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“Those ars all bellical”: Luca Buvoli’s *Velocity Zero* (2007–2009) and a post/modernist poetics of aphasia

ARA H. MERJIAN

For all the Italians of this period, when they say anything at all, [they] say it to the entire world. It’s the Mussolini influence, it is supposed, that so keys them up. But, [then] again, it may not be the Mussolini influence. Marinetti was certainly talking loudly before the war and before most of us had heard of the great dictator, and it may be that this necessity for forceful utterance is something born of the times and that Mussolini, though part of it, is not the whole of it. (*New York Sun*, Saturday, January 12, 1929¹)

“We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in; machinery that gives abundance has left us in want.”² Charlie Chaplin’s 1940 film, *The Great Dictator*, is perhaps best recalled for the final speech by the film’s Jewish barber — an elegy at once personal and existential, a melancholic dirge and a cautionary homily. Yet if any scene stands out as strikingly as this one, it is the slapstick harangue by the film’s eponymous autocrat, Adenoid Hynkel. To a non-German speaker, Hynkel’s tirade initially bears the certainty of sense. Chaplin’s parodic compendium of German phonology roils through the trills that famously leavened Hitler’s Austrian accent, then plunges just as quickly to throaty, guttural growls. Umlauts abound arbitrarily; plosives pop, then fizz into seething fricatives; rumbling exhortations skid abruptly into random glottal stops. Real German words and names — “Sauerkraut” and “Schnitzel” among them — punctuate the stream of gibberish to no grammatical end. Yet even Hynkel’s stutters are packaged in a carapace of utter conviction. Both despite and because of its hyperbole, the rant gradually reveals itself to be a blustery lampoon. By inflating Hitler’s already over-the-top oratory, Chaplin aimed to deflate his still exotic menace.

Luca Buvoli’s single-channel video, *Velocity Zero* (2007–2009) (figure 1), sets into motion precisely the opposite effect of Chaplin’s burlesque. For it inverts the poles of conviction and confusion, of authority and incapacity, bound up with the public utterance of language. It does so by means of a more subtle, oblique parody of the “great dictator” of early twentieth-century letters: the Italian poet, impresario, and founder of the Futurist movement, F.T. Marinetti. Buvoli’s suite of 11 scenes feature an equal number of sufferers of both acute stuttering and aphasia — the brain disorder affecting speech (and often cognition)³ — as they read aloud the 11 points of Marinetti’s “Founding and Manifesto of Futurism” (figure 2). Published in 1909 on the front page of the Parisian newspaper, *Le Figaro*, Marinetti’s manifesto

called for the purging of Italy’s stale aesthetic sentimentalisms, and the destruction of its prodigious traditions: museums, libraries, academies. By embracing modernity in all of its forms — urbanism, industry, and especially war — the nation most afflicted with cultural slumber would become, Marinetti hoped, the forerunner of all things mechanized and contemporary. As the invisible straw-man of the video, Marinetti haunts *Velocity Zero* precisely through his absence — an absence that underscores his notoriety as the twentieth-century’s greatest agitator for a culture of dehumanized speed and machinery.

In what became common practice for subsequent Futurist manifestos, Marinetti ended his decree with an enumeration of intentions (in this case 11), extolling everything from crowds to foundries to the waking of the nation from its “pensive immobility.”⁴ The pairing of terms in this last Futurist anathema sums up much of the movement’s animus. No other avant-garde of the twentieth century fixated more upon the relationship between language and the body, between word and deed — and, more importantly, upon the means by which the former might incite the latter. Marinetti figured culture as a corporeal lethargy to be stirred, or, conversely, as an idea to be imparted like a blow. The public recitation of manifestos and poems by the Futurists themselves — at widely publicized events across Italy and Europe — matched the texts’ aggressive rhetoric with bodily bravado (figure 3). Speakers hectored the crowds that gathered to hear them at Futurist *serate*, spitting their words with a belligerence that physicalized what might have otherwise remained a merely metaphorical violence.⁵

Filmed a century after the Founding Manifesto’s release, Buvoli’s *Velocity Zero* reveals speakers mouthing the text’s decrees cautiously, with varying degrees of difficulty. Buvoli recorded these recitations after extensive consultation with speech therapists, and after having involved aphasic volunteers willing to read for the project — as voluntary aesthetic participants, rather than objects of pathological inquiry.⁶ First screened at the Venice Biennale in 2007 as part of a larger installation (which I describe below), *Velocity Zero* engages with what Buvoli has called a “re-reading of Futurism from a post-utopian perspective.”⁷ Combining live-action footage of individuals overlaid with animation, and filmed in both English and Italian versions, the video’s revision of Futurism entails a literal re-reading of the movement’s founding text. *Velocity Zero* lays bare the disparity between the Manifesto’s fiats and the strained efforts of its new

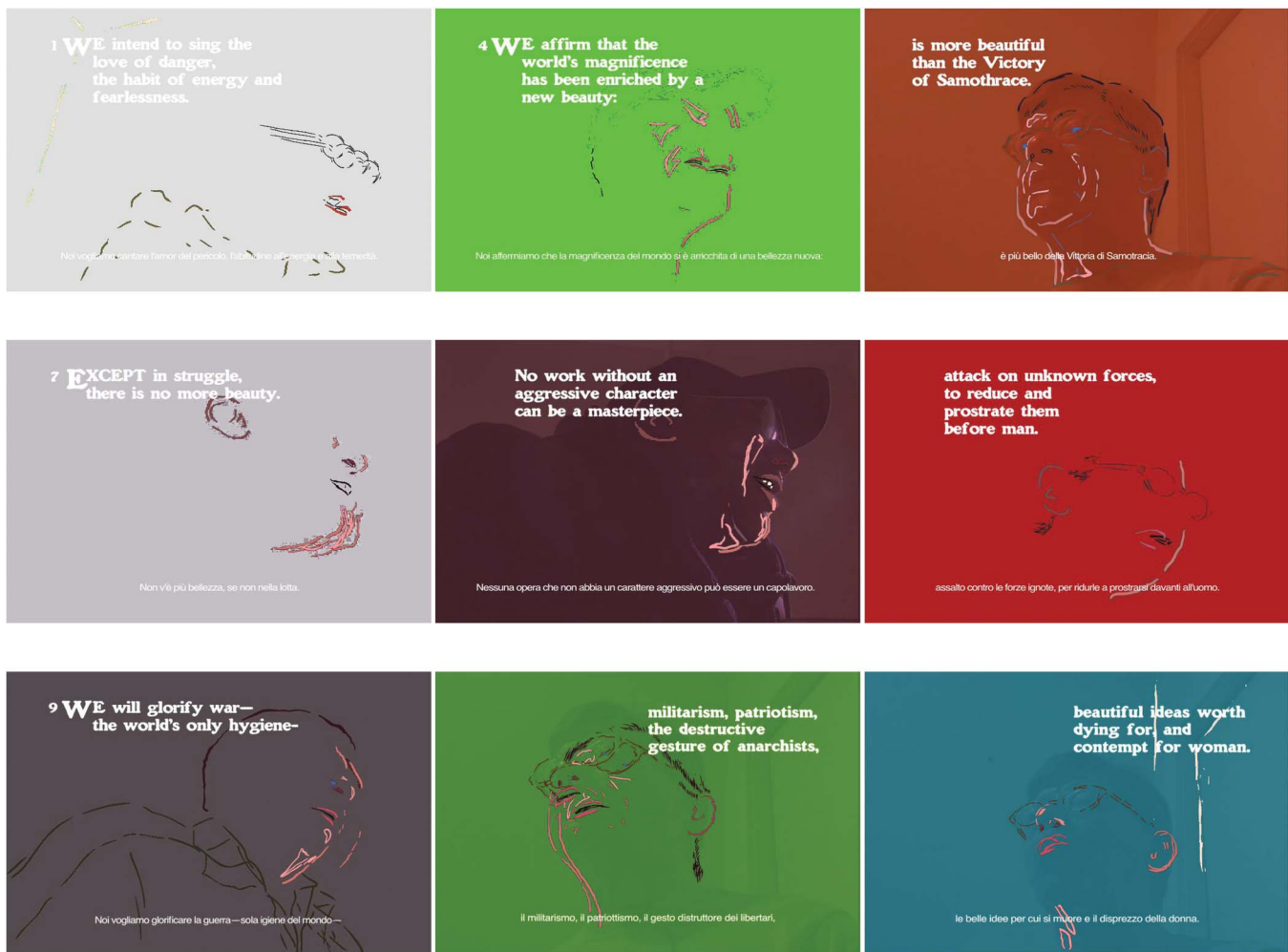


Figure 1. Luca Buvoli, Selected video stills from *Excerpts from: Velocity Zero*, 2007. Single-channel DV, 5 minutes, color, sound.

presenters. Rather than pronounce nonsense with utter confidence as does Chaplin's Hynkel, these anonymous individuals speak Marinetti's self-assured phrases diffidently, cautiously. "We intend to sing the songs [love] of da...da...de...d...danger." As she reads the Manifesto's first point, one speaker's hesitancy blunts and dampens the aural stab of the line's proverbial "danger." Another man's uncertain stammer as he struggles to read the text's ninth point (in the Italian version) subverts its intended arrogance; the rasp of his faltering voice exemplifies his mental and physical exertion, which undercuts the manifesto's own impatience. In Buvoli's own words, such aphasic exertion "dismantles the [manifesto's] praise of speed and aggression."⁸ While some speakers recite lines with relative deftness, others grapple with even the most basic of phonemes. The utopian promise of language itself unravels at the seams.

The utopia in question is as much modernism as Fascism, which the Futurists both anticipated and abetted: whether in their anti-parliamentary activism, or their lobbying for irredentist intervention in World War One.⁹ Indeed, Futurism's place

among the twentieth century's "heroic" avant-gardes was — and remains — ambivalent. In the landscape of the movement's particular utopias — marked by willful dehumanization, mechanized violence, and anarchic nationalism — the merely quixotic is impossible to tease apart from the delusional, even the gratuitously destructive. If its ideologies seemed tempered by a kind of metaphoric pliability at the outset, the ardent participation of many of its original signatories in the Fascist regime (Marinetti first among them) all but confirmed the insidious bent of even the movement's earliest ventures. To be sure, Marinetti cannot be utterly conflated with Mussolini, nor Futurism with the regime that followed. Yet the former's influence upon Fascist speechifying, as well as upon the burgeoning Fascist movement at large, is undeniable and extensive. Mussolini (who appears, incidentally, in Chaplin's film as the voluble "Benzina Napaloni," dictator of "Bacteria") took many of his oratorical cues from Marinetti's precedent. To wit, the same year that the *New York Sun* remarked on the "keyed up" resonance between the two figures' verbal prowess, Marinetti issued a glowing



Figure 2. ‘The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism,’ *Le Figaro*, February 20, 1909.

“Portrait of Mussolini.” Mussolini, in turn, appointed Marinetti to the *Accademia d’Italia*.

Even as Marinetti capitulated to the prestige of Fascist pedantry, however, his early assaults upon academic language — beginning with the indurated habits of syntax itself — echoed in European literary culture, from Dada and Joyce, to Surrealism and Concrete Poetry. Futurist manifestos generally proceed in a straightforward prose style. Yet the poetics advocated by Marinetti after 1913 — beginning with the practice of “Words-in-Freedom” (“Parole in libertà”) (figure 4) — sought to shatter the “logical canal” of syntax. Adapting a “telegraphic” immediacy from journalism, Futurist poetry dispensed with intelligence in favor of intuition. Orthographic, typographic, and onomatopoeic experiments conjured a “lyrical intoxication” of abbreviated sensations, analogies, textures. Marinetti aimed to revolutionize not only the more rarefied time of literature, but the historical duration of the nation; the swiftness of communication would correspond to — and in turn hasten — Italy’s belated rush to modernity. “Quick, give me the whole thing in two words!”¹⁰ Thus he summed up (in a few more than two words) his intolerance of prolixity and ploddingness.

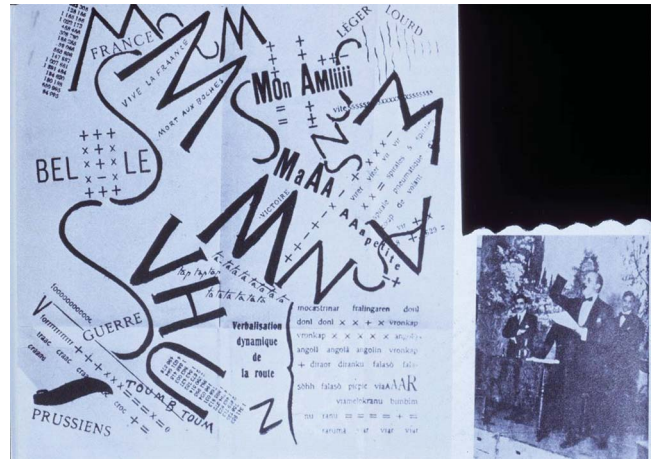


Figure 3. Francesco Cangiullo, *Words-in-Freedom [Tavola parolibera]*, with photograph of F.T. Marinetti and Francesco Cangiullo at a Futurist *serata*, 1919.

Considering his “dread of slowness,”¹¹ then, one cannot help but wonder what Marinetti would say about *Velocity Zero*’s protracted and “pensive” readings. The zero point to which the video’s speakers reduce Futurist language constitutes a kind of retrospective provocation. To watch and to hear them is to



Figure 4. F. T. Marinetti, *Montagne + Vallate + Strade x Joffre*, 1915; Manifesto: *Parole, consonanti, vocali, numeri in libertà*, 11 febbraio 1915.

witness a conscious travesty of Marinetti's entire *raison d'être*. Or is it?

Buvoli has described his larger, "Meta-Futurist" project since 2003 as undertaking to "undo — on a small and intimate scale — the violence in the rhetoric of the manifesto."¹² The imperatives of that rhetoric indeed wilt in the mouths of *Velocity Zero*'s readers. Marinetti's lofty pronouncements sag under inflections of uncertainty; his paeans to violence and "scorn for woman" receive their due unraveling. Yet if the video exposes the dystopia of Futurist conceptions and warps their impatient conveyance, the staged paralysis of language here actually conjures up some key aspects of Futurist poetics. The ways in which language is "undone" in aphasic recitation actually evoke Marinetti's proposed disjointing of discourse into units of raw sound. In the same vein, the localized forgetting of language entailed in aphasia resonates in many ways with Futurism's proposed cultural oblivion — a project that undertook to unravel individual words themselves: visually, aurally, and semantically. Against the grain of its own intentions, then, the video approximates — precisely at the moment that language breaks down — Futurism's attempted demolition of linguistic sense.

Velocity Zero thus sets into relief some vital, if unanticipated, affinities: between physiological disability and modernist prowess, between clinical diagnosis and critical methodology. Its rapport with Marinetti's Futurism is double-sided, at once critical of its ideological stakes, and consonant with its performance of lyrical dissonances. To put this another way, it touches upon what Ramon Jakobson has called the concern of linguistics "with language in all its aspects — language in operation . . . and language in dissolution."¹³ Many early twentieth-century modernists, and Futurists perhaps most importunately, assailed the boundaries between these phenomena. I hope to show the extent to which *Velocity Zero* opens up a space for their unlikely and uneasy simultaneity, even as it undercuts some of Futurism's less salutary dimensions.

Of Gatorade and marble dust

Turned at an angle oblique to the camera, each of Buvoli's readers appears slightly foreshortened (figure 5). The framing of faces recalls the off-kilter slant so favored in Futurist aesthetics for its association with movement (especially as opposed to the static, tectonic propriety of the horizontal and vertical).¹⁴ For the Futurists, the diagonal was identical with dynamism. It served as a formal shorthand for what they called *slancio*: a kineticism both physical and ideological, evoking movement, motion, a refusal to sit still. The angle at which the camera homes in on its readers from below in *Velocity Zero* also conjures up famous LUCE newsreels of Mussolini, haranguing crowds gathered below the balcony of his office on Piazza Venezia (figure 6). In this footage, the lens is aimed up from a low vantage point, either swelling the speaker's torso into a looming colossus, or else rendering him a hieratic, almost deified icon. The labored enunciation of Buvoli's readers, however, undercuts any monumentality or dynamism implicit in the camera's perspective. A few readers

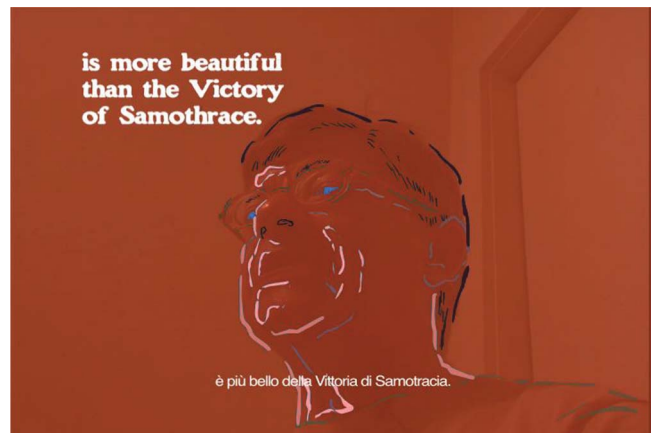


Figure 5. Luca Buvoli, Video still from *Excerpts from: Velocity Zero*, 2007.



Figure 6. Rome, Piazza Venezia, Benito Mussolini announcing Italy's intervention in World War Two against England and France, Oct. 6, 1940, Istituto LUCE, film still.

wear baseball caps, and most wear glasses. A few sport T-shirts, and one a large parka. They cut decidedly less dashing figures than the Futurists in their bowler hats, or the Duce in his fez. The very setting of Buvoli's footage — what seem like quiet, domestic interior spaces — flatly contradicts Futurism's cultural imperatives.¹⁵ Marinetti staged the overture to his "Founding and Manifesto" in his own bourgeois, Milanese living room: an allegory of tired, cloistered comforts to be definitively left behind. After a brief, narrative proem, the Founding manifesto shifts to the open road, embracing danger, adventure, speed. The calm proximity with which we glimpse Buvoli's individuals defies the emphatic publicity (in every sense) of Futurist affect.

This intimacy has its limits, however. For its entire duration, the footage in *Velocity Zero* is superimposed with bright, rotoscoped overlays, which flash apace with the syncopated recitations of each speaker. Atop these colored superimpositions, Buvoli has hand-drawn a schematic likeness of each sitter's

face. The shivering contours of these lines give only a sketchy approximation of the subject as he reads. Identified at the end of the video solely by their first names (in the Italian version, for example, Francesco, Giamperto, Giuliano, Lamberto, Lorenzo, and Luca), the speakers are most often reduced to a few visual components: the red trace of a nostril's flare, a bulge of pink, pursed lips. The flickering scrims are lifted only at very brief intervals, usually corresponding to a reader's particular struggle in enunciating, allowing a mere fleeting glimpse of the reader's face. Though we may gather some sense of each speaker's individuality through inflections of voice or mannerisms, we are given no information about their lives. The partial occlusion of the photographic image confers a certain anonymity and privacy on the reader, sparing him the potential embarrassment which an unmediated scrutiny of his labor might entail.¹⁶ By obfuscating visual specificity, Buvoli also directs the viewer's attention to the video's aural component.¹⁷ The video's verbal dimension is further underscored by its divergence from the screen's subtitles, which spell out each statement to be uttered, phrase by phrase. The rapidity with which we (presumably non-aphasic) viewers may read the manifesto's lines contrasts sharply with the speaker's painstaking enunciations. The dilation of time affords a range of potential reactions on behalf of the spectator, from empathy to impatience.

Any pathos evinced in the efforts of the video's readers appears, however, at odds with the bathos of the screen's jaunty, day-glo flashes. While Buvoli aims to re-examine Futurism stripped of the self-declared (and creepy) "optimism"¹⁸ in which the movement habitually dressed its callousness, the affect of the video — at least visually — is unstable. It literally flickers between registers: photographic and painterly, highbrow and pop, documentary and cartoon.¹⁹ Comic books have appeared as consistent leitmotifs in Buvoli's work since 1992, when he began the flipbooks and 16 mm animated films that comprise the project *Not-a-Superhero*.²⁰ His illustrations for *Flying — Practical Training for Intermediates* (2000–2002) further develop this fascination with animation, and take an almost caricatural approach to the diagram and the mock-up.²¹ In a similar vein, and anticipating *Velocity Zero* in certain respects, the gouache drawings, mosaics, and resin sculptures for *Dov'è la vittoria?* (*Where is the Victory?*) (2003) (figures 7–8) bring this Pop sensibility to bear in pastiching Fascist propaganda as well as the Futurist obsession with flight. For this project, Buvoli mined poster designs from the 1930s, in which words assume the hypertrophic perspective of a military phalanx, and athletes' bodies serve as the metonymies for the regime's cult of sport and youth.

Commenting on Buvoli's *Dov'è la vittoria*, one critic writes that his works "suggest the antithesis of the triumphalist approach of his forbears."²² Yet the formal and aesthetic parameters of the artist's work hew close to the bone of Futurist and Fascist models, even as he exposes their more dubious ideological components. That Buvoli's father and uncle served as pilots in the Italian air force during World War II underscores the extent to which his engagement with Futurism and Fascism is as



Figure 7. Luca Buvoli, *Tricolor Vectors* (*Dov'è La Vittoria?* [*Where is the Victory?*]), 2003 (above). UV stable polyurethane resin, pigment, metal rods, tubing, monofilament, dimensions variable. *Dov'è La Vittoria?* (*Tricolor Mosaic*), 2003 (below). Marble and glass mosaic on honeycomb aluminum, 118 × 157 × 1 7/8 inches. Installation view, Autori Cambi, Rome, 2003.

personal as it is ideological — bearing as much the whiff of a child's wide-eyed recollection as a matter of reified politics. Buvoli's work does not so much assail the spectacle of ideology (and its appeals to avant-garde strategies) so much as rework that spectacle from within. It is precisely through an appropriation of totalizing and totalitarian modes of discourse — whether the outsized scale of his installations, or the mock-utopian ring of their titles — that Buvoli ironizes their legacy.²³ In this vein, Peter Schjeldahl has compared Buvoli's oeuvre to the work of Anselm Kiefer.²⁴ Kiefer's moody, outsized canvases invoke the very (Wagnerian) dimensions of the German history that the painter excavates and probes, replicating those dimensions in a ruinous state. To the counterpoint of Kiefer's example, we might add that of Komar and Melamid, whose "Sots-art"



Figure 8. Luca Buvoli, Propaganda Poster - *Dov'è La Vittoria?* [Where is the Victory?] (Cloudy Grey), 2003. Gouache, pastel, pencil, and other materials on monoprint on paper, 22 1/4 × 30 inches.

paintings from the early 1980s — such as *Stalin and the Muses* (1981) and *The Origin of Socialist Realism* (1983) — tread more lightly in their pastiche. Essential to their revisitation of Soviet, Socialist Realist dictates is a wry humor that derives much of its force from a certain kitschiness intrinsic to the original aesthetic itself. Something similar, if more extreme and more literal, obtains in Buvoli's incorporation of both marble dust and Gatorade powder into his polyurethane sculptures for *Dov'è la vittoria*.²⁵ The different flavors of Gatorade at once color the resin sculptures in bright hues, and eat into their fabric, portending a hastened decay of the slick material into a ruin.

Playing on the Fascist obsession with athletic prowess on the one hand, and the regime's revivification of a millennial *Romanità* on the other, Buvoli's oeuvre here enacts a higher degree of appropriation, in his use of materials as much as the thematics to which they give form. A "futuristic" sports drink and the dust of ruins mimic — and literalize — the cocktail that was Fascist ideology. The seemingly cutting-edge technology of *Velocity Zero's* video animation signals a further appropriative maneuver, evoking the cultural context in which Futurism itself emerged. In addition to its comparatively (to painting or sculpture) "advanced" video format, Buvoli's use of animation echoes the practice of rotoscoping, invented by Max Fleischer in 1915, during World War One and the heyday of Futurism.²⁶ *Velocity Zero's* flickering forms hearken back to the Futurists' own experiments with medium and technology, but also evoke the burgeoning alchemy of "art and machinery"²⁷ pursued by various contemporaries in the first decades of the last century. It is, however, another of *Velocity Zero's* convergences with Futurism that I would like to address in what remains of this essay: the resonance between the readers' linguistic disabilities, and the self-declared "primitivism" of Futurist poetics. While this rapport is seemingly oblique to the video's central concerns, I would argue that it constitutes one of its most poignant upshots. Aphasic "regression"²⁸ seemingly stands at absolute odds with Futurist dynamism, especially the importunate fiats of the

Founding Manifesto. Yet the morphological and phonemic spontaneity of aphasic utterances — often in defiance of syntactical or enunciative propriety — in fact reflect vital aspects of Futurist literary imperatives.

While Marinetti's manifestos on literature unfurl in relatively conventional prose, they propose to destabilize every aspect of linguistic convention, to turn the aberrations of language into a boon.²⁹ In his 1913 manifesto, "Destruction of Syntax-Imagination without Strings-Words-in Freedom," the "strings" in question are the habitual rules of grammar and orthography, syntax and typography; the eponymous "freedom" entailed a liberation from the prison-house of grammatical regulation. In discussing the potential fruits of such a freedom, Giovanni Papini (a fellow traveler of Futurism, for a time) defined syntax as "the mind's slow victory over the exclamatory incoherence of primitive language."³⁰ Another one-time Florentine Futurist, Aldo Palazzeschi, described avant-garde experimentation as bound up with a yearning for "simplicity, a return to puerile expression."³¹ Indeed, the Futurists famously declared themselves the "primitives of a new sensibility."³² That paradoxical formula — in which advance and atavism are indistinguishable, not unlike Buvoli's mix of Gatorade and marble dust — characterizes the pith of Marinetti's Futurist literary theory.³³ In poems by Marinetti and other Futurist authors, the language of the future is whittled down to primal, often incoherent, forms. Futurist atavism, it must be noted, aimed for the opposite of regression: a sophisticated reshaping of consciousness in the vein of mechanized modernity, rather than a return to some originary state (whether ethnographic or mental). But the intended streamlining of Futurist expression entailed, however improbably, a sabotaging of linguistic practicality. Marinetti's "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" called for the author to "Scatter nouns at random"; "use the verb in the infinitive"; "abolish punctuation"; destroy "categories of images"; "orchestrate images by arranging them with a maximum of disorder."³⁴ While such principles — particularly of primitivism and mock-infancy — would be taken even further down the nihilist path of Dadaist experiments, to very different ends, they find an earlier iteration in Futurist practice.

Thus, when we read Giacomo Balla's campaign against "*passéist* clothing" (1914), for which he proposes "hap-hap-hap-hap-happy clothes"; when we read Bruno Sanzin's "stuttering a a attr attrac attraction / for-forced repulsions," in his poem, "Cosmic Genesis" (1933); or when we hear the protracted vowels and the staccato "karazuc zuc-zuc" of Marinetti's poem "Dune" (1914), we are not so far from some of the recitations in *Velocity Zero*.³⁵

7. Except in struggle, there is no beauty. No work without an aggressive character can be beautiful. Poetry must be conceived as a violent attack on unknown forces, prostrate them before man. (Original text)

7. E. x. c. e. p. t. in str. . . s. t. r. u. g. g. l. e. then, then is no more. . . posit. . . No work without any election? C. h. a. r. a. c. t. e. r. can be a mos. . . mos. . . e. . . prano? Words must be con. . . as

a...violet...eck...eck...on...an able to con end pro them before man. (Video transcript)

To be sure, the diffidence of Buvoli's readers — parsing out words (and even letters) with great difficulty — differs sharply from the self-assured experiments of the Futurists. If anything, the truly unhinged spontaneity of aphasia's effects — crippling rather than liberating — set into relief the practiced, often formulaic, rigidity of Futurism's professed "spontaneity." I do not wish to suggest that these phenomena are fungible, whether in intention or effect. To do so would conflate the studied ellipses of modernist poetics with actual disability, intention with accident. Rather than an extemporaneous verbal exertion, Marinetti's importunate onomatopoeia — and the manifestos that herald it — quite deliberately rehearses the sounds of machinery and weaponry.³⁶ The timed emphases and catachreses of Futurist poetry are not the same as unprompted verbal paralysis, however much these might superficially resemble one another. For an individual suffering from aphasia, furthermore, the liberation from linguistic or enunciative orderliness is painful, rather than lyrical; the aphasic patient seeks not to break down "the high walls of syntax and the weirs of grammar,"³⁷ but to be confined (again) within their sense and their security. Any such comparison thus risks flattening out the nuances and variations of these respective entities. There are, moreover, different kinds of aphasia, with varying etiologies and symptoms. In a similar vein, "Futurist poetics" takes an almost infinite range of manifestations, from the glossolalia and onomatopoeic play of sound poetry, to the narrative and visual dimensions of typographical experimentation.³⁸

Yet even as it undermines the pace of Futurist impatience, Buvoli's video adumbrates an "organic" resonance between certain aspects of linguistic aphasia and some of Futurism's (anti-)aesthetic, (anti-)literary drives. While they enter *Velocity Zero* transversely, incongruously, even unwittingly, these rapports merit consideration. For, they beg further questions about Futurism's particular place in historical confluences of broader dimension and consequence: namely, between the development of modernist poetics, and the diagnosis of aphasia as a neurological pathology; between the anti-positivist impulse in European culture, and a parallel, analytical discourse both scientific and critical. It is to the emergence of these overlaps in modernist poetics, and the tensions comprised therein, that I turn here before reprising the particular case of *Velocity Zero*.

"Heroic agony": futurism, modernism and aphasia

... the aphasia of that heroic agony of recalling a once loved number leading slip by slipper to a general amnesia of misnaming one's own: next those ars, rrrr! those ars all bellical, the highpriest's hieroglyph of kettletom and oddsbones, wasted redhandedly from our hallowed rubric prayer for truce with booty. (James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake*³⁹)

A year after he penned the manifesto/poem/polemic, "The Futurist Antitradition" (1913) — which lauds the "paroxysm" of Marinetti's "Words-in-Freedom" — the French critic and poet Guillaume Apollinaire commented in the *Paris Journal* on an upcoming conference on "Neurosis and Modern Art."⁴⁰ Downplaying the rapport between these two terms, Apollinaire remarked that, were he to encounter the conference's leader, he would convince him of the "calm," the "sang-froid," and the "good sense" of avant-garde painting.⁴¹ The appearance of Apollinaire's uneasy commentary on the same page as an article on the Austro-Serbian conflict is telling. As the Great War unfolded, avant-garde experimentation became increasingly associated with the conflagration's violence, its unprecedented damage to nerves as much as to flesh. Modernism stood accused as a symptom of — even a cause for — the war's mechanized destruction, both corporeal and cultural. Shortly after the war's end, the illustrated medical encyclopedia, *L'Illustrazione Medica Italiana* (1921), reproduced a painting by the former Futurist, Carlo Carrà, completed while convalescing at a sanatorium (*nevrocomio*) following a brief stint in the army. Erroneously labeling the image *Impressions of a Neurological Hospital*, the author(s) of the Encyclopedia related the "often schematic syntheses" of Carrà's painting to "neurological work."⁴² While Carrà was no longer a Futurist at this point, his impairment was implicitly ascribed as much to his recent prominence as a Futurist artist, as to his service as an orderly in the war. Such ascriptions, however accurate or exaggerated, abounded during this period.⁴³ They formed more recent episodes of a correlation that had gained momentum by the turn of the century.

That the first clinical investigations into aphasia coincided with the emergence of modernism in European art and literature seems less than coincidental. The extent to which the two phenomena are correlated — rather than merely coterminous — is a complex subject, beyond my expertise. I may give only the most summary of accounts. Coined in 1864 by Armand Trousseau, aphasia came into its own as a scientific subject precisely at the moment that painting and literature began self-consciously to break with the boundaries of academic propriety — whether in Paris's Salon des Refusées, Rimbaud's drunken verse, or the writings of Milan's bohemian *Scapigliatura* ("Bedraggled") authors.⁴⁴ The breakdown of seemingly inveterate aesthetic institutions was increasingly likened to aspects of physiognomic decadence — themselves the object of positivist scrutiny throughout the same period. This trend reached its climax in the pseudo-medical and pseudo-neurological findings of Max Nordau's *Degeneration (Entartung)* (1892).⁴⁵ Numerous individuals joined the fray of such speculative diagnoses at the turn of the century. A certain "Dr. Michaut" published his own hypotheses on Friedrich Nietzsche's madness, which were quickly taken up by the Parisian press. Calling attention to the philosopher's "aphasic repetition" of words and his "innumerable neologisms," Michaut ascribed Nietzsche's increasingly paratactic and aphoristic writing to a

dawning “amnesia,” a “general paralysis,” and “*une apparence d’aphasie*.”⁴⁶

“It would certainly be very difficult,” Michaut declared, “if not to say impossible, for a healthy writer to imitate this style; one can easily imitate the convulsions of an epileptic, [but] one cannot imitate the writing of a paralytic.”⁴⁷ Notwithstanding the reactionary applications of (pseudo-)science to literary studies, the extent to which modernism’s “morbid” and “neurasthenic” qualities could be said to reflect unwitting illness or conscious design remained — and remain — indeterminate. Such ambivalence has characterized creative works (and scholarly attempts to address them) from Baudelaire to Becket, often particularly in light of aphasic and other neurological afflictions.⁴⁸ The moment at which — to cite Pierre Klossowski — “Nietzsche’s *ultima verba* turned into aphasia”⁴⁹ epitomizes this moment of ambivalent overlap: between the diagnosis of a disability, and the willful performance of modernist aporia. Glossing this same ambivalence, Oliver Sacks remarks in his study of aphasia that there frequently obtains in modernist works “a collusion between the powers of pathology and creation,”⁵⁰ an intersection of aesthetics and neurological dysfunction impossible to tease apart. Rather than a cautionary tale, the edgy energy of various “diseased” modes of writing served as lightning rods to avant-garde experiment, quite in spite of any accusations of “aphasic” degeneration.

Anything but uncontrolled, Joyce’s stream-of-consciousness, use of neologisms, and obsessive alliteration derived from deliberate method: an ecstatic “misnaming one’s own” that admits quite frankly its affinity (however mannered and self-conscious) with aphasic “agony.” Even before Samuel Beckett’s *actual* affliction by the disorder in 1988, he, too, had evoked aphasia — reflexively, performatively, and literally — in the existential lyricisms of *Waiting for Godot* (1954): “quaquaquaqua outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia.”⁵¹ Beckett and Joyce’s respective debts to Futurist experiments beg some further consideration in this regard, particularly to the extent that their literary innovations entailed a voluntary, stylized regression of language — a regression often invoking aphasia in effect, when not in name. Joyce’s allusion to “those ars, rrrr! . . . all bellical” seems, in fact, to refer quite pointedly to Marinetti’s aggressive distension of words, and the frequently “aphasic” resonance of the Italian’s quasi-neologisms (though Joyce’s word play and sensitivity to the ironies of etymology courts the kind of *passéisme* decried by Marinetti and Co.).⁵²

Discussing the modern scientific diagnoses of neurological dysfunction, Oliver Sacks writes: “we have privative words of every sort — Aphonia, Aphemia, Aphasia, Alexia, Apraxia, Agnosia, Amnesia, Ataxia — a word for every specific neural or mental function of which patients, through disease, injury, or failure to develop, may find themselves partly or wholly deprived.”⁵³ Modernism came to rehearse a comparable catalogue of privations in and as the fabric of its idioms, both verbal and visual — a fabric increasingly, expressly, rendered frayed

and spare. Absence and loss (of meaning, of sense) served no longer as the dialectical, structuring opposite of modernist aesthetics, but rather its hollow core. Whether in the spartan spaces and surfaces of Manet’s images, or Cézanne’s faceless anatomies, or Stein’s choppy and affectless repetitions, the privative became in many instances inextricable from — even constitutive of — the descriptive. This was the case for Realist aesthetics as often as for more expressive (not to say Expressionist), “interior” modes. Numerous Impressionist and Macchiaioli landscapes appeared scandalously indistinguishable from mere sketches; the pith of Symbolism, conversely, lay in its leaching of semantic integrity away from the sign. The pages of Mallarmé’s poetry take this latter tendency to perhaps its earliest extreme. The empty swaths that space and pace *Un Coup de dés n’abolira jamais le hasard* (1897), for example, are as charged with meaning as the poem’s frugal economy of words. I will not venture any authoritative appraisal of that symbolic economy, one whose very sparseness has occasioned a sea of scholarship. I wish merely to note how — in skirting and flirting with outright blankness — the text verges on a kind of visual aphasia (figure 9).

Mallarmé significantly influenced aspects of Marinetti’s poetic theory and practice.⁵⁴ While Marinetti rejected the meditative solipsism implicit in Mallarmé’s writing, he drew upon the French poet’s typographical experiments. Marinetti increasingly approached the printed word as a visual entity, to be not only framed and spaced, but played with in its very materiality (both printed and sonorous): contracted or pulled apart, extended in reverberation or radically truncated. The disintegration of the grammatical sentence — and in turn the word, the syllable, even the morpheme — drove Marinetti’s theory of “Words-in-Freedom.” To be sure, the Futurists distanced themselves from any taint of the explicitly “neurasthenic,” and its degenerate, feminine connotations. They roundly condemned the decadent tendencies of Gabriele D’Annunzio, and his writing’s profound affinities with illness.⁵⁵ Championing a clinical, antiseptic rhetoric of “geometric and mechanical splendor,” Futurist language aimed to combat the forces of cultural degeneration, including “pessimism, tuberculosis . . . [and] an aesthetic of failure.”⁵⁶ As Cinzia Blum notes, oratory formed an integral part of Futurism’s proposed “mental hygiene,” a “‘healthy’ expansion,” which would help to reclaim the public dimension of art.⁵⁷ When interviewed in the French press regarding the scandal caused by his Founding Manifesto, Marinetti quipped that Futurism’s belligerence was “a question of health, which takes precedence over everything else. Is not the life of nations, when all’s said and done, like that of the individual who . . . rids himself of infections?”⁵⁸ The Futurists had no time, and less interest, in sick individuals, however afflicted.⁵⁹

Still, it is undeniable that Marinetti’s campaign of putative “health” entailed precisely a stylized imitation of linguistic disorder. To their original audiences, Futurist recitations seemed anything but wholesome and functional. In particular, the resonances between Marinetti’s literary prescriptions and certain manifestations of aphasia are striking. As I mentioned above,

C'ÉTAIT
issu stellaire

LE NOMBRE

EXISTÂT-IL
autrement qu'hallucination éparse d'agonie

COMMENÇÂT-IL ET CESSÂT-IL
sourdant que nié et clos quand apparu
enfin
par quelque profusion répandue en rareté

SE CHIFFRÂT-IL

Évidence de la somme pour peu qu'une

ILLUMINÂT-IL

CE SERAIT

pire

non

d'avantage ni moins

indifféremment mais autant

LE HASARD

Choit

la plume

rythmique suspens du sinistre

s'ensevelir

aux écumes originelles

naguères d'où sursauta son délire jusqu'à une cime

flétrie

par la neutralité identique du gouffre

Figure 9. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Un coup de des jamais n'abolira le hasard*, 1897; published in book format 1914 by Paris: La Nouvelle Revue Française.

the “agrammatism” and ellipses of aphasic impairment resemble precisely what Marinetti advocates in his “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature”: the omission of “adjectives, adverbs, and conjunctive phrases.”⁶⁰ The poet, in Marinetti’s surmise, must “weave together distant things *with no connected strings*, by means of essential *free* words.”⁶¹ He called expressly for “fistfuls of essential words in no conventional order.”⁶² A few decades earlier, the eminent neurologist John Hughlings-Jackson had asserted that the primary characteristic of aphasia was not simply a loss of words or of signs, but rather the loss of the grammatical tissue that placed them in coherent relationship to one another: “We do not either speak or think in words or signs only, but in words or signs referring to one another in a particular manner. . . . Without a proper interrelation of its parts, a verbal utterance would be a mere succession of names, a word-heap, embodying no proposition.”⁶³ In the same vein, Roman Jakobson describes the aphasic individual’s loss of “the ability to propositionize. The context disintegrates. First the relational words are omitted, giving rise to the so-called ‘telegraphic style’.”⁶⁴ The “telegraphic” mode of speaking generally refers to the aphasic patient’s “deficiency in syntactic understanding,”⁶⁵ as well as a frequent elision of morphemes, and the use of short, clipped phrases of abnormal rhythm and pacing. In

particular, sufferers from Broca’s aphasia (which affects the brain’s frontal lobe) speak in shorter, choppy phrases, often omitting words. Rather than stating, for example, “My brother is going to school today,” a Broca’s-afflicted individual might say simply, “brother school.”⁶⁶

The significance of the term “telegraphic” in relation to Futurist language is significant. Indeed, one of the principal features of Marinetti’s proposed “Destruction of Syntax” was its call for a “telegraphic” style.⁶⁷ Marinetti understood this as an imitation of the wireless transmission’s choppy immediacy. In Marinetti’s linguistic utopia, the contingencies of subjectivity would be suppressed. His emulation of both the mechanical drone of the airplane propeller, and of journalistic reportage — clipped, direct, cleansed of periphrasis and ratiocination — formed a piece with his proposed obviation of the literary “I” in writing.⁶⁸ The result would be a bare-bones language, which, in its self-sufficient quickness, could exist (or at least *seem* to exist) independent of the human being. Marinetti had long fixated upon the airplane as a new linguistic and aesthetic model, even in proto-Futurist writings such as *The Pope’s Aeroplane* and *Mafarka the Futurist*. The trope became an *idée fixe* for the Futurists, applied to every manner of expression, including so-called *aeropoésia* and *aeropittura*, even *aeroceramica*. The Futurist obsession

with flight entailed an increasing disavowal of the human body and its potential (physiological, verbal, subjective) inadequacies, just as the adoption of a propeller's inhuman "voice," or the quick dispatch of the news wire, offered Marinetti a new model of linguistic efficiency.⁶⁹

Ironically, it is precisely as a result of aphasic impairment that the readers in *Velocity Zero* often sound most rote and machine-like in their recitation. A case in point is one man's tone as he reads the Manifesto's professed "scorn for woman." This individual's difficulty in reading seemingly prevents him from registering the affective resonance of this line; rather than pronounce it with gusto and spite, he can give it only a monotone delivery. The hesitancy of "telegraphic" utterances in *Velocity Zero* unquestionably flouts Futurist rapidity. Yet the flattening of intonations and inflections, the elision of morphemes and grammatical units, and the staccato rhythms of various recitations all approximate Marinettian principles, even as they undercut them. Sufferers of Wernicke's aphasia, which affects the brain's temporal lobe, conjure up Futurist recitations in a different manner. While they speak in more fluid sentences, their syntax is often unintelligible, and introduces random words — including neologisms — into their speech.⁷⁰ To be sure, the concatenation of Futurist images often follows a somewhat narrative or episodic filament. For all of Marinetti's aural experiments in his poem *Zang Tumb Tuuum* (1912–1914), for example, he meant to convey the concrete sensations of the Battle of Adrianopoli, which he witnessed as a war reporter. Marinetti's "closely woven nets of imagery" differ significantly from the aphasic's unintended omissions, fragmentations, and ellipses. Yet while the "telegraphic" lyricism of the Futurist free-word poem aims foremost to be "streamlined and unburdened,"⁷¹ its verbal pronunciation and visual appearance often engender precisely the opposite effect.

Communication/breakdown

Due to the relentless fragmentation of syntax and of individual morphemes, the intended quickness of Futurist lyrical communication often hardens into "immobility."⁷² Ian Andrews writes, "Marinetti's Words-in-Freedom is at odds with its aspirations towards brevity and accelerated communication. In paring down the syntactic structure of language in order to focus on individual words, Marinetti arguably retards the pace of delivery and increases the incidence of ambiguity."⁷³ In a similar vein, Johanna Drucker notes in her writing on Marinetti's experimental poetics that its "demolition apparatus aimed first at convention and then at itself."⁷⁴ The detritus of the fractured line, word, and phoneme accrue in Futurist utterances like so many ruins, ensnaring the speaker in the encumbrance his own speech fragments. Notwithstanding Marinetti's elegy to "an essential conciseness and compactness, the sweet precision of machinery and of well-oiled thought,"⁷⁵ the free-word poem often groans and wheezes like a rusty clunker, creaking under the weight of its own exaggerations and dilations. Language ends up decelerated. This is the case visually as well as verbally.

Futurist typographic experiments force the reader/viewer to slow down, to consider the newly warped rapports between lettering and pronunciation, sight and sound.

This relates to, and underscores, the almost immediate influence of Futurist poetics on Dada (and, in a related vein, on Russian *Zaum* poets). These movements furthered the Futurist, "free-word" revision of aural and visual elements. They borrowed its linguistic and typographic experimentation, but cast aside the attendant nationalism and war-mongering. The affinity of certain aspects of *Velocity Zero* with Dadaist works sets into relief the specific stakes of its own particular travesty of Futurist aggression. For, in contesting — rather than celebrating — the cult of war, speed, and technology during World War One, Dada artists and poets appropriated Futurist experiments to emphatically pacifist ends.⁷⁶ Rather than disavow bodily trauma, or its origins in war and the machinery of death, the Dadaists incorporated (quite literally) that trauma into their linguistic experiments.⁷⁷ Whether in wartime Zurich, or the immediate post-World War One period in Berlin and Hannover, numerous artists affiliated with international Dada — Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Richard Huelsenbeck, Kurt Schwitters, and Raoul Hausmann chief among them — experimented with sound and optophonetic poetry, simultaneous recitation, and experimental typography and photomontage. In the mouths of these individuals, the "primitivism" originally promised by the Futurist artists became not an unequivocal celebration of newness and machinery, but rather a defiant identification with linguistic, corporeal, and ethnographic atavism.

Look at Raoul Hausmann's typeset poster for his sound poem, *OFFEAHBDC* (1918) (figure 10). Brigid Doherty writes on this piece and its performance: "Above all it is a poem to be declaimed, emphatically, but more slowly than you might imagine, with the speaker affecting, letter by letter, a range of sometimes halting sometimes lilting cadences."⁷⁸ Though differing in certain respects, Russian *Zaum* poets experimented in related modes in their (even earlier) work, which also subsequently influenced Dadaists like Hugo Ball. Aleksei Kruchenykh declares in one manifesto: "With regard to the word we noticed that it can be read backward, and that then it acquires a more *profound meaning!*"⁷⁹ Such pronouncements followed directly in the vein not only of the Futurists' experiments, but Marinetti's prescriptions thereof. "It matters little if the deformed word becomes ambiguous," Marinetti had written, in his exhortation to "unhinge" not simply verse, but even words: "Only the unsyntactical poet who unlinks his words can penetrate the essence of matter."⁸⁰ The unhinging of syntax and of sense in Dada aims at different, less transcendental ends, of which aphasia provides at least an analogy, if not a model. The resemblance between certain Dadaist (and even Futurist) examples and present-day, visual evocations of aphasia accentuates this point, particularly in their insistence upon a fraught, flawed, and decentered embodiment.



Figure 10. Raoul Hausmann, O F F E A H B D C, 1918. Poster poem, mounted on board (33 × 48 cm.) [Collection Berlinische Galerie, Berlin].

Consider the designs currently used to publicize the American National Aphasia Association (figure 11). Three such illustrations depict human heads uttering a stream of letters, whether backwards, jumbled, or upside down.⁸¹ In two examples, this “word heap” is set off against an orderly grid of alphabetic succession; in another design, the words “I have aphasia” become, “pav Isha ehaia.” If the latter evokes the ethnographically informed neologisms of Hugo Ball, the former recall Hausmann’s optophonetic knots of consonants and their duly halting enunciation. Hausmann’s visual work, too, integrated his disassembly of language in photomontage, emphasizing the body as the (imperfect) producer of words (figure 12). As in the playful drawings/*parole-in-libertà* of the Futurist artist Francesco Cangiullo, such as *Humanized Letters* (1914) (figure 13), Hausmann invokes the head and mouth as a metonymy for human speech, as well as its syncopation and rearrangement. Cangiullo’s image turns teeth and lips into the proscenium for language’s disorderly performance. That these images both call



Figure 12. Raoul Hausmann, *ABCD*, 1923-24, ink and collage on paper, 40.4 × 28.2 cm., Musée National d’art moderne, Paris.

attention to the presence of the body, and resemble contemporary evocations of aphasia today, are not, I think, entirely coincidental. Doherty notably insists upon ‘certain kinds of regressive bodily affect’ in Berlin Dada’.⁸² In a related vein, Steve McCaffery notes of Hugo Ball’s recitative performances that they emphasized ‘the



Figure 11. Advertisements, National Aphasia Association, various dimensions; reproduced with generous permission of the NAA.

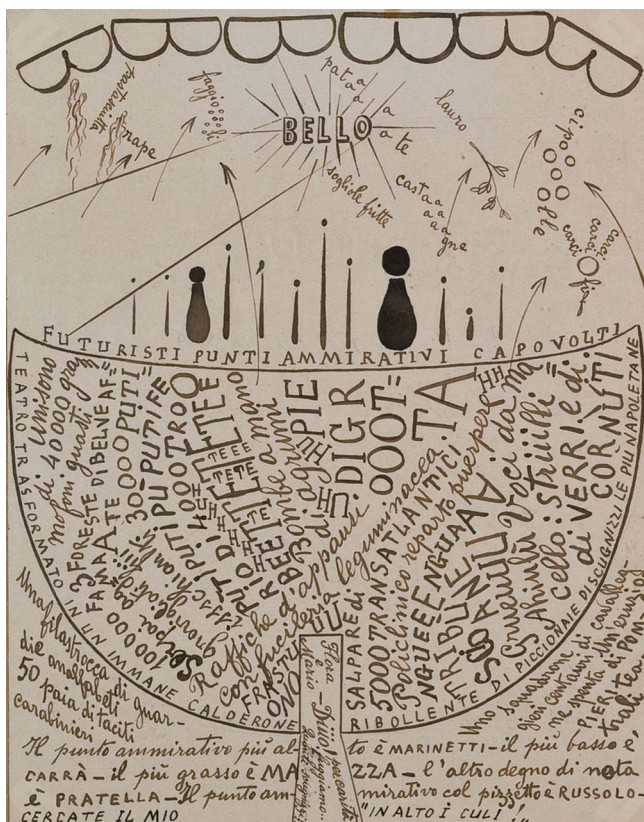


Figure 13. Francesco Cangiullo, *Bello: Lettres humanisées*, 1914, 27.6 × 21.4. Milan, coll. Calmarini.

force of haptic, pathic affect' – that is, a purposefully abortive enunciation that insists upon the body as the vector of language, whether in transmission or failure.⁸³ Cangiullo's "humanization" of confused letters – mouthed by an aperture that is at once orifice and stage – also notably contrasts with Marinetti's affinity for a dehumanized language of the propeller.

In his important essay, "The Linguistic Problem of Aphasia," Roman Jakobson complained that despite the relevance of linguistic *disturbance* to the *functional* practice of language, "in most cases, this valid insistence on the linguist's contribution to the investigation of aphasia is still ignored."⁸⁴ It was, perhaps, Dada's linguistic experiments that most importantly underscored the relationship between bodily and linguistic function and dysfunction. Rather than a streamlined linguistic machine, the body is evoked in Dada as a defective apparatus — one whose flaws set into relief the normally repressed imperfections of language. As Craig Dworkin writes, "what is conventionally understood as 'malfunction' is not an exception to the operation of machines but one of their fundamental aspects."⁸⁵ Ordinary speech is haunted by aporias, pauses, stutters, and mispronunciations, just as the body-as-machine is haunted by potential disability and injury. Dworkin writes:

All language is referential, but it need not reflect concepts; when language instead refers back to the material circumstances of its

own production, we can hear the murmur of its materials. When speech continues without communicating anything, when speech intransitively reaches the limit at which its communication becomes silent, we can hear the body speak.⁸⁶

It is precisely that kind of corporeal speech that *Velocity Zero*, like Dada before it, evoking Futurism even as it betrays and undoes its more insidious dimensions. Whereas Marinetti wanted to obviate the body's role in Futurist speech, the Dadaists, like Buvoli's speakers in turn, call attention to the corporeal origins of semantic limitations and syncopations.

Reading the Manifesto's eleventh point, which eulogizes "il volo scivolante degli aeroplani, la cui elica garrisce al vento come una bandiera" ("the gliding flight of aeroplanes whose propeller sounds like the flapping of a flag"), the video's speaker stumbles on the word for propeller: "la cui eli. . .eli...eli. . .eli. . .eli. . ." This evocation of a propeller's chop envies nothing of Marinetti's free-word experiments. Another man's spontaneous neologism, "volocità" — a fusion of the words "volo" (flight) and "velocità" (speed) — similarly suggests a consummately Futurist feat. I must reiterate the fact that Buvoli's speakers have not knowingly performed these effects. Nor do they partake of the (anti-)aesthetic intention of the Dadaist or Zaum poets — whether Ball's metaphysical primitivism, Kruchenykh's Slavic mysticism, or Hausmann's raucous dismemberments.⁸⁷ Yet it is often in their involuntary slips that they evoke these phenomena, as well as engender a new poetics of their own. A woman recites the first point of the Manifesto, which in the original reads: "We want to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness." Punctured by nervous laughter, her elocution results in a phrase echoing with new, ironic significance: "... to habit of . . . poh...pot...pot. . .pott. . .plot [laughter] . . . promise of saaadness." The unpredictable contingencies of disability here wrest from the Manifesto an autonomous — if involuntary — lyricism. The woman's reading at once unwittingly uses the movement's own tricks against it (unintended laughter undercutting solemnity), while at the same time travestyng its dearest intentions: "fearlessness" trips to its knees by the end of the sentence, becoming, instead, "saaadness." Her misreading becomes, simultaneously, an elegiac re-reading.

A similar instance occurs in the Italian version of the video, as a man reads the Manifesto's ninth point. The original text infamously declares: "Noi vogliamo glorificare la guerra — sola igiene del mondo" ("We wish to glorify war — the world's only hygiene"). The reader states: "Noi vogliamo glo. . .glo. . .glo. . .glo. . .gro. . .groc. . .glorificare la guerra, solo li li solo l'insieme [together, entirety] del mondo." The unanticipated inruption and echo of "together[ness]" thwarts the idea of a "hygienic" belligerence. So too, in a similar vein, do a couple of the readers' transformation of the word "violento" to "violet," and one man's transformation of "distruggere i musei" (destroy the museums) to "distinguere i musei" (distinguish the museums). Even more than the video's more tendentious evocation of slowness, these unprompted alterations refract Futurism

through the shattered prism of its own intended narrative. Turning prose into a new form of poetry, the readers have used Marinetti's literary prescriptions — however involuntarily — both on and against his own text.

Ruins of a future: *passéisme*, poetry, post-modernism

The screening of *Velocity Zero* in the context of Buvoli's larger installation, *A Beautiful Day after Tomorrow* (2007), further underscored the rapports between Futurist poetics, the rhetoric of flight and *aeropittura*, and Fascist image politics (figure 14).⁸⁸ The project's title derives from a statement by Marinetti to his daughter about the future perfection of the world, after an assured Futurist triumph. As mounted at the Venice Biennale, its spaces pastiched the rhetoric of Fascist exhibition culture, particularly the regime's consistent borrowings from Futurist tropes of utopia.⁸⁹ Hanging, geometric fiberglass fragments evoked abstracted airplanes, tinted in crimson and turquoise hues. Reflecting the Italian *tricolore* mixed with the red, white, and blue of the American flag, that color fusion — like the bilingual Italian/English format of *Velocity Zero* — alluded to the affinities between the aggressive foreign policies of George W. Bush and Silvio Berlusconi, particularly with regard to the invasion and occupation of Iraq since 2003.⁹⁰ Interconnected with tensile filaments, these stylized, airborne sculptures echoed the angular geometries painted onto the gallery's walls and floor, creating an atmosphere charged with flux and agitation. Shards of language pierced the air as well, as the booths housing *Velocity Zero* piped sound into the installation's hallway. Visitors could thus hear the speakers' labored enunciations as they approached the space, even before arriving at the installation. The title, *A Beautiful Day after Tomorrow*, appeared spelled out in a series of large, sculpted and colored letters, pitched at a raking angle against one of the gallery's white walls. The diagonal orientation of this utopian anthem no longer generated an unequivocally

soaring ascendancy, however. It appeared, instead, half-buried and off kilter. We still cannot be sure if the "Tomorrow" in question (figure 15) — inclined at a typically Futurist diagonal — was dawning or declining.

Resting squarely on the floor, the "M" in the word "Tomorrow" consisted not of colored resin like the other letters, but rather a rough-hewn slab of rock. Or rather, it appeared wrought from granite, but was in fact made from chicken wire, foam, and burlap dipped in gray-tinted plaster and gravel. Refusing the buoyancy of its counterparts, the squat "stone" letter recalls the failure of language to get off the proverbial ground in *Velocity Zero*. Especially in the context of Buvoli's "post-utopian" installation, it also brings to mind the "M" in "Mussolini" — shorthand for a monumental architectonics (and hagiography) under Fascism. Rather than a monument or megalith here, it resembled a kind of ruin. The partially exposed brick of the Arsenale's surrounding columns also contributed to that evocation, one that further resonated with the aural effects of *Velocity Zero*. For, rather than pierce the air like streamlined torpedoes, words in the video lag, loll, sag, splinter into ruin. Ruins constituted one of the great anathemas of Marinetti's entire project: its rejection of the past, of memory, of entropy. The art historian Romy Golan, however, has recently argued for the Futurists' "melancholy fascination for the ruin, despite their attempts to claim otherwise."⁹¹ Rather than an absolute betrayal of Futurist principles, we might consider *Velocity Zero* as setting into relief the fragmentation and disintegration always already implicit in Futurism — particularly Marinetti's approach to language. We might recall Giovanni Papini's accusations that Marinetti's verbal experimentations signaled merely a "return" to a more primitive state.⁹² The fragments of Buvoli's physical installation, as well as the splinters of words in *Velocity Zero*, recast Futurism as not simply inimical to the ruin, but haunted by it from the start.

Not long after *Velocity Zero* screened in Venice, the Italian Association of Aphasics (Associazioni Italiane Afasiche [A.I.T.A.]) asked Buvoli if they could use the video for a public



Figure 14. Luca Buvoli, *A Very Beautiful Day After Tomorrow* with *Vector Tricolor* (left) and *A Very Beautiful Day After Tomorrow (Marquee)* (center), 2007. Installation view of *Phase II: The Entanglement of Modernist Dreams*, 52nd Venice Biennale, 2007.

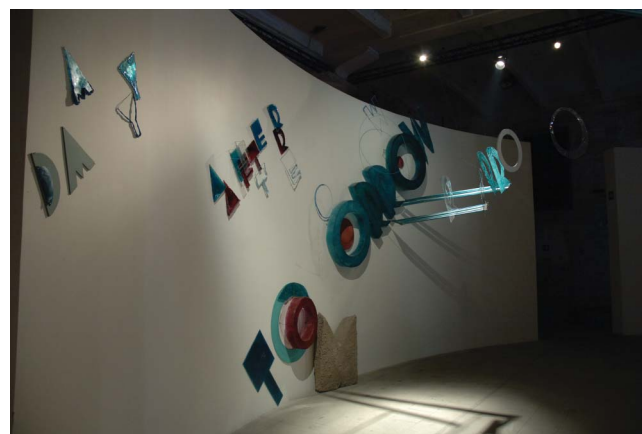


Figure 15. Luca Buvoli, *A Very Beautiful Day After Tomorrow (Marquee)* (center), 2007 (detail).

service announcement, aimed at reaching aphasic individuals who might otherwise remain isolated. A clip from *Velocity Zero* was also integrated into the association's website (where it remains), followed by practical information: "Aphasia strikes 20,000 Italians each year. Aphasia leaves you speechless. A.I.T.A does not leave you on your own."⁹³ The use of the internet (and of YouTube) to diffuse clips of Buvoli's video — in an effort to shore up the alienation that afflicts many aphasics — perhaps represents the sweetest revenge on Marinetti's project. In spite of all the technological advances of the intervening century — many of which owe more than a small debt to Futurist animus — Buvoli's tech-savvy video insists upon language's ineluctable origins in nature. Buvoli, too, has suppressed his authorial "I" in *Velocity Zero*, though to different effect than any Futurist disclaimer. The founding Manifesto serves *Velocity Zero* as the unlikely script for that which Marinetti sought expressly to banish: "dramas of humanized matter."⁹⁴

Speech in Buvoli's video is anything but unmoored or automated, rapid-fire or dehumanized. Turned tensely in the mouth, words reveal roots that sink — encumbered and tangled — into the body itself, into synapses and sinews, nerve endings and tongue muscles. The literary "I" returns to *Velocity Zero* with a vengeance, despite the visual anonymity of its actors. The video thus restores to Futurist pronouncements the ballast not only of "subjective" language, but of the real bodies from which it issues. It is not simply "humanized matter" that sits half-exposed behind Buvoli's rippling screams of color, but the invisible realm of damaged gray matter. The *mediacy* of language here — through mouths that labor in earnest deliberation — is rendered ineluctable, even agonizing, giving the lie to a Futurist dream of dehumanized speech. Of all the avant-garde agitators of the early twentieth century, Marinetti was perhaps the last ever to be at a loss for words. "Language for the Futurist," writes the literary historian Alice Y. Kaplan, "is a trap to use and not to fall into."⁹⁵ Buvoli stages precisely the ensnaring of individuals in the ambush of language. "Ars" here are no longer bellical, no longer a language of the trench or the propeller, but the aural extension of flesh and blood.

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NOTES

- 1 — *New York Sun*, Saturday, January 12, 1929; Getty Research Institute, Fortunato Depero Papers.
- 2 — *The Great Dictator* (1940), dir. Charles Chaplin.
- 3 — The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines aphasia as: "Loss of speech, partial or total, or loss of power to understand written or spoken language, as a result of disorder of the cerebral speech centres."
- 4 — F.T. Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism," February 20, 1909, in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. Umbro Apollonio, trans. Robert Brain et al. (London: Tate Publishing, 2009 [1970]), 19–24, here 21; hereafter "The Founding Manifesto." A more complete anthology of Marinetti's manifestos can be found in Günter Berghaus, ed., *Marinetti: Critical Writings*, trans. Doug Thompson (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2006).
- 5 — See Michael Kirby, *Futurist Performance* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1971), and RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001 [1979]), 11–30.
- 6 — Conversation with the artist, September 13, 2010.
- 7 — "[U]na rilettura del Futurismo da un punto di vista post-utopico, sull'illusione e la delusione di alcuni miti modernisti." Cited in Ilaria Costa, "Luca Buvoli: Arte per tornare alle origini," *Oggi 7: Magazine domenicale di America Oggi*, September 16, 2007, accessed May 3, 2010, <http://www.oggi7.info>.
- 8 — *Ibid.* ("ridimensiona l'elogio della velocità e dell'aggressione").
- 9 — Futurism's relationship to Fascism — first unabashedly proclaimed by Marinetti himself in 1924 (in *Futurismo e fascismo*) — has come to form the subject of increasingly sophisticated and nuanced scholarship since the 1980s. See, inter alia, Alice Kaplan, *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Jeffrey Schnapp, "Forwarding Address," *Stanford Italian Review*, 8, no. 1.2 (1988), 53–80; Andrew Hewitt, "Fascism, Modernism, Futurism, and 'Post-modernity,'" in *Fascism, Aesthetics, and Culture*, ed. Richard Golsan (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992), 38–55; Claudia Salaris, *Artecracia: L'avanguardia futurista negli anni del fascismo* (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1992); Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, "The Artist to Power?: Futurism, Fascism and the Avant-Garde," *Theory Culture Society* 13, no. 2 (1996): 13–39; Barbara Spackman, *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
- 10 — F.T. Marinetti, "Destruction of Syntax — Untrammelled Imagination — Words-in-Freedom" (1913), translated and reprinted in Apollonio, ed., 95–106, here 97.
- 11 — *Ibid.*
- 12 — Luca Buvoli, Interview with Christine Poggi, *Modern Painters*, February 1, 2009. On the occasion of an event at the Museum of Modern Art titled "Modern Poets: Futurism and the New Manifesto" (organized for the Futurist centenary), Buvoli presented a written version of *Velocity Zero*, for which sufferers of agraphia had transcribed the 11 points of the "Founding and Manifesto" as it was dictated to them in private, by speech pathologist Marissa A. Barrera. The results of this process, which I do not have room to expand upon here, ranged from a few minor orthographic errors to nearly illegible scrawl. To give just one example, the first individual transcribed the manifesto's title, as it was read to him, as "Manavictor of futurism by Felipo Tamaso Marati." Whether in elided words and syllables, shaky script, or omissions and repetitions, the transcription by certain individuals registers their disability in ways different than the audio-visual format of *Velocity Zero*. The spatial nature of the written version obviates — at least in the end product — the real-time difficulties of recognition and enunciation. The visual evidence of impairment bears, however, a particular pathos of its own. The hand-written uniqueness of each (albeit anonymous) individual further distances each of their efforts from Futurist typeface and its association — notwithstanding various fonts and caprices — with a certain uniformity and regularity.
- 13 — Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," in *Studies on Child Language and Aphasia* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971 [1956]), 49–74, here 49.
- 14 — See, for example, Umberto Boccioni, *Pittura e scultura Futuriste* (Milan: SE, 1997 [1914]). For a particular reading of the "diagonal imperative of the

will to power” in Boccioni’s painting, see Christine Poggi, *Inventing Futurism: The Art and Politics of Artificial Optimism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 106.

15 – The English version of *Velocity Zero* was shot in New York City, at a speech therapy center. Conversation with the artist, September 13, 2010.

16 – By contrast, certain individuals posting comments on internet discussion sites relating to aphasia have criticized Buvoli’s decision to mask the faces of his subjects, averring that this results in a kind of infantilization of aphasic individuals. See http://alessandratinti.blogspot.com/2008_01_01_archive.html, accessed October 5, 2010.

17 – Buvoli has commented, “In an effort to visually emphasize their slowed speech, I have created a layer of fragmented animated sequences that corresponds to the readers’ efforts to fluently capture the text.” Conversation with the artist, November 12, 2010.

18 – Cited in Gregory Williams, “Reanimating the Force-Line,” Rome, Galleria Autori Cambi, May–September, 2003, exhibition catalog.

19 – On Buvoli’s relationship to the comic book, see Linda Yablonsky, “Leaping Dialectics in a Single Bound,” *New York Times*, November 3, 2003.

20 – See Ilaria Costa, “Luca Buvoli: Arte per tornare alle origini,” op.cit.

21 – Luca Buvoli, *Flying: Practical Training for Beginners*, M.I.T. List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA, 2000.

22 – Gregory Williams, “Reanimating the Force-Line,” op. cit. I also disagree with Williams’s statement that “Buvoli’s blunt inclusion of the red, white and green of the Italian flag suddenly introduces a degree of literalism that seems foreign to his project.” I would contend that it is precisely that literalism which makes possible the irony of Buvoli’s critique.

23 – Buvoli’s work at the Venice Biennale, for example, seemed even to draw out the (normally latent) military character of the Arsenale’s great hall, according to one critic. “There is a military presence in the former Venetian quarter-mile long Arsenale and it opens with an eye-catching, raucous, tongue-in-cheek homage to Italian futurist propaganda by Luca Buvoli.” Francine Koslow Miller, “52nd Venice Biennale,” *tema celeste*, September–October, 2007, 39.

24 – Peter Schjeldahl, “Big Ideas — The Venice Biennale,” *The New Yorker*, June 25, 2007, 100–1.

25 – Christine Poggi, “A Very Beautiful Day after Tomorrow,” ICA Philadelphia, exhibition brochure, January 27–March 25, 2007.

26 – Dominic Wells, “Reviving an Ancient Art,” *The Times* (London), August 5, 2006.

27 – Richard Fleischer, *Out of the Inkwell: Max Fleischer and the Animation Revolution* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005) 15.

28 – Jakobson, “Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances,” 40.

29 – There is an important difference between experimental Futurist poetics, per se, and the more prosaic exposition of the movement’s manifestos, in which those poetic theories are elaborated. Marinetti himself acknowledged this fact. “However much they may seek synthetic forms of expression, [science, philosophy, journalism, etc.] will still need to use syntax and punctuation. I am obliged, for that matter, to use them myself in order to make myself clear to you.” Marinetti, “Destruction of Syntax,” in Apollonio, ed., *Futurist Manifestos*, 96 (translation altered).

30 – Giovanni Papini, “Il Cerchio si chiude,” *Lacerba* (February 15, 1914), translated and reprinted in Lawrence S. Rainey, Christine Poggi and Laura Wittman, eds., *Futurism: An Anthology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 173–5.

31 – Aldo Palazzeschi, *Galleria*, vol. 2–4, March–August, 1974; cited in Pierre Von Bever, “‘Metafisica,’ Réalisme Magique, et fantastiques italiens,” in *Réalisme Magique*, ed. Jean Weisgerber (Paris: L’Age d’Homme, 1987), 73–89, here 75.

32 – Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla and Gino Severini, “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting,” April 11, 1910; reprinted and translated in Rainey et al., eds., *Futurism: An Anthology*, 67.

33 – Marinetti’s first Futurist novel, *Mafarka le futuriste* (1909) takes place not in a technologically advanced future, but rather in a fictional North African

country which borrows numerous tropes from a contemporary primitivist imagination. F.T. Marinetti, *Mafarka the Futurist: An African Novel*, trans. Carol Diethe and Steve Cox (London: Middlesex University Press, 1997).

34 – F.T. Marinetti, “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature” (1912), trans. and reprinted in Berghaus, ed., *Critical Writings*, 107–19.

35 – Giacomo Balla, “Futurist Manifesto of Men Clothing 1913,” in Umbro Apollonio, ed., *Futurist Manifestos*, 132–4; Bruno Sanzin, “Cosmic Genesis,” trans. and reprinted in Rainey et al., eds., *Futurism: an Anthology*, 501–4; F.T. Marinetti, “Dunes: Mots en liberté” [Dunes: Words-in-Freedom], *Poesia* 1 (April 15, 1920). Balla also specifies that the transformed Futurist environment in which such clothes would exist, would include “acrobatic blocks of colours set out like the following word-shapes: coffeecornhou Rosegreebastocap transpomotocar legcutshp blueblackwhitehouses aero cigarend. . .”

36 – See Jeffrey T. Schnapp, “Propeller Talk,” *Modernism/Modernity* 1, no. 3 (1994): 153–78.

37 – Marinetti, “Destruction of Syntax,” 99.

38 – See John J. White, *Literary Futurism: Aspects of the First Avant-Garde* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

39 – James Joyce, *Finnegan’s Wake* (New York: Penguin, 1999 [1939]), 122.

40 – Apollinaire, *Paris Journal*, August 1, 1914, “LES ARTS: La Nevrose et l’art moderne”.

41 – Ibid.

42 – “And here is Futurist art [sic], seemingly disconcerting, but rich with wise design’. The entry describes the humanoid figure in Carrà’s painting as having ‘almost turned into a ‘mannequin’ of neurological labor [diventato quasi ‘mannequin’ dal lavoro neurologico’]. *L’illustrazione medica italiana* (Genoa: G.B. Marsano, 1921) p. 38.

43 – On February 11 of the preceding year, in an article titled “Slashed Futurist Canvas,” the *New York Times* reported the incident of a “terrible artistic tragedy” at Paris’ Salon des Indépendants. A visitor to the exhibition — claiming that he suffered from neurasthenia — cut a canvas from its frame, claiming that it had been “too much for his nerves.” The individual tellingly identified himself as a (modernist) painter. “SLASHED FUTURIST CANVAS: Paris Artist Says Picture Was Too Much for His Nerves,” *New York Times*, February 12, 1920.

44 – Armand Trousseau, *De l’aphasie, maladie décrite récemment sous le nom impropre d’aphémie* [On aphasia, a disease recently described under the incorrect name of aphemia], *La Gazette des Hôpitaux Civils et Militaires* (January 1864). See Yvan Lebrun, Portraits in aphasia: Armand Trousseau (1801–1867), *European Journal of Disorders of Communication* 28 (1993): 103–08.

45 – Max Nordau, *Entartung* (1892), translated in English as *Degeneration* (New York: Appleton, 1895). Recently described by one scholar as a “household name to educated nineteenth-century Europeans,” Nordau ascribed perceived social and cultural disintegration to the deviant oeuvres of authors such as Wilde, Ibsen, Wagner and Nietzsche. See Steven E. Aschheim, “Max Nordau, Friedrich Nietzsche and Degeneration,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 28, no. 4 (1993): 643–57.

46 – Paul Michaut, “Le début de la maladie de Nietzsche” (1903), excerpted and reprinted in *Annales médico psychologiques*, vol. 20, Paris, 1904, 343–49. Discussing the example of one of Nietzsche’s poems repeating “Profond,” Michaut says, “une fois l’assonance détruite, tout art disparaît.”

47 – Ibid, 345.

48 – In this same vein, we might consider not only Baudelaire’s famous repetition of *Crénom!*, but perhaps Alfred Jarry’s “Merdre!” in *Ubu Roi*. See S. Dieguez and J. Bogousslavsky, “Baudelaire’s Aphasia: From Poetry to Cursing,” in *Neurological Disorders in Famous Artists* (Basel: Karger, 2007), vol. 22, 121–49.

49 – Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997 [1969]), xix.

50 – Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales* (New York: Summit Books, 1970), 16.

51 – Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts* (New York: Grove Press, 1994 [1949]), 45. Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla mention

- Becket in the context of Futurist theater, but not poetry or language. Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla, *Futurism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985) 109.
- 52 – On some of Joyce’s debts to Futurism, see Corinna del Greco Lobner, “James Joyce and Italian Futurism,” *Irish University Review* 15, no. 1 (1985): 73–92. Joyce’s reference to “those ars, rrrr! . . . all bellical” perhaps alludes to Carlo Carrà’s 1915 book, *Guerrapittura* (War Painting), which the artist signed “Carrà” — adding an extra “r” to his name in line with Futurist “free-word” aggression; various other free-word poems similarly repeat letters in similar acts of verbal exaggeration and aggression. Yet Joyce’s “ars” perhaps also plays upon the Latin for “skill,” while his “bellical” might allude not simply to war (*bellus*) but the Italian for beauty (*bello*) — in short, a “lovely craft.”
- 53 – Oliver Sacks, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales*, 1.
- 54 – On Mallarmé’s influence on Marinetti, see White, *Literary Futurism*; Jeffrey T. Schnapp, “Politics and Poetics in Marinetti’s *Zang Tumb Tuuum*,” *Stanford Italian Review* 5, no. 1 (1985): 75–92; and Johanna Drucker, “Marinetti: Materiality and Sensation,” in *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909–1923* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 105–40.
- 55 – See Barbara Spackman, *Decadent Genealogies: The Rhetoric of Rickness from Baudelaire to D’Annunzio* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).
- 56 – F.T. Marinetti, “Geometrical and Mechanical Splendor and Sensitivity Toward Numbers” (1914) reprinted and translated in Berghaus, ed., *Critical Writings*, 135–42, here 135.
- 57 – Cinzia Blum, *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti’s Futurist Fiction of Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), viii.
- 58 – “An Interview with F.T. Marinetti,” *Comœdia*, March 26, 1909; reprinted and translated in Berghaus, ed., *Critical Writings*, 18–21, here 19.
- 59 – An exception is Aldo Palazzeschi’s “Controdolore: Manifesto futurista,” *Direzione del Movimento Futurista*, Milan, December 29, 1913.
- 60 – Bruce E. Murdoch, *Acquired Speech and Language Disorders* (Indianapolis: Wiley, 2010), 57.
- 61 – Marinetti, “Destruction of Syntax,” in Apollinio, ed., *Futurist Manifestos*, 99.
- 62 – *Ibid.*, 98.
- 63 – John Hughlings-Jackson, “Hughlings-Jackson on Aphasia and Kindred Affections of Speech, together with a complete bibliography of his publications on speech and a reprint of some of his most important papers” (1915), *Brain* XXXVIII: 1–190; cited in Sacks, *Seeing Voices*, 19 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
- 64 – Jakobson, “Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances,” 46.
- 65 – Lise Menn, Loraine K. Obler and Gabriele Miceli, eds., *Agrammatic Aphasia: A Cross-language Narrative Sourcebook*, vol. 3 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1990). On the “defective application of syntactic rules (incorrect use or omission of grammatical morphemes)” see Günter Peuser and Maren Fittschen, “On the Universality of Language Dissolution: The Case of a Turkish aphasic,” *Brain and Language* 4, no. 2 (1977): 196–207, here 206.
- 66 – Stephen E. Nadeau, Bruce A. Crosson and Leslie Gonzalez-Rothi, eds., *Aphasia and Language: Theory to Practice* (New York: Guilford Press, 2000), 14.
- 67 – Marinetti, “Destruction of Syntax,” in Apollinio, ed., *Futurist Manifestos*, 98–99.
- 68 – F.T. Marinetti, “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature” (1912), trans. and reprinted in Berghaus, ed., *Critical Writings*, 110.
- 69 – See Schnapp, “Propeller Talk.”
- 70 – Nadeau et al., eds., *Aphasia and Language*, 12–15.
- 71 – Drucker, *The Visible Word*, 106.
- 72 – *Ibid.*, 107.
- 73 – Ian Andrews, “Telegraphic Language,” 1991; <http://ian-andrews.org/texts/telegraphic.pdf>
- 74 – Drucker, *The Visible Word*, 107.
- 75 – Marinetti, “Geometrical and Mechanical Splendor and Sensitivity Toward Numbers,” 135.
- 76 – The presence of Marinetti’s words-in-freedom at the Cabaret Voltaire in wartime Zurich, where Dada first arose, is significant.
- 77 – Brigid Doherty, “‘See: We are all Neurasthenics!’ or, The Trauma of Dada. Montage,” *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 1 (1997): 82–132.
- 78 – *Ibid.*, 124.
- 79 – Alexei Kruchenykh, “New Ways of the Word,” in Anna Lawton, ed., *Russian Futurism through Its Manifestoes, 1912–1928* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 73; cited in Andrews, “Telegraphic Language.”
- 80 – Marinetti, “Destruction of Syntax,” in Apollinio, ed., *Futurist Manifestos*, 98–9.
- 81 – A recent publication of Futurist manifestos in Romanian notably renders several letters backward on its cover. See Emilia David Drogoreanu, trans. and ed., *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Manifestele futurismului* (Bucharest: Ion Pop, 2009).
- 82 – Doherty, “‘See: We are all Neurasthenics!’ or, The Trauma of Dada. Montage,” 107.
- 83 – Steve McCaffery, ‘Cacophony, Abstraction, and Potentiality: The Fate of the Dada Sound Poem,’ in Marjorie Perloff and Craig Dworkin, eds., *The Sound of Poetry/The Poetry of Sound* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 118–28, here 124.
- 84 – Jakobson, “Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances,” 70. For Freud, a neurosis represented not an exceptional state, but rather an illustrative exacerbation of pathologies underlying all “normal” states. The same might be said — and indeed has been, by Jakobson himself — about neurological disorders.
- 85 – Craig Dworkin, “The Stutter of Form,” 167. Dworkin writes, “Stuttering . . . is less a condition that does or does not exist than a rate at which one aspect of the normal mechanism of speech can no longer be overlooked or ignored. Language, in this way, operates like a machine.”
- 86 – *Ibid.*
- 87 – A more comprehensive study of *Velocity Zero*’s subjects and their experience in participating, in fact, might place the work in the larger, emerging field of Disability Studies. See Michael Davidson, *Concerto for the Left Hand: Disability and the Defamiliar Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998). In the realm of art, Tate Modern looked at the question of verbal repetition and interruption in a group exhibition titled *Stutter* (April 23–August 16, 2009), including work by Anna Barham, Dominique Petitgand, Michael Riedel, Will Stuart, and Michelangelo Pistoletto. Two short films by Sven Augustijnen, *Johan* (2001) and *François* (2003), underscored the very different manifestations of aphasia in two individuals.
- 88 – Buvoli himself has referred to the work as a “multimedia, neo-futurist installation.” Ilaria Costa, “Luca Buvoli: Arte per tornare alle origini,” op.cit.
- 89 – See, for example, Jeffrey Schnapp, “Epic Demonstrations: Fascist Modernity and the 1932 Exhibition of the Fascist revolution,” in Richard Golsan, ed. *Fascism, Aesthetics, and Culture*, op. cit., 1–37.
- 90 – Conversation with the artist, November 12, 2010.
- 91 – Romy Golan, *Muralnomad: The Paradox of Wall Painting, Europe 1927–1957* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 48.
- 92 – See my discussion of Papini above, as well as Christine Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting: Cubism, Futurism, and the Invention of Collage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 183–6.
- 93 – <http://www.aitafederazione.it/velocita-zero.php>, accessed August 2, 2010. The clip is followed by the following text: “Cranial trauma, stroke, and tumors can damage [the brain’s] ‘language zone,’ and render you “aphasic”. Aphasia strikes 20,000 Italians each year. Aphasia leaves you speechless. A.I.T.I does not leave you on your own.”
- 94 – “We are not interested in offering dramas of humanized matter.” Marinetti, “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature,” op.cit. The “Modern Poets: Futurism and the New Manifesto,” session at MoMA (see note 12) screened *Velocity Zero* and invited project participants to the museum — including speech pathologist Marissa A. Barrera — in what became, in part, an informational session on aphasia awareness.
- 95 – Alice Y. Kaplan, *Reproductions of Banality*, 85.