I Pittori Futuristi', *La Voce*, V, n. 15, 10 April 1913, 1051-1053 (p.1053).

The Futurists were certainly aware of *La Voce* and Longhi at this time, and given Marinetti's voracity in recording the movement's press cuttings, he at least would have been familiar with this article. The Futurists were also bold in their responses to anyone who misread them.¹⁵⁰ Longhi's discussion of the Futurism in terms of the Baroque did not elicit a response. The analogy that Longhi makes is in keeping with the Futurist critique of Cubism for its staticness, and for its dependence upon the neoclassical art,¹⁵¹ and with the Futurist commitment to movement and dynamism in its own aesthetic. The importance of movement for Baroque art was evident in the previously mentioned Chini decorations for the 1909 Venice Biennale, in which the Baroque is included (demonstrating its return to favour) with the phrase "I force with motion the brake of matter."¹⁵² The two artists emulated in Chini's mural are Bernini in the form of twisting columns and Tiepolo through his *di sotto in su* airy ceiling frescoes (figs 13.3, 17.4). In a general sense, which will be returned to with reference to specific works, the ellipse as discussed by Longhi as a carrier of movement, as seen the twists of Bernini's columns, is as important for the Futurist aesthetic as it is for the Baroque. In fact, in 'The Painting of Sounds, Noises and Smells' (1913), Carrà claimed that this kind of painting wanted "Ellipsoid curves considered like nets in movement."¹⁵³ While in his first sculptural manifesto Boccioni praised the simplicity of straight lines against "baroque exhibitionism", as will be seen in this section his most successful sculptural projects were those which embraced curves.¹⁵⁴ The preference for the dynamic over the static is evident in the Baroque works to which scholars have previously compared Futurism; through interrogation of these comparisons the nature of the Baroque aesthetic, and its similarities to Futurism, will become further apparent.

It was not only Longhi who noticed the possibility of an analogy with the Baroque; at the end of the 'Technical Manifesto', in a paragraph substantially changed in the Apollonio English edition of the manifestos, the Futurists state:

¹⁵⁰ A key example is Boccioni's immediate response to Papini's 'Il cerchio si chiude' in 1914. Giovanni Papini, 'Il cerchio si chiude', *Lacerba*, II, n. 5, 15 February 1914, 49- 50. Umberto Boccioni, 'Il cerchio non si chiude!', *Lacerba*, II, n. 5, 1 March 1914, 67-69.

¹⁵¹ The earliest incident of this is the accusation of the Cubists worshipping Poussin and Ingres. Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'The Exhibitors to the Public' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 46.

¹⁵² "Forzo col moto il freno della materia." Biennale di Venezia, *Catalogo della Biennale di Venezia: Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte delle Città di Venezia, VIII, 1909* (New York: Arno Press, 1971).

¹⁵³ "13. Le curve ellissoidi considerate come rete in movimento." Carlo Carrà, 'La pittura dei suoni, rumori, odori', in *Guerrapittura*, pp. 77-82 (p. 80).

¹⁵⁴ Boccioni, 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 54.

And in the end we reject until now the easy accusation of baroquism with which they will want to hit us. The ideas that we have exhibited here derive solely from our sharpened sensitivity. While *baroquism* means artifice, maniacal and spineless virtuosism, the Art that we foretell is full of spontaneity and power.¹⁵⁵

The Apollonio edition uses the translation from the catalogue of the 'Exhibition of Works by the Italian Futurist Painters' at the Sackville Gallery London of March 1912, which translates *barocchismo* as "tormented and decadent cerebralism;" a more recent anthology of Futurist texts translate it as "baroque," failing to distinguish between the baroque itself and the enthusiasm for the baroque which is baroquism. However, it is unlikely that any of the Futurist artists themselves carried out this translation, or had the necessary language skills to have noted this difference.¹⁵⁶

None of the comparisons of Futurist art or rhetoric to the Baroque to be discussed in this section have considered this statement from the 'Technical Manifesto'. I argue that this statement demonstrates the Futurist awareness of the Baroque and its own correspondence with it. The Futurists' denial of similarity does not contradict the points made above about the analogy between the Futurist interest in movement and novelty and that found in the Baroque aesthetics and ideology. As made clear, particularly when addressing Tiepolo, I do not argue that the Futurists appropriated the painterly aesthetic of the Baroque. However, as I will argue in the next chapter, this aesthetic was taken up by predecessors of Futurism, and so could have filtered down to them other than directly from the Baroque. The use of the word *barocchismo* instead of *barocco* also suggests that much as with Neoclassicism and the classical, the Futurists were averse to the imitation of the *passato remoto* in the present, rather than the actual period or its style.

Boccioni's *Unique Forms* and Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne*

The most evidenced appropriation of any work by Boccioni is that of Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* (fig. 6.7). This sculpture, based on Greek mythology, depicts the moment when

¹⁵⁵ "E infine respingiamo fin d'ora la facile accusa di barocchismo con la quale ci si vorrà colpire. Le idee che abbiamo espone qui derivano unicamente dalla nostra sensibilità acuita. Mentre *barocchismo* significa artificio, virtuosismo maniaco e smidollato, l'Arte che noi preconizziamo è tutta di spontaneità e di potenza." Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini, 'La Pittura Futurista: Manifesto Tecnico' (1910), reprinted in *Manifesto del futurismo*, ed. by Birolli. pp. 30-33 (p. 32). The English translation reads: "Our art will probably be accused of tormented and decadent cerebralism. But we shall merely answer that we are, on the contrary, the primitives of a new sensitiveness, multiplied hundredfold, and that our art is intoxicated with spontaneity and power." Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 29.

¹⁵⁶ Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla and Gino Severini, 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Rainey, Poggi and Wittman, pp.64-67 (p. 66).

Daphne, pursued by Apollo, turns into a tree. It is one of Bernini's earliest works, produced 1622-24; it won him a reputation for highly skilled modelling of marble, particularly into fine tendrils, like the branches protruding from her fingers and the roots from her toes. It is sculpted in the round, from one angle Daphne is entirely woman, from another she is entirely tree, and the stages in-between are rendered in a dynamic spiral as the viewer circumnavigates the sculpture. Bernini's centrifugal composition and ability to produce dynamic movement in an essentially static sculpture recalls the *Laocoön* and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's essay on the limits of depicting narrative in the visual arts.¹⁵⁷

The comparison between this paradigmatic sculpture of spiral movement and Boccioni's *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (fig. 6.8) is made by Golding, who also notes the change in Boccioni's sculptural work from the dominance of the straight line to that of the spiral.¹⁵⁸ Golding supports this comparison with the sketch *Dynamism of a Human Body* (fig. 6.12), a preparatory work for Boccioni's sculpture series of walking figures. At points in Boccioni's loose, geometricized and fairly abstract rendering of the figure(s) it is possible to make out the fingers and leaves of Daphne, one of the most famous elements of Bernini's sculpture, and the front leg which crosses an orthogonal trunk-like form. Although this series of sketches was made while Boccioni was working on his striding figures series in 1912, when he was based in Milan, he was no doubt familiar with the Bernini work, housed in the Galleria Borghese, from his training in Rome with Balla who encouraged him to visit museums and churches.¹⁵⁹ The sketch could have been made from memory, or from a photograph, as the reputation of this sculpture caused it to be widely reproduced. However, as Boccioni's sketch conflates more than one view of the sculpture, I argue that it is more likely to have been made from memory or the sculpture itself. The photograph included in Frascchetti's 1900 Bernini book does not share any of the angles with Boccioni's sketch.

While Golding relates the Bernini sculpture to *Unique Forms*, Longhi, who had all Boccioni's sculptural output to examine, chose to relate it to *Synthesis of Human Dynamism* (fig. 6.6). When discussing this sculpture, he marvels at its dynamic motion, its twisting spindles and arabesques, describing it as a "naturally magnificent baroque architecture."¹⁶⁰ Calvesi and

¹⁵⁷ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, trans. by Edward Allen McCormick (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1984 [1766]).

¹⁵⁸ Golding, *Boccioni: Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, p. 25.

¹⁵⁹ Agnese, *Vita di Boccioni*, pp. 38-39.

¹⁶⁰ Roberto Longhi, *Scultura Futurista Boccioni* (Florence: Libreria della Voce, 1914), p. 20.

Coen's catalogue raisonnée also describes this as a “‘baroque’ work in its abundance of muscularity imprinted by dynamic motion.”¹⁶¹ This *Synthesis* was discussed earlier with reference to the *Victory of Samothrace*, but here the Frankenstein-like composition of body parts seems more apt for comparison with a metamorphic sculpture than the classical simplicity of the *Victory*. The surface of *Synthesis* seems to be in constant flux, grotesquely morphing between forms. In *Unique Forms* the surface suggests a flame or vapour, whereas here the mixture of straight-lines and arabesques suggests the melting and reforming of structures under a liquid skin. The scattered anatomical details suggests a morphing between human and something else, again recalling *Apollo and Daphne*.

In his text on Boccioni's sculpture Longhi repeatedly refers to his use of spiral architecture and relates this to the Baroque. The Boccioni work which best demonstrates the artist's interest in spiral forms is *Development of a Bottle in Space* (fig. 13.9).¹⁶² Longhi's reference to the spiral in this work, “the architecture of motion” and “dynamic architecture”, relate it to his interest in Baroque dynamism and spiral architecture.¹⁶³ Spirals are evident in Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* and other famous works, such as his *David* (1623-24) (fig. 13.8) and the twisting columns of his *baldacchino* in Saint Peter's, seen in Chini's depiction of the Baroque. However, his rival Borromini's ‘lantern’ atop the church of Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza (1660) (fig. 13.4) is the epitome of the Baroque spiral, which would have been known to Boccioni from his time in Rome.¹⁶⁴ The tall spiral jutting from the wide base of Boccioni's sculpture is evocative of the twisting apex perched atop Borromini's synthesis of convex and concave forms. While from the side Boccioni's sculpture may seem far more irregular than Borromini's, from above the spiral formation is clear.

Longhi also refers to the solidification of light as a feature of Baroque architecture and sculpture. This arises in reference to Boccioni's *Fusion of a Head and a Window* (fig. 13.2), a work now lost, in which the light illuminating the bust of this sculpture is plastically sculpted

¹⁶¹ “Quest'opera ‘barocca’ nell'abbondanza della muscolosità impressa dal moto dinamico, risulta perduta” Calvesi and Coen, *Boccioni*, p. 855. The use of inverted commas around ‘baroque’ suggests that the authors were aware of the ideological repercussions of such a statement about a Futurist art work.

¹⁶² This work originally came in two versions, an unpainted plaster which developed ‘through form’ and one painted red, which developed ‘through colour’; like *Unique Forms*, bronze casts of this work are found in many major art institutions across the world, none of which have been painted.

¹⁶³ “Qui è l'architettura del moto [...]un'architettura dinamica” Longhi, *Scultura Futurista Boccioni*, pp. 33-34.

¹⁶⁴ On the lantern's commission, design, and wealth of interpretations, see Joseph Connors, ‘Borromini's S. Ivo alla Sapienza: The Spiral’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 138 (1996), 668–682.

in shards across the face.¹⁶⁵ *Fusion* is related to the drawing *Controluce* (1910) (fig. 13.6), and the plasticization of light in this drawing is translated into a solidification in this sculpture. Down both sides of the figure's face raking light rays are rendered as clusters of solid geometric shards. Longhi explicitly relates this aspect of the sculpture to the Baroque. "The solidification of light. Nothing is nicer. And on the other hand it is not new: how many rays of wood or marble have not launched the baroque onto its trembling statuary groups?"¹⁶⁶ While solid light rays are a feature of the interior decoration of countless Baroque churches all over Italy, the quintessential example of this practice in Baroque sculpture is Bernini's *The Ecstasy of Santa Teresa* (fig. 13.7). In fact, Longhi's use of the word "trembling" alludes to this figure. As Boccioni trained in Rome he would have been familiar with this aspect of Baroque church decoration, and, most likely the famed Bernini sculpture in Santa Maria della Vittoria.

In this sculpture, Santa Teresa of Avila reclines in the ecstatic state of receiving one of her visceral messages from God, an angel hovers over her holding a golden arrow. Bernini's skilfully rendered drapery does not fall against her form, it appears to be itself animate, as do the rippling shrouds of the angel. The figures are arranged on a cloud-like rock, and behind them, golden rays of light descend, ceasing erratically around the sculpture. They are illuminated by the sculpture's only light source, the small window above it; light radiates from behind the white marble figures towards the viewer; in this small dark church this is a spectacular site. The theatricality of the Baroque is very much present in this Bernini work, as the whole chapel is part of Bernini's design; most notably the inclusion of spectators to the sides of the chapel's apse. The Futurist edict of placing the spectator in the centre of the picture is thus achieved not only by including spectators in the figures depicted, but also by making the whole chapel the artwork, one which the spectator can literally step inside.

Theatricality, in this sense of placing the spectator at the centre of the canvas, is something shared with both Bernini and Caravaggio. The Futurists were theatrical in their activities, holding *serate* in theatres across Italy, as well as their aesthetics. Balla and later Futurists, such as Depero, worked on theatrical set designs, following on from Balla's 1917 creation of a

¹⁶⁵ Longhi, *Scultura Futurista Boccioni*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁶ "La solidificazione della luce. Nulla di più simpatico. Ed d'altra parte non nuovo: quanti raggi di legno o di marmo non lanciò il barocco sui tremoli gruppi statuari?" Longhi, *Scultura Futurista Boccioni*, p. 12.

set made up of lights which danced to Igor Stravinsky's *Feu d'artifice*. Baroque art also thrived on encouraging the spectator's physical and emotional engagement. Bernini wrote, directed and created stage sets later in life. However, as Warwick has demonstrated, theatricality also pervaded his early work, and its display, particularly in the case of *Apollo and Daphne*.¹⁶⁷ Warwick suggests that Scipione Borghese actively considered the choreography of how visitors would move around the collection in the Villa Borghese and viewer responses suggest a theatrical tone to their experiences.¹⁶⁸ Caravaggio used tableau and mixed historic and contemporary costume in constructing his compositions, which Warwick has described as theatre in the round in opposition to the proscenium arch perspectival model of Alberti and its pictorial equivalent.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, Caravaggio's visceral, tactile,¹⁷⁰ surfaces, proximity of the picture plane to the viewer and his technique of making the illumination appear to emanate from the spectator all contribute to the sense of involvement in the scene.¹⁷¹

Boccioni's *The City Rises* and Caravaggio's *Conversion of Saint Paul*

As discussed in the previous section Martin compares Boccioni's *The City Rises* (fig. 14.6) to the tradition of depicting the conversion of Saint Paul, mentioning Caravaggio's rendition of this scene.¹⁷² There are two versions of this work: the first version, rejected by the patron for reasons unknown, is now in the Odescalchi Collection, while the second *Conversion* is found in the Cerasi Chapel of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome (figs 14.1, 14.5).¹⁷³ Martin does not state which of Caravaggio's two versions of this work she refers to, and gives the sense, with the looseness of her comparison, that she is concerned more with the influence of this scene in general, rather than any specific appropriation.

On a compositional level, Boccioni's work is closer to the Michelangelo than to either of the two Caravaggio versions. In both versions Caravaggio's close-up portrait composition, earthy tones, deft modelling of surfaces and typical extreme chiaroscuro produce an image quite

¹⁶⁷ Genevieve Warwick, 'Speaking Statues: Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* at the Villa Borghese', *Art History*, 27 (2004), 353-381 (p. 355).

¹⁶⁸ Warwick, 'Speaking Statues: Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* at the Villa Borghese', p. 355.

¹⁶⁹ Warwick, 'Introduction', *Caravaggio: Realism, Rebellion, Reception*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁷⁰ A further study of the relationship between Futurist Tactilism and the Baroque would doubtless be fruitful but goes beyond the timescale addressed in this thesis.

¹⁷¹ John L. Varriano, *Caravaggio: The Art of Realism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), p. 58.

¹⁷² Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, pp. 86-87.

¹⁷³ Rossella Vodret, ed., *Il Caravaggio Odescalchi: Le due versione della Conversione di san Paolo a confronto* (Milan: Skira, 2006).

different to Boccioni's landscape composition, background detail, Divisionist strokes of pure colour and resulting diffused light. However, there are some similarities with both versions of this work. The better known version in Santa Maria del Popolo shares the outstretched arms of the falling man and the tense proximity of the horse to his victim. The Odescalchi version has the horse in a similar position to Boccioni's and the increased number of figures compared to Caravaggio's second version ensures that the sense of chaos also found in the Boccioni is present. Boccioni is more likely to have seen, and thus had the opportunity, unconsciously or consciously, to appropriate, then the publicly rather than privately displayed version. A sketch of Piazza del Popolo from Boccioni's early years in Rome places him mere metres from the painting.

So far in this section, I have, with admitted bias and historiographic specificity, coloured the Baroque as rebellious, breaking away from classical and Renaissance models to produce dynamic, emotive and theatrical works. This theatricality, combined with the breadth of the Baroque, both in its presence in all the arts, and its international spread, are analogous with Futurism as a whole. Beyond the desire to include the spectator in the picture, the Futurists brought the public into their movement through their use of newspapers and flyer dissemination to distribute their manifestos, and their regular lectures and *serate* which occurred not only in Italy, but around the world. Like the Baroque, Futurism applied itself to all forms of art, not just the visual, expanding as far as cookery and toys. The comparison between Futurism and the Baroque in the literary field, between Marinetti's poetry and that of Caravaggio's friend Gian Battista Marino on the grounds of a shared interest in metaphor, puns, reading poetry aloud and above all for the new, was acknowledged by Soffici and Flora.¹⁷⁴

Tiepolo and the end of the *passato remoto*

Finally, it is useful here to consider to Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, the Venetian painter who had returned to the limelight half a century before Bernini and Caravaggio. According to Francis Haskell, this was due to the art historian, critic and architect Piero Selvatico seeking to return him to prominence through his teaching at the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Venice

¹⁷⁴ Ardengo Soffici, *Primi principi di una estetica futurista* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1920), p. 29. "Come Marino, Marinetti ama "la novità del non più udito canto." Flora, *Dal Romanticismo al futurismo*, p. 75.

in the 1850s and 60s.¹⁷⁵ Notably, continuing the ongoing theme of this thesis about the intertextuality of artistic periods, Selvatico sought to connect Tiepolo to the *trecentisti* that he, as an affiliate of the Purists, admired.¹⁷⁶ Tiepolo's prominence in the early twentieth century is evident in his presence in the aforementioned Chini murals.

Tiepolo is particularly important when going forward into the next chapter of this thesis, as his aesthetic was appropriated by some of the nineteenth-century artists to be discussed there. As seen in Boccioni's mentioning of Tiepolo cited above, the Venetian artist appears in Futurist writings, with surprising regularity. The role attributed to him in these texts is that of appearing at the end of the *passato remoto* of art history. When Boccioni discussed the history of Italian art in *Futurist Painting and Sculpture*, Tiepolo is the last artist named, grouped with Caravaggio and Bernini.¹⁷⁷ Boccioni did not necessarily believe Tiepolo to have been the last great Italian artist before the nineteenth century, but he considered it a widely held belief among the Italian public that since Tiepolo Italian painting had been inferior to French.¹⁷⁸ Statements such as this support my hypothesis that Boccioni did not completely deny the merits of artists of the past, such as Tiepolo, as long as they were not imitated in the present; moreover, it supports the closure of this chapter with Tiepolo.

To summarise on the Futurist relationship with the Baroque, I argue that the revived interest in the Baroque, evident in art history and criticism of the period, and most notably in Longhi's analogy of the movement to the Baroque, indicates that the Futurists were aware of their movement's correspondence with the art, poetry and rhetoric of the Seicento. As I have argued in previous sections, the recent critical revival and its anti-classical and anti-academic associations, make it a more acceptable past for the Futurists to be associated with. The formal comparisons from this section are of less significance than the overall connection through dynamism, theatricality, emotion, anti-classicism and reach across artistic media and national borders. Bernini and Caravaggio add weight to the argument that Futurism appropriated the Baroque, particularly due to Boccioni's sketch of Bernini's *Apollo and*

¹⁷⁵ Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art: Some Aspects of Taste, Fashion and Collecting in England and France* (London: Phaidon, 1976), p. 74.

¹⁷⁶ Pietro Selvatico, *Storia Estetico-Critica delle Arti del Disegno ... Lezioni dette nella I.R. Accademia di Belle Arti in Venezia*, 2 vols (Venice: Pietro Naratovich, 1856), I, 575.

¹⁷⁷ This is the history which Canova is excluded from, as mentioned in chapter four. Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 72.

¹⁷⁸ Boccioni, 'La Pittura Futurista [Conferenza tenuta a Roma nel 1911]', in *Umberto Boccioni: altri inediti e apparati critici*, p. 25.

Daphne and the early twentieth-century rhetoric surrounding Caravaggio as an artistic rebel. Given that international modernist and avant-gardist artists were expressing an interest in the Baroque, it was in Futurism's interest to stress the Italian connection. Highlighting that a rebellious Italian art movement had previously conquered much of Europe was a powerful rhetorical model for the Futurists at a time when Baroque art become fashionable again. The Baroque is a particularly important movement both for Futurism, as has been demonstrated above, and for this thesis.

Before moving on to the next chapter it serves to draw some over-arching conclusions about the relationships with the *passato remoto* periods of the art history. These periods can be grouped into two main sections; the first is comprised of classical and Renaissance art, the second Byzantine, Primitive and Baroque art. The Futurists' opposition to official artistic taste mean that it was contrary to the first group, as is clearly evident in their rhetoric. As a result, any appropriations of it are all the more surprising. On the other hand, the second group of periods are those newly rediscovered at the beginning of the twentieth century, previously little considered by artists and art historians. The aesthetics of these periods were quite different from those of antiquity and the High Renaissance; these are the precursors and the rebels. Although formal similarities and analogies between the Byzantine's synthesis of form and colour and alternative approach to perspective and the Baroque's attempts to capture movement and involve the spectator in its painting and sculpture have been emphasised in this chapter, I have not sought to argue that the Futurist aesthetic was a conglomeration of past styles. Instead this chapter has demonstrated that there are affinities between both the ideology of the Primitives as precursors and the Baroque as rebels which has led to the comparisons made by existing scholarship.

The aspect which for the most part is held in common between all the artists and their works addressed in this chapter is their contemporary relevance, through physical excavation or by critics, historians and artists developing new perspectives on these works. This is essential for ensuring that the possible appropriations highlighted in this chapter stand up to analysis. While the art of this chapter has been defined by its past-ness, I have emphasise that it was as present in the Futurist decade 1909-1919 as the art to be addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: *Passato prossimo*

The Futurists' relationship with the recent past of their own lifetimes is quite different to that with the *passato remoto* addressed in the previous chapter, as evident in Boccioni's charting of the Futurists' lineage in modern French art, discussed in chapter two. As stated in the introduction, this chapter charts Futurism's predecessors in modern Italian, and to a lesser extent French, art, focusing on their *antipassatista* rhetoric and anti-academic practices, but seeking to nuance these, considering these predecessors engagement with the art addressed in the previous chapter to avoid a reductive reading of these earlier Italian movements as avant-gardes *ante litteram* or proto-Futurisms. The final section of this chapter acts as a coda, taking the spiralling and interconnected history of art developed through part II of this thesis towards the conclusion by moving beyond the confines of modern French and Italian painting to so-called Primitive African art, which returns this thesis to the temporal questions with which it began.

5.1 Futurism, the Macchiaioli and modern painting in Florence and Paris

This survey of precedents for Futurism begins in Florence, rather than Milan, as histories of modern Italian art trace the beginnings of modern art in Italy to the circle of artists around the Caffè Michelangiolo on via Larga in Florence during the Risorgimento. This milieu included the Macchiaioli, a loose grouping of artists who painted landscapes *en plein air* using the *macchia*,¹⁷⁹ meaning mark or stain, to render their oil sketches with strong chiaroscuro. The group included Giovanni Fattori, Telemaco Signorini, Silvestro Lega, and Odoardo Borrani, and although centred in Florence the group spent much time at Castiglioncello, just south of Livorno, at the home of Diego Martelli, the group's supporter. Although the movement had a proudly Tuscan identity, it was linked with Neopolitan artists and Nino Costa in Rome, and through the cosmopolitan environment of Risorgimento Florence, and the large number of artists who passed through the Caffè Michelangiolo, it had an impact across Italy. This section addresses this movement and Florentine artistic culture of this period to consider the precedent it set for Futurism, particularly with regard to its relationship with the academy. I argue that this milieu instigated a tradition in Italy of anti-academic artistic activity: meeting in cafés, publishing independent criticism, forming their

¹⁷⁹ It is also possible that they were named after the *macchia* as this was used to refer to the brush that covered the Maremma area of the Italian countryside they often depicted.

own artists' societies and avoiding the academy by exhibiting at those societies and through commercial galleries. However, this section also seeks to demonstrate that despite these practices this group was not entirely anti-academic or *antipassatista* by highlighting their absence of desire to break with the past.

Unsurprisingly, these painters who captured impressions of light *en plein air* have been related to the French Impressionists, even though *Macchiaiolismo* predates the French movement.¹⁸⁰ This section also briefly considers Futurism's relationship with modern French painting from Courbet through Impressionism, arguably introduced to Italy via Florence, noting how Futurism positions itself as a legacy of Impressionism, and the role of *antipassatismo* and anti-academia in this connection.

Macchiaiolismo can be easily differentiated from Impressionism due to the specificity of the Italian context of the Risorgimento. This 'resurgence' refers to the process of Italy's political unification from the insurrections in the 1820s up to the announcement of Rome as the new capital in 1871, with the 1848 revolutions and 1860 Garibaldian *Mille* expeditions major events in the creation of the state. Florence was the capital city before Rome and Tuscany was one of the first states to be annexed to the Kingdom of Sardinia. Tuscany's relatively liberal rule even before this meant that the city had a thriving population of artists from across the peninsula seeking exile, many of them met in Caffè Michelangiolo.

According to Signorini, the Macchiaioli's primary aesthetic theorist, the movement began in 1855 when Saverio Altamura and Serafino De Tivoli brought their knowledge of Paris's Universal Exposition back to the milieu of Florence's Caffè Michelangiolo, and it ended in 1862 when the artists had taken the *macchia* as far as they could.¹⁸¹ However, the artists continued to produce work for many years after this and although they drifted apart, they did not renege on their Macchiaioli foundations. These artists were active in the Risorgimento, both in their art and in their actions,¹⁸² which has led to comparison with the Futurists: "These men opposed the old regime in politics as in the arts. Much the same can be said of the Futurists, who were interested in revolutionary political and social ideas, whether

¹⁸⁰ The title of a recent book on the Macchiaioli, subtitled 'Before Impressionism', was an attempt to redress the situation, in which the Macchiaioli have been seen as imitators. Mazzocca and Sisi, eds, *I Macchiaioli prima dell'Impressionismo*.

¹⁸¹ Telemaco Signorini, 'Cose d'arte', *Il Risorgimento*, 1874, reprinted in Enrico Somaré, *Telemaco Signorini* (Milan: L'Esame, 1926), pp. 256-259.

¹⁸² Costa, Fattori, Signorini and Giuseppe Abbati were all personally involved in the fighting; Costa was joined by Fattori in the 1848 revolution, by Signorini, Borrani, Adriano Cecioni, Ferdinando Buonamici and Martelli in the 1859 campaign and helped organise the 1866 insurrection in Rome.

socialist or anarchist.”¹⁸³ The Risorgimento was an important subject, providing excellent sources for contemporary history painting.¹⁸⁴ In 1859, Bettino Ricasoli, leader of a newly independent Tuscany which had recently overthrown the Austrian Grand Dukes, held an artistic competition for a history painting of the Risorgimento, or a historic victory of Italy over Austria, a propaganda exercise to demonstrate Tuscany’s readiness to be part of a unified Italian state. Many Macchiaioli artists entered and Fattori’s depiction of the *Battle at Magenta* (completed 1860-1) won;¹⁸⁵ many entries were displayed at the first Esposizione Nazionale held in Florence in 1861.

In *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* Boccioni mentions Fattori and the Macchiaioli, seeing them as the only glimmer of hope for modern Italian art from outside Milan.¹⁸⁶ Carrà joined Boccioni in lamenting the lack of attention paid to these artists by the authorities.¹⁸⁷ Although the Futurists paid less attention to the Macchiaioli than the subsequent Lombard movements to be discussed later in this chapter, there are a number of comparisons to be drawn with them; the Macchiaioli can be seen as the instigators of an attitude towards artistic innovation and the academy which can be traced through to the Futurists.

Anti-academic artistic culture in Florence

The similarities between the method of dissemination of Macchiaioli and Futurist ideas is clear in Fattori’s description of the Macchiaioli: “For the first time in Italy, an artistic movement developed like a modern political party, with its programme, its strategy and its tactics.”¹⁸⁸ Their belligerence was linked to their *antipassatista* rhetoric: in 1881 Cecioni described the Macchiaioli as “rebels against academic discipline,” reiterating Fattori’s claim that they had “declared war on classical art.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ Burke, ‘The Italian Artist and his Roles’, in *History of Italian Art*, I, 23.

¹⁸⁴ Albert Boime, *The Art of the Macchia and the Risorgimento: Representing Culture and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 131.

¹⁸⁵ The battle at Magenta in 1859 had been a decisive victory against Austria in the second Italian war of independence.

¹⁸⁶ Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 42.

¹⁸⁷ Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 78. Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futurista*, p. 28.

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Corrado Maltese, *Storia dell’arte in Italia, 1785-1943* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1960), p. 245. The English translation appears in Peter Burke, ‘The Italian Artist and his Roles’, *History of Italian Art*, I, 22.

¹⁸⁹ Adriano Cecioni, ‘Artisti e critici’, 27 February 1881, reprinted in *Opere e scritti*, ed. by Enrico Somaré (Milan: Edizioni dell’Esame, 1932), p. 134. Translated and quoted in Norma Broude, *The Macchiaioli: Italian Painters of the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 13. Fattori was quoted in Maltese, *Storia dell’arte in Italia, 1785-1943*, p. 245. The English translation appears in Burke, ‘The Italian Artist and his Roles’, *History of Italian Art*, I, 22.

Although the Macchiaioli artists had, for the most part, studied at Florence's Accademia di Belle Arti they wished to rebel against its conservative teaching which discouraged innovation, leading to a stagnant artistic culture. The Caffè was at the heart of the alternative artistic culture in Florence, providing a space for discussions which was geographically close to, if ideologically distant from, the academy. Cafés served a similar role for the Futurists, regulars of Caffè Savini in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II and the Caffè del Centro in via Carlo Alberto, among others. According to Carrà the 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' was composed in a café.¹⁹⁰ Caffè Michelangiolo saw artists from beyond the Alps join the community of artists from across the peninsula, bringing Parisian ideas with them. This cultural exchange also worked in the opposite direction with figures from the Florentine milieu, in particular Martelli, visiting the Caffè Nouvelle Athenes in Paris, where he met Edouard Manet.

The Macchiaioli also produced little magazines which allowed them to disseminate their opinions on art and artistic culture to Florence's burgeoning artistic and intellectual milieu beyond the Caffè, a precedent followed by the Futurist magazines such as *Lacerba*. In order to further promote the artists of the milieu Martelli and Signorini founded the *Gazzettino delle Arti di Disegno* in January 1867 replaced one year later by the *Giornale Artistico*.¹⁹¹ Signorini was prolific, also writing under the pseudonym 'X' for the Mazzinian journal *La Nuova Europa* and a number of other publications. Their articles defended their artistic ideas and attacked their enemies. Martelli's articles attacked the art academy for its conservatism, which scholars often illustrate with the story of Lorenzo Bartolini shocking his academic colleagues by bringing a hunchback into the life drawing class in 1839,¹⁹² claiming that academies were dangerous for the growth of art. In the *Gazzettino* in 1867 Martelli praised the Società Promotrice delle Belle Arti for its independence,¹⁹³ but earlier reviews of exhibitions at the Promotrice by Martelli and Signorini had not been so complimentary, often veering into strong polemics about the conservatism of the art displayed. The Caffè

¹⁹⁰ "Ci trovavamo tutte le sere nel milanese Caffè del Centro di via Carlo Alberto, che fu per noi quello che i pittori macchiaioli fu il Caffè Michelangelo di Firenze." Carrà, *La mia vita*, pp. 78, 81.

¹⁹¹ Burke, 'The Italian Artist and his Roles', in *History of Italian Art*, I, 23. On the *Giornale Artistico* see also Maria Mimmi Lamberti, 'Artisti e mercato: Il *Giornale Artistico* (1873-1874)', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (Classe di lettere e filosofia)*, VII (1977), 1277-1301.

¹⁹² Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 13.

¹⁹³ Diego Martelli, 'Delle Accademie di Belle Arti,' *Gazzettino delle Arti di Disegno*, 3 August 1867, I, n. 29, 225-226. Diego Martelli, 'Della esposizione della Società Promotrice di Belle Arti in Firenze' *Gazzettino delle Arti di Disegno*, 11 November, n. 40, 313-315.

Michelangiolo milieu had been involved in revising the society's statutes to encourage its independence.

The Società Promotrice has been established in 1843 by Giuseppe Bezzuoli,¹⁹⁴ based on the northern Italian model.¹⁹⁵ The society's aim was the promotion of the fine arts and the support of artists; the annual exhibition, separate to the academy's annual salon, gave artists a different place to show and sell their work. While the motivations behind the creation of a new society by the Caffè Michelangiolo milieu in 1863 are not documented, when the two societies merged the new statute of the Società d'Incoraggiamento delle Belle Arti was notable for its insistence on the originality of works submitted and the lack of differentiation between prizes for history paintings, portraits, landscapes, etc. In his praise for its exhibition in 1867 Martelli noted that the principal characteristic of the show was its "independence, or even better, anarchy."¹⁹⁶

The Promotrice was not the only alternative to the academy for exhibitions and sales. The Galleria Pisani in Piazza Ognissanti, run by the dealer Luigi Pisani, also displayed the work of young artists from the Caffè Michelangiolo milieu. The gallery sold copies of historic art and original contemporary art from France, including Corot, as well as from local artists and thus encouraged contemporary art collecting, for which it was highly praised by Martelli in 1875.¹⁹⁷ The Macchiaioli achieved greater autonomy in 1874 when Lega and Borrani opened their own gallery in Palazzo Feroni in piazza Santa Trinità. Although short-lived, this independent venture is indicative of a desire for independence in Italy in the late nineteenth century. However, as the gallery showed academic artists alongside the Macchiaioli, it was considered an attempt to give modern art a status on a par with academic art, and as such

¹⁹⁴ Bezzuoli became the chair of painting at the Academy in 1844 after the long period of Benvenuto Benvenuti's conservative tutelage; Martelli considered him a precedent of the Macchiaioli group.

¹⁹⁵ The first 'Promotrice' was formed in Trieste in 1840, followed in 1842 by the one in Turin. See *Statuto della Società Promotrice delle Belle-Arti di Torino, fondata nel 1842* (Turin, Dei Fratelli Castellazzo), reprinted in Maria Cristina Gozzoli, Fernando Mazzocca, Barbara Cinelli and Maria Mimita Lamberti, *Istituzioni e strutture espositive in Italia, secolo XIX: Milano, Torino, Quaderni del seminario di storia della critica d'arte*, 1 (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, 1981), pp. 263-273.

¹⁹⁶ "la caratteristica principale di quella mostra è la indipendenza, e ciò che è meglio, l'anarchia. Nessuna regola, nessun governo impone al pensiero, ogni artista è re nella sua cornice e può dire: nel mio confine ho fatto quell che mi pare." Martelli, 'Della esposizione della Società Promotrice di Belle Arti in Firenze' p. 314.

¹⁹⁷ Diego Martelli, 'La Galleria Pisani a Firenze', *Rivista Italiana di Scienze Lettere ed Arti*, (1875). See Piero Dini and Francesca Dini, *Diego Martelli: storia di un uomo e di un'epoca* (Turin: Umberto Allemandi & C., 1996), p. 224. The sale of Pisani's collection in Milan in 1914 (thus probably known to the Futurists) also included artists to be considered later in this chapter.

demonstrates the continuing reliance of the Macchiaioli on the academy.¹⁹⁸ The combination of modern and academic art in these galleries suggests that the audience for these was not distinct.

While none of the exhibition spaces were wholly anti-academic environments, they weakened the academy's monopoly on artistic production in Florence and demonstrate that artists working outside the academic norm (described by Martelli as "colouring-in Canovas") were able to exhibit and sell their work.¹⁹⁹ It should be noted, however, that the Macchiaioli were not so averse to the Accademia that they would not exhibit there at all, Fattori and Signorini took part in an exhibition there marking the six-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Dante; the Macchiaioli may not have been intransigent in their avant-gardism but they did pre-empt Futurism's *antipassatismo*.

The Macchiaioli and *antipassatismo*

The Macchiaioli's motivations for opposing the academic tradition were not unlike those of the Futurists; Signorini identified the unpopularity of their modern art as due to a lack of awareness, stating that "our past has killed our present."²⁰⁰ Particularly in the writings of Signorini phrases like 'art for today', 'art for our time, or age, or epoch' are repeated as in those of Boccioni. Signorini's review of the 1862 Società Promotrice exhibition states:

They will say to me, did the ancients not conceive and do what is possible for the human mind? Yes, it is true, they made what they could in their century, because not imitating previous centuries, they knew how to understand their own and how to represent it, and they translated in the world of art the inspirations and the feelings that they received from their own age. [...] The past should not be praised as the apogee of art, but recommended as a study of progress in a period which, however great and glorious, nevertheless did not possess the materials and intellectual resources which we have at our disposal nowadays.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Maria Mimita Lamberti, '1870-1915: i mutamenti del mercato e le ricerche degli artisti', in *Storia dell'arte italiana* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore), vii, 5–172 (pp. 28–29). Cecioni, *Opere e scritti*, p. 197.

¹⁹⁹ "colorire le statue del Canova" Diego Martelli, *Scritti d'arte*, ed. by Antonio Boschetto (Florence: Sansoni, 1952), p. 90, cited in Dini and Dini, *Diego Martelli*, p. 238. In Rome the development of structures for non-academic artists in Rome owed much to Nino Costa. Costa, who wanted to exhibit at the Galleria Lega-Borrani, also created organised alternative art institutions in Rome. See Nino Costa, 'letter to Diego Martelli of 29th December 1875', in *Lettere dei Macchiaioli*, ed. by Lamberto Vitali (Turin: Einaudi, 1953), p. 259. In 1879 he created the Circolo degli Artisti Italiani and published a manifesto for it, stating "The object of our association is to...form and proclaim an artistic standard, to give life, character, dignity to Italian art." Quoted and translated in Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 7. In 1885 Costa formed In Arte Libertas, which organised international exhibitions to bring art from overseas into Italy ten years before the Venice Biennale; he refused to pay critics for reviews of this exhibition to encourage more genuine responses.

²⁰⁰ X [Telemaco Signorini], 'Il Caffè Michelangiolo', *Gazzettino delle Arti del Disegno*, Anno I, n. 19, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 25 maggio – 15 giugno, 5, 16, 29 luglio 1867. Reprinted in Somaré, *Telemaco Signorini*, pp. 233–244 (p. 241).

²⁰¹ "Ma gli antichi, mi direte, non concepirono e fecero quello che è possibile a mente umana? Sì, è vero, essi operarono ciò che nel loro secolo si poteva, perché non imitando gli altri secoli precedenti a loro,

This is in keeping with the Futurist desire to produce an art of their own time. However, the break with the past apparently manifest in the rhetoric of the Macchiaioli was far from complete; unlike the Futurist rhetoric of destroying the past, they show an awareness of its importance. Signorini blames the present for allowing the past to kill it, and as such does not oppose the tradition itself but the contemporary over-reliance upon it, and the lack of life in the new art.²⁰²

Let us admire the past but not adore it [...] If adoration is a good thing in religion, in art it leads to servile imitation and therefore to decay, just as an exclusive admiration for celebrities induces intolerance; by preventing thought of the principles and foundations wherein its strength lies. This system, in fact, which has been in fashion for so long, will lead you to kneel before Michelangelo and Raphael but never to reason about them, examine them, analyse their qualities and uncover their defects! Academic inquisitions will forbid you to do so, inveterate prejudice will prevent you, and woe to you if you attempt to overcome them! You would become sacrilegious!²⁰³

Rather than proposing the imitation of the received Italian tradition encouraged by their Purist and Neoclassicist contemporaries, the Macchiaioli encouraged the use of other aspects of the Italian tradition in order to counter the flaws they identified in contemporary art, “the absolute lack of solidity and the absolute deficiency of chiaroscuro.”²⁰⁴ As will be seen shortly when turning to Macchiaioli practice, in order to avoid these contemporary issues, they appropriated previous masters of solidity and chiaroscuro, the Italian Primitives and, to a lesser extent, Baroque artists from Italy, but also Spain and the Netherlands. When calling for the academy to be disbanded, Martelli did not suggest a new system, but proposed the return to the workshop of the early Renaissance, naming those of Gozzoli and Ghirlandaio.²⁰⁵ I therefore argue that the Macchiaioli were not against the art of the past per se but against the *passatismo* of the academy; I suggest that this position is similar to that taken by the Futurists. However, amongst the Macchiaioli the relationship between their art and that of the Italian Primitives, accompanied by the rhetoric of rebirth, is far clearer than anything considered in the previous chapter.

seppero comprendere il proprio e rappresentarlo, e tradussero nel mondo dell'arte le ispirazioni e i sentimenti che ricevevano dall'età loro. [...] Non ci vengono pertanto a magnificare il passato come l'apogeo nell'arte, ma ci si consiglia come studio di progresso di un'epoca, la quale per quanto grande e gloriosa, non possedè però né le materiali, né le intellettuali risorse di cui dispone e si avvantaggia l'età presente.” X [Telemaco Signorini], ‘Alcune parole sulla Esposizione Artistica nelle sale della Società Promotrice’, *La Nuova Europa*, II, n. 162, 19 October 1862. Reprinted in Somaré, *Telemaco Signorini*, pp. 220-222 (pp. 221-222).

²⁰² Broude, *The Macchiaioli: Italian Painters of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 14.

²⁰³ X [Telemaco Signorini], ‘Art Controversy’, *La Nuova Europa*, 19 November 1862, reprinted in Emilio Cecchi and Mario Borgiotti, *Macchiaioli: Toscani d'Europa*, (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1962), pp. 29-31 (p. 30).

²⁰⁴ “l'assoluta mancanza di solidità, la deficienza assoluta di chiaroscuro” Telemaco Signorini, ‘Cose d'Arte’, *Il Risorgimento*, 1874, reprinted in Somaré, *Telemaco Signorini*, p. 256.

²⁰⁵ Martelli, ‘Delle Accademie di Belle Arti,’ *Gazzettino delle Arti di Disegno*, 3 August 1867, p. 226.

In Macchiaioli writings it is evident that as for the Futurists, the Primitives are used an intuitive, rather than analytical, model for artistic production:

In the centuries previous to ours, when intuition dominated over analysis, we see the art from Cimabue to Ghirlandaio form a whole of its own, and have its own explication, spontaneous, instinctual[...]; thus, representing its own time, it was progressive and civilizing.²⁰⁶

Signorini later described how the interest in the Primitives came after the interest in the Baroque:

despite this death [the end of Macchiaioli art in 1862] modern art's research continued and naturally other ancient artists came to sanction it, no longer Tiepolo and Tintoretto, but [Fra Filippo] Lippi, Benozzo [Gozzoli], Carpaccio and thousands of others, modern art found that which it intends to conquer today for itself, that is the sincerity of feeling and that love of all nature, with which the art of the Quattrocento childishly caressed every form and obviously expressed the asceticism of its time.²⁰⁷

Lega's work after 1862 shows a clear debt to the Quattrocento.²⁰⁸ Lega trained with the Purist Luigi Mussini at his school in Florence, before joining the anti-academic Macchiaioli.²⁰⁹ Lega's *Il canto di uno stornello* (1867) (fig. 15.1) has been described as "at once and without contradiction, his most modern and most ancient," a work by an artist "unable to disentangle himself from the purist-academic cocoon."²¹⁰ Lega's short wide landscape canvases have been compared to early Renaissance predellas, and the use of this distinctive canvas shape by other Macchiaioli has contributed to the connection between the Macchiaioli and the Primitives.²¹¹ This link was also made by critics at the start of the twentieth century. In 1908 Ugo Ojetti compared Fattori to Giotto, Masaccio and Piero della Francesca²¹² and in 1913

²⁰⁶ "Nei secoli precedenti a noi, dove più che l'analisi predominava l'intuito, vediamo l'arte da Cimabue a Ghirlandaio formare un tutto a parte, ed avere una esplicazione tutta propria, spontanea, istintiva; il suo progresso, relativamente alla parte meccanica e formale, aveva la sua ragione di essere nella osservazione della natura, ed attingeva il suo lato ideale e subiettivo principalmente ed unicamente dal proprio secolo, cioè dal sentimento e dall'affetto religioso; così, rappresentando il suo tempo, essa fu progressista e civilizzatrice." X [Telemaco Signorini], 'Del fatto e da farsi nella pittura', *La Nuova Europa*, III, 2 October 1863, reprinted in Somaré, *Telemaco Signorini*, pp. 223-227 (p. 223).

²⁰⁷ "ad onta di questa morte le ricerche dell'arte moderna contiunuarono e vennero naturalmente altri artisti antichi a sanzionarle, e non più nel Tiepolo e nel Tintoretto, ma in Lippi, in Benozzo, in Carpaccio ed in mille altri, trovò l'arte moderna ciò che intende conquistar oggi per sé, cioè quella sincerità di sentimento e quell'amore per tutta la natura, col quale l'arte del Quattrocento accarezzò infantilmente ogni forma ed esprime evidentemente l'ascetismo del suo tempo" Telemaco Signorini, 'Cose d'arte', *Il Risorgimento*, 1874, reprinted in Somaré, *Telemaco Signorini*, p. 257.

²⁰⁸ See Matteucci, Mazzocca, and Paolucci, *Silvestro Lega: i macchiaioli e il quattrocento*.

²⁰⁹ Borrani also trained with a fan of the Primitives, the restorer Gaetano Bianchi, as discussed in the previous chapter.

²¹⁰ "un dipinto che è allo stesso tempo e senza contraddizione, il suo più moderno e più antico." "Era difficile per Silvestro Lega sbrogliarsi dal bozzolo purista-accademico." Antonio Paolucci, 'Silvestro Lega e il Quattrocento', in *Silvestro Lega: i macchiaioli e il quattrocento*, pp. 29-41 (pp. 31, 33). For a comparison of this work to Piero's *The Queen of Sheba Discovering the Wood of the True Cross* (c.1457/8-1465) see Broude, *The Macchiaioli: Italian Painters of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 163.

²¹¹ Matteucci, Mazzocca, and Paolucci, *Silvestro Lega: i macchiaioli e il quattrocento*, p. 29. Predellas were often an area of maximum artistic experimentation, compounding the analogy.

²¹² Ugo Ojetti, *Ritratti d'artisti italiani*, Milan 1911, pp. 145-146. Quoted in Fernando Mazzocca, 'Il dibattito sui macchiaioli nel novecento,' in *I Macchiaioli: prima dell'impressionismo*, ed. by Mazzocca

Soffici compared Fattori to Giotto, Paolo Uccello and Beato Angelico, a trend continued by Carrà in *Metaphysical Painting* (1919).²¹³ As is revisited later in this chapter, there was also a tendency to connect Cézanne to the Primitives and through them to Fattori.

The combination of innovation and appreciation of the past evident in Macchiaioli rhetoric and early twentieth-century interpretations of the movement is also found in their practice. It could be argued that some aspects of the Primitive and Baroque art discussed in the previous chapter were filtered through the Macchiaioli. Therefore it is particularly interesting to compare Futurist works already related to *passato remoto* works to by artists associated with *Macchiaiolismo*.

Formal similarities between Macchiaioli and Futurist works

The previous chapter compared Boccioni's *The City Rises* (fig. 14.6) to images of the conversion of Saint Paul by Michelangelo and Caravaggio, stressing that although there are ideological reasons why these particular works could have been sources for Boccioni, supported by the critical attention they received at this time, the comparisons are not entirely convincing. Given Boccioni's aforementioned interest in Fattori, and the analogical attitudes between the two artists, when noting the formal similarities between Fattori's depiction of a rider fallen from his horse and Boccioni's painting, the ideological and formal resonances could be considered more persuasive.²¹⁴

In *Lo staffato* (1880) (fig. 14.9) the horse and figure are juxtaposed in a similar fashion to Boccioni's. The large dark horse of Fattori's work leaps into the air and swishes its tail in a way correspondent to Boccioni's, but the Futurist's horse twists towards the figure holding its reins, rather than galloping on. Boccioni's figure is turned 180 degrees from Fattori's, but the pose is the same, arms stretched above the head in a narrow V, one leg slightly bent. However, the muted palette and barren landscape of Fattori's work, compared with the

and Sisi, pp. 21-39 (p. 23). See also Paolucci, 'Silvestro Lega e il Quattrocento', in *Silvestro Lega: i macchiaioli e il quattrocento*, p. 31.

²¹³ Ardengo Soffici, 'Giovanni Fattori', reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri*, pp. 111-118 (p. 115). Carlo Carrà, *Pittura metafisica* (1919), reprinted in Carrà, *Tutti gli scritti*, ed. by Carrà, p. 119. The trend was further developed in the 1920s Emilio Cecchi and Roberto Longhi. Longhi famously bemoaned the absence of a painting that said "Goodnight, Mr Fattori" with the force that Courbet opened the Ottocento with "Goodmorning, Mr Courbet." Emilio Cecchi, 'I Macchiaioli e il 400 toscano' in *Vita Artistica*, 1 (July 1926), 91-93. Roberto Longhi, *Carlo Carrà*, 2nd edn (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli editore, 1945), p. 5.

²¹⁴ Gino Agnese has likened Boccioni's death, caused by a fall from a horse to this Fattori painting. Boccioni's repeated painting of horses is related to his, ultimately fatal, obsession with the creatures, as much as his images of him are related to the Italian pictorial tradition. Gino Agnese, *Boccioni da vicino: pensieri e passioni del grande futurista* (Naples: Liguori, 2008), p. 147.

streaks of pure colour of Boccioni's Divisionist technique and the city construction works in the background, amplifies the differences between the two artists. Fattori's *Lo scoppio del cassone* (fig. 14.10) of the same year is similar to *Lo staffato*. The increased number of horses, and the chaotic sense of the composition, in which men are crushed and hooves flail in all directions, make it more generally analogous to *The City Rises*, even if the positions of the horse and rider in *Lo staffato* are closer to those of Boccioni's work. Fattori's two 1880 paintings were displayed in the 8th Venice Biennale in 1909, possibly attended by Boccioni.²¹⁵ I do not suggest that Fattori appropriated the Michelangelo and Caravaggio works discussed in the previous chapter, in part because I claim that the resurgence of interest in these works occurred around the time of his death in 1908.

A subject which was repeatedly treated by the Macchiaioli and the Futurists is the depiction of women sitting next to windows. Boccioni painted his female family and friends by windows from as early as 1905, a key example being *A Seamstress's Novel* (1908) (fig. 15.2), in which dappled sunlight passes through the leaves outside before landing upon Ines and her sewing machine in raked stripes and illuminating her chest and lap, leaving the side of her body and much of the rest of the room in total darkness. This work can be said to appropriate from the Macchiaioli something of their own appropriation of the Primitives. The woman in profile and the neat front elevation perspective of the window shutters and sewing machine table give this subject common to the *passato prossimo* a link to the *passato remoto*. A sketch for this work (fig. 15.6) shows the tiled floor which recalls that in the Lega's *Il canto di uno stornello*, itself reminiscent of floorings in early Renaissance paintings.

Of course the subject was not novel for the Macchiaioli, let alone Boccioni; it is worth noting that at this time Vermeer was returning to fashion and Signorini's *Aspettando* (1866-67) has been considered evidence of this interest in Dutch art amongst the Macchiaioli.²¹⁶ Borrani and Lega's women are, much like Boccioni's seamstress mother, often sat by the window sewing; these scenes had political motivations, showing the role of women, for the Macchiaioli this was the role of women during the Risorgimento, while for Boccioni it was

²¹⁵ Nico Stringa, 'Boccioni e Venezia, integrazioni e nuovi indizi', *Boccioni Prefuturista: Gli Anni di Padova*, ed. by Baradel, pp. 81-87 (pp. 81, 85). Biennale di Venezia, *Catalogo della Biennale di Venezia: esposizione internazionale d'arte della città di Venezia VIII, 1909* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), p. 137. *Lo staffato* was purchased for the Gallerie d'Arte Moderna in Florence and *Lo scoppio* went to Ca' Pesaro in Venice.

²¹⁶ Dini and Dini, *Diego Martelli*, p. 146. For Vermeer's return to popularity, see Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art*, particularly pp. 147-150.

the work of his mother which supported the family. However, I suggest that the propensity to both to sketch and work up full paintings of scenes of figures next to windows was primarily a technical exercise and mode of achieving strong chiaroscuro effects. I do not wish to attribute too much importance to this Macchiaioli precedent, but the presence of some formal comparability supports the wider argument and serves to connect the Macchiaioli to the Divisionists.

In Borrani's *The 26th April in Florence* (1861) (fig. 15.7), a woman sews an Italian flag on the eve of Florence's overthrow of Leopold II. According to Mazzocca and Sisi, in this work Borrani brought together his experience restoring the Primitives with his Macchiaioli experimentations to renovate history painting.²¹⁷ The Macchiaioli's nationalism was echoed by the Futurists in the period leading up to the First World War when Balla also used the tricolore flag in the depictions of anti-neutral demonstrations *The Risks of War* and *Forms Cry Long Live Italy* (1915) (figs 15.4, 15.8). However, it should be noted that Borrani's work moved quickly into a private collection and therefore the likelihood of it being available to Boccioni or Balla to see and appropriate is minimal; it serves here to stress the nationalistic tone and ubiquity of the image of the sewing woman in Macchiaioli art.

Balla himself often depicted scenes of people by windows, as in the now lost *The Owner* (1905) (fig. 15.3), which like his depictions of people on balconies offered him the possibility of experimenting with light, especially posing a figure in a dark room by a bright window as the Macchiaioli did. Balla's earliest works of this kind predates his 1901 trip to Paris, lending credence to the idea that Balla's source for this theme was the Macchiaioli, rather than the Impressionists, who also often depicted people on balconies looking over the city. Boccioni developed the theme of the figure on the balcony with overtly Futurist aims in *The Street Enters the House* and *Simultaneous Visions* (1911) (figs 15.5, 15.9).

The link between Futurism, the Primitives and modern Tuscan painting can also be found in the case of Carrà's *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli* (fig. 10.6). In chapters two and four I described this work as a history painting and related it to the Italian tradition of battle painting. Here I wish to connect it to an example of Risorgimento history painting, depicting a scene selected for its relevance to recent events in the city. Stefano Ussi's *The Expulsion of*

²¹⁷ Mazzocca and Sisi, 'Odoardo Borrani, *Il 26 aprile 1859 in Firenze, 1861*,' in *I Macchiaioli: prima dell'Impressionismo*, pp. 152-153 (p. 152).

the Duke of Athens (1854-60) (fig. 10.5) was lauded at the Esposizione Nazionale in Florence in 1861, bought by the king and received a gold medal at the 1867 Universal Exposition in Paris. Carrà mentions Ussi's history painting in his essay 'War and Art' in *Guerrapittura* and the fame of this work suggests that Carrà could well have been familiar with it.²¹⁸ The background of the right hand side of the painting features many raised swords in the air, and a crowd of bodies, forming and repeating diagonal lines from the bottom right towards the centre of the canvas in a manner comparable to the flags and lances found shooting into the upper half of Carrà's work and the Primitive works discussed in the previous chapter. Even though Ussi was a friend of the Macchiaioli, as an academician he had quite different artistic aims, wishing to renew history painting but without declaring war on the Italian pictorial tradition. Martelli was open in his antipathy towards the artist and the esteem in which this picture was held in an article in the *Gazzettino*.²¹⁹ My point here is to show that it was not only anti-academic Florentine art which could have been appropriated by the Futurists, motivations for formal appropriation were not necessarily dictated by *antipassatista* rhetoric.

Futurism and Impressionism

While I have argued that Futurism had a heritage in *Macchiaiolismo*, Boccioni, as seen in chapter two, sought to position Futurism as a legacy of modern French painting. The Futurists had been to Paris and their writings demonstrate a familiarity with Impressionism, but I would like to consider the reception of Impressionism in Italy and particularly Florence by the Caffè Michelangiolo milieu and the *Voci* as relevant to the terms in which the Futurists established this heritage.

As mentioned previously, there were a number of links between the artists of Paris and Florence in this period, especially with Martelli's trips to Paris and Manet and Degas's visits to Florence. Degas came to Florence to visit his family from August 1858 to March 1859, during which time he met the Macchiaioli in Caffè Michelangiolo, developing lasting

²¹⁸ Carrà, 'Guerra e l'arte', in *Guerrapittura*, pp. 99-104 (p. 101). Two other very similar but smaller versions of the work exist, thus increasing the chances of Carrà's familiarity with it.

²¹⁹ Diego Martelli, 'Della medaglia conferita al Prof. Stefano Ussi dal Giuri Internazionale di Parigi', *Gazzettino delle Arti di Disegno*, 4 May 1867, I, n. 16, 125-126.

friendships with Fattori, Signorini and Martelli;²²⁰ Manet visited Florence in October 1859. In January 1879 Martelli gave a lecture about the Impressionists at the Circolo Filologico di Livorno, repeated in Florence. Martelli's positioning of the Impressionists as the latest stage in the evolution of art which Martelli had previously outlined was not unlike Boccioni's positioning of Futurism as the apotheosis of a development of modern and historic art. Martelli also wanted Impressionist art displayed in Florence and sent two Pissarro works to the Società Promotrice di Belle Arti exhibition in 1879. Although Martelli's presentation on Impressionism was subsequently published, I do not argue that Boccioni was directly aware of Martelli's activities. However, Martelli's enthusiasm for introducing Impressionism to Florentine artistic culture was continued by the *Vociani* in the early twentieth century, of whom Boccioni certainly was aware.

Soffici became a champion of Impressionism in Florence publishing regular pieces on the Impressionists and Cézanne in *La Voce*, writing a book on Medardo Rosso and organising the *First Italian Exhibition of Impressionism and of the Sculpture of Medardo Rosso* at the Lyceum Club in Florence in 1910 with Papini and Prezzolini. Although Rosso was very much the focus of the exhibition, they managed to secure a number of loans of paintings, drawings and prints by Cézanne, Degas, Jean-Louis Forain, Paul Gauguin, Henri Matisse, Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec and Vincent van Gogh, both from collectors in Italy and from Parisian dealers, including Vollard and Durand-Ruel. Echoing Martelli three decades previously the exhibition aimed to reawaken Italian art through this exposure to modern French painting.²²¹ Even though relations between the Florentine *Vociani* and the Milanese Futurists were strained, Boccioni, Russolo, Carrà, Marinetti and Buzzi sent a telegram to Soffici thanking him for his efforts in reawakening Italian art in this respect.²²²

In the same year as this exhibition in Florence works by Renoir and Courbet, were exhibited at the Venice Biennale. The Futurists attended this Biennale, using the occasion to

²²⁰ Norma Broude, 'An Early Friend of Degas in Florence: A Newly-Identified Portrait Drawing of Degas by Giovanni Fattori', *The Burlington Magazine*, 115 (1973), 726–735. Lamberto Vitali, 'Three Italian Friends of Degas', *The Burlington Magazine*, 105 (1963), 266–273.

²²¹ Anon. [Giuseppe Prezzolini], *Catalogo della prima esposizione italiana dell'impressionismo francese e delle sculture di Medardo Rosso* (Florence: Stabilimento Tipografico Aldino, 1910), pp. 3–6.

²²² Umberto Boccioni, Luigi Russolo, Carlo Carrà, F.T. Marinetti, Paolo Buzzi, '[Telegram to Ardengo Soffici of 12–19th May 1910]', in *Umberto Boccioni: Lettere futuriste*, p. 18.

disseminate their manifesto 'Against Passéist Venice'.²²³ Courbet was well-received by the Florentine critics Cecioni and Soffici, the latter writing about Courbet in *La Voce* the following year.²²⁴ While Boccioni's *The Street Pavers* (1914) (fig. 15.11) can of course be related to Courbet's famous *The Stone Breakers* (1849) (fig. 15.10), which he could well have seen at this Biennale, the four year gap between Boccioni seeing this work and potentially appropriating it in *The Street Pavers* does seem particularly lengthy, given the frenetic pace of activity in these Futurist years.

Painting similar subjects, particularly scenes of city life, inevitably leads to formal similarities between Futurism and Impressionism: Monet's paintings of the Gare St Lazare (fig. 2.7), and Carrà's paintings of Milan's Central Station, Degas's and Severini's images of dancers, arguably led Ezra Pound to claim that Futurism was "an accelerated kind of Impressionism."²²⁵ However, I argue that while the Impressionists' painting of modern life was an important precedent for Futurism, the Italian artists' relationship with their French predecessors was ambivalent, and that the idea of a lineage between the two movements was established by the Futurists for a range of reasons, most notably the *antipassatista* precedent that it set, emphasised by Soffici in *La Voce*:

Impressionism was therefore the true emancipator of modern painting from all the ridiculous tyrannies of a professorial past. Rebelling against all authority, wiping the slate clean of all formulas, getting rid of all tethers, Manet, Monet, Sisley and the other four or five painters that everyone knows, found themselves to be primitives of a new epoch. Primitives, however, of an exceptional species.²²⁶

The vocabulary of Soffici's statement is echoed by Boccioni with the phrase "primitives of a new sensibility," and Marinetti uses the phrase "professorial passion for the past."²²⁷ Boccioni declared that the Impressionists "due to their experimentalism and scientific

²²³ F.T. Marinetti, Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, 'Contro Venezia Passatista' (1910), reprinted in *Manifesti del futurismo*, ed. by Viviana Birolli (Milan: Abscondita, 2008), pp. 34-37.

²²⁴ Adriano Cecioni, '[Letter to Telemaco Signorini of 24th July 1870]', reprinted in *Lettere dei Macchiaioli*, ed. by Vitali, pp. 144- 45. Ardengo Soffici, 'Gustave Courbet' (1911), reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri*, pp. 25-48. As previously mentioned, it was at this Biennale that Longhi, through the realism of Courbet, rediscovered Caravaggio.

²²⁵ Ezra Pound, 'Vortex' (1914), in *BLAST 1*, ed. by Edwards, pp. 153-154 (p. 154).

²²⁶ "L'impressionismo fu adunque il vero emancipatore della pittura moderna da tutte le ridicole tirannie d'un passato professorale. Ribellandosi a tutte le autorità, facendo tabula rasa di tutte le formule, sbarazzandosi di ogni pastoiia, Manet, Monet, Sisley e gli altri quattro o cinque pittori che tutti conoscono, si trovarono ad essere come i primitivi di un'epoca nuova. Primitivi però di una specie affatto eccezionale." Ardengo Soffici, 'L'impressionismo e la pittura italiana', *La Voce*, I, n. 18, 15 April 1902, p. 2.

²²⁷ "Noi ci siamo chiamati i primitivi di una nuova sensibilità completamente trasformata" Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 143. "4° la passione professorale del passato e la mania delle antichità e delle collezioni." F.T. Marinetti, 'Noi rinneghiamo i nostri maestri simbolisti ultimi amanti della luna', reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, p. 304. The differentiation here between 'the professorial past' and 'the professorial passion for the past' recalls the distinction made in chapter two between the past and history.

temperaments were the real initiators of the great break with the past.”²²⁸ When separating Futurism from Cubism, Boccioni complained that the Cubists had turned their backs on the evolution of the modern pictorial sensibility that the Impressionists had created, while the Futurists had continued this evolution; a perspective shared by Severini in 1917.²²⁹ While Boccioni positioned Futurism as an evolution in order to give his movement an avant-garde heritage, which as discussed in chapter three could have been as much a commercial as an ideological move, the temporality of avant-gardism required that he make evident his rupture from Impressionism, his revolution.

Boccioni reprinted his ‘Introduction to Painting’ diagram demonstrating this in a chapter of *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* entitled ‘Why we are not Impressionists,’ it is therefore an evolution in the sense that Futurism supersedes Impressionism. The idea that Impressionism could be superseded is also suggested in Soffici’s writings, he credits them with having opened a new road in painting, but, using the Italian Primitives as a metaphor, suggests that they are the Cimabues or Paolo Uccellos not the Giotto or Masaccios.²³⁰ In Boccioni’s diagram, Impressionism is positioned as descending into decadence, as the third stage of the diagram is ‘Synthesis of static colour’ and ‘Synthesis of static form;’²³¹ Futurism on the other hand synthesized colour and form. According to Boccioni, while the Impressionists subtracted solidity from their works to add atmosphere, the Futurists solidified Impressionism by adding atmosphere to the object without any subtraction, which allowed them to achieve dynamism.²³²

Looking back on Impressionism Carrà deemed it imperfect, because it only wanted to show nature through the vibration of colour, “Impressionism will show itself to be incapable of giving the necessary basis to a true great artistic civilization.”²³³ Carrà’s statement can be read as having nationalist undertones, insinuating that the Italians are more capable of

²²⁸ Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 42.

²²⁹ Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 77. Anne Coffin Hanson, *Severini Futurista: 1912-1917* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1996), p. 31.

²³⁰ “Ma Roma, dice il proverbio, non fu fatta in un giorno; e per arrivare a Giotto o a Masaccio – queste cime dell’arte- è necessario passare per Cimabue e Paolo Uccello. Se gl’impressionisti francesi che sono sfuggiti alla follia della luce e dei complementari, non hanno, come dicono là, *réalisé*, hanno tuttavia aperto la strada a una pittura moderna, il che non è, a parer mio, cosa di poca importanza.” Ardengo Soffici, *Il caso Medardo Rosso* (Florence: Succ. B. Seeber, 1909), p. 34.

²³¹ Boccioni, ‘Sillabario Pittorico: per l’ignoranza Italiana’, p. 180.

²³² Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 58.

²³³ “l’impressionismo di dimostrerà incapace a dare le basi necessarie ad una vera grande civiltà artistica.” Carrà, *La mia vita*, p.77.

building civilizations, but it does serve to demonstrate the ambivalence of the Futurist relationship with Impressionism.²³⁴

When writing on Impressionism in 1909 Soffici praised the Macchiaioli but lamented the fact that the Italian population was incapable of understanding their achievements. In doing so he stressed that the Italians were as capable, but were encumbered with the attachment to the past. For Soffici, the Impressionists did not break with the past but refuse to imitate it, feeding off it as necessary; in so doing they became as great as the masters.²³⁵ This is the same as the Macchiaioli approach to the past described above. While Boccioni attributed the break with the past to the Impressionists, Palazzeschi found a native source for this break in the Venetian painting of Canaletto and Guardi; Carrà also considered Guardi a precedent for Impressionism.²³⁶

While the break with the past is seen as an important part of Impressionism by the Futurists and other members of the Italian avant-garde (Soffici was not a Futurist at this point), Impressionism did not publish manifestos defining itself by opposition to the past as Futurism did; its break with the past was practical, rather than theoretical, as is summed up well by Soffici in 1910: "it [Impressionism] does not consider the past."²³⁷ This is also manifest in Impressionism's independence from the academy established in its exhibition practice. After Courbet's 1855 Pavilion of Realism, the Impressionists' independent exhibitions staged initially in Nadar's recently vacated studios in 1874, then Durand-Ruel's gallery and sometimes in domestic apartment spaces, not only undermined the Salon, but demonstrated that neither artists nor buyers were wholly reliant on the academy. As discussed above with reference to the Macchiaioli, and as will be seen in the following sections on Milanese artistic culture, the dealer-critic system developed a lot later in Italy than in France and Italian dealers often followed the lead of their Parisian counterparts. When the Futurists staged their first tour in 1912, they displayed their work in independent galleries including Bernheim-Jeune and Der Sturm in Berlin and went on to have a Futurist

²³⁴ The statement comes from his 1945 autobiography, and a time of particularly complex Italian national identity in the wake of the Second World War and the fall of Fascism, and so it should necessarily not be taken as an accurate portrayal of the Italian perception of French painting during the Futurist decade.

²³⁵ Soffici, *Il caso Medardo Rosso*, particularly pp. 17-18.

²³⁶ Aldo Palazzeschi, 'Alle fonti della contestazione', in Bruno, *L'Opera completa di Boccioni*, p. 6. Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 77. The Futurists were derided for their chauvinism when they exhibited in Paris in 1912.

²³⁷ "del passato non tien conto" Ardengo Soffici, 'L'Impressionismo a Firenze' (1910), in *Scoperte e massacri*, p. 156.

gallery run by Giuseppe Sprovieri on via del Tritone in Rome, which opened in 1913. My point here is that in breaking out of the Salon model for exhibitions and sales the Impressionists set a precedent for the Futurists, allowing the movement to function outside the academy's walls and thus to position itself in its rhetoric and activities as entirely contrary to the academy, far more so than the Macchiaioli.

In summary, the Macchiaioli and the Impressionists set some aesthetic, ideological and practical precedents for Futurism. Any formal appropriations are incidental compared to the importance of the anti-academic rhetoric of the Macchiaioli and the autonomy from the academy attempted by the Macchiaioli and achieved by the Impressionists. The Futurists also conceived of themselves as superseding the Impressionists and were sure to praise the Macchiaioli in their writings to stress to the Italian public that these artists should be recognised. This nationalist dimension between Futurism and French painting is considered throughout this chapter.

5.2 Futurism, Scapigliatura and the modern Milanese tradition

The Scapigliati were a group of writers and artists in Milan who occupied a rebellious position similar to the Macchiaioli in the 1860s and 70s. As with Florentine modern art, the lack of Anglophone scholarship on Scapigliatura has meant that the connection between the Milanese bohemians and the Futurists is, for the most part, restricted to Italian scholarship, although Martin does cite them as precedents for Futurism.²³⁸

The name Scapigliatura comes from a long article by Cletto Arrighi (pseudonym of the writer Carlo Righetti), *La Scapigliatura Milanese*, published in 1858 and his subsequent novel *La Scapigliatura e il 6 febbraio* (1861); both are often described as manifestos for the movement. The essay describes this bohemian class and the novel portrays them against the background of the four day Mazzinian uprising against the Austrians in Milan. The word *scapigliatura* dates back to Dante and Boccaccio, and roughly translates as ‘dishevelment’; this collective of artists, writers, musicians, etc were referred to as Scapigliati rather than bohemians as the Italian term was preferred to the French in this period of fierce rendering of national identity.

The identification of the group as bohemians is important for the notion that the Scapigliati were an avant-gardist precedent for Futurism. Cottington has argued that the formation and aims of bohemians and avant-gardes were distinct, if similar, as the structures of the former were too provisional and its aims were bourgeois rather than a subversive engagement with the structures of bourgeois art.²³⁹ It is true that the Scapigliati were not cohesive enough a group to warrant the description ‘movement’, not least due to their support of individualism. However, as I argue in this section, their claim to oppose every kind of conservatism, their ambivalent relationship with the academy and creation of exhibition spaces which opposed the academy, and importantly the posthumous positioning of Daniele Ranzoni and Tranquillo Cremona by the Milanese market, all demonstrate *antipassatista* and avant-gardist tendencies, if not the attributes of an avant-garde formation, and thus support the relationship between Scapigliatura and Futurism.

There are a number of similarities to note; in the prologue of Arrighi’s novel he describes the Scapigliati as “individuals of both sexes, between twenty and thirty-five years old, no more;

²³⁸ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 8.

²³⁹ Cottington, ‘The Formation of the Avant-Garde in Paris and London, c. 1880–1915’, pp. 602–603.

poor, full of genius almost always, more advanced than their time, independent like the eagles of the Alps..." and claims that they "merit being classified in a new particular subdivision of the great social family, as they form a new class *sui generis*, distinct from all the others."²⁴⁰ Both the ideas of the youths ahead of their time and of self-generation are reminiscent of the Futurist originary myth of Marinetti's rebirth as Futurist in his 'Founding and Manifesto', which (erroneously) claims that the oldest of the Futurists was thirty.

The Scapigliati anti-bourgeois attitude encouraged them to speak directly to the people, and so they used print and theatre to attract attention to themselves and defend their calls for social and artistic renewal.²⁴¹ Their publications included *Il Gazzettino Rosa* and *Il Martello* in 1872 and *La Plebe* in 1876.²⁴² Print media was used to even greater effect by the Futurists, who, even if too young to have read the work of Scapigliati in Milanese newspapers, would have been aware of the precedent.

Scapigliatura's prevalence in print was also due to the movement's adoption of a number of art forms; Scapigliatura novels, journalism, and poetry appeared in print attracted publicity for the painting and music produced by the same community. Emilio Praga practiced as both poet and painter and Arrigo Boito was both musician and poet; the Futurists were not as prolific in this field, the obvious exception being the painter and musician Russolo. However, this blending of the arts was highly developed in the Futurist visual poetry of Marinetti and Francesco Cangiullo. The fusion of the arts in also led to Scapigliatura *serate* which, due to a lack of information and scholarship on these events, are usually attributed as a Futurist invention.²⁴³

The movement's artist protagonists included the painters Cremona, Ranzoni, Camillo Boito, Mosè Bianchi and the sculptor Giuseppe Grandi. The most highly regarded of the painters were Cremona and Ranzoni for their use of light, movement and life in their paintings,

²⁴⁰ "In tutte le grandi e ricche città del mondo incivilito esiste una certa quantità di individui di ambo i sessi, fra i venti e i trentacinque anni, non più; *poveri*, pieni d'ingegno quasi sempre, più avanzati del loro tempo, indipendenti come l'aquila della Alpi [...] meritano di essere classificati in una nuova e particolare suddivisione della grande famiglia sociale, come color che vi formano una casta *sui generis*, distinta da tutte le altre." Cletto Arrighi, 'Introduzione, Prologo e Presentazione', in *La Scapigliatura, romanzo sociale contemporanea* (Milan: Istituto Propaganda Libreria, 1878), reprinted in David Del Principe, *Rebellion, Death and Aesthetics in Italy: The Demons of Scapigliatura* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1996), pp. 133-141 (pp. 133, 134).

²⁴¹ "Tra il 1860 e il 1880 molti scapigliati, se non tutti, trovarono nella pubblicistica il mezzo più importante per diffondere le loro idee di rinnovamento sociale e letterario" Giuseppe Farinelli, *La Scapigliatura: Profilo storico, protagonisti, documenti* (Rome: Carocci, 2003), p. 87.

²⁴² Farinelli, *La Scapigliatura*, p. 87.

²⁴³ Masoero, 'Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo: un percorso di modernità', in *Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo*, ed. by Caroli and Masoero, pp. 21-55 (p. 23).

alongside a rebellious streak. As Carrà complained in his autobiography, they were largely ignored by the critics.²⁴⁴ Annie-Paule Quinsac describes their innovation:

Cremona, Ranzoni and Grandi together worked out a new language, fixed on a luminous definition of form, through which an object or figure in space are only an illusion of shade in movement that interact with the environment to reflect the proven emotions of the artist. We are already, therefore, in a perspectival conception clearly detached from the renaissance order.²⁴⁵

The idea of figures and their environment being rendered by shade, as well as breaking with Renaissance perspective was to be continued by Rosso and the Divisionists. The Scapigliati are therefore seen as instigating a rebellious Lombard tradition which is handed down to the Futurists.

Anti-academic artistic culture in Milan

Scapigliatura writings demonstrate their *antipassatista* sentiment. In his poem *Preludio* of 1864 the poet and painter Emilio Praga's describes himself and his colleagues: "We are the sons of ill fathers / Eagles at the time of changing feathers."²⁴⁶ Achille Bizzono, in 'Who we are and why we are', states: "exactly because we are young we are not tied by the chains of tradition, of memories, of companies and the very dangerous friendships of the past."²⁴⁷ Felice Cameroni, under his pseudonym Stoico, published 'Yes! We are the bohemia of the press' in 1873, one of Scapigliatura's most important manifestos, claiming:

Scapigliatura does not have faith, but convictions; it loves that which does not yet exist, and rebels against that which wants to be imposed for tradition or interest. [...] The paradoxes of bohemia are an inevitable reaction against the fetishism of the pedants of the past. Youth, the carelessness of the future and the fever of new ideas: these are the characteristics of bohemia.²⁴⁸

The similarity becomes even more explicit when the alternative name for the Scapigliati is considered. As highlighted in chapter one and summarised by Quinsac:

²⁴⁴ Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 77.

²⁴⁵ "Cremona, Ranzoni e Grandi abbiano insieme elaborato un linguaggio nuovo, impostato sulla definizione luminosa della forma, attraverso la quale un oggetto o una figura nello spazio non sono che illusione di ombre in movimento che interagiscono con l'ambiente per riflettere le emozioni provate dall'artista. Siamo già, quindi, in una concezione prospettica di netta rottura con il dettato rinascimentale." Annie-Paule Quinsac, 'Dal "pandemonio per cambiare l'arte" all'accademismo', *Scapigliatura*, ed. by Annie-Paule Quinsac (Venice: Marsilio, 2009), pp. 27-49 (p. 31).

²⁴⁶ Emilio Praga, 'Preludio' (1864), reprinted in Del Principe, *Rebellion, Death and Aesthetics in Italy*, pp. 11-12 (p. 11).

²⁴⁷ "appunto siccome giovani non legati ai vincoli delle tradizioni, delle memorie, delle imprese, delle pericolosissime amicizie del passato." Achille Bizzono, in 'Chi siamo e perché siamo', *Gazzettino Rosa*, 26 July 1868, reprinted in Farinelli, *La Scapigliatura*, p. 232.

²⁴⁸ "La Scapigliatura non ha fede, ma convinzioni; ama ciò che non esiste ancora e si ribella a quanto le si vuole imporre per tradizione od interesse. [...] I paradossi della Bohème sono un'inevitabile reazione contro il feticismo dei pedanti del passato. La gioventù, la noncuranza dell'avvenire e la febbre delle idee nuova: ecco i caratteri della Bohème." 'Sì! Siamo la Bohème della stampa', *Il Gazzettino Rosa*, 14 November 1873, reprinted in Farinelli, *La Scapigliatura*, pp. 250-251.

Diving into the reviews of the age, it would seem that the artists instead preferred to call themselves “*avveniristi*”, an epithet that did not find critical fortune – taken up solely by Severino Pagani in 1955 -, but that, with hindsight becomes evocative because it translates the same as “*futurists*.” And, in fact, like Futurism, Scapigliatura wanted to break with the past; like Futurism it is an all-accomplished experience, intellectual ferment together with historical and socio-political clutter, renovation of ideology, culture and customs; like Futurism, but before it.²⁴⁹

This positioning of Scapigliatura as an earlier version of Futurism leads to the idea that the earlier artists were *antipassatisti* and avant-gardists, which warrants further interrogation in the light of the distinction of bohemia and the avant-garde introduced earlier and in the context of the Milanese artistic structures of the time.

The importance of the Milanese artistic culture for the Futurists is evident in Boccioni's statement that:

They speak of Milan and of the few other cities which instead of the usual glorious tradition have a wonderful present and a formidable future, as horrible and crude. I will say in parentheses that the only glimmer of Italian art, excluding Fattori and some Florentine Macchiaioli, comes from Milan (Ranzoni, Cremona, Rosso, Segantini, Previati).²⁵⁰

These five artists were not all born in Milan, but all studied at the city's renowned Brera art academy. This academy was of central importance to the city's artistic culture as it was both seat of artistic training and the art market via its salon (which during the period in question varied between annual, biennial and triennial). Much like the Florentine Accademia and those throughout Europe the Brera was an aesthetically conservative institution, educating painters, sculptors and architects based on foundation of life drawing and copying great artists of the past, and awarding medals at the salon, rewarding history painting above all.²⁵¹ From the 1830s the art historical emphasis of the Brera was increased with the introduction of a chair of art history.²⁵² Even though as an academy and salon the Brera was conservative the artists who taught and studied there were not necessarily so. Two artists who taught at

²⁴⁹ “Tuffandosi nelle recensioni d'epoca, sembrerebbe che gli artisti, essi invece, preferissero chiamarsi “*avveniristi*”, un appellativo che non ha trovato fortuna critica – ripreso solo da Severino Pagani nel 1955 -, ma che, con il senno del poi, acquista un valore evocativo, perché tradotto equivale a “*futurismo*”. E di fatto, come il Futurismo, la Scapigliatura intende rompere con il passato; come il Futurismo è esperienza a tutto tondo, fermento intellettuale e insieme congerie storica e socio-politica, rinnovamento ideologico, culturale e di costume; come il Futurismo, ma prima.” Quinsac, ‘Dal “pandemonio per cambiare l'arte” all'accademismo,’ *Scapigliatura*, ed. by Quinsac, p. 27.

²⁵⁰ “Ad esempio si parla di Milano e delle altre poche città italiane che invece della solita gloriosa tradizione hanno un meraviglioso presente e un formidabile avvenire, come di città grossolane e orribili. Dirò tra parentesi che il solo barlume di arte italiana, se si toglie Fattori e qualche macchiaiuolo fiorentino, ci viene da Milano (Ranzoni, Cremona, Rosso, Segantini, Previati).” Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 42.

²⁵¹ For a history of the Brera see Eva Tea, *L'Accademia di Belle Arti a Brera Milano* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1941).

²⁵² Miklos N. Varga, ‘Brera, Autoritratto di Milano’, in Gianni Utica, Elisabetta Longari, Miklos N. Varga, and Paolo Thea, *Milano Brera: 1859-1915: i premi Brera dalla scapigliatura al simbolismo* (Codogno: Cassa rurale ed artigiana del Basso Lodigiano, 1994), pp. 23-46 (p. 44).

the Brera in the nineteenth century are considered progenitors of the modern anti-academic Lombard tradition: Il Piccio and Francesco Hayez.

Giovanni Carnovali, called Il Piccio, was the protagonist of Italy's 'missing' romanticism, described as such because romanticism in art was not as prevalent as elsewhere in Europe.²⁵³ He taught at the Brera while Cremona, Ranzoni and Bianchi studied there. Il Piccio is given a prominent role in the history of Milanese modern art, described in 1892 as "a futurist [*avvenirista*] half a century ago,"²⁵⁴ and considered to be a major event in art history by Previati.²⁵⁵ He is considered to have surpassed the dryness of smooth classical marble by drawing on the local artistic tradition and enriching it with the work of the 'adjoining' Emilians Coreggio and Parmigianino and Venetians Tintoretto and Tiepolo.²⁵⁶ This use of the late Renaissance and Venetian Baroque to oppose Neoclassicism sets a precedent to be developed through modern Lombard art, and therefore, the rest of this chapter. While Il Piccio is now considered to have instigated this modern Lombard tradition, he was not widely appreciated until the 1909 exhibition of his work at La Permanente in Milan, reviewed by Previati, through which the Futurists could have gained awareness of him.

Francesco Hayez, another tutor at the Brera, was more popular amongst buyers and the public alike for his sensual nudes and his Risorgimento scenes. He used history painting to encourage the people of the Italian peninsula to fight their oppressors and unify the country, and was also highly praised by Mazzini in his 1840 essay on modern Italian painting.²⁵⁷ Mazzini expressed an interest in art akin to both the Futurists and the others discussed in this chapter, as demonstrated by his statement: "The painting of the future [*avvenire*] will, we believe, be greater than that of the past, because we will be greater, more religious, than

²⁵³ On Italy's missing romanticism see Gina Martegiani, *Il romanticismo italiano non esiste: saggio di letteratura comparata* (Florence: Successori B. Seeber, 1908) and Joseph Luzzi, 'Did Italian Romanticism Exist?', *Comparative Literature*, 56 (2004), 168–191.

²⁵⁴ Silvio Marco Spaventa, 'Un'avvenirista di mezzo secolo fa', *L'Adige* 14 November 1892, after the first retrospective of Il Piccio in Bergamo, quoted in Fernando Mazzocca, 'Il Piccio e la pittura lombarda tra romanticismo e naturalismo: l'eredità di Appiani', in *Piccio: l'ultimo romantico*, ed. by Fernando Mazzocca, Giovanni Valagussa, (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2007), pp. 17–25 (p.25).

²⁵⁵ "uno degli avvenimenti più notevoli nella storia della pittura moderna" Gaetano Previati, in *Perseveranza*, 17 June 1909, quoted in Ciro Caversazzi, 'Esposizione postuma delle opere di Giovanni Carnovali detto il Piccio 1909', in Società per le belle arti ed esposizione permanente, *Le Tre Esposizioni Retrospettive MDCCCXVIII-MDCCCXX* (Milan: Alfieri & Lacroix, 1910), pp. 39–45 (p. 42).

²⁵⁶ Masoero, 'Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo: un percorso di modernità', in *Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo*, ed. by Caroli and Masoero, p. 23. By 'adjoining' Masoero is referring to the geographical proximity of the artistic regions Il Piccio drew from.

²⁵⁷ Giuseppe Mazzini, 'La Pittura Italiana Moderna' (1840), in *Scritti editi ed inediti*, 94 vols (Imola: Cooperativa Tipografico-Editrice Paolo Galeati, 1915), XXI, 293–307.

we have ever been.”²⁵⁸ Although Hayez preferred contemporary and medieval history painting to more fashionable classical, mythological and allegorical scenes, his work was not revolutionary on a formal or technical level, but his harsh words against critics, who he claimed intimidated artists and stifled their creativity, have been seen as a point of connection between the Futurists and Hayez.²⁵⁹ The importance of Hayez at the Brera’s school and gallery ensured that future students at the school, the Scapigliati, Rosso, the protagonists of Divisionism and Carrà, were aware of him.

The Scapigliati had an ambivalent relationship with the Brera. Cremona, Ranzoni and Bianchi and a number of other artists associated with the movement attended the school and exhibited in the salon, most notably in 1873. However, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Brera lost its monopoly on the Milanese contemporary art market, which had been expanding with the rise of the bourgeoisie in Milan since early in the nineteenth century.²⁶⁰ The limitations of the Brera as an art market led to the creation of La Permanente in 1870 which in 1883 became associated with the Società di Belle Arti. As the name suggests La Permanente was a year-round exhibition of contemporary art, in which the displays changed and all works were for sale. Although many works exhibited in the Brera salon would also be exhibited in La Permanente, and in 1884 a jury was established, made up predominantly of Brera academicians, the role of this jury was purely to process the applications. The Futurists exhibited at La Permanente mere months after publishing their first manifesto and other exhibitions held there offered them a ready-made heritage of Lombard art.²⁶¹ The exhibition *Lombard Painting in the 20th century* in 1900, curated by the Scapigliato Vespasiano Bignami, former pupil of Il Piccio, showed works by Hayez, Ranzoni, Cremona, as well as artists addressed later in this, such as Giovanni Sottocornola and Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo.²⁶²

²⁵⁸ “La Pittura dell’avvenire sarà, noi lo crediamo, più grande ancora di quella del passato, perché noi saremo più grandi, più religiosi di quanto non lo siamo mai stati.” Mazzini, ‘La Pittura Italiana Moderna’ (1940), in *Scritti editi ed inediti*, XXI, 259.

²⁵⁹ Francesco Hayez, *Le mie memorie* (Milan: Bernardoni, 1890), p. 70. See also Burke, ‘The Italian Artist and his Roles’, *History of Italian Art*, I, 18.

²⁶⁰ “Il progressivo incremento [di opere esposte alla Brera] tra 1817 e il 1845 si spiega con la formazione, in ambito milanese, di un mercato artistico determinato dalla crescente domanda di strati borghesi emergenti.” Maria Cristina Gozzoli, ‘Contributi alle Esposizioni di Brera (1805-1859)’ in Gozzoli, Mazzocca, Cinelli and Lamberti, *Istituzioni e strutture espositive in Italia, secolo XIX: Milano, Torino*, pp. 3-60 (p. 20).

²⁶¹ Lydia Gandini, ‘L’inaugurazione’, in 1886-1986: *La Permanente, Un secolo d’arte a Milano*, ed. by Giampiero Cantoni (Milan: Società per le Belle Arte ed Esposizione Permanente, 1986), pp. 13-36 (p. 30).

²⁶² Cantoni, ed., 1886-1986 *La Permanente*, p. 141.

Bignami was also behind the Famiglia Artistica, an exhibition space and meeting place, which offered young artists and potential buyers an alternative social space and market.²⁶³ The soon-to-be Futurists Carrà, Boccioni, Russolo, Aroldo Bonzagni and Romolo Romani exhibited works at the Famiglia Artistica in December 1909,²⁶⁴ and the *Nuove Tendenze* architectural exhibition which included Sant'Elia and Mario Chiattone took place under its auspices in 1914.

Eight years after its inception the Famiglia Artistica created the *Indisposizione [ailment] di Belle Arti* which opened on 11th June 1881 on via San Primo, that is, next to and contemporaneous with the Esposizione Nazionale dell'Industria e delle Belle Arti in Milan. This humorous exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue known as the *Libro d'Oro* which spoofed the rhetoric of the Esposizione which positioned Milan as the Italian centre of artistic and industrial progress.²⁶⁵ While narratives of modern Lombard art place this exhibition in a proto-avant-gardist role, it would be a mistake to read the Esposizione Nazionale as traditionally academic and the *Indisposizione* as avant-gardist. The Famiglia Artistica had played a role in creating the Esposizione Nazionale, persuading the authorities that the Brera was not a good location for the fine arts exposition, against the European norm of such events being Salon-based.²⁶⁶ Moreover, many artists exhibited in both events, including Bignami himself and Gaetano Previati. I therefore argue that while the *Indisposizione* set a precedent for independence from the art establishment, as it was organised by the Famiglia Artistica with a mildly subversive edge, the Futurists' *Esposizione d'arte libera* held under the auspices of the Casa del lavoro at the abandoned Ricordi works on Viale Vittoria, which included work by children and workers, was for more subversive in its attempt to entirely emancipate art from the bourgeois environment of the Milanese art establishment.²⁶⁷ The inclusion of 50 Futurist works in this exhibition of 800 was doubtless a reference to the 50 years of Italian unification being celebrated with a Universal Exposition

²⁶³ "È un gesto di rottura che comporta l'apertura di uno spazio espositivo, di riunione e di formazione." Paolo Thea, 'La Cittadella e la città proibita ovvero la doppiezza di Brera,' in Utica, Longari, Varga, and Thea, *Milano Brera: 1859-1915*, pp. 63-75 (p. 70).

²⁶⁴ Agnese, *Vita di Boccioni*, p. 171. Bonzagni and Romani soon abandoned Futurism, their places taken by Balla and Severini. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Carrà designed logo for the Famiglia's membership card in 1908.

²⁶⁵ Anon. [Vespasiano Bignami?], *Il Libro d'oro per chi visita la famosa Indisposizione di Belle Arti* (Milan: Tipografia Nazionale, 1881). This exhibition is comparable to the contemporary Salon des Arts Incohérents in Paris, another parodic counter-Salon.

²⁶⁶ Carlo Montalbetti, *Indisposizione di Belle Arti: una stagione della scapigliatura artistica milanese* (Rome: Pierr Marteau Editore, 1988), unpaginated.

²⁶⁷ Laura Iotti, 'Futuristi e anarchici: Dalla fondazione del futurismo all'ingresso italiano nella prima guerra mondiale (1909 - 1915)', *Carte Italiane*, 2 (2010), 69-95 (p. 78).

and academic art exhibition in Rome (which Balla participated in). While the lineage between the *Esposizione d'arte libera* and the *Indisposizione* is clearly apparent, the scale of the 1911 exhibition and the inclusion of non-professional artists, alongside artists who wished to “assert something new”, shows a greater degree of antagonism.²⁶⁸

The Scapigliati had some *antipassatista* and avant-gardist tendencies but did not claim to entirely repudiate the past. Masoero has claimed that the Scapigliati put themselves forward as an avant-garde *ante litteram*, but tempers this statement by stressing that their opposition to the past was formed in the classrooms of the Brera,²⁶⁹ and it is therefore unsurprising that like Il Piccio and Hayez before them, the Scapigliatura artists were not entirely *sui generis*, not least as the Scapigliati openly followed Il Piccio and Antonio Fontanesi's leads. Martin stresses the applicability to the painters of the description of the poets given by Olga Ragusa: “vacillating rebels [...] revolting against tradition in their bohemian ways and habits more than in their poetry, which is a [...] mixture of residues of the past and aspirations to novelty.”²⁷⁰ Bignami went on to teach at the Brera in 1883, further illustrating the academy's ambivalent relationship with conservatism and avant-gardism. As Eva Tea put it, Bignami as a typical Brera tutor was “a strange mix of tradition and rebellion, like most of the Scapigliati [...] for the young he represented the past, for the old he was an avant-gardist.”²⁷¹

When praising the Impressionist detachment from the past in *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* Boccioni complains that Cremona's pictorial inefficiency (compared to the Impressionists) was due to the “negative action of the antithesis that existed between his sensation, sometimes modern, and his brain full of romantic sentimentality and Italic guitar sonatas.”²⁷² Although Primo Levi saw the art of this period as a second renaissance, he also claimed that Cremona was nourished by the “juiciest” Renaissance artists in Venice, and that

²⁶⁸ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1919*, p. 80.

²⁶⁹ Ada Masoero, ‘L’incubatrice del moderno’, *Art e dossier*, 171 (October 2001), 20-25 (p. 21).

²⁷⁰ Olga Ragusa, *Mallarmé in Italy: Literary Influence and Critical Response* (New York: S. F. Vanni, 1957). Cited in Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 8.

²⁷¹ “strano misto di tradizione e di ribellione, proprio come la maggior parte degli Scapigliati [...] per i giovani rappresentava il passato, ma per i vecchi era un avanguardista” Eva Tea, ‘Storia del Cinquantennio 1894-1944 dell’Accademia di Belle Arti a Brera in Milano’, in *Accademia di Brera, Atti, 1896-1948* (Milan: Scuola Tipografica Artigianelli, 1948), pp. 193-232 (p. 200).

²⁷² “Noi italiani non dobbiamo dimenticare che l’inefficacia di alcune doti pittoriche del nostro Cremona è appunto dovuta all’azione negativa dell’antitesi che esiste tra la sua sensazione, alcune volte moderna, e il suo cervello pieno di tenerume romantico e di vecchie chitarronate italice.” Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 50.

Bianchi emulated the effects of Tiepolo.²⁷³ These comparisons with Venetian art confirm the above suggestion that according to the Longhian division, the Scapigliati were part of the colourist tradition. This was even applicable to sculpture; Grandi's painterly sculptural style was described by a contemporary critic as "chiselled with a brush, in fact, with the brush of Tiepolo."²⁷⁴ Grandi's avant-gardist credentials are further questioned by the fact that he is best known for a public commission, the *Monument to the Cinque Giornate*, completed posthumously in 1895, 14 years after he won the commission, found in the piazza of the same name at Porta Vittoria. It can be stated with some confidence that the Futurists were familiar with this public sculpture, not least as this piazza is at the end of the street where Carrà lived, Corso 22 marzo, and near the unnamed café where the 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' was drafted.²⁷⁵ While I do not claim any specific appropriations of this work by the Futurists, this sculpture connects the previous and subsequent sections with Scapigliatura. As a monument to Italy's recent history, this work demonstrates that the Scapigliati, like the Macchiaioli were interested in depicting the Risorgimento, and Grandi's sculpture was a precedent for Medardo Rosso.

The positioning of the Scapigliati in the history of Italian art, particularly their avant-gardist reputation is arguably a result of the retrospectives of Ranzoni and Cremona organised by Vittore Grubicy de Dragon. As Robert Jensen has noted, retrospective exhibitions served to rewrite contemporary history, and those of Ranzoni, and even more so Cremona, are a case in point.²⁷⁶ Grubicy organised an retrospective after Cremona's sudden death at the age of 41 in June 1878, in which he mythologized the young man who died for this art (literally, in that he was poisoned by the pigments he mixed on his arm) as an avant-gardist figure.²⁷⁷ Although Cremona trained at the academy and was certainly part of the Brera milieu despite his lack of official honours until his death, the fact that the space at the Brera where the retrospective was to be staged was suddenly withdrawn, causing Grubicy to arrange the

²⁷³ "Mosè Bianchi ricordava gli effetti pittorici di quel Tiepolo, che ora nell'affresco egli doveva emulare; Cremona, i più succosi dei cinquecentisti, di cui a Venezia si era sapientemente nutrito." Primo Levi, *Il secondo rinascimento, forma e colore* (Rome: Stabilimento Tipografica Italiano diretto da L. Perelli, 1883-1884), p. 145.

²⁷⁴ Quoted in Margaret Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, 2nd edn (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972), p. 11.

²⁷⁵ This is known to be Carrà's address during his Futurist years through his correspondence. Carrà description of the drafting of the painters' manifesto can be found in Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 81.

²⁷⁶ Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 111.

²⁷⁷ Paola Martinelli, 'Il mercato dell'arte a Milano nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento', *Arte Lombarda*, 50 (1978), 122-126 (p. 124).

exhibition in the foyer of the Scala theatre,²⁷⁸ endorses Grubicy's positioning of Cremona as anti-academic. Grubicy repeated this when writing an article on the larger 1912 retrospective of the artist in which he again stressed the innovative role of Cremona. Grubicy said of Cremona "his hand, virtuous like Raphael, rebelled against obedience," describing him as:

the staunch and resolute innovator who presents, with an intuitive creative genius, something not pre-existing, something new, that, as it remains so vivid today – 34 years after his death! – even and above all amongst the young that rise up, he is assured a long survival even in the future. ²⁷⁹

Grubicy's retrospective of Ranzoni at La Permanente in 1890, the year after the artist's death, served a similar role and was the last exhibition Grubicy organised.

As a gallerist dealing in Scapigliatura painting Grubicy benefitted financially from the increased attention given to Scapigliatura artists after the Cremona and Ranzoni retrospectives he organised. Grubicy went on to describe Cremona and particularly Ranzoni as precedents for Divisionist technique, tracing this lineage back through Ranzoni to Il Piccio, and thus establishing the Italian heritage of his movement.²⁸⁰ Grubicy was not alone in holding this position; the Divisionist Giovanni Segantini described the Brera school as a whole, and particularly Cremona and Bianchi, as prefiguring "a real Lombard renaissance in the art of painting."²⁸¹ In 1910 Grubicy also positioned Cremona and Ranzoni as predecessors of Futurism on an aesthetic level, considering them the first artists not to demarcate masses with lines, allowing masses to blend into each other.²⁸²

Formal similarities between Scapigliatura and Futurism

While the blurring of forms may connect the appearance of Futurist and Scapigliatura works to some extent, the subject matter was often quite different. The Scapigliati for the most part painted portraits and figures, in scenes quite unlike those of the Futurists. However, Bianchi

²⁷⁸ For more on the arrangement of this exhibition see Francesca Velardita, 'Vittore Grubicy e il culto per Tranquillo Cremona,' in Annie-Paule Quinsac, ed., *Vittore Grubicy e l'Europa: Alle radici del divisionismo* (Milan: Skira, 2005), pp. 171-177.

²⁷⁹ "La sua mano, raffaellescamente virtuosa, si ribellava all'obbedienza." Gaetano Previati, 'Tranquillo Cremona Come Innovatore' (Dicembre 1912), reprinted in *Archivi del divisionismo*, ed. by Teresa Fiori and Fortunato Bellonzi, 2 vols (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1968), I, 115.

²⁸⁰ Vittore Grubicy de Dragon, 'Tecnica e estetica divisionista' (1896), reprinted *Archivi del divisionismo*, ed. by Fiori and Bellonzi, I, 99-100 (p. 98). See also Annie-Paule Quinsac, 'Milano 1890. La mostra postuma di Daniele Ranzoni,' in Quinsac, ed., *Vittore Grubicy e l'Europa*, pp. 179-182.

²⁸¹ Giovanni Segantini, 'Lettera a Domenico Tumiati, Maloja 29 maggio 1898,' reprinted in *Archivi del divisionismo*, ed. by Fiori and Bellonzi, I, 375. Soffici also related Ranzoni to Segantini and Rosso, in 'Un artista sacrificato: Daniele Ranzoni' (1911), reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri*, pp. 99-110.

²⁸² Vittore Grubicy de Dragon, 'Pittori futuristi', *Il Secolo*, 19 April 1910, reprinted in *Vittore Grubicy de Dragon: Scritti d'arte*, ed. by Ilaria Schiaffini (Rovereto: Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, 2009), pp. 179-183 (p. 182).

also painted cityscapes of Milan, which of course resemble Futurist depictions of the city. Bianchi's work often depicts snowy scenes of central Milan and night-time scenes of the illuminated city, subjects that gave him opportunity to play with the depiction of light.²⁸³ In the nocturnal scenes, such as *Vecchia Milano* (1890), the streetlights glow, and are reflected in the wet pavements, much like in Russolo's *Memories of a Night* (fig. 3.7). One of Bianchi's snowy scenes is particularly reminiscent of Carrà's *Leaving the Theatre* (fig. 3.9). In *Snow in the City* (1888-91) (fig. 3.8), the bright white snow creates striking chiaroscuro against the dark figures. In both works, and in many others by Bianchi, these figures are at an oblique angle, rather than stood up straight. In Carrà's work this angle has been associated with the Symbolist idea of the direction of lines depicting human emotion; its appearance in the Bianchi work reminds us that this posture is related to the physical experience of walking in cold temperatures. The dark curved forms of the arcade in *Snow in the City* are reminiscent of the black arches of the carriages in *Leaving the Theatre*, which can appear to be dark arches at first glance. Bianchi often paints the (still horse-drawn) trams, and often includes tram-lines in his compositions. Carrà was interested in Milan's (by then electric) trams and depicted them in *Piazza del Duomo* (1910), as well as the later Cubist-style *What the Tram Told Me* (1911) (figs 2.8, 2.12).

These works by Bianchi passed into private collections, and so I do not argue specific appropriations. However, Carrà did know of Bianchi, mentioning in his memoirs that he was the most appreciated artist of the milieu.²⁸⁴ Referring to his time at the Brera he describes how:

One evening, talking with some painters, it came to me to confirm that Mosè Bianchi did not understand the spiritual conditions and needs of his time and he moved art towards those stylistic conceptions, and instead of simplifying his work he filled it with frippery and immersed it in the eighteenth century. Hearing this criticism of his idol, Giuseppe Carrozzì became furious with me, screaming that I was not worthy to clean the boots of the great master, in so demonstrating that he had not understood the true meaning of my words.²⁸⁵

This somewhat oblique statement suggests that Carrà had some respect for his predecessor. It is possible that Carrà had sufficient familiarity with his works in order to know he was

²⁸³ On Bianchi see Paolo Biscottini, ed., *Mosè Bianchi e il suo tempo, 1840-1904* (Milan: Fabbri, 1987).

²⁸⁴ Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 19.

²⁸⁵ "Una sera parlando con alcuni pittori mi venne fatto di affermare che Mosè Bianchi non comprendeva le condizioni spirituali e le esigenze del suo tempo e verso quali concezioni stilistiche si movesse l'arte, e anziché semplificarsi s'infronzolì e si immerlettò alla settecentesca. Udendo criticare il grande idolo, Giuseppe Carrozzì s'infuriò contro di me, gridando che io ero indegno di allacciare le scarpe al grande maestro, dimostrando in tal modo di non capire anch'egli il vero significato delle mie parole." Carrà, *La mia vita*, pp. 72-73.

creating similar images two years later, whether in homage to or in order to surpass the eighteenth-century Tiepolesque frippery of Bianchi.

I return to Bianchi when considering Previati's interest in Bianchi's two versions of *Paolo and Francesca*, the Tiepolesque ceiling of the library in Villa Giovanelli at Lonigo (1877) and the later version donated to the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Milan in 1895 (figs 17.3, 17.8). These works and Previati's rendering of the scene are considered as sources Boccioni's pre-Futurism depiction of Dante's infamous lovers.

The importance of Scapigliatura for the Futurists, both directly and through the Divisionists and Medardo Rosso, cannot be overstated. Their *antipassatista* statements and reputation as *avveniristi* construct a strong lineage. The similarities are practical as well as rhetorical; while the formal similarities are minimal, the tendency to bring together all the arts, use newspapers, journals and *serate* to attract attention, and their creation of exhibition spaces outside the academy are all precedents for Futurism. However, the role of Vittore Grubicy in building the avant-gardist reputation of a movement which was bred at, and for the most part remained within, official artistic culture, should not be ignored.

As the following sections will now explain, Rosso and the Divisionists were openly appropriated by the Futurists, and so the appropriation of Scapigliatura by these later Lombard artists is another strong point of connection between the Scapigliati and the Futurists.

5.3 Futurism and Medardo Rosso

The sculptor Medardo Rosso trained in Milan and practised in Paris and his abstract sculptures have been associated with both Scapigliatura and Impressionism. However, even though Rosso trained and exhibited with the Scapigliati, he did not wish to be associated with that group. His connection with Impressionism is also tenuous as his sculptural 'impressions' were of a different nature to the painterly ones of the Impressionists. For this reason, this section singles him out, and focuses on Rosso's rebellious temperament and his importance for Boccioni's Futurist sculpture.

The proximity of Medardo Rosso's aesthetics to those of the Futurists is immutable; they openly praise him in their manifestos and Boccioni's appropriation of his work is acknowledged by both the artist himself and numerous scholars. I offer here a synopsis of these discussions but question the reading of Rosso as a wholly rebellious artist, instead seeking to position his ambivalent relationship with the past as a precedent for that of Futurism.

The Futurists on Rosso

Mentions of Rosso appear in both the painters' and technical manifestos and a number of the Futurist proclamations can be related to Rosso's aesthetics. For example, the call to suppress depictions of the nude for ten years in the technical manifesto recalls Rosso's aversion to nudes expressed in 1883.²⁸⁶ In the 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' Rosso is named alongside the other great Italian artists of the preceding generation, Segantini and Previati, to be addressed in the following section. The Futurists demand that the young artists of Italy:

ask these priests of a veritable religious cult, these guardians of old aesthetic laws, where we can go and see the works of Giovanni Segantini today. Ask them why the officials of the Commission have never heard of the existence of Gaetano Previati. Ask them where they can see Medardo Rosso's sculpture, or who takes the slightest interest in artists who have not yet had twenty years of struggle and suffering behind them, but are still producing works destined to honour their fatherland.²⁸⁷

Soffici had been campaigning for Italy to pay attention to the work of Rosso since 1909 in his book *Il caso Medardo Rosso*, which emphasises Rosso's *italianità*, in terms both of his status

²⁸⁶ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist Painting, Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 31. Sharon Hecker, 'Ambivalent Bodies: Medardo Rosso's Brera Petition', *The Burlington Magazine*, 142 (2000), 773–777, p. 777. Hecker cites H. De Horatiis, 'Dopo una scappata: Testa in bronzo di Medardo Rosso', *Giornale illustrato della Esposizione di Belle Arti in Roma*, 22 April 1883.

²⁸⁷ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 26.

as Italy's only living artistic genius, but, as I will come back to, as a modern continuation of an Italian artistic tradition. Two months after the publication of the 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters' seventeen of Rosso's sculptures were exhibited in the previously discussed *First Italian Exhibition of Impressionism and the Sculpture of Medardo Rosso* in Florence. Prezzolini's introduction to the catalogue for the exhibition described the initial idea for the exhibition, that of exhibiting the work of Rosso in Italy, as "an act of justice and reparation,"²⁸⁸ seeking to honour the Italian artist in his homeland. However, Rosso continued not to receive official recognition in Italy for a number of years following this exhibition. In 1914 Carrà still described the sculptor as "Great MEDARDO ROSSO Italian genius = UNKNOWN in *passatista* Italy."²⁸⁹

Boccioni considered Rosso at greater length in his sculpture manifesto of 1912. In October of that year he sent a copy of this manifesto to Rosso, "as an homage to your work for which I and my futurist friends have the deepest admiration."²⁹⁰ In that manifesto Boccioni calls Rosso:

an Italian, the only great modern sculptor who has tried to open up a whole new field of sculpture, by his representation in plastic art of the influences of the environment and the atmospheric links which bind it to his subject.²⁹¹

The other sculptors mentioned are Constantin Meunier, Antoine Bourdelle and Rodin, who are dismissed as influenced by Greek, Gothic and Renaissance style respectively, while Rosso is praised for being:

revolutionary, very modern, more profound and necessarily contained. In his sculptures there are no heroes or symbols, but the planes in a forehead of a woman, or child, which betray a hint of spatial liberation, will have far greater importance in the history of the spirit than that with which he has been credited in our times. Unfortunately the Impressionists' need for experiment has limited the research of Medardo Rosso to a species of both high and low relief. This shows that he is still conceiving the figure to something of a world as itself, with a traditional foundation, imbued with descriptive aims.

Medardo Rosso's revolution, then, although very important, springs from extrinsic, pictorial concepts, and ignores the problem of constructing planes. The sensitive touch of the thumb, imitating the lightness of the Impressionist paintbrush, gives a sense of vibrant immediacy to his works, but necessitates a rapid execution from life, which

²⁸⁸ "La presente, modesta e limitata, ma "prima mostra in Italia dell'Impressionismo" è nata dal bisogno di un atto di giustizia e di riparazione." Anon. [Giuseppe Prezzolini], *Catalogo della prima esposizione italiana dell'impressionismo francese e delle sculture di Medardo Rosso*, pp. 3-6.

²⁸⁹ "Grande MEDARDO ROSSO genio italiano = IGNOTO in Italia *passatista*" Carlo Carrà, 'Immobilità+Ventre', *Lacerba*, II, n. 1, 1 January 1914, 13-14 (p. 14).

²⁹⁰ "Avrete già ricevuto il manifesto della Scultura futurista ma tengo a mandarvelo personalmente come omaggio alla Vostra opera per la quale io e i miei amici futuristi sentiamo la più profonda ammirazione!" Boccioni, 'Letter to Medardo Rosso of 2nd October 1912', reprinted in *Umberto Boccioni: Lettere futuriste*, p. 51.

²⁹¹ Boccioni, 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 53.

deprives a work of art of any elements of universality. Consequently he has fallen prey to the same qualities and defects as the Impressionist painters; although it is from their experiments that our own aesthetic revolution springs, we shall move away to a diametrically opposed position.²⁹²

In this passage it is evident that Boccioni aimed to build upon and supersede Rosso in his sculpture just as Futurist painting overcame the problems of Impressionism. Boccioni praised Rosso for his plastic rendering of atmosphere, the modernity of his subjects, and his anti-academic attitude. Boccioni's emphasis on Rosso's revolutionary nature has been continued by scholarship on the artist.

Rosso and *antipassatismo*

Margaret Scolari Barr describes Rosso's rebelliousness as becoming his banner, making him a mythic figure, expelled from the Brera, turning his back on Italy for Paris, and as Scolari references, naming his son Francesco Evviva Ribelle (Francis Hurrah Rebel).²⁹³ Rosso turned his back on Italy artistically as well as geographically; his repudiation of the Italian artistic tradition distanced him from Rodin and brought his aesthetics closer to those of the Futurists. As Scolari Barr recounts, in 1879 after being conscripted:

as his troop train passed through Florence on the way to Rome, he covered his eyes to avoid the sight of the city that had cradled the Renaissance, which he already abhorred. In Rome he went to see Michelangelo's *Moses*, whose beard he compared to "a mass of Neapolitan spaghetti."²⁹⁴

In 1910 Soffici described how Rosso refused to ever enter Florence; this was not a lifelong commitment, but a refusal to do so until he had produced a work of art "capable of contradicting and confounding the spirit of our Renaissance."²⁹⁵ Participating in the Impressionist exhibition in Florence was therefore for Rosso a statement of his overcoming of the Italian Renaissance sculptural tradition.

The anecdotes of Rosso's abhorrence towards Florentine sculpture are part of a campaign by Rosso to disassociate himself with that tradition. After his falling out with Rodin, Rosso included his French contemporary in the same group as the tradition he loathed.²⁹⁶ Rosso conducted tours of his studios which Sharon Hecker describes as "mini-lessons in the

²⁹² Boccioni, 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture' (1912), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 62.

²⁹³ Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, p. 10.

²⁹⁴ Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, p. 10.

²⁹⁵ "aveva fatto giuro a se stesso si non por piede in Firenze se non quando fosse stato sicuro di aver messo al mondo un'opera capace di contraddire e confondere lo spirito del nostro rinascimento, che odia" Soffici, 'L'Impressionismo a Firenze' (1910), reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri*, p. 169.

²⁹⁶ For more on Rodin's classicism see chapter 4.1.

inherent “rightness” of his project and the “wrongness” of what he called a “statuary” or “paperweight” tradition of objects reaching from the Greeks to Michelangelo to Canova to Rodin.”²⁹⁷ In the introduction to the Florence Impressionism exhibition Prezzolini distinguished the modern Rosso from the *passatista* Rodin, but the aim of the show was to situate Rosso amongst modern French art.

Rosso’s avant-gardist credentials are supported by some aspects of his exhibition practice. In 1881, while still on military service in Pavia, Rosso entered the bust *L’allucinato* to the Scapigliatura *Indisposizione di Belle Arti* discussed in the previous section; he did not exhibit at the Esposizione Nazionale, leading to this idea of his early career being anti-establishment and thus avant-gardist. However, as discussed in the previous section, the *Indisposizione*, although subversive and humorous, was not wholly anti-academic and avant-gardist. Many years later Rosso was involved in the creation of the statutes for the Parisian Salon d’Automne in 1902, exhibiting there in 1904 and 1906. The importance to the Parisian avant-gardes of this unofficial Salon is in keeping with Rosso’s reputation. However, although Rosso book-ended his career with involvement in anti-establishment exhibitions, in-between he trained at the Brera and chose to exhibit at academic and regional salons.²⁹⁸

As Hecker has stressed, Rosso’s relationship with the past was not one of pure rebellion. Rosso was expelled from the Brera in March 1883 for punching a student who refused to sign his petition requesting real body parts in the school of anatomy and female and child models in the school of life drawing. Hecker notes that this petition was neither strongly anti-academic nor avant-gardist in its polite request for the Brera to return to what was not a new, but in fact an earlier practice of using cadavers.²⁹⁹ Rosso’s relationship with the academy was complex, he chose to attend the Brera (which was one of many art schools in Milan), arguably for the opportunity to exhibit at the salon, and was only excluded for his violence, not his artistic choices.

²⁹⁷ Sharon Hecker, ‘Reflections on Repetition in Rosso’s Art’, Harry Cooper and Sharon Hecker, *Medardo Rosso: Second Impressions* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 23-67 (p. 66). Hecker cites the sources of this story as Meier-Graefe, *Modern Art*, 21; Rictus Journals, NaFr16102, Journal 6, 12 May 1899, 41r/v.

²⁹⁸ “Il suo debutto alla *Indisposizione* potrebbe indicare una precoce scelta di lavorare ai margini dell’arte ufficiale, anche se successivamente egli ha esposto le sue opere in mostre accademiche e regionali come era la tendenza dominante di altri scultori.” Sharon Hecker, ‘L’esordio Milanese di Medardo Rosso’, *Bollettino dell’Accademia degli Euteleti della Città di San Miniato*, LXV (1998), 195–202 (p. 186).

²⁹⁹ It is unclear whether in the petition ‘il vero’ (real) refers to live models or cadavers. Hecker, ‘Ambivalent Bodies: Medardo Rosso’s Brera Petition’. See also Hecker, ‘Reflections on Repetition in Rosso’s Art’, Cooper and Hecker, *Medardo Rosso: Second Impressions*, p. 30.

Rosso's ambivalence towards artistic authority continued in Paris. Although the Paris Salon had been run by artists since 1881, Rosso's decision to exhibit at the Palais des Champs-Élysée in 1886 distinguished him from the Indépendents salon formed that same year, shows a degree of attachment to the art establishment. In February of that year Rosso sold works through the state sponsored auction house, the Hôtel Drouot.³⁰⁰ Rosso was pleased when he sold two works to the French state in 1907 as this gave him a chance of seeing his work displayed in the Palais du Luxembourg. In general Rosso's works were commissioned or bought by collectors and major museums; the works loaned to the First Italian Exhibition of Impressionism came from modern art museums across Europe. Rosso was associated with, if not officially attached to major Paris dealers in Impressionism, Georges Petit and Albert Goupil, with whom Degas, thought to be an early champion of Rosso in Paris, could have put him in touch.³⁰¹ Rosso's courtship of the (albeit more modern end of the) art establishment serves to demonstrate not only the peculiarity of the lack of recognition he received in Italy and, more importantly, the ambivalence of his *antipassatismo*. As I now argue, his desire to relate to the Italian tradition, while producing innovative work and maintaining an avant-gardist attitude, is a useful model for comparison with the Futurists' relationship with the past.

Rosso's interest in the tradition is evident in his making copies of a number of sculptures from previous periods in art history, including ancient Rome and the Italian Renaissance of Donatello and Verrocchio, which he sold and included amongst exhibitions of his work. Rosso made a small carving of Michelangelo's unfinished *Medici Madonna* from the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo in Florence which is included in two photographs of Rosso's work from two points in his career (figs 16.1, 16.5). In the photograph of Rosso's Milanese studio, taken in 1882 or 1883, he has lined up a number of his sculptures on plinths in front of a curtain. The artist himself peeks around a screen placing his face within the line up, second from the left. Hecker, noting that Rosso has written *fine* (end) on the pedestal topped by his laughing old woman, reads this photo as the artist situating his work against that of Michelangelo with a right-to-left chronology "the Renaissance past is defined as origin but

³⁰⁰ Luciano Caramel, 'Notizie biografiche,' *Medardo Rosso: Le origini della scultura moderna* (Milan: Skira, 2004), pp. 243-248 (p.249).

³⁰¹ Caramel, 'Notizie biografiche,' *Medardo Rosso*, p. 244. Anon. [Giuseppe Prezzolini], *Catalogo della prima esposizione italiana dell'impressionismo francese e delle sculture di Medardo Rosso*, pp. 3-6.

reduced to a puppet like figurine mastered and reproduced by Rosso's own hand."³⁰² This photograph may have been taken while Rosso was still studying at the Brera and endorses the idea that he wished to be part of the tradition, rather than rebel from it. The later photograph shows Rosso's installation from the 1904 Salon d'Automne. In front of the photographs hung on the salon wall, Rosso positioned this same small carving next to his own *Après la visite* (1889), again enforcing this comparison between his own work and that of Michelangelo, this time in a public forum. In a further comparison, Scolari Barr likens the wistful pose of *The Flesh of Others* (1883-84) (fig. 16.3), which was also included in the same Salon d'Automne and the 1910 Florence exhibition, to that of the Michelangelo sculpture.³⁰³

Scolari Barr concludes from the fact that Rosso was willing to sell his copies of antique sculpture that while he continued to loathe classical and Renaissance art, Rosso was proud in the skill he possessed to make what he felt them to be creations, not copies.³⁰⁴ It can be argued that are more factors at play here than Scolari Barr acknowledges, not least the continuing market for antique copies, and the importance of repetition in Rosso's practice.³⁰⁵ Soffici, who as stated earlier acknowledged Rosso's anti-tradition stance, also noted the sculptor's achievement of "a close accord between the latest modernity and the remotest antiquity. Here [referring to *Laughing Woman*] [...] all times meet and recognise each other. There is Italy, early Greece, Paris and Egypt in this mouth of big teeth, in these bright eyes, in this flesh, in this flat nose, in these plebeian cheeks, in this thick hair, yes true, yes ours, and nonetheless yes, eternally real."³⁰⁶ Soffici's had also emphasised his timeless *italianità* in 1909.³⁰⁷

Rosso did not only bring the classical and the Renaissance into his practice, he also introduced his practice to them; he placed one of his works next to Michelangelo's *Slaves*

³⁰² Hecker, 'Reflections on Repetition in Rosso's Art', in Cooper and Hecker, *Medardo Rosso: Second Impressions*, p. 63.

³⁰³ Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, p. 25. See also Hecker, 'Reflections on Repetition in Rosso's Art', in Cooper and Hecker, *Medardo Rosso: Second Impressions* p. 156, n. 140. For a photograph showing the presence of this work see Mino Borghi, *Medardo Rosso* (Milan: Edizioni del Milione, 1950), fig. 10.

³⁰⁴ Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, p. 56.

³⁰⁵ On Rosso's repetition see Hecker, 'Reflections on Repetition in Rosso's Art', in Cooper and Hecker, *Medardo Rosso: Second Impressions*, pp. 23-67.

³⁰⁶ "un accordo più stretto fra la postrema modernità e l'antichità più remota. Qui, [...] tutti i tempi s'incontrano e si riconoscono. C'è l'Italia, la prima Grecia, Parigi e l'Egitto in questa bocca dai grossi denti, in questi occhi brillanti, in queste carni, in questo naso camuso, in queste gote plebee in questi capelli grassi, sì veri, sì nostri e nondimeno sì eternamente reali." Ardengo Soffici, 'L'Impressionismo a Firenze' (1910), reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri*, p. 177.

³⁰⁷ "L'arte del Rosso riunisce in sé, come s'è visto, la forza espressiva della modernità e la compattezza e sobrietà dello stile antico; è un'arte in cui - secondo scriveva un critico francese - tutti i tempi si riconoscono: né capricciosa, né impacciata, ma viva e indipendente, conforta per l'oggi e fa sperare nell'avvenire." Soffici, *Il caso Medardo Rosso*, p. 68.

(1520-32) in the Accademia in Florence, and was delighted that no-one was surprised to see the two works in conjunction. Moreover, he claimed that younger visitors preferred his *Baby Chewing Bread* (1892) to Michelangelo's *David* (1501-04), next to which he had placed this work.³⁰⁸ According to Lorella Giudici, referring to a letter of either 1911 or 1920 in which Rosso asks Prezzolini if *The Porter* (1883) (fig. 16.7) could be shown next to a Michelangelo, Rosso's engagement with the tradition had a very specific aim:

Rosso has compared the works of his own Lombard genius with the Renaissance in order to make more evident the distances that exist between his sculpture and the renaissance conceptions of form and space. The comparisons he will want, even with Donatello, Rodin, or with works (he himself copied) belonging to classical schemas and, in his opinion false and misleading. The comparison was pedagogical: he taught to seize the abyss which exists between art meant as form and art meant as life: between an object and an emotion of light. An abyss that should not be covered up, on the contrary, it should establish a limit from which to break away for a new art, closer to the real, for a language in step with the times.³⁰⁹

It is this model of positioning oneself in the context of the old in order to emphasise novelty that I propose is applicable to Futurism.

Formal similarities between Rosso and Futurism

As well as sharing this ambivalent *antipassatismo* with the Macchiaioli and Scapigliati, Rosso also had similar aesthetic concerns, particularly the depiction of light. In 1907 Rosso wrote, "light is the true essence of our existence, a work of art that has nothing to do with light, has no reason to exist."³¹⁰ The technique of applying wax over bronze or plaster also allowed Rosso to toy with light, which penetrates this material. His claim that "Nothing is material in space" is supported by his practice, which excludes holes and voids, and seeks to incorporate the atmosphere of the subject into the subject itself. Hence in *Impressions of a Boulevard: Woman with a Veil* (fig. 16.6) the veil over the woman's face and the air around her as she promenades become solid. An 1895 version of this work was loaned to the 1910 Florence exhibition by the Palais du Luxembourg. Rosso's statements are echoed in the

³⁰⁸ Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, p. 60.

³⁰⁹ "Rosso ha preteso il paragone con le opere del genio lombardo proprio per mettere maggiormente in evidenza le distanze che ci sono tra la sua scultura e le concezioni rinascimentali della forma e dello spazio. Confronti che vorrà anche con Donatello, Rodin o con opere (da lui stesso rifatte) appartenenti a schemi classici e, a suo parere, falsi o fuorvianti. Il confronto era pedagogico: insegnava a cogliere l'abisso esistente tra un'arte intesa come forma e un'arte intesa come vita: tra un oggetto e un'emozione di luce. Un abisso che non doveva essere colmato, al contrario, doveva stabilire un limite da cui staccarsi per un'arte nuova e più vicina al reale, per un linguaggio al passo con i tempi." Lorella Giudici in Medardo Rosso, *Scritti sulla scultura*, ed. by Lorella Giudici (Milan: Abscondita, 2003), p. 79. n. 10. The letter is possibly from 1920 when the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Florence was trying to purchase a wax version of *Portinaia*.

³¹⁰ "La luce è la vera essenza della nostra esistenza, un'opera d'arte che non ha a che fare con la luce non ha ragione di esistere." Medardo Rosso, 'L'impressionismo in scultura, una spiegazione', *The Daily Mail*, London, 17 October 1907, reprinted in *Scritti sulla scultura*, ed. by Giudici, pp. 15-20 (p. 15).

proclamation in the 'Technical Manifesto' that "motion and light destroy the materiality of bodies."³¹¹ As Rosso wrote to Edmond Claris:

When I do a portrait I cannot limit it to only the lines of the head, because this belongs to a body, one finds that it exercises an influence on it, it makes up part of a whole that you cannot overcome. The impression that you produce for me is not the same if you were to be spotted alone in a garden, or if you were to be seen amongst a group of men in a room or on the street. Only this matters.³¹²

Such claims, known to the Futurists through Soffici's publication on Rosso, have an analogous sense to the later Futurist claim about tricks of vision causing a speeding motor bus to blend into the houses it passes, or a horse at the end of a street to appear on the cheek of the person you are talking to.³¹³

Boccioni also discussed the sculpture of the environment in his sculpture manifesto a couple of paragraphs after the analysis of Rosso's work quoted at length above. This concept is perfectly demonstrated in Boccioni's *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (fig. 6.8). In this work the striding figure appears to be made of flames, or plasma, barely solid, transubstantiating between the solid plaster and the air around, the figure is not cut out from the environment around him, from the air his moving body shifts. The dynamic position of Boccioni's *Unique Forms* is also comparable to Rosso's now lost *Impression of the Boulevard: Paris by Night* (c. 1895-6) (fig. 6.14). In the surviving photographs, we see a figure, fleeting, possibly fleeing, with a flowing cloak of either fabric or displaced air billowing out behind it, like the calves of Boccioni's *Unique Forms*.

Another comparison between Rosso and Boccioni, made by Longhi, is the approach to the bust as seen in Rosso's *Porter*, a version of which was displayed in Florence in 1910, and Boccioni's *Antigraceful* (1912-13) (figs 16.4, 16.7).³¹⁴ Both of these women, depicted unflatteringly yet compassionately, appear slumped forward, with Rosso's *Portinaia* casting a more downward gaze than that of Boccioni's figure, both rejecting the tradition of heroic masculine busts. The rough modelling emphasises convex and concave forms around the base of the sculpture, more stylized in Boccioni's work; where the voids Rosso evaded bore

³¹¹ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 30.

³¹² "Quando io faccio un ritratto non posso limitarlo alle linee della testa, perche questa testa appartiene ad un corpo, si trova in un ambiente che esercita un'influenza su di lei, fa parte di un tutto che non posso sopprimere. L'impressione che tu produci in me non è la stessa che se ti scorgessi solo in un giardino o ti vedessi in mezzo ad un gruppo d'altri uomini in un salotto o per la strada. Questo solo importa." Cited in Soffici, *Il caso Medardo Rosso*, p. 56.

³¹³ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, 'Futurist painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 28.

³¹⁴ Longhi, *Scultura Futurista Boccioni*, p. 10.

deeper into the head of *Antigrazioso*.³¹⁵ In one of Rosso's photographs of his sculpture the lighting accentuates chiaroscuro on the rough surface, suggesting a depth comparable with Boccioni's.

Rosso can even be seen to pre-empt Boccioni's collage sculptures. As Lista stated:

it was as if Boccioni found himself constrained to follow all Rosso's experimental footsteps. Already in 1897, in Venice, arriving at the most extreme phase of his naturalist realism, Rosso had exhibited due assemblages, *Fine* and *Se la fusse grappa*, that included real objects in an attempt to restore the interdependence between the figure and its environmental space.³¹⁶

It should be remembered that Degas had exhibited *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen* (1880-81), made of painted wax with a real tutu, hair and ribbon, in the sixth Impressionist exhibition of 1881, although Degas aimed at a different kind of depiction of the real than Rosso and Boccioni's mixed-media works.³¹⁷

The majority of Boccioni's sculptures were made of plaster, which Rosso and Rodin were arguably the first to use as a finished medium rather than an intermediary process.³¹⁸ Boccioni's surfaces are much smoother than Rosso's painterly use of the medium, but doubtless he was aware of the precedent. The ephemerality of plaster has deeper connotations for the Futurists, with their self-obsolescing avant-gardist rhetoric. As has been well documented, many of Boccioni's sculptures were destroyed, and are now only known through photographs. It should not be overlooked that plaster was a cheap and readily available material for Rosso and Boccioni, especially compared with the cost of marble and casting in metal. As such, both artists' choice of material was arguably a pragmatic as well as artistic choice, subsequently exploited for its *antipassatista* credentials.

³¹⁵ Rosso arguably evaded depth and kept his work closer to a low relief in response to Baudelaire's critique of sculpture. Baudelaire had complained, in 'The Salon of 1846', that sculptures could be viewed from a number of points, whereas painting has one correct viewpoint. Rosso's pictorialist reliefs were no doubt a response to this, but Harry Cooper has effectively argued that Rosso's work is not purely relief, and that Rosso had an ambivalent relationship with the relief tradition. Harry Cooper, 'Ecce Rosso!', in Cooper and Hecker, pp. 1-21 (p. 4). See also Charles Baudelaire, 'The Salon of 1846,' reprinted in *Art in Paris, 1845-1862: Salons and Other Exhibitions Reviewed by Charles Baudelaire*, ed. and trans. by Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1965), pp. 41-120 (p. 111).

³¹⁶ "Ma è come se Boccioni si trovasse costretto a ripercorrere tutte le tappe dell'itinerario sperimentale di Rosso. Già nel 1897, a Venezia, arrivando alla fase più estrema del suo realismo naturalista, Rosso aveva esposto due assemblaggi, *Fine* e *Se la fusse grappa*, che comportavano degli oggetti veri nel tentativo di restituire l'interdipendenza tra la figura e lo spazio ambientale." Giovanni Lista, 'Medardo Rosso e i futuristi', *Medardo Rosso: Le origini della scultura moderna*, ed. by Caramel, pp. 41-65 (p. 58).

³¹⁷ Hecker, 'Reflections on Repetition in Rosso's Art', in Cooper and Hecker, *Medardo Rosso: Second Impressions*, p. 34. As discussed in the previous chapter, this could be seen as an appropriation of Byzantine and Italian Primitive art, as well as a continuation of Rosso.

³¹⁸ Hecker, 'Reflections on Repetition in Rosso's Art', in Cooper and Hecker, *Medardo Rosso: Second Impressions*, p. 34.

Rosso's position as a precedent for Boccioni's Futurist sculpture is widely-acknowledged. Previous descriptions of this relationship have focused on the sculptural aims and formal similarities of the two sculptors' work and Rosso's rebellious nature. I have sought to nuance this reading of Rosso's *antipassatismo* to demonstrate the ambivalence of his relationship with the past. Drawing attention to the importance of recognition from (the French) artistic establishment I have argued that in this respect he cannot be considered avant-gardist. Moreover, his relationship with the Italian sculptural tradition, his desire to supersede it which is manifested amongst other ways, through appropriation, is an example of the kind of destructive tradition and appropriation described in chapter three. It also provides a model of *antipassatismo* that can be applied to the Futurists.

5.4 Futurism, Divisionism and Neo-Impressionism

Following on from the Scapigliati a movement (or more properly a technique, as I will come to explain) flourished in Milan before the launch of Futurism. Italian Divisionism,³¹⁹ as Futurism's most recent Italian artistic past, is considered to be a direct progenitor, despite the Futurists' claim to have no past. The relationship is evident in early Futurism's personnel, rhetoric, technique and compositions. This idea is rife in Italian scholarship, common in Anglophone, and even central to the Futurist manifestos themselves. In 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto' the Futurists state "We conclude that painting cannot exist today without Divisionism."³²⁰ While their praise for the Macchiaioli and Scapigliati was temperate, in both their public and private writings the Futurists boldly supported the Divisionists, whom they considered exemplary of the Italian state's myopia with regards to modern art. As quoted with reference to Rosso, in the 'Manifesto of Futurists Painters', when attacking the *passatista* art establishment, the Futurists demand to know why the Divisionists Giovanni Segantini and Gaetano Previati are still unrecognised by the art establishment.³²¹ As discussed in this section, Segantini and Previati were recognised by the commercial Galleria Grubicy in Milan, mentioned in the previous section, through which the Futurists became familiar with their work. The dealer and critic Vittore Grubicy was also a Divisionist artist, his colleagues included Angelo Morbelli, Plinio Nomellini, Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, Giovanni Sottocornola and, as is particularly pertinent, Giacomo Balla. In addition to addressing these Italian artists, this section also briefly considers Futurism's relationship with Neo-Impressionism and the *passato remoto* connections that Divisionism and Neo-Impressionism establish.

The Futurists on Divisionism

Carrà's autobiography admits his predilection for the Divisionists. He says that when Segantini died in 1899 he "cried for hours, often calling out to the heavens "Why, Lord, have

³¹⁹ Even though it was primarily associated with Lombardy and Piedmont, as it was born after the Italian unification, Divisionism is generally referred to Italian Divisionism, unlike the Tuscan Macchiaioli and the Lombard Scapigliati.

³²⁰ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla, and Severini, 'Futurist painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 28-29.

³²¹ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla, and Severini, 'Futurist painting: Technical Manifesto' (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, p. 26.

you not killed me instead of him?”³²² Carrà knew Segantini's work through the older artist's gallery, saying that he was “enamoured with the Galleria Grubicy on largo Cairoli, where Segantini and Previati exhibited.”³²³ In 1906 Carrà visited Previati's studio; they spoke about their contemporaries and immediate predecessors in art, particularly the English Pre-Raphaelites and the French Impressionists. Carrà reports that Previati described Divisionism as “not only a new method, but the most suitable for expressing the thoughts and feelings of modern men.”³²⁴ This autobiographical detail highlights the Divisionists' awareness that modern men needed to express themselves differently, to create an art of their own time; Carrà would have been aware of this precedent when the artists' manifestos were prepared. Another important point here is that when Previati spoke of the Pre-Raphaelites, Carrà responded that “in every way our primitives would have taught us something better.”³²⁵ Whether or not Carrà, writing many years later, was deliberately making his interest in the Primitives appear earlier, the claim that he saw the connection between modern painting and the Primitives, and his desire to defend his native predecessors as superior to foreign art movements, demonstrates Carrà artistic patriotism and fondness for pre-Renaissance art as early as 1906.

Boccioni and Severini were aware of the Divisionists through Balla. They had met Pellizza da Volpedo when he visited Balla's studio in Rome in 1906 while in the city to display work in the *Amatori e Cultori* show of that year. Agnese suggests that the melancholic Boccioni would have related to Pellizza.³²⁶ On the news of his death Boccioni described him as sweet, serene and “so full of faith in the future.”³²⁷ The Divisionists' concern for the future of art was one of the primary draws of the group for the young Futurists.

In 1907 Boccioni attended the Italian Divisionism show in Paris which had been organised by Alberto Grubicy and the Paris branch of the Italian cultural institute Société Dante Alighieri,

³²² “Quando Segantini morì nel '99, ritiratomi nel mio abbaino-rifugio piansi lungamente, dicendo spesso ad alta voce rivolto al cielo: “Perché, Signore, non avete fatto morir me in vece sua?”” Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 19.

³²³ “Ma una vera cotta l'ebbi per la Galleria Grubicy del largo Cairoli, dove venivano esposte opere di Segantini e Previati.” Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 19.

³²⁴ “Passò quindi a parlarmi del divisionismo, che secondo lui era non soltanto un modo nuovo, ma il più indicato ad esprimere i nostri pensieri e sentimenti di uomini moderni.” Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 51.

³²⁵ “A mia volta gli feci osservare che ad ogni modo i nostri primitivi ci avrebbero insegnato qualcosa di meglio.” Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 51.

³²⁶ Agnese, *Vita di Boccioni*, p. 79.

³²⁷ “Era così dolce, così sereno e così pieno di fiducia nell'avvenire” Boccioni, '[16th June 1907]', *Diari*, p. 28.

formed in 1902.³²⁸ In this exhibition the first few rooms were dedicated to the younger Italian Divisionists, followed by major displays of Previati and Segantini. In his diary Boccioni called it “very interesting;” describing Segantini, Previati and Fornara as wonderful, daring and worthy, respectively.³²⁹ Boccioni was particularly enamoured with Previati, whose *The Technique of Painting* Boccioni read between December 1907 and January 1908; this text made Boccioni feel inadequate due to his lack of technical knowledge.³³⁰

In March 1908 Boccioni visited Previati’s studio; on 2nd March he wrote in his diary about talking to him for three hours and agreeing with nearly everything he said, describing the artist as quite different from Balla and “a soul full of faith and courage,”³³¹ a description which chimes with that of Pellizza. At the end of March, however, Boccioni commented in his diary that he found Previati changed, that he found visits to his studio discouraging, but admitted to still visiting when he was tired, despite knowing it would be a disheartening experience.³³² The position of Previati’s studio, above Piazza del Duomo, is indicative of the correlative attitudes of the two artists, in that Previati chose this studio so that he could be in the middle of the city’s life. Giovanna Ginex has suggested that Boccioni’s *Riot in the Gallery* (1910) could have been inspired by the view from Previati’s studio window, which looked down on the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II.³³³

Boccioni’s estimation of Previati is well summarised in his 1916 review of Fornara and Previati’s exhibition at La Permanente, in which he calls him the “greatest artist that Italy has had from Tiepolo until today.”³³⁴ Through Previati, whose admiration for Scapigliatura has already been mentioned, Boccioni can be linked to this preceding movement. As Masoero has identified, Previati, as a former Scapigliato and current Divisionista, “opened the road to

³²⁸ Sergio Rebora attributes the organization wholly to Grubicy, while Dominique Lobstein plays down his involvement. Sergio Rebora, ‘L’arte come impresa. Il caso Previati-Grubicy,’ *Gaetano Previati, 1852-1920: Un protagonista nel simbolismo europeo*, ed. by Fernando Mazzocca (Milan: Electa, 1999), pp. 46-53 (p. 49). Dominique Lobstein, ‘Paris 1907: The Only Salon of Italian Divisionists’, in *Divisionism & Neo-Impressionism: Arcadia & Anarchy*, ed. by Vivien Greene (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2007), pp. 59-67.

³²⁹ “L’esposizione dei divisionisti a Parigi, interessantissima. Tele meravigliose del Segantini, arditissime del Previati e degne quelle di Fornara e altri.” Boccioni, [17th October 1907], *Diari*, p. 56. In this same passage he says “Balla is finished”, presumably due to the absence of his teacher at this exhibition.

³³⁰ Boccioni, [21st December 1907], *Diari*, p. 63.

³³¹ “È un’anima pena di fede e di coraggio.” Boccioni, [2nd March 1908], *Diari*, p. 83.

³³² Boccioni, [31st March 1908], *Diari*, p. 97.

³³³ Giovanna Ginex, “Un sogno che svanisce nella luce della modernità”: Gaetano Previati nella lettura della critica, dalle suggestioni antipositiviste all’influsso su Umberto Boccioni’, in *Gaetano Previati, 1852-1920*, ed. by Mazzocca, pp. 69-75 (p. 70).

³³⁴ “il più grande artista che l’Italia ha avuto da Tiepolo fino ad oggi” Umberto Boccioni, ‘Gaetano Previati’ (1916), *Archivi del divisionismo*, ed. by Fiori and Bellonzi, I, 55.

Futurism, profoundly marking the younger years of Boccioni, who always considered him a great master.”³³⁵ Judith Ellen Meighan writes similarly of Previati’s pivotal role, describing him as the ‘silent partner’ in the formation of Futurist painting, as he provided the Futurists with theory and technique, suggesting that the press censure of his exhibition at La Permanente in January and February 1910 on the grounds of Previati’s abandonment of correct linear perspective caused Boccioni to turn to Marinetti. She concludes that “We cannot measure the breadth and depth of Previati’s personal involvement in the formative years of Futurism.”³³⁶ Meighan’s conception of Boccioni’s work between 1910 and 1911 as a marriage of a Marinettian vocabulary and Previatian technique, is further explored when I come to address formal resonances between Divisionist and Futurist paintings.

Balla, a well-established Divisionist painter who tutored Boccioni and Severini in this technique, is crucial to the narrative of continuity between Divisionism and Futurism. He was not involved in the writing of the manifesto of Futurist painting, and as highlighted in the previous chapter, remained somewhat distant from the group in the first years of the movement. It has been argued that Balla did not immediately change his work to fit with the Futurist credo not through lack of commitment, but as an older man with a wife and child to support, he had a more pressing need to earn a living with his existing Divisionist style.³³⁷ The turning point was in 1912-13 when Balla held an auction of all his Divisionist/pre-Futurist work under the title ‘For Sale: The Works of the Late Balla,’ then re-christened himself FuturBalla.³³⁸ Despite this constructed break, and stark contrast between the more abstract and experimental work produced by FuturBalla and the Divisionism of Fu (late) Balla, there is strong continuity in his interest in motion, photography and the modern city; moreover, Balla’s study of light lasted his whole career.³³⁹

³³⁵ “apri di fatto la strada al Futurism, segnando profondamente gli anni giovanili di Boccioni, che lo considererà sempre un grande maestro.” Masoero, ‘Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo: un percorso di modernità’, *Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo*, ed. by Caroli and Masoero, p. 34.

³³⁶ Judith Ellen Meighan, ‘The Stati d’Animo Aesthetic: Gaetano Previati, Umberto Boccioni and the Development of Early Futurist Painting in Italy’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1998), pp. 161, 165.

³³⁷ Susan Barnes Robinson, *Giacomo Balla: Divisionism and Futurism 1871-1912* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1981), p. 82.

³³⁸ Gerald Silk, ‘Fu Balla e Balla Futurista’, *Art Journal*, 41 (Winter, 1981), 328–336 (p. 328).

³³⁹ Gerald Silk, ‘Fu Balla e Balla Futurista’, p. 335.

Saying Goodbye (c. 1908-1909) is sometimes described as “already Futurist,”³⁴⁰ and the balustrade beats out a descending rhythm into the spiralling vortex of the staircase, but the sentimentality of the scene contradicts this. Balla’s only strongly Futurist painting of his Divisionist period was *Streetlight* (1910-11)³⁴¹ (fig. 3.6) discussed in chapter one. Balla had already tackled such a Futurist subject in his nocturnal street scene *October* (c. 1902). The flecks of colour in *Streetlight*, which show the artificial light, are, however stylized, obviously of Divisionist descent. Lara Pucci has compared this work to Pellizza’s *The Sun (Rising Sun)* (1904) (fig. 3.5), stressing both the continuity between the two movements, and the novelty of the new electric Futurist sun.³⁴²

The continuity between Divisionism and Futurism, above discussed in terms of personnel and the respect the Futurist artists held for the Divisionists, is also evident in their theoretical statements. The Divisionists had a complex relationship with the past, and particularly the Italian pictorial tradition.

Divisionism and *antipassatismo*

Like the Macchiaioli, Scapigliati and Rosso before them, the Divisionists subscribed to a strongly anti-academic aesthetic attitude; they can therefore be seen as the final part of the chain that brought this anti-academic and anti-classical tradition, which arguably goes back at least to the Baroque and fellow Lombard Caravaggio, to the Futurists. As Anna Maria Damigella describes it, “the Futurists owed a moral debt to this small group from Piedmont and Lombardy [the Divisionists] which rebelled against academic conventions, provincialism

³⁴⁰ Elena Gigli, ‘Giacomo Balla 1871-1911 Quarant’anni di vita pubblica e privata’, *Giacomo Balla: 1895-1911: Verso il futurismo*, ed. by Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco (Venice: Marsilio, 1998), pp. 131-157 (p. 156).

³⁴¹ Balla’s *Streetlight* has been dated to 1910-11, but Balla himself backdated it to 1909. When Balla described this painting to Alfred H. Barr in 1954 he referred to it as produced during his “divisionist period (1900-1910)” but the modernity of the subject is secured as he aimed “to show that the romantic ‘moonlight’ had been overpowered by the modern electric lamplight”, claiming that the Futurist mantra “Let’s murder the moonlight” stemmed from this painting. Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco, ‘Giacomo Balla Verso il Futurismo’, *Giacomo Balla: 1895-1911: Verso Il Futurismo*, ed. by Fagiolo dell’Arco, pp. 13-39 (p. 23). Originally quoted in Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco, *Ommaggio a Balla* (Rome: M. Bulzoni, 1967), p. 52. As Susan Barnes Robinson has commented “Balla, writing more than four decades after the fact, undoubtedly inverted the sequence of events.” Robinson, *Giacomo Balla: Divisionism and Futurism 1871-1912*, p. 85. Maurizio Calvesi has sought to clear up the confusion by suggesting that Balla dated the work 1909 to commemorate the founding of the Futurist movement. Maurizio Calvesi, ‘Penetrazione e magia nella Pittura di Balla,’ *L’Arte Moderna*, v. 14 (Milan: Fratelli Fabbri 1967), p. 122 and n.73, quoted in Robinson, *Giacomo Balla: Divisionism and Futurism 1871-1912*, p. 85. *Streetlight* is a consummate example of the flexibility and inconsistencies of time for the Futurists; what first appears to be a sharply delineated time frame is actually fuzzy and hotly debated even within the group.

³⁴² Lara Pucci, ‘Notes on Artists and Paintings’, in Fraquelli, Ginex, Greene, and Scotti Tosini, *Radical Light: Italy’s Divisionist Painters 1891-1910*, pp. 129-169 (p. 132).

and the pictorial limits of empirical reality,”³⁴³ the Futurists were “the first to recognize the innovations of Divisionism, that is, its break with historicism and its affirmation of the artist’s creative freedom.”³⁴⁴

This attitude is clear in the writings of Vittore Grubicy. At a conference in Milan in 1893 he stated:

Look back a little, to good old days, when in all Italy there was no trace of the many Academies and Institutes of Fine Arts that afflict us now: [...] there was not the splendid “past” and “the ancients” that today we are forced to consult and emulate.³⁴⁵

Grubicy, like the Futurists and the Macchiaioli before him, was interested in producing art for his own time: “They are the battles of art. And we have promised to participate in them, lining up next to all that is sincerely art *of our time*, to all that is initiative and progress.”³⁴⁶ As discussed above, this phrase ‘of our time’ appeared in Signorini’s and Boccioni’s writings. He goes on to note how the Divisionist technique and the aesthetic importance they attribute to light is part of this negation of the past; their

new aesthetic horizons, [...] even if less vast and powerful than those of the past, will have at least the incalculable quality of not being a rehash of that *already done* wonderfully by predecessors, but to have its own physiognomy that signifies among those to come a characteristic track of our epoch, as have signified all the great arts of the past, not excluding the baroque.³⁴⁷

Like the other *passato prossimo* movements discussed in this chapter, this statement suggests a respect for the art of the past, but contempt for its repetition in the present. The

³⁴³ Anna Maria Damigella, ‘Divisionism and Symbolism in Italy at the Turn of the Century’, in *Italian Art in the 20th Century: Painting and Sculpture, 1900-1988*, ed. by Emily Braun (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1989), pp. 33-41 (p. 33).

³⁴⁴ Damigella, ‘Divisionism and Symbolism in Italy at the Turn of the Century’, in *Italian Art in the 20th Century: Painting and Sculpture, 1900-1988*, ed. by Braun, p. 38.

³⁴⁵ “Guardatevi un po’ in dietro, ai bei tempi che furono, quando in tutta Italia non c’era neppure traccia di quelle numerosissime Accademie ed Istituti di Belle Arti che ora la affliggono: quando non c’erano che le *botteghe* dei maestri e mancavano i mezzi di diffusione e di comunicazione che abbiamo oggi e mancava tutto lo splendido “passato” e “gli antichi” che oggi abbiamo sotto mano da consultare e da emulare.” Vittore Grubicy de Dragon, ‘Un po’ d’arte per tutti’, *Idea Liberale*, II, 10, 5 March 1893, 5-7 (I part), and II, 11, 12 March 1893, 6-7 (II part), reprinted in *Vittore Grubicy de Dragon: Scritti d’arte*, ed. by Schiaffini, pp. 116-130 (p. 119).

³⁴⁶ Sono le battaglie dell’arte. E noi abbiamo promesso di parteciparvi, colle nostre forze schierandoci a fianco di tutto quanto è sinceramente arte *del nostro tempo*, di tutto ciò che è iniziativa e progresso.” Vittore Grubicy de Dragon, ‘Le nuove battaglie dell’arte’, *Cronaca d’arte*, I, 1, 21 August 1890, p. 4, reprinted in *Vittore Grubicy de Dragon: Scritti d’arte*, ed. by Schiaffini, pp. 55-57 (p. 56).

³⁴⁷ “È un’estetica, in sostanza, che conduce ancora allo studio d’un altro aspetto della VITA, poiché tutti sentiamo che LUCE È VITA e, se, come molti a ragione affermano, ARTE È VITA e la luce è una forma di *vita*, la tecnica divisionista, la quale tende ad accrescerne di molto – in confronto al passato – l’espressione sulla tela, può essere la culla di nuovi orizzonti estetici per il domani; orizzonti i quali, anco se meno vasti e poderosi di quelli del passato, avranno almeno il pregio incalcolabile di non essere la rifrittura del *già fatto* meravigliosamente dai predecessori, ma di avere una fisionomia propria che segnerà fra i venturi una traccia caratteristica anche dell’epoca nostra, come la segnarono tutte le grandi arti del passato non esclusa la barocca.” Vittore Grubicy de Dragon, ‘Tecnica ed estetica divisionista’, *La Triennale*, 14-15, Turin, 1896, 110-112, reprinted in *Vittore Grubicy de Dragon: Scritti d’arte*, ed. by Schiaffini, pp. 174-178 (p. 178).

acknowledgement of the Baroque indicates the aforementioned revival of interest in this period at the turn of the century.

Aurora Scotti Tosini has described the Divisionist relationship with the Italian pictorial tradition concisely and effectively; it warrants quoting at length:

the desire to come to terms with the history of painting was keenly felt by all the Divisionists. Leonardo da Vinci's painting treatise, *Trattato della pittura*, for example, was popular among the artists – Pellizza had a copy in his library. Grubicy sought to construct a history of nineteenth-century Lombard art with its own logic and its own progression, and built his collection of art in accordance with this program. Segantini, in supporting his thesis that art cannot be taught, evoked "the vigorous youth of Greek art as the clear wellspring of neoclassicism". Pellizza clarified his own Divisionist painting and reflected on the masterworks of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by tracing the roots of experimentation in light and painting back to ancient Roman mosaics. Previati defended the study of drawing and chiaroscuro, which artists had been practicing since the Renaissance. One's link to history is preserved by updating the past's themes and accomplishments, but only in order to attain equal greatness and be equally consistent with one's own time.³⁴⁸

Boccioni also noted Divisionism's lack of detachment from the past in 1911 when attempting to establish some distance between Futurism and its predecessor, claiming that for "the Italian Divisionists of yesterday" their modern technique was just "a graft onto an already old trunk."³⁴⁹

Despite this element of *passatismo*, Divisionism made an important contribution to anti-academic artistic culture in Milan and in this respect was a fundamental precedent for Futurism's rhetoric of *antipassatismo*. It should be noted that Divisionism's break with the academy came in two forms, one formal, one practical. Divisionism was launched at the Brera's first Triennale in Milan in 1891 in which Gaetano Previati's *Maternity* (1890-91) was attacked by critics and the public for its technique, treatment of form and symbolism.³⁵⁰ The work's harshest critic was Luigi Chirtani, the pen name of the chair of art history at the Brera, Luigi Archinti, who said the work resembled "woollen embroidery."³⁵¹ The critical storm around Previati's work led to it being considered a symbol of Italian avant-gardism.

³⁴⁸ Aurora Scotti Tosini, 'The Divisionists and the Symbolist Cycle', in *Divisionism & Neo-Impressionism: Arcadia & Anarchy*, ed. by Greene, pp. 43-57 (p. 55). The quote within this comes from Paola Barocchi, *Testimonianze e polemiche figurative in Italia: Dal divisionismo al novecento* (Messina: G. D'Anna, 1974), p. 8.

³⁴⁹ "Ed è appunto perché lo crediamo un atteggiamento dello spirito che il complementarismo deve essere congenito nel pittore moderno. E questo ci divide assolutamente dai divisionisti italiani di ieri per i quali questa verità (data la loro cultura) era soltanto un innesto su tronco già vecchio." Umberto Boccioni, 'La Pittura Futurista [Conferenza tenuta a Roma nel 1911]', reprinted in *Umberto Boccioni: altri inediti e apparati critici*, p. 19.

³⁵⁰ Vivien Greene, 'Painted Measles: The Contagion of Divisionism in Italy', in *Divisionism & Neo-Impressionism: Arcadia & Anarchy*, ed. by Greene, pp. 15-27 (p. 19).

³⁵¹ Luigi Chirtani, 'L'Esposizione Triennale di Brera. II: Il piano superiore', *L'Illustrazione Italiana* 18, n. 20, 17 May 1891, 318.

Apart from Segantini, who was a more established name, Chirtani attacked the Divisionists for their “mania for novelty”; Morbelli was singled out, possibly because he had turned away from more conventional academic painting.³⁵² Chirtani used a metaphor of illness, likening Divisionism’s technique to “painted measles”; he considered the source for this disease to be the Parisian Salon des Réfuses, both foreign and anti-academic, and suggested that it could bring about wider degeneration in Italy.³⁵³ Gustavo Macchi, Alberto Sormani and Vittore Grubicy hit back at Chirtani using, to varying extents, Darwinian or evolutionary language to emphasise that Italy had been sick for some time, and the Divisionists were a sign of recovery.³⁵⁴ Such rhetoric espousing evolution, progress and modernity is clearly analogous to that of the Futurists.

The contribution of Vittore Grubicy and his brother Alberto to the anti-academicism of the Divisionists extended beyond Vittore’s critical writing; the Galleria Grubicy in Milan, was the hub of both the sales and the promotion of Italian Divisionism. In 1883 Segantini and Emilio Longoni signed contracts with Vittore Grubicy, for which they were given annual stipends, in return granting the gallery exclusive sales of their works, and as Adolphe Goupil had already pioneered, reproduction rights. Segantini became known across Italy and throughout Europe, and buyers for his work were in general found outside Italy. In 1899 Gaetano Previati signed a contract with Alberto Grubicy, who had recently become sole proprietor of the business after the brothers fell out; after the death of Segantini in that year, Previati became the gallery’s main focus. While encouraging the awareness and sales of their artists internationally, at the Venice Biennale, the 1888 London exhibition and the 1907 Paris exhibition, the latter accompanied by the opening of a Parisian branch of the gallery on Rue de Richelieu, the Galleria Grubicy ensured a strong presence of Segantini, Previati and other Divisionists in the Milanese environment from which Futurism emerged. In 1906 the gallery held an exhibition of Segantini and Previati at the same time as the Esposizione Nazionale di

³⁵² Luigi Chirtani, ‘A Brera’, *Discorsi a ritagli, Corriere della Sera*, 16, n. 132, 15-16 May 1891, 3. See also Greene, ‘Painted Measles: The Contagion of Divisionism in Italy’, in *Divisionism & Neo-Impressionism: Arcadia & Anarchy*, ed. by Greene, p. 19.

³⁵³ Greene has related this fear back to the work of Cesare Lombroso. Lombroso’s contention that not everyone is contemporary encourages the relationship between this idea of Darwinian progress and the unstable temporality of this period which I characterized in chapter one. Greene, ‘Painted Measles: The Contagion of Divisionism in Italy’, in *Divisionism & Neo-Impressionism: Arcadia & Anarchy*, ed. by Greene, p. 24.

³⁵⁴ Gustavo Macchi, ‘L’arte a Brera II’, *La Lombardia*, 33, n. 186, 8 July 1891, p. 2. Alberto Sormani, ‘Critica della critica’, *Cronaca d’Arte*, I, n. 35, 16 August 1891, 287. Vittore Grubicy, ‘Maternità di Gaetano Previati’, in *Prima Esposizione Triennale Brera 1891: tendenze evolutive nelle arti plastiche; Pensiero italiano* 9 (Milan: Tipografia Cooperativa Insubria, 1891), pp. 51-57 (p. 52).

Belle Arti. This exhibition sought to redress the lack of attention showed to these artists by the Italian state. In 1910 Alberto Grubicy staged a retrospective of Previati's work at La Permanente at which Previati's texts, a monograph on his work by Locatelli-Milesi and reproductions of his paintings were also sold to encourage the awareness of his work at a more democratic price. In March of the same year Alberto Grubicy organised the Esposizione del Bianco e Nero at the aforementioned Milanese Famiglia Artistica at which Previati was exhibited alongside Boccioni, Carrà and Russolo, who had recently penned the 'Manifesto of Futurist Painters'.

With the Grubicy brothers, particularly Alberto's entrepreneurial practice of developing a circle of critics as well as artists, Italy saw its most developed indigenous manifestation of the dealer-critic system. Some of the exhibiting practices, for example the focus on overseas art markets, could be considered a precedent for Marinetti's active international marketing of Futurism in later years. However, the important point to make is the autonomy from the academy and official exhibitions of all kinds the Grubicys offered their stable of artists was comparable to that seen previously in Paris. Had there not been a contemporary art market in Milan independent from the Brera, the Futurist project would in all likelihood not have been staged there.

Formal similarities between Divisionism and Futurism

It could be argued that early Futurism's tendency to resemble Divisionism is based on the market developed by the Grubicys for this kind of art. However, given the continued similarity between Divisionism and Futurist paintings when the Futurists were not in any way dependent on the Milanese market and the continuity of personnel between the two movements, such an argument would overlook the profundity of the connection.

Boccioni's Divisionist training with Balla is evident in Boccioni's early work, particularly in his depictions of rural scenes. These works do not form part of Boccioni's Futurist oeuvre, but are still valuable to this study as they represent the formative years of the artist and demonstrate the continuity between his early years and his fully-fledged Futurism. In Boccioni's early work the Divisionist interest in the landscape is clearly evident. The panoramic canvas, livestock profiles and strong horizontals of *Roman Landscape* or *Midday* (1903) (fig. 9.7) are evocative of Pellizza's *The Mirror of Life* (1895-98) (fig. 9.8), in which a

procession of sheep follow each other across a marshy meadow. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Boccioni would have seen the Pellizza before the exhibition of this work in Rome in 1906, and so this work is indicative of Boccioni's adherence to Divisionism, rather than an appropriation. As Vivien Greene has highlighted, Pellizza's inspiration for this work came from mosaic friezes of a dozen single file sheep representing Christ's disciples as found in the apse of early Christian and medieval Italian churches, such as the Sant'Apollinaire in Classe in Ravenna, which he visited in 1895 (fig. 9.9).³⁵⁵

Boccioni's close affinity with Previati is evident in the large number of early Boccioni works which are formally comparable with the Divisionist master. In some cases Boccioni has emulated Previati's style and in others there is a potentially stronger case of appropriation. The formal comparisons made here do not argue that Boccioni's compositions in his early career were entirely derivative of Previati (and to a lesser extent, Segantini), but suggest that the predominance of these two figures in the Milanese context, particularly the esteem bestowed upon them by the Grubicy brothers meant that their precedent could not be ignored.

One case in which an appropriation has been claimed by some scholars and refuted by others is the pre-Futurism work by Boccioni known as *Paolo and Francesca* or *The Dream* (1908-09) (fig. 17.7), which is thought to be a depiction of Dante's tragic lovers due to a preparatory sketch on which he wrote 'I fidanzati' (The betrothed) (fig. 17.10). Boccioni's painting is often compared to Previati's two versions of *Paolo and Francesca* from 1887 and 1909, to his later work *The Dream* (1912) (figs 17.9, 17.11, 17.12) and to Bianchi's versions, mentioned above (figs 17.3, 17.8). For Masoero, Boccioni's painting marks a point of maximum confluence between Boccioni and Previati.³⁵⁶ In all but Previati's *Scapigliatura* rendering two bodies interlace, encompassed in flowing hair and drapery, forming an oblique but sinuous line across the canvas. The backgrounds are different, but a luminous sky and a strong use of chiaroscuro is common to each. As Meighan has argued, even though Coen and Calvesi and Hùlten have suggested an appropriation, there is no evidence that Boccioni saw Previati's

³⁵⁵ Vivien Greene, 'Divisionism's Symbolist Ascent', in Fraquelli, Ginex, Greene, and Scotti Tosini, *Radical Light: Italy's Divisionist Painters 1891-1910*, pp. 47-59 (p. 53).

³⁵⁶ Masoero, 'Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo: un percorso di modernità', *Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo*, p. 42.

1909 work;³⁵⁷ however, if Boccioni attended the 1909 Venice Biennale, as I have speculated elsewhere, he could have seen Previati's 1909 version on display. Meighan suggests alternative sources; Boccioni could have seen the *Night* panel from Previati's triptych *The Day* (1907) which features two interlocked lovers, on display at both the 1907 Paris exhibition and the 1910 Permanente monographic show. It is also a more compelling source as in both this work and Boccioni's the couple are in a bright vermillion against a mossy turquoise background. Alternatively, a potential source for Boccioni's figures can be found in the work of another Divisionist. Segantini's *Pagan Goddess* (1894-97) (fig. 17.6)³⁵⁸ was held in the Galleria Grubicy from 1908 to 1913, and according to Meighan was reproduced in Primo Levi's book on Segantini which Boccioni owned in 1908,³⁵⁹ but it is more likely that Boccioni owned the 1900 version in which this reproduction was replaced with *The Punishment of the Bad Mothers* (1894) (fig. 17.5).³⁶⁰ Incidentally, Greene has compared the contorted body of the figure in this painting to that of Saint Teresa in the Bernini sculpture discussed in the previous chapter.³⁶¹

Boccioni's *Mourning* (1910) (fig. 17.1), compared by Martin to Italo-Byzantine crucifixion or deposition scenes,³⁶² shares the contorted form of the head thrown back in grief as *The Punishment*, but other sources for it have been found in the work of Previati. The most plausible Meighan identifies is *The Marys at the Foot of the Cross* (1897) (fig. 17.2), in which the main figure's head is again thrown back, her body resting on the other figures. *The Marys* was exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 1887, at La Permanente in 1905, at Galleria Grubicy in 1906 and La Permanente in 1910.³⁶³ *Mourning* is usually considered too Symbolist to be considered a Futurist work, despite being painted in the year the first artists' manifestos were written, but Boccioni's appropriations of Divisionism do not cease when his paintings start to be openly Futurist in their subject.

³⁵⁷ Meighan, 'The Stati d'Animo Aesthetic: Gaetano Previati, Umberto Boccioni and the Development of Early Futurist Painting in Italy', p. 139.

³⁵⁸ This work is also known as *Dea dell'amore*.

³⁵⁹ Meighan, 'The Stati d'Animo Aesthetic: Gaetano Previati, Umberto Boccioni and the Development of Early Futurist Painting in Italy', p. 141.

³⁶⁰ Primo Levi, *Segantini* (Rome: Societa editrice Dante Alighieri, 1900), p. 49. Primo Levi, 'Il Primo e il Secondo Segantini', *Rivista d'Italia*, III, November 1899. Umberto Boccioni, '[1st April 1908]', *Diari*, p. 107.

³⁶¹ Greene, 'Divisionism's Symbolist Ascent', in Fraquelli, Ginex, Greene and Scotti Tosini, *Radical Light: Italy's Divisionist Painters 1891-1910*, p. 50.

³⁶² Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 83.

³⁶³ Maria Grazia Schinetti, 'Le Marie ai piedi della croce', *Gaetano Previati, 1852-1920: un protagonista del simbolismo europeo*, ed. by Mazzocca, pp. 156-157 (p. 156).

Boccioni's *The City Rises* (fig. 14.6) has, in addition to the Renaissance and Baroque links discussed earlier, a strong resonance with Divisionism, not least due to its *complementarismo congenito* technique. The scaffolding scenes at the top right of Boccioni's work, which show the titular act of the rising city, echo those of Balla's *The Worker's Day* (fig. 3.4) in which a very similar building rises at an oblique angle, with timber scaffolding hatched across its upper floors. The horse in the centre of Boccioni's composition has been compared to Previati's *Il carro del sole* (1907) and *L'Eroica* (1907) (figs 14.4, 14.7) by Fergonzi, Ginex and Masoero, even though these compositions are quite different.³⁶⁴ Boccioni could have seen both of these works at the 1907 Paris exhibition and the 1910 La Permanente show, as well as in Previati's studio when he visited in 1908.³⁶⁵ Boccioni's bolting horse also recalls Segantini's *Galloping Horse* (1886) which Boccioni sketched in his formative years while it was held at the Galleria Grubicy (figs 14.12, 14.13).³⁶⁶ Compositionally, *Il carro* and *L'Eroica* are closer to Carrà's *The Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1908) (fig. 14.8) in which the horses form a wave surging towards the spectator; Carrà too could have seen these works on studio visits.

Returning to the previous comparisons made between Boccioni's work and conversions of Saint Paul, *The City Rises* can also be connected to Previati's rendering of this biblical scene (fig. 14.3). In this charcoal drawing from 1901, which Boccioni could have seen during his time Ca' Pesaro in Venice,³⁶⁷ the figure of Paul, still hanging on to his horse's bridle, is being helped to his feet, while behind him two other horses rear up in opposite compositions, one taking a man with him. The horse to the far left of the composition recalls both Boccioni's and Fattori's. It is of course interesting that the atheist Boccioni could have appropriated Previati's religious art; Meighan has concluded that the radical nature of Previati's work was

³⁶⁴ Flavio Fergonzi, *The Mattioli Collection: Masterpieces of the Italian Avant-Garde* (Milan: Skira; New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2003), p. 148. Ginex, "Un sogno che svanisce nella luce della modernità": Gaetano Previati nella lettura della critica, dalle suggestioni antipositiviste all'influsso su Umberto Boccioni', in *Gaetano Previati, 1852-1920*, ed. by Mazzocca, p. 72. Masoero, 'Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo: un percorso di modernità', *Dalla Scapigliatura al futurismo*, p. 42. Ada Masoero, *Umberto Boccioni: La città che sale* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2003), pp. 12-13.

³⁶⁵ Ada Masoero, 'Milano 1900-1916: la città, l'arte. Dal Divisionismo al futurismo', in *Lombardia Moderna: Arte e architettura del Novecento*, ed. by Valerio Terratoli (Milan: Skira, 2007), pp. 103-123 (p. 115).

³⁶⁶ Calvesi, *Boccioni prefuturista*, p. 18.

³⁶⁷ Flavia Scotton, ed., *I disegni e le stampe: Venezia, Ca' Pesaro, Galleria internazionale d'arte moderna: Catalogo generale* (Venice: Musei civici veneziani, 2002), p. 105.

sufficient for younger artists to overlook the content in favour of the new technique, but of course this would not apply to this specific work as it is a simple charcoal drawing.³⁶⁸

Another relevant feature of the plans for *The City Rises* is that it was originally designed to be the central panel of a triptych, neither Boccioni's first or last.³⁶⁹ Day, night and dawn were to appear (fig. 14.11), exactly as in *Il carro del sole* and *L'Eroica*. Balla's *The Worker's Day* comprises three images in one, showing the dawn, day and night of the worker; while the practice of producing triptychs is inherently linked to the tradition of altarpieces, Balla was moving towards the Futurist preference for simultaneous images.

While technique and composition are the strongest connections between the work of the Futurists and the Divisionists, they also painted similar subjects, namely the industrial city. Morbelli depicted Milan's train station in 1887 (fig. 2.6) in a work bought by Galleria Grubicy, many years before Carrà and Boccioni turned to the subject, but his rendering lacks the sense of commotion and emotion that the Futurists gave it.³⁷⁰ Giovanni Sottocornola's painting *The Dawn of the Worker* (1897) (fig. 3.10) has been credited as a precedent for Futurism's depiction of the suburban industrial areas of Milan and artificial lighting a couple of decades later.³⁷¹ The almost black canvas is illuminated by a few distant streetlights, which brightly glow above the huddled together workers, who, leaning like Carrà's figures in *Leaving the Theatre* (fig. 3.9), cross Milan's tramlines early in the morning on their way to work. A similar scene is cast in Plinio Nomellini's *Morning at the Factory* (1893) (fig. 3.11); the artificial lights in this scene are also reminiscent of those used by the Futurists, who tended to use them in scenes of bourgeois entertainment rather than proletariat labour.

The lineage between Divisionism and Futurism is well-established in scholarship and I have sought to emphasise the multifaceted nature of this connection by highlighting that the personal connections and formal similarities are indicative of a shared ideology of anti-academicism which is manifest in the promotion of both movements via commercial galleries rather than the academy. It is important to note at this point that it was not only the Italians

³⁶⁸ Meighan, 'The Stati d'Animo Aesthetic: Gaetano Previati, Umberto Boccioni and the Development of Early Futurist Painting in Italy', p. 186.

³⁶⁹ I refer here to the triptychs *Veneriamo la madre* (1909), the cruciform pose of the mother and the arched top of the central panel of this work, again stresses the similarity of this work to an altarpiece, and of course *States of Mind* (1911).

³⁷⁰ Annie-Paule Quinsac, 'Regesto: Grubicy, gli amici olandesi, Bruxelles e il neoimpressionismo', in *Vittore Grubicy e l'Europa*, pp. 34-59 (pp. 41-42). According to Gino Agnese, Boccioni hated Morbelli, but it is unknown whether Carrà felt the same. Agnese, *Vita di Boccioni*, p. 161.

³⁷¹ Aurora Tosini, 'Giovanni Sottocornola – Ragioni di una mostra', in *Giovanni Sottocornola: Dal realismo sociale al quotidiano familiare*, ed. by Giovanna Ginex (Milan: Edi artes, 1985), p. 7.

painting a *puntini* who played a role in the formative years of the Futurists, and that while autonomy from the Salon had been achieved in Italy with the Galleria Grubicy and the Divisionists, in Paris market forces were again shifting the rhetoric of progress and the relationship with the past.

Futurism and Neo-Impressionism

In Milan Divisionism was the acknowledged Futurist heritage, in Paris, for Severini, it was the Pointillism of Georges Seurat. Pointillism differed from Divisionism, in its technique, in its relationship with the Italian artistic past, and its role in establishing an alternative space for the display of avant-gardist art, all of which will be briefly addressed here. I wish to focus on Seurat, in order to avoid homogenizing Neo-Impressionism, and because of his importance for Severini and his role in the revival of the Italian Primitives in modern art.

Although different, Divisionism and Pointillism stemmed from the same optical theories, including *The principles of harmony and contrast of colours* by Michel Eugène Chevreul (1839), *Modern Chromatics, with Applications to Art and Industry* by Odgen Rood (1879, French translation 1881) and *Chromatic Circle* by Charles Henry (1889), which suggested that a more luminous effect can be created in paint if pure colours are applied directly to the canvas and allowed to blend on the viewer's retina, rather than on the palette. These theories were disseminated in the Milanese artistic milieu by Morbelli and Vittore Grubicy, the latter had come to these theories via his Dutch contacts, but wrote articles on the technique which demonstrates an unacknowledged familiarity with Félix Fénéon's writing on Neo-Impressionism. Colour science was also written about in Italy, in *Lights and Colours* by Giulio Bellotti (1886) and the ophthalmologist Luigi Guaita in his *The Science of Colour and Painting* (1893),³⁷² both of whom, alongside the American and French authors above, were cited in Previati's *The Technique of Painting* (1906).³⁷³ The key difference between the Divisionist and Pointillist application of these theories was the more intuitive and less scientific approach of the Italian artists. The intuitiveness of Divisionism is noted by the Futurists in their 'Technical Manifesto': "This is no process that can be learned and applied

³⁷² The original titles are: *Luci e colori*; *La scienza dei colori e della pittura*; and *Tecnica della pittura*. Anna Maria Damigella, *Pellizza da Volpedo* (Rome: Giunti Editore, 1999), p. 20.

³⁷³ Gaetano Previati, *La tecnica della pittura* (Turin: Fratelli Bocca, 1906).

at will. Divisionism, for the modern painter must be an *innate complementariness*.”³⁷⁴ While Seurat’s Pointillism utilised small regular dots of colour to achieve its overall effect, the Italians used varying shapes, including longer thin strokes.³⁷⁵ The scientific nature of Pointillism led it to embrace a rhetoric of progress and modernity akin to that of Futurism.

In his memoirs Severini stated that Seurat was his “starting point and teacher.”³⁷⁶ He also went on to name him “our true precursor,”³⁷⁷ centrally positioning Seurat for all the Futurists. Seurat had died at the age of 31 in 1891, but Pointillist painting continued into the early twentieth-century Paris in which Severini lived. There had been retrospectives of Seurat at the Salon d’Automne in 1905 and the Bernheim-Jeune, where the Futurists later exhibited, in 1908.³⁷⁸ Severini’s interest in portraying modern Paris is often indebted to Seurat in its stylized compositions. In particular his dancers, which, as discussed in the previous chapter when considering Byzantine mosaics, were often embellished with sequins, evoke the simplified forms of *Le Chahut* (1889-90) (fig. 8.10). In *Spring in Montmartre* (1909) (fig. 8.6), Severini’s small daubs of paint capturing the light effects as sun streams through the trees are not the tight network of tiny dots associated with Seurat, they are looser, like the Pointillism of Paul Signac, Camille Pissarro and Maximilien Luce, but Severini did not give these artists the praise or the precursor status attributed to Seurat.

In Boccioni’s art historical chart, the Pointillists – Seurat, Signac and Cross – are described as “study of reality with the division of coloristic elements” and directly opposed to the formal equivalent, as espoused by Picasso and Braque. This use of colour connects back to the Byzantine mosaics discussed in the previous chapter and the analogy between Pointillist painting and tesserae. It is far from coincidental that Severini returns to Seurat in the years he worked on mosaics.

Seurat is important for this discussion due to his different approach to appropriating the Italian artistic tradition. As previously mentioned, in *Les Poseuses* (1886-88) the figure on the left recalls a bather by Ingres, an artist who died just 20 years before this work was painted, but the other two sources for the poses are drawn from the classical Spinario and

³⁷⁴ Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla, Severini, ‘Futurist painting: Technical Manifesto’ (1910), reprinted in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. by Apollonio, pp. 28-9.

³⁷⁵ Hanson, *Severini Futurista: 1912-1917*, p. 33.

³⁷⁶ Severini, *La vita di un pittore*, p. 99.

³⁷⁷ Severini, *Dal cubismo al classicismo*, ed. by Pontiggia, p. 124.

³⁷⁸ Borel, ‘Severini tra Parigi e Milano: la disputa sulla simultaneità’, in *Gino Severini, 1883-1966*, ed. by Belli and Fonti, p. 61. The Futurists knew Fénéon as he was running the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune in 1912 when they exhibited there.

Venus Pudica.³⁷⁹ Seurat's static compositions are indicative of the return to fashion of Piero della Francesca.³⁸⁰ Both Piero and Seurat were avid students of science and mathematics, interested in the technology of their time, whether architectural or industrial, and often depicted spectacles and parades, featuring unusual characters in costumes.³⁸¹ Seurat attended the École des Beaux-Arts in 1878 and 1879, when copies of Piero's work were hanging in its chapel. These copies were commissioned by Charles Blanc in 1872, the École's Director, who was interested in progress, but was unconvinced by the Impressionists, hoped that a new artistic era could be inspired by the Renaissance and so created the Musée des Copies.³⁸²

The differences between Parisian and Milanese artistic culture at this time led to the Neo-Impressionists' and Divisionists' different relationships with the past. The past that the Neo-Impressionists were distinguishing themselves from was the immediate past of the Impressionists while in Milan the Divisionists were antagonistic to the conservative Brera and the *passatista* present. Although Pissarro apparently called for the Louvre to be burned down,³⁸³ pre-empting Marinetti, the state collection of contemporary art at the Palais du Luxembourg meant that in Parisian avant-gardist circles the museum could be something to aspire to rather than repudiate. Seurat trained at the École des Beaux Arts, and is therefore seen an anachronistic figure who bought his academic education into this avant-garde environment, but the angst of imitating the Italian tradition was not felt as strongly in the Paris of Impressionism as in Italy, where Neoclassicism still dominated.

Neo-Impressionist *passatismo* relates to its critique of Impressionism (articulated in print by Fénéon as well as on canvas by Seurat), which bemoaned the Impressionists' avoidance of stock poses to emphasise the uniqueness of the moment captured as "the artist's theatrical display of his own originality."³⁸⁴ Therefore, the staticness Seurat returned to, which led to the association between his art and the Italian Primitives, was an attempt to progress beyond

³⁷⁹ Leighton and Thomson, 'The Continuity of the Classical', in *Seurat and the Bathers*, p. 148.

³⁸⁰ Ballo, *Preistoria del futurismo*, p. 83.

³⁸¹ Albert Boime, 'Seurat and Piero della Francesca', *The Art Bulletin*, 47 (1965), 265-271 (p. 266).

³⁸² Boime, 'Seurat and Piero della Francesca', p. 268. Apart from Piero, copies included Raphael's *Stanze*, Michelangelo's Prophets and Sibyls, Leonardo's *Leda and the Swan*, and frescoes by Masaccio, Ghirlandaio, Andrea del Sarto and Mantegna. This list makes apparent the return to the Primitives discussed in the previous chapter and, in fact, demonstrates that this return was earlier in the French academy than in the Italian.

³⁸³ R.P. Rivi re and J.P. Schnerb 'L'Atelier de C zanne', *La Grande Revue*, 25 December 1907. See Martha Ward, *Pissarro, Neo-Impressionism, and the Spaces of the Avant-garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 6.

³⁸⁴ Ward, *Pissarro, Neo-Impressionism, and the Spaces of the Avant-garde*, p. 101.

Impressionism; this return was part of this progress, arguably in the cyclical sense discussed previously. While returning to the art of the past, Seurat also fused scientific theories regarding the psychology of composition, colour science, and the relationship between his small touches of pure colour and the wide dissemination of chemical and physical theories of the atom.³⁸⁵ Fénéon's writings on Neo-Impressionism stressed its progression from Impressionism, on the basis that the technique was scientific and therefore an improvement on all previous techniques. In an article of 1886 Fénéon claims: "The innovation of Mr Seurat is based on the scientific division of tone," going on to list the advantages of his technique which, drawing on modern physics, avoids the mixture of pigment on the palette and creates luminosity by allowing colour to mix on the retina.³⁸⁶ The very word Neo-Impressionism sought to historicize Impressionism, condemning it to the past in order to stress the innovation of Seurat, Signac et al. However, as discussed in chapter three, the maintenance of the connection with their predecessors was also important for establishing the provenance and innovation of the new group, and echoing Bourdieu's discussion of the return to grandfathers rather than fathers, Neo-Impressionism was traced back to Delacroix by both Fénéon and Signac.

However, it should be noted that the Neo-Impressionists were not necessarily looking to compete with the Impressionists in the same market as they further distanced themselves from their immediate predecessors through their means of exhibition. While, as previously discussed, the Impressionists had embraced autonomy since 1874 via their independent exhibitions; in the mid-1880s they had become entrenched in the dealer-led Parisian market, a market in which the Neo-Impressionists were unwelcome. The association of the Neo-Impressionists with the Salon des Indépendents therefore not only reflected their dissociation from the market, evident too in Seurat's large scale works, but their return to the Salon format, albeit a juryless one. It is telling of the different paces of change between the French and Italian art markets and institutions that while the launch of Divisionism occurred at the Brera, and was encouraged by the Milanese market, the launch of Neo-Impressionism

³⁸⁵ On the dissemination of these scientific theories and the relationship between the Pointillist application of paint and anarchist theories of unity in diversity see Robyn Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism and Anarchism in Fin-de-Siècle France: Painting, Politics and Landscape* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

³⁸⁶ "L'innovation de M. Seurat a pour base la division scientifique du ton." Félix Fénéon, 'L'impressionisme', *L'émancipation sociale*, 3 April, 1887, reprinted in *Au-delà de l'impressionnisme*, ed. by Françoise Cachin (Paris: Hermann, 1966), pp. 81-86 (p. 84).

occurred at the 1886 eighth Impressionist exhibition, and disassociated itself from the Parisian market for Impressionism.

My point here has been to show the ambivalent relationships with the past found in both Divisionism and Neo-Impressionism which the Futurists to an extent continued. While the formal appropriations, particularly of Previati by Boccioni and of Seurat by Severini are widely accepted in scholarship, the consequences for Futurist *antipassatismo* vary. Both Divisionism and Neo-Impressionism provide a precedent for the rhetoric of scientific progress attached to Futurism, which led to the Divisionist *complementarismo congenito*, the intuitive form of this technique, being adopted by the Futurists, particularly in their early canvases. The market for Divisionism in Milan in the early twentieth century, orchestrated by the Grubicy brothers, also provided the Futurist artists with their first exhibitions. The comparison with the Neo-Impressionists serves to remind us of the specificity of the Italian, or rather Milanese situation, and Severini's different take on the relationship with tradition discussed in chapter three could be related to his different milieu.

In the rhetoric of Divisionism and the practice of Seurat an interest in the Italian Primitives is certainly present, playing a key role in the rediscovery of the Primitives discussed in the previous chapter and a means through which the Futurists could have appropriated this past through the present. Seurat was not the only French artists working after Impressionism to embrace the Primitives, and I now turn to Cézanne who leads this chapter, and this thesis, to its coda.

5.5 Futurism, Cézanne, Picasso and Primitivism

The final section of this chapter considers some of the precedents for Futurism set by Cézanne and Picasso through the very specific lenses of Cézanne's relationship with the Italian Primitives and Picasso's Primitivism. I argue that the Futurist appropriation of Cézanne, evident in Boccioni's last works, is crucial to the connection of the Futurists with the Italian Primitives and also to the Primitivism of Picasso and other contemporaries in Paris. I also consider the colonial and temporal issue of Africa and the Primitive which returns this thesis to the temporal questions with which it began.

Cézanne and Futurism

As with earlier French art, Soffici played a crucial role in introducing Cézanne to the wider Italian public. He wrote an article on the Post-Impressionist in 1908 and included four paintings, one lithograph and six photographs of work by Cézanne in the 1910 Florence Impressionism exhibition. The Futurists knew his work from their trips to Paris; Boccioni could have seen the Cézanne retrospective at the Salon d'Automne in 1907. Carrà saw his work in 1900 and again in 1914; in his autobiography he recalls visits to Cézanne's dealer Vollard and the Pellerin collection, where he saw Cézanne's *Bathers* (1894-1905) which made a great impression upon him.³⁸⁷

The Futurists placed Cézanne at the end of a lineage, from which they claimed to break. For Boccioni, Cézanne's statement in a letter to Emile Bernard: "*The edges of the object flee towards a centre situated on our horizon*,"³⁸⁸ was "the synthesis of everything that painting has been." He conceived Futurist dynamism as completely the opposite, for them: "*The edges of the object flee towards to the periphery (environment) of which we are the centre*."³⁸⁹ This comment suggests that Cézanne was the end point of the development of perspective, which the Futurists wished to overturn, and although, as identified in the previous chapter, there are some connections to be made between Cézanne and Byzantine art, the main

³⁸⁷ This work is now in the National Gallery, London. Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 27, pp. 114-115.

³⁸⁸ The full quote from Cézanne is: "Esso (l'occhio) diviene concentrato a forza di guardare e di lavorare; voglio dire che in un'arancia, una mela, una tazza, una testa v'è un punto culminante e che questo punto è sempre, malgrado il terribile effetto, luce, ombra, sensazioni coloranti, il più vicino al nostro occhio. *I bordi dell'oggetto fuggono verso un centro situato al nostro orizzonte*". – n. 2 Bernard, 'Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne et lettres inédites', in *Mercure de France*, 1 and 15 October; see Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, pp. 122-123.

³⁸⁹ "Noi dunque diciamo l'opposto di Cézanne: *I bordi dell'oggetto fuggono verso una periferia (ambiente) di cui noi siamo il centro*." Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, pp. 122-123.

connection is with the Italian Primitives who were at the beginning of that lineage. Cézanne himself is thought to have said "I am a primitive of my own way,"³⁹⁰ which of course chimes with the Futurist "we call ourselves primitives of a new sensibility."³⁹¹

Cézanne's traditional aspect has often been addressed, and Boccioni was clearly familiar with it as in *Futurist Painting and Sculpture* he complained that although Cézanne said "It is necessary to make the museum in front of nature," he forgot nature and made only the museum.³⁹² Boccioni claimed "Cézanne is all antique Italian," shortly before saying "We Italian futurists have no tradition to conclude or continue,"³⁹³ and it should be noted that the lineage the Futurists place him at the end of is an Italian one. However, the Futurists had differing opinions about whether Cézanne was more concerned with colour or line; while Boccioni put Cézanne in the 'form' half of his diagram in the first stage after Manet, subtitled 'intellect', Carrà praised him for giving "colourist expression of bodies, from the same point of view from which the ancients gave them linear expression."³⁹⁴ Like Boccioni, Carrà also evoked the relationship between Cézanne and the Italian tradition, describing his work as reminiscent of Michelangelo and Giotto, calling him a Masaccio of his times, and positioning him as "the last exponent of the ancient epoch."³⁹⁵ Ezio Bassani has claimed that Carrà's interest in the Italian Primitives stemmed from the influence of Cézanne.³⁹⁶

Soffici placed Cézanne in a similar lineage to those suggested by Boccioni and Carrà, instigating a renaissance in painting, not with the stale classicism of the critics, but the true classicism of Masaccio, Tintoretto, Rembrandt and Goya as early as 1908.³⁹⁷ Soffici's

³⁹⁰ Joachim Gasquet, *Cézanne* (Paris, 1926), p. 138. Quoted in Richard Shiff, 'Originality', *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. by Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff, 2nd edn (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp.145-159 (p. 150).

³⁹¹ "Noi ci siamo chiamati i primitivi di una nuova sensibilità completamente trasformata" Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 143.

³⁹² "Il faut faire le musée devant la nature." Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 71. Later in the same book Boccioni calls him more dangerous than Phidias. Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 142.

³⁹³ "Noi futuristi italiani non abbiamo alcuna tradizione da chiudere o continuare." Boccioni, *Pittura e Scultura futuriste*, p. 72.

³⁹⁴ "Egli ci dà l'espressione coloristica dei corpi, dallo stesso punto di vista dal quale gli antichi ci diedero l'espressione lineale." Carlo Carrà, 'Da Cézanne a noi Futuristi', *Lacerba*, I, n. 10, 15 May 1913, 99-101 (p. 100).

³⁹⁵ "Cézanne è l'ultimo esponente dell'epoca antica." Carlo Carrà, 'Da Cézanne a noi Futuristi', pp. 99-100. Carlo Carrà, 'Picasso', in *Valori Plastici*, September 1920, reprinted in *Tutti gli scritti* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1978), p. 461.

³⁹⁶ Bassani also mentions Picasso and Derain as influences upon Carrà's return to the Primitives, grouping the three Paris-based artists under the term 'primitivists', a term I will discuss later in this section. Ezio Bassani, 'Italian Painting,' in *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, ed. by William Rubin, 2 vols (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984), II, 410-11.

³⁹⁷ Ardengo Soffici, 'L'Impressionismo a Firenze' (1910), reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri*, p. 163. Ardengo Soffici, 'Paul Cézanne' (1908), reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri*, pp. 49-62 (p. 60). Classicism

judgement is related to his interest in Denis,³⁹⁸ and thus to a French discourse on Cézanne. Denis, looking to establish a French artistic tradition, related Cézanne back to Poussin and ancient Greece.³⁹⁹ At the same time, like his colleague Bernard, who in 1904 had referred to Cézanne as Giottesque,⁴⁰⁰ Denis placed Cézanne in a heritage of the same lineage of Italian Primitives. Arguably Denis's position was informed by an experience in Florence; a few months after publishing his article in late 1907, Denis was in Fiesole, just outside Florence, with Egisto Fabbri, a collector of Cézanne, who insisted on taking him to see the Masaccio frescoes in Brancacci chapel of Santa Maria delle Carmine to demonstrate to him the analogy with the work of Cézanne.⁴⁰¹ It was through Fabbri that Papini met Denis, who assisted Papini and Soffici with the organization of the aforementioned First Italian Exhibition of Impressionism.⁴⁰² Denis also provided the photography of Cézanne's work for Soffici's article on Cézanne in *Vita d'Arte* in 1908, in which he included the comparison between the "chromatic conflicts" of Masaccio's Brancacci chapel and Cézanne.⁴⁰³ I argue that while Soffici's comparison of Cézanne to the Italian trecento and quattrocento is based on similar formal motivations, the political motivations are somewhat different.

Both Bernard and Denis's articles, published in *L'Occident* served to associate the modern French art they supported with a French, or more widely Latin, tradition, thus distancing it from eastern influence, which had been suggested by Gauguin and others from 1885.⁴⁰⁴ These nationalist, religious, anti-Semitic motivations, in the context of the Dreyfus affair, were not present in the same form in Italy and as this chapter has shown, Italian modernism had a different character to French. Christopher Green has noted the tendency of modern

is here used by Soffici more in the sense of being classics of art history, rather than the classicism of ancient Greece and Rome.

³⁹⁸ Soffici wrote an article on Denis's art in 1909. Ardengo Soffici, 'Maurice Denis,' *Vita d'Arte*, n. 24 (December 1909), 504-514.

³⁹⁹ Maurice Denis, 'Cézanne', trans. by Roger Fry, in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 16, 82 (1910), 207-219 and 83 (1910), 275-280. This article was originally published in French in *L'Occident* in September 1907.

⁴⁰⁰ Emile Bernard, 'Paul Cézanne,' *L'Occident*, July 1904, quoted in Jean-François Rodriguez, *La Réception de L'impressionnisme à Florence en 1910: Prezzolini et Soffici maitres d'œuvre de la 'Prima esposizione italiana dell'impressionismo francese e delle sculture di Medardo Rosso'* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1994), p. 34.

⁴⁰¹ "Fabbri insiste pour me faire voir les parties du Carmine qui sont vraiment de Masaccio. C'est pour moi l'occasion de découvrir Masaccio [...] [Fabbri] me dit que Masaccio lui donne quelque chose d'aussi noble que l'antique, et que Cézanne est le seul peintre un peu noble de ce temps" Maurice Denis, *Journal*, 3 vols (Paris: La Colombe, 1957), II, 83-84.

⁴⁰² Giovanni Papini, '[Letter to Soffici of 28th December 1907]', reprinted in *Papini-Soffici Carteggio*, ed. by Mario Richter (Rome: Ed. di storia e letteratura, 1991), p. 167. Jean-François Rodriguez, 'Florence 1910: The First Exhibition of French Impressionism in Italy between Cézanne and Picasso', *Cézanne in Florence: Two Collectors and the 1910 Exhibition of Impressionism*, ed. by Francesca Bardazzi (Milan: Electa, 2007), pp. 155-167 (p. 158).

⁴⁰³ Soffici, 'Paul Cézanne' (1908), reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri*, pp. 49-62 (p. 60).

⁴⁰⁴ Richard Shiff, 'Seeing Cézanne', *Critical Inquiry*, 4 (1978), 769-808 (p. 772).

French painting, both independent and official, to connect itself to tradition, and while in this chapter the presence of this trait has also been identified in modern Italian painting, the motivations in the recently unified nation of Italy were quite different.⁴⁰⁵ Soffici had two aims in establishing an Italian lineage for Cézanne, emphasising to the Italian audience the importance of Cézanne on the basis of his *italianità*, and defending his own adherence to the Italian Primitives to the French audience, which had ridiculed his Etruscan works submitted to the 1907 Salon des Indépendents.⁴⁰⁶ In Cézanne Soffici identified a precursor to his own attempts to synthesize the modern and the traditional, equating Cézanne's Provence with his Tuscany.⁴⁰⁷ The criticism Soffici received for his admiration of the French artist arguably led to his preoccupation with Rosso described above. The necessity of Soffici championing an Italian rather than a French artist, even though his respect for Cézanne was tied into a strong *italianità* and Tuscan-Etruscan chauvinism, demonstrates the importance of Italian nationalism at this time. Before concluding on the Milanese Futurists' possible reasons for drawing on Cézanne, Boccioni's appropriation of his painting style should be addressed.

In 1916 Boccioni began to paint in a clearly Cézannian style. The best known examples of this are the three portraits of Federico Busoni and his wife, composed from Cézanne's distinctive patches (figs 18.1, 18.4, 18.7). In *Portrait of Maestro Busoni* (1916), Boccioni's extravagant use of jewel-like colours, as seen in *Modern Idol*, is still present, and the canvas is strongly worked-up. In the two portraits of his wife, however, Boccioni's hand is looser. In the version in which she wears a hat the brushmarks are clearly visible and the palette toned down to more Cézannian burnt siennas in the face and lush greens in the background. In the other portrait of Signora Busoni, a mountain appears in the background, the reference to Cézanne here becoming more overt as the French artists painted countless scenes of Mont Sainte-Victoire (fig. 18.3), of which Boccioni would have been aware. Boccioni also painted a *Landscape (Mountainous)* (fig. 18.2) in the same year which again shows a Cézannian subject, palette and technique. Finally, in another Boccioni work from this year an apparently direct appropriation of Cézanne is found in the form of his *Man with a Pipe*

⁴⁰⁵ Christopher Green, *Art in France, 1900-1940* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), particularly pp. 185-230.

⁴⁰⁶ Rodriguez, 'Florence 1910: The First Exhibition of French Impressionism in Italy between Cézanne and Picasso', in *Cézanne in Florence: Two Collectors and the 1910 Exhibition of Impressionism*, ed. by Bardazzi, p. 156.

⁴⁰⁷ Rodriguez, 'Florence 1910: The First Exhibition of French Impressionism in Italy between Cézanne and Picasso', in *Cézanne in Florence: Two Collectors and the 1910 Exhibition of Impressionism*, ed. by Bardazzi, p. 159.

(1916) (fig. 18.5). Cézanne painted a number of portraits of men smoking pipes, and this Boccioni work particularly recalls a particular version, painted around 1892, in which the smoker faces the painter, almost like a bust (fig. 18.6). The fact that the Cézannian style is found not only in Boccioni's commissioned portraits suggests that this was the artist's decision rather than a request by Busoni. It is, however, difficult to support the possibility of Boccioni having seen this work which passed between private collectors and was not exhibited at any of the aforementioned retrospectives and exhibitions.

Barr saw these 1916 paintings as a sign that "by the end of 1914, Boccioni had begun to desert Futurism for a more static and traditional technique."⁴⁰⁸ This chimes with Martin's idea, discussed in chapter four, that in 1913 Boccioni was moving back towards Michelangelo, although I by no means wish to equate Cézanne and Michelangelo or Boccioni's relationships with them.⁴⁰⁹ It is, however, pertinent to note that Boccioni did not distance himself from the Futurist movement as Carrà and Severini did before or during the war; he died still very much a Futurist. The augmentation in his style towards Cézanne should therefore be understood as within the Futurist ideology with an acceptance of its contradictory nature.

While for Soffici the appropriation of Cézanne, who he connected back to the Tuscan painter's own heritage, served to justify his own interest in tradition, Boccioni's return to this artist seems quite separate from his rhetorical distancing of Futurism from Cézanne. His later interest in an artist he had connected with the Italian tradition inevitably connected own work with that tradition, although, as I sought to demonstrate in the previous chapter, it was not only in last works, nor purely through Cézanne that this connection with the Italian tradition was present.

This brief exegesis of the Futurist relationship with Cézanne has shown that as with the Macchiaioli the connection between modern painting and the Italian tradition was strong before and during the Futurist period, and that while the Futurists saw Cézanne as the final stage of the tradition with which they wished to break, there was continuity. While the continuity between Cézanne and the Cubists was one of the reasons the Futurists were so eager to distinguish themselves from the Cubists, their interest in Picasso above all, and other Salon and gallery Cubists, could have annulled their attempted break with Cézanne.

⁴⁰⁸ Alfred H. Barr, 'Early Futurism', in *Twentieth-Century Italian Art*, ed. by Barr and Soby, pp. 7-16 (p. 15).

⁴⁰⁹ Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915*, p. 161.

Picasso and Futurist Primitivism

I now turn from modern art and the Primitives to modern art and Primitivism, that is, the appropriation of so-called 'primitive cultures' evident in, for example, the stylization of the face of Signora Busoni in the aforementioned paintings. This confluence of Primitivism with Cézanne as related to the Italian Primitives is at the crux of this section and my wider argument about cyclical returns in art history.

I focus here on Picasso's Primitivism, even though Gauguin, Matisse and the Fauves were earlier exponents, because I argue that it was via Picasso that the Futurists first adopted the Primitive aesthetic. As is well known, Picasso appropriated masks seen in the Musée d'Ethnographie in the Trocadéro, evident in his work after June 1907, and most famously in *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907) (fig. 19.8). The Futurist associate Apollinaire, who sparked Severini's interest in the Italian Primitives, is also an important figure for this discussion as he decorated his apartment with many African fetishes.⁴¹⁰ Severini, Carrà and Boccioni all commented upon the Primitivism of their Paris-based contemporaries and show disdain for the practice,⁴¹¹ however, it was not excluded from Futurism and, I argue, opens another dimension of temporal consideration. Severini witnessed Paris's Primitivism first hand; he attended the Gauguin retrospective at the Salon d'Automne in 1906, and saw the African idols in the bric-a-brac shop in Rue des Rennes where he, and before him Matisse and Picasso, bought masks. In his memoirs he stressed the importance of African art for Cubism, stating that Max Jacob had agreed with him that "Negro art was the origin of Cubism" and suggesting that it allowed the Cubists to take even further than possibilities they had learnt from Cézanne.⁴¹² However, Severini also said "It is certain that [...] Negro sculpture had no influence upon me. Later I did also buy some negro masks like the others, but then I sold them, because, I don't know for what reason, they disturbed me."⁴¹³

⁴¹⁰ Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco, *Carlo Carrà: The Primitive Period: 1915-1919* (Milan: Mazzotta, 1987), p. 15. While Apollinaire was associated with the Futurists and published the manifesto 'L'Antitradition Futuriste' (1913) he is more properly associated with Orphism, Futurism's great rival.

⁴¹¹ Balla does not show concern with Primitivism, as he is less interested in Cubism and other developments in Paris, Russolo was at this point more concerned with his musical experiments.

⁴¹² "Max Jacob convalidò questa idea, che l'arte negra era l'origine del Cubismo." Severini, *La vita di un pittore*, p. 64.

⁴¹³ "È inoltre certo che [...] le sculture negre non ebbero in me nessuna influenza. Più tardi comprai anch'io delle maschere negre per far come gli altri, ma poi le rivendei, perché, non so per qual ragione, mi disturbavano." Severini, *La vita di un pittore*, p. 66.

Carrà was also aware of the developments in Paris. In his memoirs he describes how in 1900 he visited the ethnographic displays in the Musée du Trocadéro, but claims that they had not interested him.⁴¹⁴ When again in Paris in April 1914 he saw the work of Henri Rousseau at Wilhelm Uhde's gallery and was positive about Le Douanier and his primitive form of expression.⁴¹⁵ Carrà may well have gained awareness of Rousseau through Soffici's writings on him in 1910 and 1911.⁴¹⁶ During the same trip he spent time with Apollinaire, and met the Fauve Maurice de Vlaminck and the writer Remy de Gourmont, whose ideas on tradition were quoted in chapter three. However, later in the same year Carrà clearly stated that the Primitivist tendency was an error made by those looking for ready-made inspiration, mistakenly thinking that the needs of modern aesthetics could be fulfilled by African aesthetics.⁴¹⁷ Retrospectively Carrà claimed to have sympathised with the Primitivists' desire to get to the essential consciousness of man but highlighted that the traps of Primitivism and archaism were easy to fall into.⁴¹⁸

Boccioni judged Primitivism more positively. He saw Gauguin's journey to Tahiti and the presence of Central African 'fetishes' in Parisian studios as "a historical inevitability in the destiny of our European sensibility, like an invasion of a barbarous race into the body in decay."⁴¹⁹ For Boccioni, the "primordial epochs" were not troubled by the word 'art' and the subdivisions between painting, sculpture, music etc, which chimed with Boccioni's anti-artistic and the Futurists' synaesthetic stances.

John J. White has also noted that Primitivism was an essential element in Futurism, describing 'Futurist Primitivism' as "in no way to be confused with that espoused by any other coterie" and "not backward-looking to the same degree (if at all), but [it] seeks to create

⁴¹⁴ "il Trocadero [...] mi parve piuttosto squallido e di scarso interesse." Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 28.

⁴¹⁵ Carrà, *La mia vita*, p. 115. In Carrà's Primitivist work from after his Futurist period the visual connection with Rousseau is much stronger.

⁴¹⁶ Ardengo Soffici, 'Henri Rousseau' (1910), reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri*, pp. 119-133. Ardengo Soffici, 'Un libro su Rousseau' (1911), reprinted in *Scoperte e massacri*, pp. 135-140. This text refers to Uhde's 1911 book on Rousseau.

⁴¹⁷ "Il male aveva preso tutta l'Europa. Seguaci russi, polacchi, tedeschi degli artisti di Francia, ecc. ecc. Brutte copie di quelle confezionate a Parigi, gli stessi errori che si dovevano alla falsissima idea di potersi creare artificialmente una verginità e una sensibilità moderna andando nel lontano centro d'Africa a prendere bell'e fatte le ispirazioni e gli arcaici motivi per le loro costruzioni plastiche, le quali, non si sa perchè, dovevano poi per un fenomeno di suggestione culturale rispondere ai bisogni estetici della nostra sensibilità modernissima." Carlo Carrà, 'Vita moderna e arte popolare', *Lacerba*, II, n. 11, 1 June 1914, p. 167.

⁴¹⁸ Carrà, *La mia vita*, pp. 124-5.

⁴¹⁹ "Il viaggio a Tahiti di Gauguin, la comparsa degli idoli e dei feticci del Centro-Africa negli *ateliers* dei nostri amici di Montmartre e Montparnasse, sono una fatalità storica nel campo della sensibilità europea, come nell'organismo di un popolo in decadenza l'invasione di una razza barbara!" Boccioni, *Pittura Scultura Futuriste*, pp. 80-81.

a new sensibility appropriate to its own culture, especially those elements of the modern world which point towards the future.”⁴²⁰ I agree that Primitivism was an important element and not at odds with their *antipassatismo*, but argue that it is not uniform across the protagonists of the movement.

As described above, Carrà was openly averse to Primitivism, yet some of his works suggest a direct appropriation of African masks and fetishes via the Primitivist milieu of Paris. A number of ink portraits by Carrà have been compellingly compared to African masks in the collections of Paris’s artistic milieu. The *Portrait of Russolo* (1913) (fig. 19.4) has been linked to a mask from Gabon (fig. 19.3) with a similar long face with a slim nose and curved eyebrows, which Carrà could have seen in the Musée du Trocadéro. The *Portrait of Remy de Gourmont* (1916) (fig. 19.2) with a Teke figure from the People’s Republic of Congo (fig. 19.1), similar to that found in Apollinaire’s *Cabinet de travail*.⁴²¹ Carrà’s *Portrait of Boccioni* (1913) (fig. 19.9) has not been linked to a specific mask but has the stylized eyes and ‘slice of brie nose’ of Picasso’s 1907 *Self-Portrait* (fig. 19.7), which was in Paris, where the Futurists could have become familiar with it, remaining at the artist’s studio or in Vollard’s shop before its sale in 1911. Carrà’s *Composition* (1915) (fig. 19.6) also features a blankly staring mask against a collage background. Bassani has linked this mask to a small Lega sculpture in Paul Guillaume’s collection, but provides no evidence of Carrà having access to it.⁴²² This work was made in 1915, the year Carrà moved away from the Futurists and became more interested in the Italian Primitives, but the presence of the Futurist flag, with the phrase ‘*Marciare non marcire* [march don’t rot]’ and the newspaper clippings about the First World War suggest that it was attached to Carrà’s Futurist interventionist phase around *Guerrapittura*.

Boccioni’s close interest in Picasso, and his aforementioned affinity with the primordial, barbarous and primitive (I come back to nuance of definitions of these words) is reflected in

⁴²⁰ John J. White, *Literary Futurism: Aspects of the First Avant-Garde* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 294, p. 316.

⁴²¹ Bassani, ‘Italian Painting,’ in *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, ed. by Rubin, II, 407. The comparison between the Fang mask and Carrà’s *Ritratto di Russolo* is also made in Alessandro Del Puppo, *Primitivismo* (Milan: Giunti, 2003), p. 25. Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco dismisses Bassani’s article, instead finding the source of the primitive turn in Carrà’s work the influence of Henri Rousseau, mentioned above. “The ‘gentil’ Rousseau [...] is in fact the true opposite pole to the “art nègre” then triumphant, to which Carrà’s primitivism has been linked (see the recent questionable essay for the “Primitivism” exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York).” Fagiolo dell’Arco, *Carlo Carrà: The Primitive Period: 1915-1919*, p. 15.

⁴²² Bassani, ‘Italian Painting,’ in *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, ed. by Rubin, II, 407.

his works, as seen in the *Portrait of Signora Busoni* discussed above, but this tendency originates from as early as 1912. In the painting *Antigrazioso* (fig. 19.10) the use of colour shows Boccioni's Divisionist roots, but the flattening of planes demonstrates his awareness of Picasso's work and the stylization of the face, particularly around the eyes and in the solid curve of the nose suggests an interest in the African masks Picasso had been appropriating. Such mask-like stylizations of facial features returns in *Dynamism of the Head of a Woman* (1914) and *Dynamism of a Man's Head* (1915) (fig. 19.5). It could be argued that in these works Boccioni was appropriating Picasso rather than the African masks themselves, further encouraged by the Cubist flattening of planes and use of collage elements in these Boccioni works. However, in doing so Boccioni was, apparently consciously, only a step away from the African masks, and so his and Carrà's relationship to the African aesthetic should not be ignored.

It should be noted that as the Futurist artists' understanding of the African aesthetic was filtered through Paris it was predominantly from the areas of the continent colonised by France, which were quite different from those colonised by the Italians, and from Marinetti's home town of Alexandria in Egypt. However, the Futurists themselves failed to nuance these areas, instead seeing Africa as a homogenous primitive whole.

Marinetti and Italian Africa

In order to consider the Futurist relationship with Africa, it is necessary to consider Marinetti, who as well as being born and raised in the port town of Alexandria, returned to the continent in 1911 as a war correspondent in Libya, and later in life during Fascist colonization and for personal nostalgic reasons. Marinetti's practice is related to Primitivism in his desire, as expressed in the 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature' to remove the excesses of language - syntax, conjugated verbs, adverbs and punctuation - in order to make it more expressive.

Marinetti considered the primitive in greater depth in his 1909 novel *Mafarka the Futurist*, based further along the North African coastline, in fictional Tel-el-Kabir. The story focuses on Mafarka-el-Bar, a warrior who, after bringing down the old order of his uncle Boubassa, goes about ruling his people belligerently until the death of his brother inspires him to create a son without the aid of a woman. He creates the mechanical and immortal Gazourmah, who,

after being animated by Mafarka's kiss, kills his father. Psychoanalytic readings of the novel have drawn parallels with aspects of Marinetti's life, but more relevant here is the novel's preoccupation with rebirth, which is also related to Africa: Marinetti mentions the "blessed black breast" of his Sudanese nurse during his rebirth in the 'Founding and Manifesto', and in the case of *Mafarka* Africa is seen as "a model for the futurist creation of a new Europe through the reshaping of the largely imaginary spaces of Africa."⁴²³ I argue that Africa's role in Futurism was as a (re)generative space where the past could be escaped from.

In the context of early twentieth-century Italy, Africa was not a distant space and time as colonialism was part of the Italian present. By the 1890s Italy had gained the territories of Eritrea and Somaliland in the Horn of Africa. The Italian government invoked Roman Empire and Risorgimento traditions to present its colonialism as a civilizing mission and to draw parallels between the landing of troops at the important Red Sea port of Massawa and the landing of the *Mille* at Marsala.⁴²⁴ In reality it was an attempt to catch up with the scramble for Africa and unite Italy's fractured population against a common enemy. As such this colonialism reflects a blending of Italy's *futurista* and *passatista* presents, in that colonialism was inherently linked with progress through the expansion and development of Italy, but also *passatista* due to the reliance of the Renaissance and Risorgimento models to justify the activity. Italian colonial exploits were widely reported on and illustrated in the popular press and so the Futurists were not reliant on Paris for awareness of an African aesthetic. Colonial expansionism was popular with the Nationalists and those in the South who dreamt of a land of plenty, but unpopular with the North unwilling to bear the expense. The defeat at Adowa in 1896, the first time a native army had defeated a colonial power, humiliated Italy on the international stage, and it was not until the Italo-Turkish war in 1911 that Italy returned to try to reclaim the formerly Roman Libya.

The Romans' dominance over Libya was not the only way in which Italy's African heritage was stressed to justify colonialism. Contemporary physiological anthropology suggested a lineage between Italy and Africa. In 1897 the anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi proposed that

⁴²³ Kai Mikkonen, 'Artificial Africa in the European Avant-Garde: Marinetti and Tzara,' in *Europa! Europa?: The Avant-Garde and the Fate of the Continent*, ed. by Sascha Bru, Jan Baetens, Benedict Hjartarson, Peter Nicholls, Tania Orum, and Hubert van der Berg (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), pp. 391-407 (p. 398).

⁴²⁴ Alessandro Triulzi, 'Adwa: From Monument to Document,' in *Italian Colonialism: Legacy and Memory*, ed. by Jacqueline Andall and Derek Duncan (Bern; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 143-163 (p. 149).

Mediterraneans had the same origins as, and were a subset of, the Hamites (descendents of Ham, the second son of Noah), the indigenous people of North and East Africa.⁴²⁵ This hypothesis, which could well have been known to the Futurists, given Sergi's fame, not only justified colonialism, and went some way to reducing the embarrassment of Adowa by stressing the superiority of Africans in this region, but also made Africa the cradle of the great Latin civilization.⁴²⁶

Primitivism and time

This genealogical suggestion leads to the possibility of Africa being another Italian past that the Futurists repudiated. However, Primitivism is rarely seen as a return to the past as the Primitive is considered atemporal. Poggioli also saw the avant-garde's interest in the Primitive as in keeping with its *antipassatismo*, as this was also an anti-academic activity.⁴²⁷ This idea that the Primitive has little to do with the ancient is also expressed in Boccioni's statement "Our primitivism must not have any analogy with the ancients. Ours is the pure extremity of *complexity*, the ancient is the stammering of a *simplicity*."⁴²⁸ He involved science, with its connotations of progress, claiming "Science has brought us to a higher barbarism."⁴²⁹ However, Boccioni used Primitivism and the primordial more than barbarism and I focus on these terms here because of their temporal specificities. Barbarism is other to, but contemporary to civilization, whereas the primitive is prior to civilization; this is a crucial difference. I propose here that Primitivism is therefore relevant to the Futurist relationship with the past in that it provides the Futurists with a means of escaping the history and tradition they despise.

⁴²⁵ "Con la demonazione di *stirpe mediterranea* io ho inteso di riunire una famiglia di popoli che abbraccia gli Egiziani antichi e i loro moderni rappresentari, le popolazioni dell'Africa settentrionale dalla Tripolitania al Marocco, alle Canarie, antichi Libi, oggi con diversi nomi, tutti i popoli antichi delle tre grandi penisole, Spagna, Italia, Grecia, quelli dell'Asia occidentale, Siria, moloti gruppi di abitanti del Ma Nero, e poi anche quelle popolazioni che, stancandosi dal Mediterraneo, si diffusero per l'Europa occidentale fino alla Gran Bretagna, e per la centrale e l'orientale fino a limiti poco determinati finora." Giuseppe Sergi, *Africa: Antropologia della Stirpe Camitica* (Turin: Fratelli Bocca Editori, 1897), p. 395.

⁴²⁶ Barbara Sòrgoni, 'Italian Anthropology and the Africans: The Early Colonial Period,' in *A Place in the Sun: Africa in Italian Colonialism from Post-Unification to the Present*, ed. by Patrizia Palumbo (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 62-80.

⁴²⁷ Poggioli, *Theory of the Avant-garde*, p. 55.

⁴²⁸ Umberto Boccioni, '[Letter to Vico Baer of 21st June 1913]', reprinted in *Archivi del futurismo*, ed. by Drudi Gambillo and Fiori, II, 48-49 (p. 49).

⁴²⁹ "La scienza ci ha condotto ad una specie di barbarie superiore" Boccioni, 'Il cerchio non si chiude!', p. 69.

The idea that Africa is atemporal and ahistorical has been repeatedly raised, particularly after the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* in 1984, the catalogue of which, it should be noted, contains the aforementioned Bassani essay. In this exhibition, the modern art labels stated the year the objects were produced, but those for the 'tribal' objects did not, relegating them to "either a vanishing past or an ahistorical, conceptual present."⁴³⁰ This tense, the anthropological or ethnographic present is, has been described as "a device that abstracts cultural expression from the flow of historical time and hence collapses whole generations into a composite figure alleged to represent his fellows past and present."⁴³¹ The idea of the primitive as timeless links directly to Futurism; in the introduction of the 1998 English translation of *Mafarka*, it is claimed that "Marinetti [...] set his novel in a timeless present."⁴³² Timeless in this sense refers to a lack of reference to clock or calendar time; in *Mafarka* there are no times or dates, days are charted by the rising and setting sun not by numerals on a clock. As mentioned above, Marinetti's Africa was a mythological, rather than a historical, space, the only indications that the story could be unfolding in 'modern times' are the occasional references to machine guns and tinned food. Hal Foster saw the aforementioned displays in MoMA as "setting the primitive/tribal adrift from specific referents and coordinates,"⁴³³ that is adrift from the scientific time of clocks and calendars absent in *Mafarka*. It is perhaps not coincidental that Africa is stereotyped as having a similar relaxed approach to time as Italy, where punctuality is perceived as a lower priority than elsewhere, particularly the UK and US, as discussed in chapter one.

Modernity can also be seen to deny the contemporaneity of the primitive: "During the period of modernity's dominance, the downside of what used to be called cultural imperialism was a kind of ethnic cleansing carried out by the displacement of unmodern peoples into past,

⁴³⁰ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 201.

⁴³¹ Sally Price, *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 57.

⁴³² Carol Diethe, 'Introduction', in F.T. Marinetti, *Mafarka the Futurist: An African Novel*, by, trans. by Carol Diethe and Steve Cox (London: Middlesex University Press, 1998 [1909]), p. xvi. This point has also been emphasised by Mikkonen, 'Artificial Africa in the European Avant-Garde: Marinetti and Tzara,' in *Europa! Europa?: The Avant-Garde and the Fate of the Continent*, ed. by Bru, Baetens, Hjartarson, Nicholls, Orum, and van der Berg, p. 398.

⁴³³ Hal Foster, 'The "Primitive" Unconscious of Modern Art, Or White Skin Black Masks,' in *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (Port Townsend; Washington: Bay Press, 1985), p. 187.

slower or frozen time.”⁴³⁴ The idea that African traditional art was coeval with prehistoric art is summed up in Leon Underwood’s assertion that African traditional art was “without centuries and decades, in terms of evolution.”⁴³⁵ This takes further Panofsky’s idea cited within chapter two that an African sculpture made in 1530 and Michelangelo’s *Medici Madonna* are not of the same time by completely excluding the African sculpture from this chronology.

Not only is the primitive other to the Western linear conception of time, with which I demonstrated the ambivalence of Futurism’s relationship in chapter one, but it is other to the Western concept of history, due to its oral history tradition. According to Jacques Darriulat, “Africa has no written records, it has no memory [...] Africa and Oceania have no history. The story of primitive art is written in the present tense.”⁴³⁶ Temporality and historicity are linked by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney’s suggestion that Lévi-Strauss’s rapidly transforming hot societies have history and slow moving cold societies do not.⁴³⁷ In short, the lack of Western homogenization of time, and association of history with written records means that the primitive aesthetic appropriated by the Futurists and other avant-gardes cannot be seen as part of the past or the present, or part of the history of art.

It is useful here to return to Vico, who provides an Italian precedent for the Futurist interest in the primitive. In his *New Science* of 1725 Vico portrayed the savage as a natural poet, “the source of the imaginative faculties still present in modern civilized man.”⁴³⁸ Vico was concerned with the ‘barbarism of reflection’, “a form of corruption of human nature and hence of society,” and one of the remedies he proposes to this is “a return to the barbarism of poetic man and a recurrence of the whole cycle.”⁴³⁹ As Hayden White describes it, as man becomes increasingly aware of the purely human origins of the institutions he is supposed to honour, he becomes driven to pursue private pleasures at the expense of the public good.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁴ Terry Smith, ‘Introduction: The Contemporary Question,’ in *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*, ed. by Smith, Enwezor and Condee, pp. 1-19 (p. 5).

⁴³⁵ Leon Underwood, *Figures in Wood of West Africa* (London: Tiranti, 1951), p. 18.

⁴³⁶ Jacques Darriulat, ‘African Art and Its Impact on the Western World,’ *Réalités* (English Edition) no. 273 (1973), 41–50 (p. 50).

⁴³⁷ Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, “Introduction: The Historicization of Anthropology,” in *Culture Through Time: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 2-3.

⁴³⁸ Hayden V. White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore; London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 174.

⁴³⁹ Leon Pompa, ‘Introduction,’ in Giambattista Vico, *The First New Science*, ed. by Leon Pompa (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.

⁴⁴⁰ White, *Tropics of Discourse*, p. 201.

This description parallels the decadent society and corrupt politics of the Giolittian era that the Futurists were keen to cast off. The 'second barbarism' of this stage is "more barbarous than primitive savagery, inasmuch as it is unrestricted by the fear and ignorance which drove men to impose restrictions upon their desires in primitive times."⁴⁴¹ White also notes that "Vico maintained that the original barbarism of the savage state was less inhuman than the sophisticated barbarism of the technically advanced but morally corrupt civilizations in their late stages."⁴⁴² Futurism's connection with Africa can be seen as ensuring that Boccioni's 'higher barbarism' encompassed this original poetic barbarism, rather than being the corrupt second barbarism. As stressed in chapter two, for Vico a return to an earlier stage, in this case to a different form of barbarism, was considered a step forward and is thus not anathema to the Futurist rhetoric of progress.

To conclude, Futurist Primitivism can be seen as an appropriation of the present and recent past artistic trends in Paris which the Futurists were exposed to via the Primitivism of Picasso, Gauguin, Matisse, and others. However, they also appropriated the primitive directly, again in Paris through the Musée d'Ethnographie, in Italy through the reports of the country's colonial activities and for Marinetti, directly with Africa. This was not the appropriation of a past, distant or recent, but, I argue an attempt to harness the creative power of the cradle of civilization in order to revolve the Vichian cycle.

My inclusion of Cézanne and the Italian Primitives in the same section as Picasso and African Primitivism has had the aim of demonstrating the tension of evolution and revolution in art history described in chapter three, Longhi's 'short-circuit.' While continuity between Cézanne and Picasso is widely acknowledged and was by the Futurists, the sense of revolution, of Cézanne being "the last exponent of the ancient epoch," as stated by Carrà, and the primitive allowing the Cubists to progress from Cézanne, as proposed by Severini, suggests a Vichian cyclical model.

To conclude this chapter and the second half of this thesis I would like to draw on the work of Ballo who also saw Primitivism as an escape from history and a return to art history:

The escape into prehistory, or, if you like, into the fourth dimension, resulted in a closer contact with history. The present became charged with the past, and charged with the future too, with manifestos and proclamations aimed at opening up new avenues for expression. At the very moment when they thought they were fleeing it,

⁴⁴¹ White, *Tropics of Discourse*, p. 201.

⁴⁴² White, *Tropics of Discourse*, p. 174.

painters and sculptors had their eyes on the historical past more than ever before. The whole of the past – Byzantine painting, Romanesque and Gothic painting and sculpture, the so-called Primitives, the fifteenth century, the Orientals, the Baroque, Hellenism, Ancient Greece and the Etruscans—all seemed actual and contemporary as seen through fresh eyes. Pure visibility, Croce's abolition of *kinds* of art, awareness of the relativity of the various idioms and the irrelevance of scales of value between periods and artists once a certain standard has been reached –all these things produced a new kind of criticism. In Italy, Giotto, the Sienese painters, the Ravenna mosaics and fifteenth-century art underwent revaluation. Artists themselves became more and more critical as they rediscovered traditions that had been long forgotten.⁴⁴³

Ballo's statement does not refer specifically to Futurism, but his notion that the attempt to flee history altogether, which I have related to Futurist Primitivism, was connected to the return to the Italian artistic tradition, particularly to those periods recently rediscovered and revaluated, connects this coda to the previous chapter on the *passato remoto*, emphasising the actuality of everything in the second half of this thesis in the Futurists' present. Despite this thesis's seemingly radical claim that Futurist *antipassatismo* did not mean a negation of the Italian tradition, this quote demonstrates that this notion has been present in art historical scholarship for over fifty years, but here given sustained consideration for the first time.

⁴⁴³ Guido Ballo, *Modern Italian Painting: From Futurism to the Present Day* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1958).

Conclusion

To contradict oneself is to live
F.T. Marinetti, 'Futurist Discourse to the English' (1910)¹

Futurism was inherently temporal; its very name declared its position with regard to time and its *antipassatista* rhetoric expanded on this at every opportunity. Looking back on Futurism during the centenary's period of retrospection on the movement has led to closer inspection of its internal contradictions and complexities. While scholarship has interrogated various aspects of the Futurist temporality, including its relationship with contemporary scientific and philosophical ideas of time and its connections with art of the *passato remoto* and the *passato prossimo*, this research has made an original contribution to knowledge by bringing these ideas together to critically re-evaluate Futurism's *antipassatismo* in its art and theory 1909-1919.

The Futurists' *antipassatismo* cannot be separated from their comprehension of time in general. While each of the Futurists addressed in this thesis had their own temporalities, some elements are common to them all. Their obsession with speed and movement, found in Futurist art as well as in the manifestos, engaged them with the temporalities of modernity, the scientific and homogeneous clock-time of train timetables, factory work and world standard time; their art was of its time in both senses of the phrase. However, their interest in science at a time when Einstein and Minkowski were reappraising the homogeneity of time and its relationship to space exposed them to less atomistic approaches to time. Bergson expounded this further, causing Boccioni to insist on the simultaneity of his depictions of movement due to Bergson's assertion that only the present is experienced, but that the past always exists within that present. Husserl's more diachronic approach to the present, in which the now stretches and blends into a retained past and protained future, is more akin to Balla's depictions of movement via repeated figures. Both Balla and Boccioni's approaches to movement reflect the contemporary development of chronophotography by Marey and Muybridge. Considering these phenomenological approaches to time in tandem a model of the present which is both synchronic and diachronic, a present which contains the past and the future, but can distinguish the *passatista* present from the *futurista* one creates a model of time which accommodates many of the complexities of the Futurist temporality, and aid

¹ "Contraddirsi è vivere" F.T. Marinetti, 'Discorso Futurista agli Inglesi, pronunciato al Lyceum Club di Londra' (1910), reprinted in F.T. *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, p. 285.

the clarification of its *antipassatismo*, which was not against the past per se, but against *passatismo* in the present. This disambiguation positions Futurism within a lineage of aversion to *passatismo*, but not necessarily the past, which includes Nietzsche and many of the artists considered in chapter five; as such, not even Futurism's *antipassatismo* can be considered *sui generis*. Reading the Futurist temporality as presentist, idolising the *futurista* present and repudiating the *passatista* present, connects it to readings of the avant-gardist temporality. Exploring avant-gardism's temporality of evolution and revolution encourages the non-linear ideas of time to be related to non-linear models of history in which historical cycles connect periods across time, as seen in Boccioni's 'Introduction to Painting', which charts Futurism's art historical lineage and the justifies a major reassessment of Futurism's relationship with the art of the past.

Futurist art's connections with the *passato remoto* and *passato prossimo* of art history have previously been identified on a small scale, noting formal similarities between individual works of Futurism and those of the Old Masters, and highlighting the shared rhetoric of Futurism with its immediate predecessors in Italy and France. However, critically interrogating these connections and viewing them *en masse* as an overarching story of the presence of art history in Futurism has allowed the magnitude of these connections, and their variety, to be evident for the first time. However, it would be simplistic to read Futurist art's appropriations of the Italian artistic tradition as an element of *passatismo* within the movement since appropriation can be read as a destructive rather than a conservative act. On this basis Futurism's use of tropes from art and artists which its rhetoric denounces could be seen as a means of demonstrating their supersession of those predecessors. The spiral model of history also allows connections made between art movements analogous to Futurism without denying the rhetoric of progress. For the *passato prossimo*, with which the Futurists themselves encouraged connections, the presence of continuity has different repercussions for Futurism, highlighting that they were not the first to declare war on the *passatista* present, but continuing a lineage of *antipassatismo* and opposition to the academy, even if they were Italy's first avant-garde.

The historicization of the avant-garde, its adoption into the art historical canon, has impacted the hegemonic stories of art; while modernists, avant-gardes and above all the Futurists were initially narrated as a complete rupture with everything that went before, the discipline has been revisiting this story and establishing connections between what are broadly termed as historic, modern and contemporary art for the last fifty years. During the time this research was undertaken this has come to a head with a trend for museums displaying modern and contemporary art alongside their historic collections, particularly in London, and exhibitions focusing on these connections, such as *Picasso and the Masters* at the Grand Palais, Paris (2008) and *Caravaggio and Bacon* at the Galleria Borghese, Rome (2009). This research is thus of its time, a manifestation of this tendency to explore connections across art history, to find continuity in the histories of art. The fashion for appropriation art in what is commonly considered to be postmodernity, and its resulting wake of copyright cases, has led to wider discourses on the nature of originality, which have contributed to my argument that appropriation is not necessarily conservative, in contrast to the normal reading of art historical influence. Source-hunting, making visual connections between artworks is fundamental to some aspects of art historical practice, including attribution and dating, but most importantly for this discussion, the building of a historical narrative about the relationships (or lack thereof) between works of art. The art historical eye's tendency to find formal connections requires discipline and a sound methodological framework to prevent the desire to find continuity becoming all-pervading without recourse to other methodologies. Continuity is a necessity of a cohesive chronological art historical narrative, with occasional ruptures serving to segment that chronology into periods.

This thesis has shown the difficulty of chronological art historical writing as the interconnections which it has identified are based on the simultaneity of the objects discussed in a particular present. Perhaps more importantly it has also emphasised the exclusive nature of art historical writing, which, as discussed within this thesis, is necessarily selective in its narration of past events. This thesis has not contested the factual accuracy of the stories of Futurism which tell of its repudiation of the past and has for the most part drawn on the same artworks and manifestos and the historiography of Futurism to produce a contradictory interpretation of the movement.

The limitations of space, and of course time, as well as the exclusive nature of historical writing have restricted the scope of this thesis, and there are a number of avenues of investigation which require further research. The timeframe of this thesis, focusing on the first decade of Futurism, has been necessarily restrictive. Extending this further into second Futurism would allow the changing relationship Futurist art, particularly *aeropittura*, held with the art of the past within the context of the 'return to order' and the Fascist relationship with art and history to be fully analysed. While this thesis has discussed the manifestos and theoretical writings as well as painting, sculpture and drawing, and has briefly touched on architecture and theatre, the exclusion of the full gamut of Futurist output has given a restricted picture of Futurism's relationship with the past. Turning to more peripheral figures in the movement, those working in other media, later Futurists and female Futurists would also aid a fuller picture of Futurism's relationship with the past. Extending the remit of this thesis yet further, a comparative study of how later artists and movements in Italy, for example Lucio Fontana or Arte Povera, related back to the Futurists and the Italian tradition in the context of the *dopoguerra* and the economic miracle, would highlight the legacy of Futurism's relationship with Italian art history.

In the light of the new work being done on international Futurisms, comparative studies of how *antipassatismo* manifested itself in these different countries, with their own national temporalities would also bring this study into clearer relief. This of course also applies to other avant-gardes who set out their relationships to time and the past differently and sometimes in opposition to those of Futurism. Moreover, within avant-garde studies, the mapping of relationships between the development of the Italian avant-garde and those elsewhere in Europe is yet to be fully developed, but this would first require a thorough study of the development of avant-garde ideas and formations internationally, and the structures which enabled these, as briefly considered here. This research's focus on the peculiarities of historical writing and its relevance when addressing questions of temporalities and *antipassatismo* in avant-gardism is applicable to these possible extensions of this project. Moreover, the engagement with and acceptance of the contradictory nature of Futurism, here emphasised with regard to the movement's relationship with time, is applicable to considerations of and beyond Futurist art.

While this thesis's use of Futurism's relationship with history and the past to inform its approach to historical research could be developed widely, the specificity of this project should not be underestimated. As this thesis has sought to demonstrate, Futurism's relationship with the past was multifarious; the approach used here has sought to elucidate its contradictions in a manner specific to the unique problems which arise from the temporality of Futurism's *antipassatismo*.

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NB: 'Original texts' are not differentiated from 'secondary texts' as the methodology of this thesis has highlighted the difficulty of such a distinction on temporal grounds.

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