

Italian futurism and its Latin American echoes

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Futurism, emerged within a peripheral reality, from the point of view of cultural elaboration, as it was Italy at the beginning of the 20th century, produced a strong and almost unexpected impact over all political and cultural contexts, where the strongest thing was the expectation of changes¹.

Much more radical than the French modernity, this avant-garde put in discussion the traditional way of thinking culture and art, and was received and developed where the rupture with tradition was necessary. Detonator in complex situations and at the same time a manifestation of uneasiness, Futurism interested that part of the world which obviously needed to escape from a tradition considered sterile, to achieve a quick renovation.

The asynchronism of its affirmation can lead to different cultural and socio-economic realities in which it impacted: from the pre-warlike Italy to revolutionary Russia, to the Iberian peninsula and lastly, during the 1920s, among many Latin American countries, where the avant-garde diffusion happened thanks to some precursors and to intellectuals and artists who had returned trained from Europe to their countries. The role of the magazines in disseminating and commentaries on the proclamation of the ideas has been fundamental both in Europe and in America, and for the first time, modernity got into the cultural arenas: excessive, provocative, unequal, discord, ambiguous, fertile, the real avant-garde producer of changes. The discussion about what was periphery and what was center was reinstated.

Relations between Futurism and Hispanic world and Latin American world were established in a very short distance from the publication of the *Manifesto* by Marinetti. It is well known that on April 5th, 1909, the Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío correspondent of *La Nación* from Buenos Aires, published the Spanish translation of the *Manifesto*. On the following day, April 6th, the Portuguese writer Manuel de Sousa Pinto, correspondent of *Correio da Manhã*, offered the first piece of information in Brazil about Futurism, presented by the author as an eccentric provocation by beginners artists². At the end of 1909, Almaquio Diniz published at the *Jornal de Notícias* of Bahia the translation of the *Manifesto*

1 The Futurist Manifesto was published in Paris on February 20th 1909 in the periodic *Le Figaro*. Its author, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, was a great visitor of Paris, therefore it does not surprise that the manifesto had been published in that city, where it could not be unnoticed.

2 FABRIS, Annateresa. "O futurismo como estética patológica", *Artelogie*, 1, 2011, p. 3.

Italian text and the consecutive comments, which demonstrated a careful reading of the document, pointing out many positive principles, underlining the “beleza da velocidade” [beauty of velocity], at the same time that disagreed with most of the Futurist beliefs, in which he could see the anxiety for novelty and source of extravagance, the opposition of the present to the past, the mass and repudiation of tradition, woman and love³.

Meanwhile, in Spain, besides the lack of a true avant-garde by then, one of the few isolated avant-garde artists of the beginning of the century, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, published in the magazine *Prometeo* (1910), number 20, a *Proclama futurista* to the Spanish, which had no followers amongst the artists.

Curiously, the first Latin-American who made a real profession of faith in Futurism was the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro (1893-1948). At his magazine, *Azul*, in 1913 he was writing that times had changed, and the real poet was “the one who knew how to vibrate with his own epoch, or overcome it”, not returning back. That was the premise of an intellectual and cultural position which led him to exhibit three years later, in Buenos Aires, his Creacionismo Theory. According Huidobro, the world must reinvent itself, in opposition to realism. The poet, such as every artist, recovered the original Greek meaning of “poietés”, that is, of the maker, the creator of a new reality.

Artists and intellectuals went to Europe and interacted with the European milieu, and soon returned to Latin America, where they interacted again with their own milieu. The Uruguayan Torres García would meet in Spain another Uruguayan, Rafael Pérez Barradas, who would reveal to him a distinct artistic world.

At the same year of Barradas, a man from Buenos Aires, son of Italians, arrived in Italy, Emilio Pettorutti, who installed himself in Florence in 1913. At that moment, Florence was the place of contrasts between the intellectual's supporters of *La voce* magazine and *Lacerba*, which was the futurist's stronghold. That was Marinetti, Papini and Soffici's world, made by a militant Futurism, within a burning climate that proclaimed war and expressed Marinetti's, Boccioni's and Russolo's moods and many other artists who gravitated among Milan, Florence and Rome. The young Pettorutti carefully and inquiring looked over the Italian milieu and surely was in contact with many artists. The collage entitled *El sifone* (or *Lacerba*), which he developed for *Lacerba*'s⁴ cover, was an interesting sign of his artistic search, that had begun to be more concretely formed during his Roman stay in 1915. So far, Pettorutti's artworks had no decipherable physiognomy and could not be defined as avant-gardist. In his autobiography, the artist defines his search independent from Balla's one, projected towards abstract art. While never adhering formally to Futurism, he said that he appreciated Balla's artworks in which “there were no subject”, which were “simple iridescent planes or vortices of color that plastically expressed the dynamism of a strength in progress, close to the way I understood it and had prac-

3 FABRIS, 2011, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

4 It is worth mentioning that Severini developed in 1913 an artwork entitled *Nature morte au journal "Lacerba"* (Musée Municipal d'Art et Industrie, Saint Étienne).

ticed in many drawings and in some paintings”⁵. As long as he attributed to Balla the role of the inaugurator, by pure intuition, “of the painting era that nowadays we call abstract” in Italy, he strongly stated that “the second one was me, since 1914, and it was intuitively”⁶, that is, without receiving any kind of foreign influx.⁷

On the other hand, the contacts with Severini and the interest for a certain cubist painting, such as Juan Gris’ one, highlighted his cultural projections and his exasperated desire of independence (Fig. 1).

Italy was the point of reference to many Argentinian artists during the “ismos” epoch. That could be explained by the Italian roots of many Argentinian and Uruguayan artists and also with the familiarity with the Italian environment for a long time. The generation of Pettoruti, Curatella Manes, Xul Solar had been formed in Buenos Aires during the primacy of Ernesto de la Cárcova’s production, who had been formed at the end of 19th century with Albertina from Turin, and the echoes from Italy had arrived in Argentina through Pio Collivadino’s efforts; they were not exactly the precursors of the avant-garde, but artists who were honored and had acquired a more than respectable métier. In Italy Xul Solar, Pettoruti, Pérez Barradas met and, in passing, sculptor Curatella Manes. Oliverio Gironde, who would become years later the protagonist of the literary culture of Argentina, traveled to Italy. The enthusiasm for Futurism shown by the Uruguayan Barradas at his Milan residence, would turn into a personal path of avant-garde acquisition during his long-living period in Barcelona, Zaragoza and Madrid, meeting and dialoguing with Joaquín Torres García. The latter, would slip toward a personal abstract style, not immune from the contact with De Stijl and the movements that would lead him through Cercle et Carré to the personal positions of the Constructivism, which had been one of the most fortunate and glorious pages of Latin American art.

During the World War I, Barcelona was the meeting point of many artists such as Delaunay, Gleizes, Picabia, Barradas, and also Siqueiros, who would publish the single number of *Vida Americana* in 1921 precisely with Torres García’s illustrations⁸. In Barcelona some of the intellectuals protagonists of the Spanish literature avant-garde also met and where were published many magazines, at the same time galería Dalmau offered its spaces to the artists. Barradas would develop there a group of paintings defined as “vibracionistas”, mostly inspired by the subject of the life of the citizen, of its “vibracionismo callejero”, highlighting his capacity of assimilation of the French cubists simultaneity and the dynamism of the Italian futurists, in particular, Severini’s one. In fact, Barradas⁹ developed the vibrationista aesthetics through the composition of figures and scenes that depicted the sensorial intensity that underlies in the daily situations

5 PETTORUTI, Emilio. *Un pintor ante el espejo*. Buenos Aires: 2004, p. 93.

6 Ibidem, p. 94.

7 The artist clarified that: “What can be strongly affirmed [...] is that in the Florentine environment, between 1914 and 1917, there was no painter, except myself, that would do, or at least present a painting where the subject-matter was evident”.

8 LINARI, Gabriel. *Historia de la pintura uruguaya*, tomo 2. Montevideo, 2000, pp. 27-31.

9 MARTINEZ PÉRSICO, Marisa. *Vibracionismo pictórico, ultraismo literario. Ecos de un dialogo transatlántico en la revista “Alfar”*, PhD Diss. Buenos Aires, 2011, UBA, p. 12.

in an urban environment¹⁰. In the meantime the Vibracionismo was disseminated through illustrations in the avant-garde magazines¹¹ and galleries¹², in the Spanish capital occurred the encounter with the Ultraismo, whose magazines *Ultra* and *Gaceta Literaria* highlighted the birth of a movement, led by writers and poets, not immune from the impacts also in Latin America.

In Madrid, the eclectic aspect of the movements is a great testimony of the receptive environment, capable of conducting the cultural elaboration to a high level. The ultraistas tunes cross with Vibracionismo due to an affinity of feeling: the ultraista image is “a vibrating image because it was born in an urban dynamism context surrounded by mechanical dissonances”¹³. Guillermo de Torre, writer of the ultraista document, forged in the capital a friendship with Barradas. In the city, immersed in ultraista fervor, arrived Vicente Huidobro, Rafael Cansino Assens (director of *Grecia* magazine), Andalusia painter Vázquez Díaz, Robert and Sonia Delaunay, Norah Borges, Wladislaw Jahl and Marian Paskiewitz, in an interpenetration of arts, which counted on clear expression and testimony among many magazines, which constitute the greatest tangible product of the Ultraismo. Amongst them it is necessary to point out *Alfar* that would achieve an uncommon importance in the avant-garde diffusion scenario, once its publishing would be continued in Uruguay from 1928 on. The avant-garde art confluence determined an intersection of roles that reminds the one that happened in Paris among Apollinaire and the cubists and whose Spanish predecessor was the artistic soirées of Pombo¹⁴, organized by Gómez de la Serna.¹⁵

The most important thing in this panorama is that the cultural mediation of the Spanish environment seems to be decisive to comprehend something that soon would be found out in some Latin American countries. The returning from Spain of Jorge Luis Borges in 1921 represented the beginning of a new Argentinian path, such as, few years later, the one of Xul Solar and finally Pettoruti's one. In 1920, the single number of *Los raros* was published in Buenos Aires, a futurist-oriented-magazine directed by Bartolomé Galíndez, who disseminated the Ultraismo and incorporated poems by the writers of *Grecia*, at

10 What favors Pettoruti is certainly the possibility of looking over the cultural and artistic Italian context making an effort not to get excessively involved with that world. Thus he is capable of adhering to the less visceral and more creative part of the Futurism, which was the Roman one, which could peacefully renounce to the divisionist stylistic premises, and he could be closer, I believe, more instinctively, by calculation, to the abstract experiences, which he had to know, being always inside of the artistic circles more aware, not only within the peninsula, but in Europe. Again it is important to highlight the disseminator role played by national and international magazines. It is necessary to bear in mind that in Italy there were some figures such as critic Anton Giulio Bragaglia or the gallerist Sprovieri, in Rome, who would have a leading role. Pettoruti would be present at the chronicles of the time and his exhibitions in Italy were many, besides his participation at the Biennale di Venezia (1920); until getting to the most prestigious one in Berlin, at Der Sturm gallery in 1923.

11 *Arc Voltaic* magazine, published in Barcelona, from 1918 on, has as subtitle “Vibracionismo de ideas”, clearly in reference to Barradas.

12 Galleries Dalmau of Barcelona and Sala Mateu of Madrid exhibited Barradas's artworks.

13 MARTÍNEZ PÉRSICO, Marisa, op. cit., p. 11.

14 BOZAL, Valeriano. *Pintura y escultura españolas del siglo XX (1900-1939)*, Madrid, 1992 (Summa Artis-Historia General del Arte, XXXVI), pp. 396-399.

15 Guillermo de Torre recognized “the painting had forwarded the way around the lyric and influenced us [the poets]”. The writer presented Sonia Delaunay as the paradigm of the avant-garde painting in the pages of *Alfar*, and Cansino Assens used as a pretext the activity of the Ukrainian painter to prove the new avant-garde prose (MARTÍNEZ PÉRSICO, Marisa, op. cit., pp. 198-199).

the same time, Borges, since 1921, expressed in *Nosotros* pages, his distance from Futurism and also the Spanish Ultraismo, which he accused of being “overloaded with modernity and gadgets”. Borges added that¹⁶ “The Ultraismo in Buenos Aires was the desire of gathering an absolute art [...] which could last along with the continuity of the language”¹⁷. It was the enunciation of the European movements creolization in Rio de la Plata, even though some people, such as Leopoldo Marechal, honored in many poems published in *Martín Fierro*, the exaltation of the Urbe, in the wake of Futurism. Marinetti’s arrival in 1926 is the reflection of enthusiasms and perplexities. Meanwhile, in the magazines, the Rio de la Plata’s culture distances itself from the political and pro-fascist Marinetti, defined as a “superficial man” and a “passionate disseminator”, but in any case an artist, or a lyric writer, or a critic¹⁸; in the pages of the magazine, Oliverio Gironde commented that “*Martín Fierro* is [...] more comfortable in a modern transatlantic rather than in a renaissance palace”.

There are no doubts that in Buenos Aires many magazines, such as *Proa*, *Inicial*, *Martín Fierro*, were instruments to the dissemination of the European avant-garde, and it is necessary to point out, in particular, Alberto Prebish’s critic for the introduction of the new art represented by Pettoruti, Norah Borges, Curatella Manes and Guttero. Obviously, they were elitist readings, which allegedly achieved results that have nothing to do with the masses opinions and almost cannot reverse the traditional vision of arts. On the contrary, due to the exhibition at the Galería Witcomb, ferocious critics and great opposition arose, and only in São Paulo would find another aggressive environment with the *Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922*¹⁹.

The Brazilian pathway to modernity started with the participation of the poet and writer Ronald de Carvalho, from 1913 on, in the cultural Portuguese life and in the magazine *Orpheu* published in Lisbon. The contact with the Portuguese Futurism was surely a vehicle, such as Mário de Andrade was with the European environment, Soffici’s books, the influence of the poet Émile Verhaeren and the French avant-garde. In Europe, Oswald de Andrade spent some time with intel-

16 BORGES, Jorge Luis. *Autobiografía (1899-1970)*. Buenos Aires, 1999, p. 62.

17 Mentioned in text and in footnotes by MARTÍNEZ PÉRSICO, op.cit., p. 91. Borges had already considered in the pages of *Nosotros* magazine, the main canonic elements of the ultraista movement: 1. Reduction of lyric to its fundamental element (the metaphor); 2. Laconic Syntax facilitated by the ‘tachadura’ of the intermediate sentences; 3. Useless nexus and adjectives; 4. Abolition of the ornamental distractions; and 5. Synthesis of two or more images in just one. According to Martínez Pérsico “the bi-o tridimensionality of the visual arts involves the advantage of the iconic analogy regarding the world [...] quality that lacks in the arts of discourse.”

18 SALAS, Héctor. *Martín Fierro. Periódico quincenal de arte y crítica libre (1924-1927)*, Edición facsimilar. Buenos Aires, 1995, p. 223.

19 It is important to reflect about the difficulties faced by artists who were gathered around *Claridad*, which expressed feelings and socio-political positions assumed by committed artists. An evidence of that is that both Xul Solar and Pettoruti did not succeed in their first exhibitions. Annateresa Fabris developed a documented and funny essay about the reception of the artists of the *Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922* and the underlying movements (Fabris 2011). The *Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922*, which took place at the São Paulo Municipal Theater, in February of 1922, is considered to be the landmark of Brazilian modernist avant-garde movement (T.N.).

lectuals and avant-garde artists and supposedly knew the Futurism²⁰.

It is well known that the discussions around the renovation of the cultural and artistic world in Brazil, above all São Paulo's one, started due to the polemic involved in the exhibition of Anita Malfatti in 1917. Around this event and its echoes, a group of writers, intellectuals and artists was outlined, which contributed to the emergence of a new art. These positions induced the critics to classify those "moderns" as futurists, not for being affiliated to the Italian movement, but because they were way from the national artistic canons²¹.

However, it was only from 1920 on, that Futurism was a term of combat and attack to the artistic manifestations of the past. The readings of the futurist writers offered "an opportunity to affirm the modernity of São Paulo, the anti-positivism and the bergsonism of the new generation". In 1921, the "futurist issue" became "paulista futurism", according to the expression coined by Oswald de Andrade, which was the one that the modernists wanted to designate their own "aesthetic feeling" characterized by a complete freedom and originality; at the same time they emphasized the reaction against any kind of school, including Marinetti's one.

Surely, the Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922 highlighted the debate around the Futurism. On the other hand, as it is known, this week represents the conscious implementation of some Marinetti's essential strategies: the occupation of the press organizations to disseminate and to defend the new ideas; the integration of arts in a common forefront; the searching for the shocking effect; the provocation and the conflict with the public; the presentation of artworks that stressed the new "modern" aesthetics. Although distancing them from the futurist "dogmatism", there is still a genuine futurist vein that emerges from *Revista Klaxon*'s language, which is shaped with the technique culture and the velocity. There are no doubts regarding the extent in which the Futurism was adopted as medium and rupture pretext, at that phase, it is set up as a synonym of modernity²².

According to Annateresa Fabris in her historical work about Futurism and Cubism in Brazil²³, to Futurism were often applied categories of negative sign, such as anarchy, Bolshevism and materialism, in order to highlight in a more effective way the inaccurate and bizarre aspects²⁴ that were in its artistic plat-

20 His interests about writing drove him to find in 1923 the Swiss poet Blaise Cendrars, which soon travelled to Brazil. In the meantime, two of the women artists who can be named in the history of Latin American Art of the beginning of the century, Anita Malfatti and Tarsila do Amaral, had their international experiences, the first one, between Berlin, Paris, and New York; the second one travelling many times to Paris and being in contact with Léger, Lhote, Gleizes, Brancusi and others. Both artists, the first one showing a personal expressionism of the German type; the second one showing a personal almost-cubism of French type, represented more than the others the novelties in the Brazilian artistic panorama, which also counted on Vicente do Rego Monteiro artist, and Heitor Villa-Lobos composer and musician.

21 In the group, which would soon result in systematic actions, would militate artists such as Anita Malfatti and Vitor Brecheret, the writers Guilherme de Almeida, Sérgio Milliet, Cândido Mota Filho, Oswald de Andrade, Mário de Andrade and Menotti del Picchia.

22 FABRIS, Annateresa. "Futurismo in Brasile", in: CAT. EXP. *Futurismo e futurismi*, Venezia, Palazzo Grassi, HULTEN Pontus (ed.), Milano 1986, pp. 480-481.

23 FABRIS, Annateresa. *Futurismo: uma Poética da Modernidade*. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1987.

24 FABRIS, Annateresa, 2011, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

form²⁵. Besides all that, the futurist *Manifesto* would play an important role at the preparatory phase of the Modernism. Marinetti's declarations about the dynamic concept of the beauty that he links to speed, had a strong impact amongst the young personalities of São Paulo, who lived the myth of the progress and the metropolis under construction, without seeing or considering the problems caused by the fast and wild urbanization. Not embracing completely Marinetti's thoughts, those who would define themselves as modernists, used the signs of the contemporary technology; and the frenetic ordinariness and the feeling of power given by the machine, became part of the lexicon and the practice of the new generation of artists. That is clearly in Tarsila do Amaral's case (Fig. 2). This selective and "criolla" manner of getting closer to Futurism, embracing much more *la pars construens* rather than discussing *la pars destruens* of the Manifesto, in the end, would lead São Paulo's world to a critic position and to reject, such as Mário de Andrade emblematically did, of the futurist "denominative"²⁶. The adoption of the "modernist" term best configured a nationalist attitude, which was more convenient to the role that the artists wanted to play in Brazil, and because of that, ignoring, in general, what Boccioni, Balla, Carrà, Russolo, among others, had done, they oriented themselves towards an experimental aesthetics which embraced the anti-positivist and Nietzschean influence of Futurism. Oswald de Andrade response to a polemic particularly aggressive, figured on the pages of *Jornal do Commercio*. In effect (due to the fact that during the *Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922* no exhibited artworks could be related to Italian Futurism) he affirmed²⁷:

The idiot definition that some mercenary journalists want to give us cannot persist, stating that we are Mr. F.T. Marinetti's thugs. We are not. What we could have been before the returning to homeland from Graça Aranha and his significant proto-martyr of the new era performance [...] was 'futurists from São Paulo'²⁸.

Besides not discussing the dialectic meanders by many critics, which also confuse cubists and futurists and talk about the new art as a pathology, it is worth mentioning the comment by Jorge Schwartz regarding the Brazilian attitude of bringing about a constant cultural polemic adding that the conflict between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, which creates an imperative need of fixing its own specificities, due to the intense search for a national affirmation²⁹. The answer to the national-cosmopolitan ambivalence that characterizes the 1920s

25 According to the author, combating Futurism as an excessive form, its critics did not defend just one model of art. They also defended above all, a model of society, of which art was the sublimated expression. Fabris also remembers the opposite vision: the iconoclastic and the anarchist wave of the Futurism became, according Sérgio Milliet, "relief", hygienic operation, cleaning the panorama of literature and arts from an old and decadent humanism.

26 Oswald de Andrade published his polemic intervention at *Jornal do Comercio* of São Paulo on 19th February 1922, p.4 (BOAVENTURA, Maria Eugênia. *22 por 22. A Semana de Arte Moderna vista pelos seus contemporâneos*. São Paulo, Edusp, 2008, pp. 103-105).

27 Andrade 1922, apud BOAVENTURA, op. cit., p. 4.

28 The writer adds: "personal and independent not only from Marinetti's little dogmas, but from any other niggard game. Futurists, only because we tended to a constructor future, in opposition to the melodramatic decay of the past, of which we did not want to depend from [...] It is a national movement, violent and triumphant in which formidable reputations are committed". Regarding the subject and the protagonists, see the documents collected by TELES, Gilberto Mendonça: *Vanguarda europeia e modernismo brasileiro*. Petrópolis, Vozes, [1977], 2009.

29 SCHWARTZ, Jorge: *Vanguardas latino-americanas: polémicas, manifestos e textos críticos*. São Paulo, Edusp/Iluminuras/Fapesp, 1995, p. 465.

was brought by the “Antropofagia”, which at some extent solves and overcomes in a lucid and creative manner the basic question³⁰ posed by those new times.

The Estridentismo

At the same time the avant-garde concerns appeared amongst the Southern Cone’s countries, the Estridentismo in Mexico had its manifesto on 31th of December 1921. It was published by the Mexican poet and intellectual Manuel Maples Arce in the magazine *Actual*, n. 1, with the subtitle “Hoja de vanguardia. Comprimido estridentista de Manuel Maples Arce”. Among the different influences from the European movements over the Estridentismo, the Creacionismo by Huidobro, the Ultraismo by Guillermo de Torre, the Dadaismo by Tristan Tzara, and particularly Futurism can be highlighted. Clear echoes of the Italian Futurism are the against-past tendency, the exaltation of everything which is technologic and juvenile, the celebration of the dizzying speed and also the aspects that showed the subversive and strident agitation of the contemporary life³¹. Provocative and irreverent expressions such as “Die priest Hidalgo!” and “Chopin on the electric chair!” were the epiphenomenon of a wish of being free from its own past and guide Mexico towards an authentic modernity³². The most important statement is in the furrow of the futurist sensitiveness³³:

*It is necessary to highlight in all strident tones of our propagandist tuning fork, the updated beauty of the machines, the recent athletic bridges created on the slopes by iron muscles, the factories smoke, the cubist emotions of the great transatlantic with smoky red and black chimneys [...]*³⁴.

The “avant-garde Directory” that Maples Arce includes on the manifesto-sheet, is the witness of the large knowledge of its writer. It is not by chance that he mentions the names of Marinetti, Huidobro, Jorge and Norah Borges, Pedro Garfías. He even calls Guillermo de Torre his “spiritual brother”. Such as the previous movements, the most encouraging figures of the Estridentismo

30 FABRIS, Annateresa, 1987, op. cit., p. 481. According to Fabris, “the debate with futurism, already denied in defense of the specificity of the modernist experience, also assumes political connotation in 1926, when Marinetti visited Brazil. Well received in Rio de Janeiro [...], the Italian poet did not succeed in gathering São Paulo’s modernists around him. The old-fashioned residue for the São Paulo’s intelligentsia [...], futurism is considered at the following years an expression always very distant from the real interests of the Brazilian culture. Nationalistic ferments, already present in the *Manifesto pau-brasil* (1924) and in the *Verdeamarelismo* (1926) are recovered by *Revista de Antropofagia* and by anti-industrialist polemic lead by Mário de Andrade in *Macunaíma* (1928). Factory and machine, modern and Marinetti’s emblems were put under accusation: factory is an illegitimate element of Brazilian reality; machine is an obstacle in the way of the Brazilian men towards the “tropical civilization”, civilization which, with Oswald de Andrade, became absorbing commitment and at the same time creator. Modernism, in progress since 1923 to a critic way definition, finds in expressionism the possibility of acting that ‘emotional synthesis’ between outside reality and art, which has no comparison in the radical modernity of futurism [...]”

31 MORA, Francisco Javier. “El estridentismo mexicano: señales de una revolución estética y poética”, *Anales de Literatura Hispanoamericana*, 29, 2000, pp. 263-265.

32 PRIETO GONZÁLEZ, Juan Manuel. “El estridentismo mexicano y su construcción de la ciudad moderna a través de la poesía y de la pintura”, *Scripta Nova*, Revista electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales, XVI, 2012, 398, URL: [http://www.red-redial.net/referencia-bibliografica-63716.html], p. 5.

33 PRIETO GONZÁLEZ, ibidem, p. 8.

34 It is worth remembering that Guillermo de Torre, the most important representative of ultraismo, at his poetry book, *Hélices*, wrote: “the engines sound better than the hendecasyllabic.”

had been poets and writers³⁵. In an uncommon harmony, the group of artists composed by painters and engravers accompanied the intellectual group. It is important to mention that in the scope of the group there are no architects, although the dialogue between the poets and the painters must have been really close and oriented towards the usage of the modern, frenetic and industrial city as one of its main sources and aesthetic “obsessions”, on the verge of conceiving the Estridentópolis utopia, which is “the poetic equivalent, metaphorical of the modern city. The poetry book *Andamios interiores* by Maples Arce (1922) will achieve an interesting plastic echo in 1923 through the painting entitled *Andamios exteriores*, by the painter Fermín Revueltas”³⁶. Scaffolds and construction, thus: where the city renovates the symbol of the good govern and the good culture³⁷. However, it is Maples Arce who occupies a particularly leading position of the poetic commitment with the city at his work *Urbe* (1923), which John Dos Passos soon would publish a translation entitled as *Metropolis*. The Mexican edition was printed with cover and woodcut by Jean Charlot (Fig. 3). To some extent, it is precisely the opposite reading of the metropolis that Roberto Arlt would offer in Argentina few years later.

This visionary representation of the city, with its symbolic values, incidentally constitutes the best element of the Estridentismo; surely it was the one that was expressed with a greatest coherence and stylistic unit. The poems by the estridentists artists constantly glorify urban pieces in a kind of cubist composition, which more than one graphic or pictorial work would correspond; they also glorify series of urban components that sound identifying elements of the modernity³⁸.

The fascination for the electric energy of the cables is an expressed part, it contributes to develop a unique view of the country; such as factories, industrial chimneys, hotels, train stations, skyscrapers. All that is part of Estridentópolis.

The experience of Estridentismo lasted less than a decade. The Café de Nadie, immortalized in a cubo-futurist composition by Alva de la Canal, (Fig. 4) reflected to some extent the role of the Café de Pombo of ramonian memory, where the avant-garde groups led by Ramón Gómez de la Serna gathered. In 1924, at Café de Nadie a painting exhibition happened where names such as Revueltas, Méndez, Jean Charlot and Xavier González figured. The life of the Estridentismo would last until 1927 thanks to the political support offered by some left-oriented-characters, in addition to that, from *Actual* came up other magazines, all of them founded between 1922 and 1926. In 1925, due to the political support, the most important estridentistas were established in Jalapa,

35 During the active life of Estridentismo, above all, through its magazines and proclamation, the important characters were, in addition to Maples Arce, Germán List Arzubide, Salvador Gallardo, Luis Quintanilla and the Guatemalan novelist Arqueles Vela.

36 PRIETO GONZÁLES, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

37 *Esquina* is the title of a poetry book by Germán List Arzubide; but it is the word that evokes the simultaneity principle, as an attribute of the modern city. The exaltation of the urban scraps often recurs to the estridentistas poets.

38 That is, means of transportation (transatlantic, locomotives, airplanes, trams, cars, motorcycles); means of communication (radio, typewriter, telegraph and therefore, poles, transmission towers, wiring communication of many types).

where they developed great editorial, cultural and educative activities³⁹.

The majority of other Latin American countries remained if not quiet, surely less encouraged towards modernity. Peru had only one truly committed writer, José C. Mariátegui, who tried to modernize his country through the pages of *Amauta* and his writings. The contact with the greatest Latin American intellectuals represented an important hinge in America. In Colombia, besides León de Greiff's concerns and the curious embracement of the call to order made by the painter Pedro Nel Gómez, there were no particularly relevant signs. And also the plastic arts from Equator seem to have no significant stimulus, besides literature and poetry.

Finally, Cuba had not been exempt, although late, from the avant-garde stimuli that the *Revista de Avance*, from 1927 on, could condense. Pushing social changes and a culture that, besides being confusingly of an avant-garde one, knew how to pour new sap in a difficult cultural and artistic Cuban panorama and had already started with the magazine *Social*, whose first number was printed in 1916. The large list of Cuban and foreign collaborators (Argentinian, Mexican, Chilean) bears witness of the great amount of international contacts that knew to involve, whose reverberations did not remain without consequences. However, a complete consciousness of the new epoch seeds started to grow around *Revista de Avance*, expression of the Minorista Group, which among many activities promoted the exhibition *Arte Nuevo*, that, even without a manifest or a stylistic unit, was an important manifestation of the Cuban avant-gardes and of the changing desire, which the new intellectual generation wanted and knew how to express during the 1920s.

The powerful ideological burden, the opening towards social, were reinforced by the contact with the Mexican magazine *El machete*, the Argentinian one *Martín Fierro*, the Peruvian one, *Amauta*; which meant the participation in an international debate. It is demonstrated by the fact that the graphic works that were published in the magazine converged from Argentina, Spain, United States, France, Guatemala, Mexico, El Salvador, Russia, Uruguay and Venezuela. From the new intellectual group emerged artists such as Carlos Enríquez (having in mind the *Rapto de las mulatas*, 1938) and Marcelo Pogolotti, whose blood bonds with Italy, in a certain way, also determined his artistic ties with Marinetti and the second Futurism. Artworks such as *Paisaje cubano* (1933) or *El intelectual* (1937), in which applies simultaneous scenes, are testimonies of his wish to combine his complex learning with a personal elaboration of cubist and futurist principles, with a strong ideological accent, which was his peculiarity.

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³⁹ It is meaningful and interesting that an avant-garde group achieves such results. It is not by chance, that its effective instruments are the manifesto-sheets, the flyer sheets, woodcut, graphic design, which thanks to Leopoldo Méndez, would achieve, in a process of continuity, a particular relevance years later, when the Taller de Gráfica Popular was founded (1936).

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Fig. 1 Cover of Der Sturm magazine, 1914, no. 192/193 with the reproduction of Gino Severini's painting, Tango argentino, 1914.



Fig. 2 Tarsila do Amaral, La gare, 1925. Oil on canvas.



Fig. 3 Jean Charlot, Cover of the poetry book *Urbe*, by Maples Arce. Xylography, 1924.

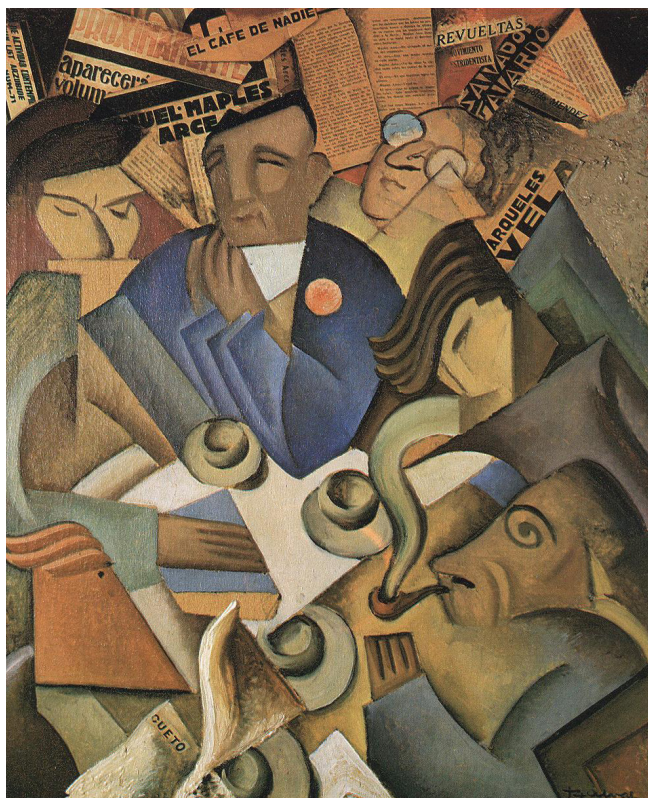


Fig. 4 Ramón Alva de la Canal, *El café de nadie*, 1930. Collage and oil on canvas.